

THE DERBYSHIRE RECORD OFFICE,

1964

By JOAN SINAR

THERE were 55 deposits in 1964, fortunately some of them small. Some were both bulky and dirty, and followed a run of similar deposits in 1963. Consequently throughout the year my office was swamped with collections waiting to be cleaned, fumigated and roughly sorted before they could be put in the strong-room. This work is time consuming and often unpleasant but necessary. It has to take precedence of all except fieldwork. Without it the physical preservation of the records cannot be ensured; no collection of any size can be listed or enquiry properly answered. Whilst it is in progress listing is not possible, and enquiries can be difficult to deal with. The forced concentration on first-stage work seriously interrupted other work. Little listing was possible until the end of the year when 31 small collections were listed. Large-scale jobs already started or planned for 1964 either moved forward more slowly than had been hoped or were temporarily abandoned. As 1964 closed, the County Council therefore took the first steps towards the appointment of an assistant archivist, and one will begin work in August 1965.

Local authorities co-operated generously in answering an enquiry concerning 19th-century housing late in 1963, and from this contact has flowed a steady stream of manuscripts and information. Chesterfield Rural District Council deposited a large collection of parish rate books and assessments chiefly for the early 20th century, but with earlier material including valuation lists and rate books for Ashover from 1849, Brampton 1897, Eckington 1826, Hasland 1838, Heath 1841, Killamarsh 1882, Pilsley 1882, Shirland and Higham 1830, Tupton 1887, and a Chesterfield rate book of 1835-36. The bulk of the material lay between 1914 and 1928, and needed weeding. All valuation lists have been kept, but all rate books covered by periods for which valuation lists survive have been destroyed. With this exception rate books have been kept for spring 1914, spring 1921 (census year) and autumn 1928, or as near such dates as possible. Rate books outside the 1914-28 period and not covered by valuation lists have been kept. This should prove a most valuable source for both geographers and topographical and social historians.

The Surveyor, Bakewell Rural District Council, deposited a series of plans as yet unexamined, and Alfreton Urban District Council a useful series relating to 19th-century housing. Heanor loaned material for use in the Office.

Other authorities have asked for help with survey work or promised future co-operation. The records of older local government units are still coming in. To the minutes and ledgers of Chesterfield Board of Guardians and Public Assistance Management Committee have been added admission registers and related records, 1838-1946, making Chesterfield the best documented of the Derbyshire poor law unions. The rector of Ashover has deposited a further run of parish poor law records.

Four artificial collections have strengthened both local government and private holdings. The most important of these deposited by Mr. J. W. Pashley consists of deeds, accounts, plans and printed ephemera relating to land, mining, inclosure, industry, local government, social background and entertainment in Chesterfield and N.E. Derbyshire, 17th-20th century, including business and personal papers of Bernard Lucas, solicitor, late 18th-early 19th century. Mr. R. Thornhill has deposited papers relating to Hartington rate assessment and a copy of the inclosure claims there, early 19th century, with a rent and a servants' wage book with other papers for Tissington 1785-1815. The third collection transferred from the County Library consists largely of the papers of John Hunter of Belper relating to his public service, including Belper public health and waterworks material 1893-1937, papers relating to the foundation of the Derbyshire Municipal, Urban and Rural District Councils Association 1907-8, Belper Bible Association minutes 1821-75, Belper National School managers' minutes 1871-1903, Milford Mill School record book 1880-1931; Charity Organization minutes 1879-1949; Invalid Children's Aid Association minutes 1914-46; letters and reports of John Langford, agent for French parole prisoners at Ashbourne 1812-4; deeds; 18th-century manuscript newsletters, and views, etc. Buxton Library deposited a run of Ashford and Buxton turnpike trust accounts 1823-48, with United Trust records 1875; the visitors' book of the Crescent Hotel, Buxton, 1868-95; Buxton poor rate-book 1863; Ratepayers' Association minutes, 20th century; and papers, pamphlets and notes of Professor W. Boyd Dawkins on excavations and museum organization, late 19th-early 20th century.

A number of records of closed schools were transferred by the County Education Committee. These are as yet unexamined. The Bishop Pursglove Trust of Tideswell deposited deeds, accounts and other papers, mid-16th century to early 20th century. These are not a complete run of records and a further search is planned for papers that were known to exist in the late 18th century. Individual schools and headmasters responded nobly to an appeal in the County Schools newsletter, and a thick file of letters awaits analysis and action. Two schools, Wirksworth Anthony Gell Grammar School and Shirebrook Central School, deposited 20th-century records. An enquiry revealed 18th- and 19th-century Chesterfield School records stored amongst the County Council's deeds.

The largest deposit of private records was that of the deeds, family and estate papers of the family of Every relating to estates in Egginton, Repton, Etwall, Rolleston, Newton and Hilton, 17th-19th century. An interesting accumulation, obviously only a fragmentary part of the lost whole, are the

deeds and papers of the Cotton family of Etwall, Dalbury and Burnaston 1646-1834, including 18th-century accounts, and papers relating to the military career of Bt. Col. R. J. Cotton (Green) in Spain and elsewhere 1797-1839. Another deposit with some military interest is that of the Birds of Bakewell and Eyam, consisting of family correspondence 1776-1842 including Francis Birds' letters 1789-93, and papers and pedigree notes 19th-20th century. There are a number of small deposits consisting chiefly of deeds of which the most important are deeds of Doveridge and Somersall lands of the family of Fitzherbert of Somersall, 1741-1906.

The Office has been recognized as a repository for colliery records pre-vesting date under the act for nationalization. Only a small bundle of deeds has so far been transferred. Two medium-sized deposits add to the evidence of business enterprise in the county. The papers of the Ray family of Heanor are chiefly deeds and papers of their Heanor property including Kilburne Colliery, 1712-early 20th century. The first instalment of the Fox family records includes deeds of properties in Twyford and Gresley 12th-19th century, Burton-on-Trent 18th century, and Derby 16th-19th century. The Derby papers are largely title deeds, soap-boiling partnership articles, and papers of the Derwent Boat Company founded to exploit the navigational possibilities of the river below Derby in the 18th century. There are also family and pedigree papers for the Fox family and their connections including the families of Bristowe, Darwin and Wagstaffe, 18th-19th century.

The small deposits included a number of which use was made very quickly after their arrival: an 18th-century plan of Croxall; plan of land and veins within the Hollow of Wirksworth and part of Middleton and Cromford 1826; account and memorandum book of John Lowde, farmer, of Clowne, 1745-66; farming account and memorandum book of the Garratt family of Barrow on Trent 1844-1908, with rent receipts and bills 1725-1907; grain milling invoices for Bradbourne Mill 1903-13; and grocers' and chemists' invoices, *c.* 1900.

Survey work continued on the older papers of Messrs. Brooke Taylor of Bakewell who generously lent lead-mining records from the 18th century for use in the Office. A new large survey was started of the records of the Butterley Company. One large section was finished, and then the work was interrupted by a rush of deposits. Heath parish records were surveyed, and a start made on the records of Stanton by Dale, Dale Abbey and Repton. Of small private surveys three sets of farming records have been listed, two of which came to light through the kindness of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries' Advisory Service. Their local office published a short article on farming and related records in their Derbyshire news sheet.

A publicity drive in spring and summer was generously helped both by the local and national press who reported on certain articles and talks. Small exhibitions and talks to social and other clubs, both at luncheon and evening meetings, and during club visits to the County Offices have been a routine, at times a weekly, feature of work, and have resulted in several deposits. Larger exhibitions and major talks have been given for schools, and bodies such as the newly extended Derbyshire Committee of the National Register

of Archives, Derby Historical Association, Matlock Training College, and the Manchester branch of the Library Association. Three W.E.A. groups have visited the Office in the evening to see and use original sources. Material was lent to the Railway Exhibition at Tawney House, Matlock. Several Departments collaborated to suggest material for a large exhibition held in London to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of the County Councils' Association. Photographs of snow clearing by blasting and a motor-cycle road-safety centre, which Derbyshire was the only county to offer, were finally chosen. These are amongst the current records of Council Departments which will eventually pass into the Record Office.

The regular work of the Office continues. Copies of all lists made are sent regularly to libraries in and around Derbyshire. Well over 200 postal enquiries were dealt with. A steadily growing number of enquirers visited the Office personally. Exact numbers are not known because when I am busiest I seldom remember to ask searchers to sign the register. It would be a great help if searchers would enter their names, addresses and purposes of search without waiting to be prompted. Without such entries I cannot let searchers know when material they want comes in after they have left the office. Searchers for their own sakes should not rely on my memory of their visit.