

## **House History**

### **Sources in the Devon Heritage Centre, Exeter**

This guide gives information on the sources available at Devon Heritage Centre for researching the history of houses in Devon. It is not intended to be a guide on how to carry out such research, though several useful printed and on-line guides are listed below.

For small properties it is rare to find documents which give details of construction of buildings, and their age can usually be assessed only by reference to architectural features. This requires the services of an architectural or buildings historian. Ownership however can often be traced back to 1780, and sometimes further, using documents available at Devon Heritage Centre. Following is a summary of the sources available. The printed references and periodicals listed are generally available in the Local Studies Collection in Devon Heritage Centre, Exeter. There is an on-line library catalogue for the local studies holdings in Devon libraries which includes those in in the Local Studies Collection at the Heritage Centre.

### **Printed**

#### **General**

*Tracing the History of Your House*, Nick Barratt, The National Archives (2001) [ISBN: 1903365228]

*Discovering your old house*, David Iredale and John Barrett, 3rd edition (1991, reprinted 1997),

*Tracing the History of Houses*, Bill Breckon & Jeffrey Parker, Countryside, (1st edition 1991, reprinted 1996)

*Place Names of Devon*, J.E.B. Gover, A. Mawer, F.M. Stenton, eds. English Place-Names Society, Vol. IX. Available for reference in the Devon Heritage Centre search-room.

*Sources for the History of Houses*, John H. Harvey. British Records Association, Archives and the User series, No. 3, 1974 Available for reference in the Devon Heritage Centre. [ref: LS:728.07/GEN ]

#### **County Histories**

*Collections towards a Description of the County of Devon*, Sir W. Pole (1791)

*The History of Devonshire*, R. Polwhele (1797)

*Magna Britannia*, D. and S. Lysons (1822)

*Monasticon Dioecesis Exoniensis*, G. Oliver (1846) (covering monastic lands)

#### **Directories (Devon)**

White 1850, 1878; Billing 1857; Morris 1870; Kelly 1866, 1883, 1889, 1893, 1897, 1902, 1906, 1910, 1919, 1923, 1926, 1930, 1935, 1939.

#### **Directories (Exeter)**

Mortimer 1875; Besley 1923-1955; Kelly 1956-1971.

## **Periodicals**

Transactions of the Devonshire Association

Devon and Cornwall Notes and Queries

Devon Historian

Copies of these journals , as well as a wider range of publications can be found in the Devon Heritage Centre.

## **Documentary**

### **Maps (Devon)**

These include Ordnance Survey maps [6" and 25" to 1 mile], first edition [1886-9] and second edition [1904-6], and some later editions. Devon Heritage Centre holds incomplete series of these maps in paper format.

Microfiche of the complete set of First and Second Edition 25" maps are available in the Westcountry Studies Library. They also hold a large number of later OS maps. For a list of their major map series see the Local Studies web-page. The library also runs MapView, computer software which enables the viewing of recent large-scale digital mapping of Devon.

Tithe maps [1837-1847] of most Devon parishes, together with their apportionments give names of owners and occupiers, property and field names, acreage, and state of cultivation.

Inclosure awards cover a negligible area for Devon. There is a list in the Devon Heritage Centre search-room, of those which we hold .

There is a maps and plans card index (part of the subject card index) in the Devon Heritage Centre search-room, which indexes other historic maps deposited in private collections.

### **Maps (Exeter)**

Ordnance Survey sheets, 10" to 1 mile [1891] for Exeter are held in Devon Heritage Centre as well as microfiche copies.

We also hold a Map of Exeter [1840] and valuation [1838], made for the Improvement Commissioners.

Earlier smaller scale maps of Exeter are also held in both repositories.

### **Electoral Registers**

Electoral registers have been compiled since the 1832 Reform Act and survive from that date [Exeter 1843] in Devon Heritage Centre. All 19th century registers have been microfilmed and can also be consulted on fiche in North Devon Record Office and Plymouth and West Devon Record Office.

Poll books, which indicate the way individuals voted and were intended to prevent corrupt practices, appeared between about 1695 and 1872 when the secret ballot was introduced . They occasionally reached printed form, for example for the Exeter election of 1818 when it was printed by R.Cullum with the Addresses, speeches, squibs, songs &c which were circulated during the recent election. Relatively few poll books survive for Devon in libraries and record offices. Those that do are listed in Poll books c1696-1772 by J.Gibson (3rd ed, 1994). They provide names and addresses of voters.

An incomplete series of electoral registers for Devon dating from 1951 and a complete series for Exeter dating from 1950 to 2000, are also available at Devon Heritage Centre.

NB: before 1928 the vote was limited to men possessing certain property qualifications.

### **Tax Assessments (Devon)**

Land Tax, 1780-1832: annual returns for each parish give names of owners and occupiers with the properties concerned.

Hearth Tax, 1662-1688: these returns are of limited use since names of properties are not given and they survive in the Heritage Centre for only a few parishes.

Most original Hearth Tax returns are found in The National Archives. The most complete return for Devon is for Ladyday 1674 and this was transcribed and published by T. L. Stoate in 1982. Copies of this publication are available in the Devon Heritage Centre search-room. There is also a microfilm of assessments for the whole county in Devon Heritage Centre.

### **Tax Assessments (Exeter)**

There are assessments for various taxes levied in the City, beginning in 1489.

### **Enrolled Deeds (Devon)**

Deeds of bargain and sale were enrolled with the Clerk of the Peace, 1536-1763. There is a typescript calendar and index in the search-room.

### **Enrolled Deeds (Exeter)**

Deeds of bargain and sale were enrolled from 1536 and the rolls are found in the Exeter City Archives collection (ref: ECA Misc. Rolls 22-24) There is also a series of deeds enrolled on the Mayor's Court Rolls, 1264-1701. Both series are calendared (listed).

### **Exeter Deeds**

The collection of deeds of City Council properties are found in the Exeter City Archives collection (refs: ECA D1 onwards, and 5200 C) and can be useful for tracing properties in the centre of Exeter.

### **Rate Books (Devon)**

These can be found relating to church and poor rates in parish record deposits, and as poor, district and water rate books amongst the deposited records of local authorities in Devon from the mid- 19th century onwards.

### **Exeter Rate Books**

The continuous series of City rate books are found in the Exeter City Archives collection (ref: ECA). The series begins in 1869, and some earlier rates exist.

Private and Parish Deposits

These often contain deeds, surveys, sale particulars, rate books, and other material which can be useful in tracing property. The archivists can advise on collections which have been deposited, and their contents.

### **Supplementary**

Listed below are classes of records which relate to houses used for special purposes:-

#### **Parsonage Houses**

Glebe Terriers: an 18th century terrier usually contains detailed description of the parsonage house. Held among the records of the Diocese of Exeter.

Papers relating to the rebuilding of parsonage houses, 18th-19th centuries, held among the records of the Diocese of Exeter.

Papers relating to parsonage houses, 20th century. Held among the records of the Diocese of Exeter, and kept at Devon Heritage Centre.

Papers relating to former parsonage houses, deposited by the Church Commissioners (ref: DRO 382).

### **Parish records.**

#### **Toll Houses**

Details about toll houses can often be found among the records of the turnpike trusts, viz:  
Plans deposited with the Clerk of the Peace, among the County Quarter Sessions records  
Deeds of Turnpike Trusts, among the County Quarter Sessions records  
Solicitors' collections (a solicitor frequently acted as secretary of the trust).

#### **Schoolmasters' Houses**

School deposits sometimes contain deeds and papers relating to the schoolmaster's house. Lists of collections deposited by Devon schools are available in the Devon Heritage Centre search-room. School collections for schools in North Devon and the Plymouth area are held at North Devon Record Office and Plymouth and West Devon Record Office respectively, and they have lists of the collections they hold.

Plans of schools are found in the Board of Education, School Board Division, School plans collection. Some plans include the house (ref: DRO 1473).

#### **Public Houses**

Parish deposits occasionally include documents relating to the church house, which in a number of cases later became the inn.

Victuallers' returns and recognizances, 1607-1828, and Registers, 1759-1903, are found in the County Quarter Sessions records. The earlier records do not give the name of the inn.

Whitbreads PLC, Brewers: some collections relating to Devon have been recently deposited at Devon Heritage Centre [refs. DRO 5215B; 6114B; 6114 B add/] and at Plymouth and West Devon Record Office [ref. PWDRO 2012].

Collection 5215B at Devon Heritage Centre includes architectural plans of alterations to public houses, 1960-1990, given to the office in 1994 by Whitbreads of Tiverton. The collection is catalogued and available for research.

Collection 6114B and 6114B add/ at Devon Record Office include inventories of licenced premises, 1913-1956; correspondence relating to buildings and repairs, 1933-1960; notes, ephemera, photographs and newspaper cuttings of licensed premises and public houses; public house plans album; other plans, c.1930-1990; deeds and documents, 1680-19th century. The collection is not catalogued and is not yet available for research.

Collection 2012 at Plymouth and West Devon Heritage Centre contains 20th century plans of licensed premises, and is catalogued. For more information contact Plymouth and West Devon Record Office.

Devon Heritage Centre  
Great Moor House  
Bittern Road  
Exeter  
EX2 7NL

01392 888700

[devonarchives@swheritage.org.uk](mailto:devonarchives@swheritage.org.uk)

Website: [www.swheritage.org.uk/devon-archives](http://www.swheritage.org.uk/devon-archives)

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