

# THE DERBYSHIRE RECORD OFFICE,

1963

By JOAN SINAR

WORK in the office in 1963 has been very mixed. The exploration of the unknown material already in the office, sorting of old deposits identified but unlisted, the accessioning and sorting of new deposits, and the surveying of groups of documents in homes and business premises have gone on side by side.

So far as material in the office is concerned the position is much clearer. A few large boxes are still unexplored but the bulk of our holdings have been identified and accessioned. Since 1906 we have received about 260 accessions, 87 of them since Easter 1962. Over 120 of the smaller accessions have been listed and over half the lists circulated to the major libraries in and around Derbyshire.

The most important material identified from our older holdings in 1963 are the records of Repton and Willington bridge trust 1835-1898, and a run of turnpike trust records. These include minutes, plans and papers of the Chesterfield, Newbold and Dunston Road, 19th century; minutes and papers of the Brimington and Chesterfield Road, 19th century; minutes and papers of the Owler Bar Road, Hernstone Lane Head and Greenhill Moor Road, late 18th-19th centuries; minutes and other papers for different sections of the Derby to Sheffield, Duffield to Wirksworth Road, 19th century; and minutes and other papers of the Sheffield to Gander Lane Road, late 18th-19th century. These records, together with a run of 19th century papers relating to county bridges, and a later run of correspondence and other papers relating to roads from the 1890s to the early 20th century, recently transferred by the County Surveyor, strengthen considerably the material relating to communications.

Work has continued on sorting out the official papers of quarter sessions and the county council. Runs of reports of county officers and committees are being brought together, but as yet are far from complete. Some useful rate bases and valuations for the county from the mid-19th century supplement the odd parish rate assessment of the late 18th and early 19th century deposited with quarter sessions. There is an almost complete run of the County Treasurer's printed abstracts of accounts from 1890 to 1914, and then some sorry gaps. One of the best 19th century series are the reports of the County Lunatic Asylum from 1853, supplemented in the 20th century with plans

RED DEER (*Cervus elaphas*).

Four rather battered premolars from the N.W. quadrant and the grave-pit appear to belong to the red deer. Two pieces of antler bone from the former show evidence of shaping consistent with their possible use as tools.

SHEEP OR GOAT (*Ovis* or *Capra*).

There are teeth, and a few bones, including a short length of tibia representative of a small breed of one or other of these animals.

PIG (*Sus scrofa domesticus*).

From the grave-pit came the constituents of a small pig "hock" including the distal end of the humerus, with proximal parts of radius and ulna. The condition of the bones suggests a prehistoric rather than modern dating, and in fact the humerus has the same dimensions as one obtained from a Neolithic or early Bronze Age stratum at Shacklow, Taddington Dale. The distal width of both these humeri is 38 mm.

FOX (*Vulpes vulpes*).

An upper canine from the N.W. quadrant, together with a fragmentary vertebra, were noted. Both look old and eroded.

WATER VOLE (*Arvicola amphibius*).

This is Bateman's "rat" whose bones he noticed in such quantities in the barrows he dug, most of them far from streams. Further re-excavation of his sites should provide a reasonable explanation for their presence. I feel sure the answer is connected with the use of the barrow-structure by small carnivores. Bateman only occasionally records the smaller wild vertebrates such as stoat or polecat. He may often have ignored them.

DUCK (Mallard — *Anas platyrhynchos*).

From the grave-pit came the *furculum* (wish-bone) of a large species of duck.

RAVEN (*Corvus corax*).

A metacarpal fragment of this well-known scavenger came from the N.W. quadrant. In prehistoric times, and up to a few centuries ago, it would be a familiar visitor to human settlements.



a. Grave-pit from the east.



b. Deposit of bones as left by Bateman. Marker 6 in.

Green Low



and other papers relating to the Council's mental hospitals. Police and lock-up papers run from the mid-19th century. One useful artificial collection is a number of local acts chiefly relating to inclosure throughout the country found in the papers of Mr. Busby, a former Clerk of the Peace. Not enough has been done to permit a comprehensive report on these sessions and council records.

Much has been done on the records of other courts. Petty sessions records have been deposited and listed for the divisions of Alfreton with Clay Cross, 1831-1834, 1915-1950; Bakewell 1857-1958; Belper 1839-1949; Buxton 1872-1941; Matlock 1929-1936; Wirksworth 1829-1954. These records are deposited with the approval of the Lord Chancellor, and those less than 100 years old cannot be used by the public. This period may be changed when the new Schedule on Petty Sessions records is published by the Public Record Office. The records of the Chapel-en-le-Frith and Buxton sessions of the County Court, 1847-1923, have also been deposited and listed, but are held for use by the Registrar only, until such time as the official Schedule on County Court records shall be issued.

The loose papers of the overseers of the poor for Bolsover, 1700-1838, deposited some years ago, have been identified but not listed. Records of the civil administration of Dethick, Lea and Holloway, 1742-1861, have been transferred from the County Library. Brimington Parish Council has deposited its records, 1852-1958, including a run of burial board papers; and the rector of Ashover has deposited a run of overseers' records, 1792—mid-19th century, as yet unexamined.

It is now known that the bulk of the material relating to closed schools held by the Education Department was destroyed after it was damaged by a flood in Derby some years ago. This makes it all the more important that log-books, admission registers, account books and other records still in the schools or strayed into private hands should not be destroyed. I ask people holding these, or managers' records, to let me know what they have. A good run of minutes and other papers of Buxton School Board has come in, as well as log-books, etc. for schools in Blackwell, Heath and Pilsley, 19th-20th centuries.

There have been a number of important deposits of private records, the first of them the deposit by the Lord Lieutenant, Sir Ian Walker-Okeover, Bt., of the Okeover papers. These consist of deeds for the west Derbyshire and Staffordshire estates based on Okeover from the mid-12th century, including the 15th century Rocester cartulary roll, with rentals, surveys and court rolls, 15th-18th centuries; deeds and other papers for properties elsewhere, chiefly Ellingham and King's Lynn, Norfolk; Kempley, Gloucestershire; Gotham, Nottinghamshire; and Wymeswold, Leicestershire; 13th-19th centuries; letters and accounts, 18th-19th centuries, with a good run relating to the rebuilding of Okeover Hall in the mid-18th century.

Sir John Fitzherbert, Bt., deposited the records of Fitzherbert of Tissington just before Christmas for examination and report. These include deeds, surveys, rentals and estate papers relating to properties in Tissington, Fenny

Bentley, Thorpe, Bradbourne and elsewhere in Derbyshire, and estates in Nottinghamshire, Kent and Surrey, 16th-19th centuries; personal papers, correspondence and accounts of the families of Fitzherbert including Lord St. Helens, Treby, Galley Knight and Perrin, 17th-19th centuries. Particularly pleasing are the good runs of Fitzherbert diaries for the 19th century. The Historical Manuscripts Commission 13th Report, Part VI, surveys the Treby papers, which deal mainly with the Popish Plot, and which it is thought that Sir William Fitzherbert (d. 1791) saved from loss when he was a barrister in London. Other correspondence in the Fitzherbert papers is also mentioned in a cursory fashion. The collection is being sorted and boxed, but no detailed work has yet been possible.

The Glapwell papers have been transferred from the County Library. They consist of deeds of the Glapwell estate, 1206 — 18th century, including those calendared for the *Journal*, and other records of the family of Wolhouse and Hallowes. These papers, together with two deposits previously reported by the Hallowes family, must represent a substantial proportion of the original archive group.

There have been a number of deposits of private papers. The largest consists of the deeds of the Arkwright Gatehouse estate at Wirksworth, 17th-19th centuries. Several smaller parcels of deeds from properties in and around Wirksworth, together with other papers from Messrs. Stone and Symond's old office, deposited by Messrs. A. and J. Cash, solicitors, has considerably strengthened 18th- and 19th-century material for the area. Particularly pleasing are some mid-19th century Conservative party organisation papers and a large collection of Victorian mourning cards. Small groups of deeds for properties scattered through the county have come in or been found in the strongroom, as well as groups of papers dealing with daily life in more detail. Duffield inclosure award, 1791; the Hill Carr Sough Proprietors minute book, 1775-1821; the first year's pay checks of a boy beginning work with the Butterley Colliery Company in 1902; poll books of 1701 and 1704; a Thorpe court baron roll, 1603; and a Tibshelf court baron roll, 1640-1651, are probably the most important of these.

Survey work continues. The parish records of Hope and Morley and the civil parish of South Wingfield have been surveyed and listed. Work is in progress on North Wingfield parish records. A number of small private collections remaining in private custody have been surveyed, and the lists await drafting for typing. The trustees of the Whitworth Institute deposited their papers for survey and listing. Surveys in two solicitors' offices were completed, and led to deposits. A survey in a third begun in 1962 is still under way.

Time is taken from the primary work on documents to deal with enquiries which come by post or telephone or are made on a personal visit. 165 postal enquiries chiefly relating to possible sources have been dealt with. The introduction of a Xerograph machine has made the supply of photo-copies much easier, and photo-copying is mounting. Over 270 searchers have visited the office to search in the records for themselves. These searchers range in age from 14 years old upwards. They come from all walks of life and many have

not used documents before. These people need help in the early stages. About 70 of them came in groups from sixth forms or extramural and W.E.A. classes who came specifically to use records for the first time. Three other groups of children came to the office for an exhibition, talk, and tour of the record office. Talks and exhibitions were given at two schools. A technical talk on Derbyshire records was given to a group of schoolteachers, and a similar talk on records in general accompanied by a large exhibition was given to students from Matlock Training College. Small exhibitions were prepared for parties touring the County Offices, and a number of talks have been given to clubs and groups of all kinds scattered through the county. These have led to the discovery and sometimes the deposit of still further groups of papers. The press has taken a generous interest and people who have not heard a talk but who have seen it reported have in turn come forward with information and invitations to see their papers.

One extra function of the record office is to act as something of a clearing house not only for papers but for historical material generally, and to put people in touch with each other who may be seeking similar means to very different ends. As a result of one set of introductions the memories of the older inhabitants of Sandiacre and district are now being taped, to preserve both their knowledge of the little town's immediate past and something of the local dialect. Another group of local historians in Bakewell are considering similar work. So many documents relating to the daily life of our predecessors, to their work, to their businesses, to their worship and their play, have been destroyed that memory is often the only source for the recent past, and can in old field and street names provide clues for unravelling the more distant past. Reminiscences can be written down or taped. Tape has the advantage of recording also the sound and nature of fast vanishing dialect. A home for the recorded reminiscences can always be found in the record office.

With many irons in the fire single-handed work is not easy. I am out a good deal and enquiries and letters cannot always be answered immediately. I have a number of date lines for certain pieces of work and, even if I am in, I cannot always spare time to help searchers who arrive without an appointment. Searchers should make an appointment, even if they do not need help. In my absence they may well not be able to see the papers they want.