

THE RECORDS OF THE DERBYSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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(Derbyshire Record Office, County Offices, Matlock)

THE records of the Derbyshire Archaeological Society deposited in the Derbyshire Record Office consist of two distinct sections, firstly the business records of the Society — the Society's minutes, accounts, correspondence, reports and publications — and, secondly, the large collection of miscellaneous papers acquired by the Society.

The minute books date from the foundation of the Society in 1878 and are complete up to 1920. The accounts and correspondence on the other hand are intermittent. The earliest correspondence, namely a letter regarding the Society's attitude to the adoption of the name New Mills for Beard, dates from 1885, but it is not until the 20th century that the correspondence is in any way comprehensive. The accounts consist largely of subscription books.

The largest section of the Society's business papers deals with the Society's archaeological activities and in particular with Dr. W. A. Timperley's extensive excavations of prehistoric sites at Oakes Park, Norton, Sheffield, between 1946 and 1957. The progress of these excavations is recorded in a series of fourteen large scrapbooks containing details of finds, notes on the conduct of the excavations and innumerable photographs of the various sites. Yet further detail on this project is added by three cases of 35mm. slides.

In addition to the Oakes Park material there are also papers relating to the Duffield Castle excavations carried out by T. G. Manby in 1957, including an excavation diary, plans of the site and a photograph album. The excavation of a Neolithic long house at Swarkestone and of Roman kilns at Hazelwood are recorded in photographs.

The very large collection of miscellaneous papers contains title deeds, estate papers, printed ephemera, newspaper cuttings, prints, drawings, photographs and maps and plans relating to a wide variety of places over a wide variety of periods. The outstanding material in this section is to be found among the illustrative material and the printed ephemera.

The backbone of the pictorial material is a collection of several hundred small prints and engravings dating from the mid-18th century onwards providing illustrative material on most places of interest in the county

in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Several less well-known prints are included which are not to be found in the standard books of the county. Probably the most interesting item, however, is the book of 55 water-colour sketches of Derbyshire scenery, presented to the Society by the Worshipful A. T. Lawrence, Chancellor of the Diocese of Southwell, in 1926. These were painted in 1785-87 and include important illustrations of industrial developments such as Arkwright's mills at Cromford and Matlock Bath, and the lead smelting cupola at Cromford as well as the more standard views of Dovedale and Matlock. A smaller album of prints and engravings also contains much useful material, including a 1721 plan of the Roman camp at Derwentio (Little Chester) and little-known illustrations of Smisby, Brailsford and Allestree churches and Ogston and Doveridge Halls.

The more recent photographic material includes photographs of several buildings of historic interest, including those in which the Society played an active role in preservation (Cromford Bridge Chapel, Wheston Cross) and also buildings threatened with demolition (the Dovecote at Codnor Castle and the canal buildings at Shardlow adjoining the boat-house stables). There is also a scrapbook of photographs of church doorways, compiled by Cecily Jenner, illustrating the various periods of church architecture in Derbyshire.

The printed ephemera cover a wide range of subjects and are difficult to categorize. Most of the documents date from the late 18th and 19th centuries and there are many things of considerable interest. One of the larger groups of papers relates to political subjects and includes 19th-century satirical posters and a number of mid 19th-century election addresses. There is also material dating from the time of the Reform Bill, including a letter by Joseph Strutt pledging his support for the reforms. The agricultural papers include a good series of early 19th-century stud advertisements, stating the time and date on which a particular stallion will be in a given locality. The items relating to charities include several early reports of the Derbyshire General Infirmary (1811-23) as well as a handbill advertising the "City of London Truss Society for the relief of the Ruptured Poor" (c. 1830). The ecclesiastical material largely consists of appeals for money for the building of new vicarages in the mid-19th century. There is also a certain amount of theatrical material, including notices of concerts by celebrated entertainers and musicians locally, including an appearance by a ventriloquist, Mr. Flemmington, at Ashby in 1831.

The collection of miscellaneous title deeds and estate papers is extremely assorted with only very small groups relating to a single property or area. The earliest deed is a 1561 bargain and sale of a rent issuing from the manor of Cotton (Coton-in-the-Elms). Of the later deeds small groups relating to properties in Norton and Alderwasley provide a certain amount of useful topographical detail.

The estate papers are generally more interesting. There are several copies of medieval deeds dating from the 13th century and a number of

early leases of property in the Derby area (Spondon, Chaddesden, Locko). One of the more unusual items is a Chaddesden manor court-roll dating from the short reign of Edward V (1483). A survey of the estate of the Rev. E. Meymott in Derbyshire in 1736 provides a considerable amount of detail on the open fields in Alvaston, Aston and Chellaston, while there is also a small group of interesting terriers and surveys of Pinxton in the early 18th century. In addition, there are some informative 19th-century estate surveys relating to the Goodale estate in Normanton, Littleover, Litchurch and Chellaston.

The collection of maps and plans contains examples of most of the standard early maps of the county from Speed's map of 1610 through to Burdett's excellent one-inch map of 1792. The most unusual item is a later copy, probably 18th century, of an early topographical map of the county. There are also several Ordnance Survey first edition geology maps of parts of Derbyshire and North Wales.