

THE DERBYSHIRE RECORD OFFICE,

1968

By JOAN SINAR

1968 brought the Derbyshire Record Office to the end of its first stage of development and saw the resolution accomplished or planned of longstanding problems. The lack of space had bedevilled the office from its inception. Working accommodation, that is the one room used as archivist's office, search room, and workroom for the cleaning, sorting and listing of incoming records, was strained to breaking point by the reception of the Brooke-Taylor deposit in autumn and winter 1967/8. Searchers had to be asked to postpone their visits if possible. The strong-room shelving was filled. Fortunately the office's needs were known and various possible solutions were considered. In summer 1968 a block of air-conditioned rooms in the main building was allocated for long-term storage, and room provided for the reception and cleaning of deposits. By the end of the year a larger room was being equipped as a search room, and the re-organization of modern records office accommodation had been planned to give more working space, and a separate office for the County Archivist.

Mr. C. J. Williams resigned from the post of Assistant Archivist to move to Flintshire Record Office at the end of May. His successor, Mr. D. V. Fowkes, started work in mid-October. In the meantime almost all work on archives except a little fieldwork was abandoned whilst the County Archivist and the clerical staff concentrated on dealing with searchers, postal and telephonic enquiries, and modern records. A re-organization of the office's establishment was planned to take effect in February 1969 on the retirement of Mr. J. R. Wild, the Records Clerk. Mr. Wild is to be replaced by a junior clerk and a second assistant archivist. He will be much missed by staff and searchers. Mr. Wild was appointed in 1948 and until 1962 had charge of both the modern and the older records. From 1962 he has concentrated on modern records but always been quick to help searchers in the older records when there has been no archivist in the office, or when his specialist knowledge has been called on.

So far as private deposits were concerned the early part of the year was devoted to the sorting of the Brooke-Taylor papers, and listing the lead-mining section of the deposit. Work on the Okeover papers was resumed in November. Certain minor collections were listed as they came

in. Mr. F. P. R. S. Stevenson gave much generous help in sorting the Miller Mundy papers. A major effort was made to finish the initial exploration of bundles and boxes found in the strongroom when the office was set up. The papers concerned were mainly older County Council and Quarter Sessions administrative records. Runs of chief officers' yearly reports were made up with the co-operation of the departments concerned. Some of the longer and more elaborate series dealt with health and finance. Specialized runs of minutes, reports and returns on the County Lunatic Asylum and on pauper lunatics from the mid 19th to early 20th century are being built up. Runs of the County Treasurer's summary accounts from the late 18th century have been assembled. There are gaps in the early years, but some of these may be made up from loose papers which have strayed singly in the past from the main series. There are now several boxes of these. There are good runs of county rate bases from 1817 to 1929 together with groups of ancillary papers such as the summary property tax returns for 1816, early 19th-century returns from townships on the levying and spending of their poor rates, and later 19th-century sets of rating working papers. Sets of papers relating to local government and other enquiries from the 1880s onwards have been brought together and weeded. Spare sets of printed papers and duplicate material from the Clerk's Law Library have been passed to the appropriate university, public and law society libraries. The older correspondence of the Clerk's department has been examined, some destroyed, some retained, and some transferred to the official archives.

There is now a growing volume of 19th- and early 20th-century administrative county archives embodying statistical material, which it is hoped will be listed in the near future. Much of it will be open to searchers. Following the reduction of the closed period for public records to 30 years the Clerk lowered the normal closed period for the Council's archives to 50 years. This period begins with the closing and not with the opening of a file or volume. Chief officers' annual reports are of course open as soon as they have been approved by the appropriate committee. Statutory rights of access remain unchanged. Privately deposited papers less than 100 years old are still not normally open to searchers, and any individual private deposit may be subject to additional bars requested by the depositor.

There were 99 deposits, gifts and transfers of material covering a wide field. These were the usual small groups of deeds ranging in date from the 14th to the 19th centuries. The outstanding simple country house deposit is that by Lord Harrington of the deeds of his Elvaston estate, 13th-19th centuries, accompanied by rentals and inventories, 16th-20th centuries. A more varied deposit is that of the records of the Romeley and Birkin (Yorkshire) estates of the Hill, Wright and Olivier families: deeds 1599-1866, rentals and surveys 1685-1837, and a fine series of estate plans 1735-1781.

The largest estate collection is that of the Miller Mundy family covering

both their landed and their business interests. Their Shipley estate deeds, 17th-19th centuries, include deeds for their collieries and mining interests in Heanor and Shipley. Roughly half the collection consists of the key working papers relating to the building and running of the Nutbrook canal from 1793 to the end of its active life. The Denby estate deeds similarly cover the coalmining and landed interests of the Strelley family in the district, 18th-early 20th centuries.

There has been a good deal to interest business and transport historians in further instalments of two artificial and two family deposits. The collection of Cromford canal permit-books continues to grow. Important items have been added to the John Pashley collection: a volume of accounts for Staveley coal mines, 1691-1708; Chesterfield and Stockwith canal prospectus plans, 1769, with a few associated papers relating to the running of the canal, 1771-1833; a volume of the Turner family's leather working accounts, 1793-1794, used as a rough memorandum book for notes on the family and jottings from the Chesterfield parish registers; the minute book of the Chesterfield and Brampton Mechanics Institute 1841-1880; the account book of a Chesterfield architect, W. M. Ashmore, 1912-1920; and papers in the "Double Fork" link motion case of 1870. These papers and drawings were amongst those prepared by "Double Fork" Waller as part of his proof that the invention of link motion first used in a steam-engine by Stephenson was the work of William Williams, and not of William Howe to whom it had been generally attributed.

The further instalments of the papers of the Ogden family consist of accounts, plans, and correspondence relating to their business, committee and trust interests mainly in the Stanley district. They include a volume of Alexander Ogden's cock stockinger accounts of the mid 19th century, later used by his son for his own business as an estate surveyor in the early 20th century, together with a War Agricultural Committee farm survey for the Ilkeston area 1917, and a run of correspondence 1858-1861 concerning a patent rope machine used in the manufacture of the first Atlantic telephone cable, and other inventions of Archibald Smith. The printed ephemera relate mainly to Ilkeston and Stanley but include a charming series of late 19th-century children's Christmas and birthday cards received by the depositor.

The latest section of Thornhill papers includes a run of children's school exercise books for the Wager family 1840-1862 saved by the depositor, but chiefly consists of family papers both manuscript and printed ephemera. There is a group of specification and minor accounts for turn-pike road improvements, bridge and toll-house construction 1825-1842, the basis for Mr. R. Thornhill's article in *Derbyshire Miscellany* 1968. The printed ephemera for the Great Longstone and Bakewell areas constitute the bulk of this section. They range from a good series of posters and handbills, propaganda on the home front in the first world war, and a scrapbook on the war, to an album of greeting cards received by the family in the late 19th-early 20th centuries. They also include the bulk

of the very useful runs of views, prints and photographs of Derbyshire, 18th-20th centuries, received by the office in 1968. Two unusual sources are the calendars of the D. P. Battery Company, Bakewell, and the Thornhill Egg Packing Station, Great Longstone, the earlier issues of which show buildings, plant and other equipment, and the later issues views of Derbyshire. A number of other views including postcards were distributed to the appropriate record offices and libraries, nineteen in all. The office in turn received similar material from as far afield as Devon. Photographs and postcards are often the only remaining source of information concerning buildings, streets and rural areas which are rapidly vanishing or changing in appearance. They can be vital evidence for topographers, or mirror the dress and fashions of previous generations for social historians. An early 20th-century corsetry catalogue was very gratefully received by the large museum to which we passed it. Modern photographs and ephemera can be very useful. A welcome current group consists of the printed handbills, regulations, leaflets, posters, etc., removed by a friend of the office from Miller's Dale station, together with his run of colour slides of the last train.

Other business fragments are views of frankpledge and barmote records for Hassop, Rowland and Calver 1667-1680, with a scrap of lead ore accounts for Eyre interests 1662. A xerox copy of 18th-century Gell estate accounts from the Shropshire Record Office includes references to lead mining and smelting. There is a useful copy of the Baslow Shepherds' Book compiled in 1777 and printed in 1798 with manuscript additions; and the Newton Grange farm auction account, 1848.

The Thornhill war posters give background colour to a tiny group of papers of the Titterton family, mainly consisting of the letters of Gunner Titterton to the girl he later married, describing conditions at the front, his farming plans, and farming and housing conditions in the Bakewell district, 1917-1919. These were accompanied by an apparently unrelated set of 19th-century plans for Earl Sterndale church, itself destroyed by enemy action in 1941. The major military deposit is however the minutes and accounts of the Derby Territorial and Auxiliary Forces Association and its allied cadet branches, 1907-1968, a series of public records.

The remaining private deposits cover a wide field. A doctor's day-book, 1836-1837, found in the house of the present village doctor, was accompanied by a handful of later farming bills with veterinary charges. A Board of Education labour certificate no. 2, 1901, illustrates the usual lot of the intelligent working-class child of the period. A small private collection includes both the depositor's own copies of Derby Technical College students' publications, 1949-1951, and several sheets of Richard Gough's antiquarian notes, late 18th century.

One of the most interesting deposits is that of the archives other than title deeds of the Belper circuits of the Wesleyan, Primitive, United Free, and post-1933 Methodist churches and of certain of their constituent chapels and Sunday schools, 1813-mid 20th century. A further deposit

was made late in the year and is not yet examined in detail. The Belper Wesleyan Sunday School, and the Primitive Methodist circuit records are fine runs. The deposit also includes records of Wesleyan social groups, and a good artificial collection of ephemera built up by a church member. It covers several types of membership tickets, service leaflets, concert programmes, fund raising activities, outings and social occasions. A much smaller deposit is that of the Ripley Congregational Church account book 1865-1929. A Winster circuit plan, 1878, came with the Titterton papers.

The trustees of the Staveley charity deposited their first volume of accounts 1678-1718, and a temporary home is being given to the Staveley parish registers in a period of difficulty following a breaking into the church. Horsley Woodhouse Male Friendly Society upon its dissolution deposited its uniforms and equipment in the parish church, and its accounts from 1837-1967 in this office. It was a society of some distinction for its officers claim that it was never registered.

Official deposits and transfers include the records of seventeen schools and four school boards and governors, together with records from fourteen civil parishes. These largely consist of fairly modern minutes. The Spondon records include minutes, accounts, and other papers relating to civil administration from the late 18th century. Chaddesden and Findern have transferred original copies of their inclosure awards, extremely valuable additions to the office's holdings. The Hathersage Petty Sessions minute book 1848-1858 was deposited by the descendant of the justice who generally presided in the court. Its exact status as a private or public record has not yet been decided.

The Clerk of Dronfield Urban District Council has deposited the minute books and other records of the local board of health, urban sanitary district and civil parish councils, together with rating valuations and accounts of his own Council, selected committee minutes and reports 1848-1944. The Inspector of Nuisances journals and report books throw a welcome light on conditions in a then small urban community. Good runs of valuations and accounts show the essential continuity of the successive authorities.

Probably in national terms the most important deposit received in the year is the series of Land Values Duties Act working sheets 1912-1915 transferred by the District Valuers. The record sheets and field memorandum books have been retained by the Board of Inland Revenue and are not available for consultation. They are at some future date to be transferred to the Public Record Office where they will form the corpus of a modern Domesday, taken just before the internal combustion engine changed our way of life. Once these records are available to the public, archivists hope to purchase microfilm copies of the field books for local use. Until then the working sheets alone are available. As these sheets are based on the O.S. 1/2500 series current at the time they are invaluable simply as a set of large-scale printed maps. The deposit followed an earlier most generous gift by the Director General of the Ordnance Survey

of $7\frac{1}{2}$ cwts. of early editions of O.S. 1/2500 and 1/25000. In accordance with the conditions of the gift a single copy of each variant imprint in the collection was kept for the office, and the remainder are being distributed through the very kind co-operation of the County Librarian to public and university libraries with preference given to the County Library's northern regional headquarters at Buxton. A number of early large-scale O.S. sheets were already held by the office drawn from a variety of sources, and further 1st edition sheets were added by Mr. R. Thornhill. The office now holds about a quarter of the O.S. large-scale 1st edition, three-quarters of the 2nd edition and two-thirds of the provisional and subsequent editions. The new O.S. 1/2500 edition is being built up as the basis of the map register of county property.

Talks and exhibitions have been given as usual to historical societies, extramural classes, and social groups. In addition special lectures and exhibitions were given at short courses on Industrial Archaeology, and Sources for Peak District History arranged by the Universities of Nottingham and Manchester, and at a week-end conference in London sponsored jointly by the Historical and the Newman Associations. At the annual conference of the British Records Association Professor B. Crick and I introduced a discussion on the postgraduate student and his needs.