

DHRGHist91 -3 **History of the Dartmouth History Research Group**
1991-3

The first meeting which led to the formation of the DHRG was held in Dartmouth Museum in the evening of October 1st 1991, attended by Ray Freeman (who had called it), Irene O'Shea, Jerry and Rhona Coats, Joan Peel, Harold Hutchins, Wendy Perrin, and Ivor and Pam Smart. Ray's main idea, which she put to the meeting, was that when speakers had given talks about the history of Dartmouth to the Museum Society they should be asked to donate the script to the Museum, since it often contained valuable information which should be preserved for the future. She had in mind that it might be possible to photocopy these scripts and possibly sell them at cost to anyone interested. Ivor Smart had himself written short articles which he was anxious to publish, and, supporting this idea, asked his wife Pam to drive him to the meeting since he was unable to drive. Irene O'Shea had only recently moved to Dartmouth, in 1989, and as a history graduate soon joined the Museum and wanted to play an active part in this work. Ray had prepared a paper of ideas for discussion at this first meeting. These included encouraging anyone interested to do research at the Devon Record Office, to record memories of old people or collect old photographs. Exhibitions might also be organised at the Museum.

In the discussion which followed, these ideas were generally supported by those present. It was agreed that the Group would be associated with the Museum but would remain financially independent of it. As the Museum already arranged lectures on historical subjects during the winter months it was never our intention to do this, as some History societies would. Instead we decided to concentrate on research, and to make material about the history of Dartmouth available to the general public.

Irene O'Shea suggested that those present should contribute £5 each to a fund to start the group off and pay for any printing costs etc. This was agreed, and no further payments have been asked for from the Group.

As well as the articles already written by Ivor Smart there were several other articles already in existence: one by Ray, already published by the Devon History Society was available as a leaflet "The Holdsworth and Newman Families in Dartmouth"; one by Giles Keane on the History of the hospital; and another by Ursula Dimes on Oldstone Manor, Blackawton, which needed to be shortened.

Jerry Coats, the first person to already have a computer, became one of the most active members of the group. He not only transferred typed transcripts of possible booklets onto his computer, but set them up with illustrations ready for printing. He dealt with publicity, negotiated with printers, took drafts to the printers and fetched them back. He helped to set up exhibitions. For several years, until he left the town to move to London, he was indispensable.

There was already much to do. At the end of this meeting Ray agreed to be Chairman, and Irene to type the first minutes. By the time of the second meeting Ivor had supplied printed copies of his article "The Dartmouth Residences of Thomas Newcomen and his Family." Dr. Keane had given Jerry a revised version of his History of the Hospital. Tony Higgins was working on a paper about the Free French Forces in Kingswear during the war. Ivor had two more papers ready for publication. Ray was working on a booklet on Brownstone Farm, as well as one on Warfleet Creek. There was no shortage of subjects.

Father Chris Smith joined the Group and offered the use of his parish room for meetings. We could also use his photocopier to reproduce some of the booklets. Other new members were Mike Emms and Jan Barlow. Harold Hutchins had resigned, owing to pressure of work, but offered his help with photographs when needed.

By November 1992 we were recommended to use Ivybridge Community College to print our booklets, as they were willing to do this. This saved our members a lot of work. Deryck Arnall was

arranging for microfiches of the Parish Records to be put in the public library in Newcomen Road.

In Feb. 1993 the Free French booklet was the first to be printed by Ivybridge Community college, for £43.35 for 250 copies. At first we had thought to sell booklets for £1, thinking the cheaper the better, but since we had to give many away, and then pay commission to shops selling them, the price had to go up. Shops preferred higher prices with higher commissions.

In March we were still meeting in the Museum and Wanda Manktelow joined us. She is American, and returns there from time to time. She offered to ask in American newspapers for memories from U.S. forces who had been in Dartmouth before setting off for D-Day in 1944. This proved most rewarding, and information flooded in.

By September, we had agreed to help the Museum put on an exhibition in 1994 for the 50th anniversary of D-Day. There was scope for more booklets on this coming event. Information from WRENs was building up to make a booklet on their memories possible for 1994, and perhaps another about the bombing of Dartmouth in 1943-4.

Ray had written a history of the Castle Hotel, nearly ready for publication, and Ivor Smart's articles on Newcomen Memorials and on the Dartmouth Millpond were also ready.

Roy Jones, who had a large collection of slides of old Dartmouth, died, and the Museum at first refused to buy them. Ray stepped in and bought them for £500 to prevent them being lost to someone else, and eventually the Museum did buy them from her. There were 987 slides, which she listed and catalogued.

In November 1993 we gained a new member hi Evan Davies, History lecturer and Archivist at BRNC, who will be working with us on our booklets on D-Day memories.

Our funds from sales now stood at £400, but we realised that the D-Day and WREN booklets would have to be printed more expensively and began looking for funds to pay for this.

Ray had had to stay with her an American, Chris Buchanan, who is in charge of making a film of the D-Day preparations, including the evacuation of the S. Hams. She gave him a guided tour of the area involved and arranged a tea party at the Castle Hotel to meet and tape locals directly involved.

A collection of D-Day photos now turned up, found in a house in Slapton. Ray was also in contact with a Dr. Green, a medic at D-Day who was a witness at the disastrous Exercise Tiger just before the landing forces left. Wanda reported much information gleaned on her recent U.S. visit including a diary kept by Werner Kleeman.

By December 1993 the main work of the group was in collecting information from all sources about D-Day preparations, including local memories, diaries & letters from WRNS, and an account by John Keffer a naval with the US forces on D-Day. It was felt that with expected visits by US veterans a larger print run than usual would pay, and it would be done in A4 not A5, but we were still looking for funds to finance this.

In January 1994 Ray had prepared the text of "We Remember D-Day", and Tozers had given us a price of £2,000 for 2,500 copies. Selling price - £1.80? How can we pay for this? Ray's booklet on WRENs was also complete, subject to proof-reading.

The main discussion was on "We remember D-Day." Paul Peel had designed a fine cover, which was approved. Offers of loans to finance it were made: £500 each from BRNC and David Freeman, and other offers from Irene O'Shea and Mike Emms. With these plus cash in hand it was agreed to

print £2,000 to sell at £2.25.

The Warfleet booklet has been reprinted, 200 copies, with improved pictures. Tony Aylmer's booklet on Wrecks has now been printed, also at Ivybridge. Ivor Smart's article on the Mill Pool was to be set up as another booklet. Ursula Dimes booklet on Oldstone had been printed.

The Group also agreed to help set up an exhibition in Dartmouth Museum with help from Dr. Porter, ex-Manchester Museum. Four members were working on screens for this in St. John's Parish Room

At the March meeting Jerry Coats reported that he had registered the Group with an ISBN number which will be printed on all future books starting with the D-Day one.

The financial position had to be regularised by opening our own bank account with Nat. West bank. Four members were appointed signatories: Ray, Jerry, Joan Peel and Father Chris. Two were needed to sign cheques withdrawing funds. Ray had now £521.25 in her account, which she transferred to this account, and £30 in cash. No bank charges were envisaged. It was agreed to appoint a treasurer at the next meeting.

Tozers were now printing D-Day. There were extra costs for using heavier paper. A retail price of £2.50 was agreed. Payment would not have to be made for printing until it was finished. The loan promised from BRNC was in fact to be made by Even Davies himself. There was now a problem of storage: Father Chris agreed some copies could be stored at his house.

Cash was now coming in from sales of the first 500 D-Day booklets. Jerry reported we would break even on the sale of 1000 copies. It was agreed to print 1000 of the WRENs booklet, to sell at the same price as D-Day.

By the beginning of 1994, less than three years after the group was formed, we had ten booklets in print: 1. Holdsworths & Newmans 2. Dartmouth Hospital 3. Newcomen Residences 4. Brownstone 5. Guildhalls 6. Free French 7. Newcomen Memorials 8. Warfleet 9. Oldstone 10. Wrecks.

DHRGHist94

DARTMOUTH HISTORY RESEARCH GROUP 1994

This year was to be exceptionally busy as the 50th anniversary of D-Day was coming up and we were producing two A4 size booklets to go with it, to be printed by Tozer. We were also working on an exhibition to be shown in the Museum. As well as the ten A5 booklets already in print, the Millpond booklet was being printed by Ivybridge and the Free French one by them, Tozer's bill was paid. Jerry broadcast on Radio Devon to publicise the Exhibition. The Guildhalls booklet was reprinted with 100 copies on Father Chris's photocopier. The steam railway was running special trips to Dartmouth for the D-Day celebrations, and Jerry and others travelled on them selling our booklets very successfully.

We had considered publishing a booklet on Liwenthals glider, but this was done by a Dittisham group so we did not.

Our sales had been so successful that the loans were repaid to those who had lent them.

We had approached Dartmouth Council to put up a plaque on a wall in Dartmouth to commemorate the MGBs and MTBs who had left from there in 1943-4, but they did not reply, so we approached Kingswear. They were pleased to put one by the Lower Ferry Slip, so this was agreed.

Volunteers were busy recording memories of wartime experiences, in Dartmouth and wherever people now living in Dartmouth were then. This provided material for another book, with information from Finland, Burma, Hospital ships, Japanese prisoners of war and much more.

Jerry had set up in print a booklet by Hubert Snowdon on his life on a farm, but he preferred to publish it himself at a higher price.

Deryck had received from the Public Record Office a microfiche of the 1891 Census. He also had arranged for Dartmouth parish registers to be taken to the Devon Record Office to be copied onto microfiches.

Jerry had arranged for press releases in the Herald Express, Western Morning News and Navy News to publicise our books, as well as the WRENs Association, to boost sales. We now had a problem in storing our stock of unsold books, for the moment held in Father Smith's parish room.

DHRGHist95

History of the Dartmouth History Research Group 1995

We agreed to pay the D.R.O. £1 each for M/fiche copies of the parish registers, a total of £107. Screens for the exhibition were collected from Taunton by Jerry. They would cover the whole war, not just the events of 1944.

Robert Franks, who had contributed to our Memories of War, now joined our Group, with John Craddock Turnbull. Also Michael Toms of Blackawton. Jim Riley of Totnes is doing line drawings which reproduce better than photos in some booklets.

Memories of War booklet inside pages to be printed by Ivybridge, but outside cover by a different printer in Ivybridge, with stronger card. Cover approved by Group. Cost £412 in all.

Microfiches of the parish registers were handed to the Library on April 10th, with the Chronicle photographer there to give publicity about this and all the other material already deposited.

Castle Hotel booklet now printed. 100 sold to Hotel to be put in each bedroom, others for sale in Hotel. Ray now has a computer, so material can now be passed round to other computer owners.

Memories of War booklet printed, launched at Museum on 5th May, with drink and nibbles provided. Many given away free to Mayor and Councillors, invited to attend.

Our members are taking turns to sit with the Bidder exhibition in Flavel Hall. Ray is receiving information about the Scale family from Richard Seale in Cambridge, and is starting to file it.

It was agreed to order a copy of the 1861 Census for Dartmouth.

The National Trust was doing little to clear the 17C fortifications at Gallants Bower, and we should write to them about this.

We are asking for information on the Archaeology of the 2nd World War from people in Dartmouth, Kingswear and other villages.

We have been sent some researches by Mr. Sampson, former lecturer at Naval College, about the history of Dartmouth, including comments on an early map of DARTMOUTH. Details of this have been sent to Chris Henderson who is doing an archaeological dig at Mayors Avenue.

Dave Griffith's booklet on Dart Pilotage is now on sale for £1, but a mistake on one page had to be

corrected by cut and paste by our members. He was not pleased with the pictures in it, but had seen proofs of them before printing.

The exhibition on war memories in Museum is now being dismantled. The Museum have now acquired some screens of their own, so we will not have to fetch them from Taunton in future

John Craddock Turnbull has studied the St. Petrox Church booklet and has advised on a revision of the wording, pointing out that the first parish records start at 1652.

Ivor Smart's booklet on Banking and Industry with Jim Riley's line drawings is now printed in A4 size, in 200 copies. It took 70 pages and is for sale at £2.50. It was decided in future only to do A5 size booklets.

Deryck has lent us his portable microfiche reader and it was decided to use it to transcribe the whole of the 1861 census, our members taking turns with it. The aim was to put bound volumes in the Library for people doing family history research. It was warned that eye strain could result if used for more than one or two hours at a stretch! Jan Barwick has begun to put this census onto her computer, so that it could be arranged in different ways.

List of booklets published by the Group in 1994-5:

11. We Remember D-Day 12. A Wrens Eye View. 13. DARTMOUTH Millpond 14. Castle Hotel
15. Newcomen Road 16. Memories of War 17. River Dart Pilotage 18. Industry and Banking.

DHRGHist96 History of the Dartmouth History Research Group 1996 Summary

In 1996 the Group gained a new member, Trevor Miles, archaeologist, who lives in Kingswear. He is working on parishes on the east side of the Dart, south from Totnes.

Ivor Smart is working from home on various articles which we could not publish, which were put into a series of the Maritime History's monthly booklets. Ivor's big booklet, in A4 size, Industry and Banking, cost £289 to set up. A hundred were printed, and by the end of the year 30 had been sold. Sadly, at the end of 1996 Ivor died, leaving many of his writings too long for our group to publish.

One booklet, Operation Farhenheit published by the end of 1996, has a most interesting history. Capt. Robert Franks was on duty in the Museum one day when a Frenchman, Michel Gouillou, appeared with this book, written hi French. It was eventually translated, partly by Robert's grandson, and it was agreed that instead of paying Gouillou royalties we should give him books on the commando raids on the French coast, including some sent to us from Australia by Lloyd Bott. Robert Franks took these heavy books over to France in his boat in July, and handed them in person to Gouillou. He saw the beaches where the commando raids landed. The first draft of the booklet had to be revised as the boats concerned had been mistakenly called MGBs when they were MTBs. Jim Riley did a line drawing for the cover as there were no photos, and it came out as our no. 20.

Ray Freeman. and Margaret Bridges copied the 1861 Dartmouth. Census by hand, using Deryck Arnall's microfiche reader which he has left with us after he moved. Jan Barwick is putting it onto her computer, working on a database.

Ray has typed and Jerry has set up Hubert Snowdon's booklet about his first 15 years on a farm, but he thought we were selling it far too cheaply at £2. He decided to publish it himself, selling at £3.95, so it never became one of our booklets.

Much work over the year went on listing graves and memorials on the walls of all the churches in

Dartmouth, Kingswear and Blackawton. These also were placed in the Library, as were copies of Voters' Lists.

Tony and Margaret Blackman, who have been very helpful in setting material onto computers for us, have now moved to Honiton, but say they are still willing to help from there.

Two of St. Clements' parish registers were omitted at first, but have now been taken to Exeter to be copied onto m/fiches, where they will be joined up with the original set.

Ray and Jerry have re-written the Museum leaflet, which is being printed at Ivybridge. Ray is giving a slide talk at the Museum using D-Day slides.

Margaret Bridges is helping Fr. Smith to research the Catholic Archives. At the moment stores of our unsold books are being held in Fr. Smith's parish room, but it looks as if there may be a problem of storage later on. There are large numbers of WRENs booklets unsold, so they are being offered to the WRENs Association at a reduced price.

Reprints of some early booklets were agreed: Nos. 1. Holdsworth & Newman, 100. 2. Hospital, 100. 8. Warfleet-200. 10. Wrecks-200. 13. Millpond-200.

Peter Wyatt had been hoping to write up the story of his wife Monique, who had recently died, and her wartime adventures. Sadly, Peter too has died so this was never done.

Jan Barwick has written an article on Lime Kilns, to be printed in Jan. 1998. We need to campaign to preserve these kilns before they are demolished.

Deryck Arnall has sent a guide to Dartmouth parish records held on m/fiches. We need to get copies of non-conformist registers to add to the existing parish registers.

Ray has sold to the Scale family her set of documents about them, but has kept transcripts of all of them. She is now in touch with Richard Seale in Cambridge who is sending her transcripts of other documents he has there. This set of files continues to grow!

Ray has sent copies of much material about the Dartmouths connection with the Newfoundland trade to a History Group there based in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and has had a grateful letter back.

By the end of 1996 our bklt. 19 on Sir Thomas Wilton, written by his grandson, was published. Jim Riley did a front cover for it showing the family coat of arms. Jerry did a write-up about it for the Chronicle.

In November we had a formal handover in the Library., with full press publicity, of a large number of historical documents, including a typed transcript of the 1861 Census done by Jan Barwick, and a thick file provided by the Devon Schools Library Service. A good photo shows those attending were Peter Botrill the Area Librarian, Jerry Coats, Robert Franks, Ray F. and Roger Flower, recently appointed Vicar.

We were now looking at more work for the future. Ray has started on the 1891 Census, using Deryck's reader. Material exists for a booklet on ferry crossings of the Dart, with contributions from Jan Cowling's father. Bob Harvey is looking for material on the history of Lower Clyston Farm where he lives.

One long term project for this year was to transcribe the 1891 Census for Dartmouth., Kingswear and Dittisham, using Deryck Arnall's reader which he has lent us. This was nearly completed by the end of the year, up to the list of ships in the harbour. Meanwhile Jan Barwick was putting the completed sections onto her computer.

Booklets: By the end of 1996 No. 19, "Sir Thomas Wilton" written by his grandson was published. Jim Riley did a front cover for it showing his family coat of arms. Jerry did a write-up about it for the Chronicle. "Operation Fahrenheit", with corrections, came out by the end of the year, printed by Tozer and selling at £2. Irene's booklet "Wadstray House", our no. 21, came out in July, and 200 copies were immediately sold to the owners, so covering the printing costs. The "Dittisham Boy's Story" text was printed at Ivybridge, but they had decided to double their prices in future so it is unlikely we will use them again. The photos were done by Tozer. By October it was on sale for £2.50, our no. 22, and was selling well in the village. Lloyd Bott's booklet. "The Secret War from the Dart," our no. 23, came out in December, priced £3. The author has sent us money to cover the costs, and to post copies to people in Australia.

The Group wrote to the South Hams to urge them to keep on supporting the Museums Development Officer, Nicki Jarvis, and they agreed to do so for a period of three years, showing we have some influence.

Terry Edwards is writing "Hawley's Fortalice," of which English Heritage have agreed to buy 1000 copies.

In June the Group visited Godmerock fort in Kingswear and were shown round it.

Dartmouth Museum has been discussing the possibility of renting the flat above it, to incorporate the Henley Collection into their own. The Town Council promised them the first refusal if it became vacant.

Ray has received a most interesting inventory of the Castle Hotel dated 1792, sent by the Modbury History Society, which needs to be incorporated into her existing booklet on the hotel.

In October we welcomed as a new member Jan Cowling, the first born and bred Dartmothian to join us, who will be most useful with his local knowledge. He is compiling a list of shops and trades in the town.

Showing how useful he is already, Jan C. has produced a magazine rack for showing our booklets when we want to sell them at exhibitions etc. He has also acquired old deeds of Cranfords restaurant going back to the 18C, which Ray will type out and give copies to the Museum.

The set of deeds found at Cullompton have been transcribed by Ray, the originals given to the owners of the Summerlands house described in them, and copies put in the Museum. Ray has also transcribed deeds of Bayards Restaurant, copies to the Museum.

Ray reports that the History of St. Saviour's by Back was handwritten on documents on the reverse side of which was material just as interesting as what he wrote. She suggests we acquire the original from Mr. Parr Ferris who owns it and put it in the Museum or Library.

This year we received many queries about family History research and acquired more copies of deeds, documents etc. which we have added to material stored in the Library and/or Museum. More new booklets were published during the year, and some reprinted.

Terry Edwards' "Hawley's Fortalice," our bkl't 24, was published in July, of which English Heritage paid for 1000 copies and our Group paid for a further 500. A revised version of the "Castle Hotel," our no. 25, came out, priced at £3, of which Nigel Way agreed to buy 200 to put in rooms in the hotel. It was agreed to print 500 copies of Linda King's booklet "William Veale," no. 26. Brixham Museum have typed out a bkl't. on "Torbay Paintworks" which they suggest we publish, but we have asked them if they would be willing to contribute half the cost of it. A reprint of "Operation Fahrenheit" with 300 copies was agreed, subject to the agreement of Michel Guillou.

The material about the Hoo Down golf courses was considered, but it was decided that there was not quite enough of it to form a booklet on its own, though it might be added to other Kingswear documents.

The Town Council withdrew their offer of giving Dartmouth Museum first refusal on the flats above the Museum, in which it had been hoped the Henley Collection might be put along with an expansion of the Museum's collection. They were told they could apply again in six months.

The Henley Museum opened late this summer because the toilets had to be renewed. Maurice Riddihaugh's history of the three museums has been put in the Henley.

The problem of disabled access to Dartmouth Museum was raised, because of the steep winding stairs approach. It was pointed out that despite this DARTMOUTH. Museum had 10,000 visits a year, more than Totnes, 8,000, and Brixham, 6,000. Ray organised an exhibition in the Museum Lewis Stock Room on World War Two in Dartmouth. Irene had provided a series of activities for children, with a model of the stocks and a board for practising knots, as well as a treasure trail and "Dartmouth Then and Now." All this had brought in a lot of visitors. The Museum now has a computer and scanner.

The last microfiches of St. Saviour's parish registers were handed over to the Library in a public ceremony with press photographs and publicity in the Chronicle and Herald Express.

Our members were told that they could use the Search Room in the Devon Record Office free if they took a certificate of membership of the group with them.

In May a party from Kittery, Maine, arrived to visit Kingswear, and unfortunately underestimated the time to drive from London, came to Dartmouth not Kingswear, so were too late for lunch and had very little time to see anything.

Ray talked to a group from the National Trust about Gallants Bower, pointing out how the fortifications were being destroyed by the trees, which needed to be cut down. The Trust has now brought out a booklet on the site. Caroline Fay whose house backed onto it has lent for copying a map of the land owned by her grandfather.

Work continued all year on various possible booklets: Ferries across the Dart; a history of the Museums of DARTMOUTH; Operation Ambassador; Emigrants to the New World from Dartmouth; Millennium bkl't on Christianity in DARTMOUTH.

It was agreed that we needed to work harder to sell our booklets. We should send copies for review to the Devon History Society, and the Family History Society.

We have had enquiries re the Queen's Hotel from someone whose relative once ran it, and thanks from him when we answered his letter. Similar queries were received from the Hutchins, Dottin and

Rees families, Joan Peel has produced a tree of the Vavasour family, in reply to a query. Another query concerned an allegation of witchcraft against a Dartmouth family, Trevisard,

Rev. Roger Flower has sent us a list of St. Petrox burial plots, copies of which will be added to those of other churches already in the Library and Museum.

Don Collinson's book on 150 years of the Dartmouth Chronicle is to be published by Richard Webb.

New members: Derek Blackhurst of Salcombe has info, on DARTMOUTH. shipyards; John Sidders, draughtsman and engineer. Ken Wootton offered to be sales co-ordinator and will visit shops in Torbay to try to sell our booklets. Robert Franks has volunteered to become the Treasurer of the Group.

DHRGHist99

History of the Dartmouth History Research Group. 1999

Trevor Miles led a discussion about how we should move forward, and suggested we should be putting our documents onto the Web, as he had started doing with the area from Littlehempston to Kingswear on the east side of the Dart, listing every inhabitant. It is clear that a major problem for the group was how to share and to organise information as more people acquired their own computers. We need more skills in computer management and decisions needed to be taken about how much could be stored.

The booklet on William Veale by Linda King was published in February, and 50 copies were sent to the author. New copies of Operation Fahrenheit have been printed, with the permission of Michel Guillou, who is planning to visit Dartmouth this summer. The Secret War has also been reprinted, but old copies must be sold off before this superior version is put on the market. A new version of the Hospital booklet is to be produced, and the old stock sold to the Hospital.

Ray hosted a cream tea party at her home for Michel Guillou on his visit to Dartmouth in May, also attended by Mme Espinasse a Swiss lady who lives in Dartmouth who had helped with the translation of Operation Fahrenheit.

One of our members Shirley Anderson, of Cheltenham, whose ancestors were involved in the trade has visited Newfoundland and Labrador, and sent us useful leaflets concerning Dartmouth merchants involved there.

The Museum is preparing an exhibition on Shipbuilding in Dartmouth, being put together in Father Smith's Parish Hall. Our group paid for the last one, and we think the Museum should pay for this one as it brings in visitors to them.

We have been asked for suggestions for sites for Blue Badges, on sites of famous Dartmouth people e.g. Newcomen, Bidder, Flora Thompson, C.R. Milne. Ray has drafted the wording for plaques for each of these. However, as the existing one for Newcomen did not need replacing it was suggested that an additional one should be made for Flavel, to be put on the site of his church.

Burials have been found by archaeologists in the Garden of Remembrance by St. Petrox.

The DARTMOUTH Chronicle has agreed to publish regular articles on DARTMOUTH. history to be produced by our group. Jan Cowling has volunteered to write the first one, which came out in October and aroused a lot of interest. Two more articles by others are ready to follow on.

In November Derek Blackhurst's history of Philip's Shipyard was published, 500 copies, selling at £21, with 500 photos. He is having a dispute over the copyright of some of these photos. He has built us a small bookstand, for use on a counter top when we are selling our books, for which we are very grateful.

Oliver Benn's Book, British Towns, was also published at the same time, price £30, also full of photos. It featured 15 towns, of which Dartmouth was one of three ports, with some very interesting photos, and Ray had written the introduction for this.

Geoffrey Newman has asked for our help to provide the wording for an information board on Blackpool Sands, concerning both the battle there in 1404 and its use during the 2nd World War. concerning both the battle We have sent him our suggestions for this.

The 1891 Census for Dartmouth has finally been transcribed, including ships on the Dart and people on "Britannia," and is being put onto a computer by Jan Barwick. However, Jan is now going to work full time for Devon Life so will not have time to come to our meetings.

Ray has written to the Masons correcting their claim that there was a monastery in the 13C on the site of their Hawley Lodge meeting place. She explained how the surviving documents showed their building would have been under water at that time.

We have received trees of the Rees family, and have had queries about the Withall family, and the history of houses: Undercliff and Alcyone. Deeds of Cranford's restaurant have been transcribed and put in the Library. We have sent out letters asking for details of all local lime kilns, hoping to prevent them from being demolished. For the same reason, we have been asked to provide a list of local watermills.

We are making enquiries about who has E.H. Back's History of St. Saviour's, which is hand written, with very interesting information on the back of the large sheets about plumbing etc. It would be good to have this preserved in the Library rather than in private hands.

DHRGHistOO

History of the Dartmouth History Research Group.

2000

Much *effort* was devoted to planning and writing monthly articles for the DARTMOUTH Chronicle. These included, Feb. Ray on Lidstone's Boathouse, to coincide with the 99th birthday of Miss Lidstone. March, Robert Franks on his rescue of a Hurricane Pilot in his ship H.M.S. Scimitar. April, Mike Emms on 150 years in Kingswear. Jan Cowling on Fairfax Place. Jackie Wallace on the Royal Avenue Gardens. Irene O'Shea on Wadstray House. Ray on a stay at the Castle Hotel in 1880 on a visit by Kinfauns Castle. Terry Edwards on St. Petrox Church. D. Stranack, a new member, on a comparison of DARTMOUTH. England and DARTMOUTH. Nova Scotia. Robert Franks also wrote on 18C privateers in DARTMOUTH. Fred Jenkins on the Finesse story.

In March, "The Torbay Paintworks" was published, 700 copies costing £700, selling for £3. Brixham Museum paid for 300 copies, which they collected for sale there. Astra Zenica, who formed part of the Brixham Research Station, had agreed to donate £100 towards the cost of it. The author, Bridget Howard, was to give a talk to the Friends of Dartmouth Museum.

Angela White, museums designer, was working on the Museum Millennium exhibition, due to open there at Easter, The Museum is trying to raise £10,000 to restore and display in a suitable case three original 19C Holdsworth family costumes. Our Group agreed to contribute £100 towards this.

There was a discussion about how to sell off our stock of 3,000 books, now kept in Father Smith's room.

The 1891 Census, with index, on which our members had worked for four years, was finally ready, both as typed copy and on disc. In June copies were publicly presented to the Library, with photographs taken for the Chronicle. Discs were offered to schools for £5 each, and the first ten were soon snapped up. A further ten were ordered. Typed copies could be bought by members of the History group for £10. Jan Barwick has also supplied a floppy disc of the 1861 Census.

This census information is already proving useful with people researching their house or family history, e.g. recent queries re the Scarlet Geranium Cafe, the Ismay family, the High House Clarence Hill.

In July the Blue Plaques for famous Dartmouth residents were unveiled, for Thomas Newcomen, John Hawley, Flora Thompson and Christopher Milne.

Wills and a lease on Fosse Street going back to the 18C. had been transcribed, and copies passed to the Museum.

Arguments continue between the Museum and the Council about the future of the premises above the Museum. The Chronicle printed, wrongly, that the tenants of the top flat would be evicted if the Museum took it over, while they had only ever asked to be offered the first refusal if it became vacant. Now the Council have reversed their original offer of this. The group gave £30 in memory of Ralph Cawthorne, till recently the Curator of the Museum.

The Henley Collection was being packed up and inventoried, with various places suggested for it to be stored, including the Jesse Room in the Butterwaik, and even Exeter. Ron Langworthy how, during the last war, he had helped to cut up into two feet squares the plaster ceiling of the Jesse Room for safe storage. We agreed that his memories ought to be recorded for the future. However the Jesse Room seems too small and difficult of access to be used as a location for the Henley collection since the public could never see it there.

Ray was taken by Hamilton Hill to see the alleged site of a maze which he had pegged out with string in a field just to the west of the top of Gallants Bower, How he had established the lines of it was not clear to her, but he reckoned it dated back to the 17C at least.

A query had been received asking whether Pissaro's son Lucien had briefly stayed in the house Glenadon in Southtown. There was no way of checking whether this was true, since he never owned the house and no record has survived of his staying there. Other queries had been received about the Turner, Blackaller and Yonge families, and the Mansion House.

Members had been asked to write to S.H.D.C. urging them to keep open the post of Museums Development Officer, held now by Nicky Jarvis. They had now agreed, but her hours were to be extended.

New members during this year: Phil Roe, who was anxious to produce a multi-media event called "The Dartmouth Experience and asked for help in locating documents on Bayards Cove; Rosemary Tiptaft; Alan Coles, who has written a booklet Sport in Dartmouth, perhaps to be one of our booklets, for which Jerry is getting quotes for printing it. Gay Coles, who allowed us access to her husband's copies of the Dartmouth Chronicle after he died; Carol Harding, who has computer skills -just what we need! and Janet Cusak, who has written a history of Yachting. Sadly, Joan Peel, who has worked so hard for us for years, is leaving Dartmouth following the death of her husband in a car accident.

Much effort during this year went into writing monthly articles for the Chronicle, which it was would stimulate sales of our booklets as well as publicising our activities, These included Robert Franks on how on H.M.S. Scimitar he rescued a Hurricane pilot; David Stranack on the two Dartmouths; Jan Cowling on Fairfax Place; Ray on memories of Sydney Bell, who has recently died; David Stranack on Undercliff; Robert Franks on privateers in the 18C.

The group helped to assemble the Museum exhibition on the development of the Townstal which opened at Easter. It has attracted many visits from schools, and offers of memories from older residents which need to be taped. Tony Wright has offered to collect information. It was decided that the next year's exhibition in the Museum would be on Royal Dartmouth, from King John to the day.

Phil Roe is looking for personal stories to add to his documents about the history of Bayards Cove,

A major problem this year was that Father Smith wanted our stock of books moved from his Parish Room. These boxes containing nearly 3,000 booklets were removed to the Marie Jones Greengrocers in Newcomen Road. Then Emily Clarke of Compass Books offered to take our stock, manage our stock records and act as retail outlet in return for a further 10% discount, i.e. 45% instead of 35%. This was agreed so our stock was all moved again to Compass Books shop.

Father Smith has been created a Canon of Plymouth Cathedral. We have sent our congratulations to him.

A CD has been received of a booklet on the life of William Veale, Master Mariner, from Dittisham, written by Linda King who is a descendant living in Sussex. It describes his capture by Australian aborigines with whom he lived for over a year before escaping. Well worth publishing as one of our booklets. Another document relating to it was received from Susan GooDartmouthan in the U.S. who reported that the story had first been printed there in 1853. This must be followed up.

Ursula Dimes has sent us a typescript "Four Devon Squires." all accounts of members of the Dimes family. An Australian cousin had offered to meet the cost of publishing it. It was considered, but doubts were raised whether it would sell here as none of them had any local connection.

A new member, Wally Fleet, has offered memories of life around the Dartmouth Castle during the last war. We welcome him, and the memories were soon used in an article in the Chronicle. Another new member was welcomed, Joyce Borthwick of the Stoke Fleming History group.

Marion Hardy has written describing a visit to Newfoundland where she was following up her family connections with the trade there. She asks for information about Codners and Pensents (Pinsons). She was referred to the Wadstray House booklet, where Pinsons were mentioned. Shirley Anderson, another of our members whose ancestors were involved with the Newfoundland trade, has also just returned from a visit there and has left us notes about it. Ray has sent copies of documents relating to Dartmouth's links with the Newfoundland trade to their archives there.

Don Collinson's book "Chronicles of Dartmouth" has been published at £25. Derek Blackhurst's book on Philip's Shipyard has also been published at £21.

New member Janet Cusack has written an an article "Fast Women" for the South West Maritime History booklet, on women seamen.

Copies of "The Secret War from the Dart" by Lloyd Bott,, who lives in Australia, are to be given to his grandson who is visiting Dartmouth soon.

The Flavel Centre project, aiming to build a large library and meeting centre on the site of the old Flavel meeting house, is hoping to raise large sums of money for this. Ray has offered to produce old photos of the site, and possibly a booklet on the life of Flavel. James Kelly, of University College Oxford where Flavel himself studied, has written an article about him for the New English Biography. He has agreed that this article could be used in the launch for funds for the new Centre.

By the end of 2000 our Group had published 27 booklets, of which 12 were out of print. There was a discussion as to whether to reprint some of these.

An invitation was sent to the new Vicar, Rev. Simon Wright, and Rev. Chris Searle of the Flavel Church to come to some of our meetings.

Miscellaneous historical information received:

An article sent by Victor Okrami Smart told the life story of Rev. John Weekes of Dartmouth who went as a missionary to Sierra Leone and later became its first bishop. No other Dartmothian has ever become a bishop.

Extracts from We Remember D-Day are being used as teaching material for American students on a website.

A recent seminar held at the Slapton Field Centre reported the discovery of prehistoric reaves, i.e. field boundaries dating back to the Bronze Age, in the Slapton area. These have never before been found except on Dartmoor.

DHRGHist002 History of the Dartmouth History Research Group 2002

Much time was spent this year on discussing what our aims as a group should be, how we should best use computers to share information between ourselves as well as making it available to others, and what grants were available to history groups. Wally and Trevor visited the Moretonhampstead History Group to ask for their advice on this. Rosemary and Joyce visited the Cookworthy Museum to see what grants were available to history groups, but unlike them we had no centre which people could use to consult our records.

Trevor described his methods of recording information and said we should have firm guidelines on structure and objectives. Wally reported that the Past perfect system used by the Museum for artefacts, photos and documents, would not suit us. We need to have copies of tithe maps, apportionments and Land Tax returns on our website. It was also suggested that we should copy all maps over 50 years old as these were now out of copyright. The Local Studies Library in Exeter could be asked about how to obtain funding for Local History Groups. We should ask for a grant to pay for a digital camera, laptop computer and printer - but, as with the maps, where would we keep them?

Irene has drafted a Constitution for the Group, which was discussed and agreed by members. She asked for help from members to read newspapers to search for information on Wadstray farms, on which she was working.

Terry Edwards has been promoted to English Heritage Manager at Dartmouth Castle.

The Jubilee exhibition on Royal Dartmouth, on which members had worked, opened in April.

Marion Hardy, whose ancestors were involved in the Newfoundland trade, wrote re a visit she had made there with information about Terry's Plantation. This would be useful in the Museum's new display case on the Newfoundland/Dartmouth connections.

Ray is summarising a set of documents called Kelly's Gift which relates to a farm at Allaleigh. She is also helping to revise the St. Saviour's guide book, improve its appearance and include a self-guided walk around the church.

In April Torcross Chapel had a good photographic display of 400 years of Torcross history, which could lead them to produce a booklet about it.

The William Veale booklet by Linda King is being circulated in Universities in Australia, where it is being used to support Aboriginal claims to land where he was held by them.

Reports had appeared in national papers about the alleged deaths by "friendly fire" on Slapton beach in 1944, and it was possible a film might be made about it. No doubt we should be asked about any photos we have in the Museum.

A "fire mark" has been found on a house in Bayards Cove, indicating that in the 18C it was insured to be protected if it caught fire. It will be preserved on the building.

Chronicle articles have appeared, including ones by Terry Edwards and Jan Cowling, Irene's description of Foss St. in the 1861 census, and Ray's description of water supplies and conduits in St. Petrox parish.

The booklet "A River to Cross", our no. 30, was published in July, selling at £4, with a press release by Jerry, and was selling well. A reprint of the Secret War was released in December, after the earlier printing had been sold. Sales reports throughout the year were good, with money coming steadily from new and reprinted booklets.

The group had a walk in July to Old Mill Creek, to see what remained of the walk described in the 1790's in an account by the Baptist Minister's daughter. The "Folly" or castle is still there, but now dangerous to go inside. —————

As a result of contact made with the History Society of Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, we have exchanged copies of some of our booklets, and Wally may soon visit them there.

Ray reported on E.H. Back's history of St. Saviour's Church, which had been hand written between 1900 -1914 on large sheets bearing on the back fascinating adverts for current items re building and plumbing. The whole thing should be preserved, and was currently held by Chris Ferris who should be asked to donate it to the Museum.

Copies of the family histories of Bowhays and Middletons had been received. Mike Michelmore had written from Australia to enquire about his Tucker ancestors, and had been sent copies of pages in the 1891 census. Queries had also come from the Atkins family, who had once lived in Father Smith's house and re Liwenthal, and aircraft pioneer, who had been referred to the Chronicle article about him.

Other queries answered by Ray were: 1. re Norton, a contemporary of John Hawley. 2. Berry Pomeroy families in the early 19C. 3. Beacon Park Barn, near where a 17C cannonball had been found. A visit was made to this site by Jan Cowling, Ray and architect Bob Seymour. 4. Re families of Bales and Wallace.

The daughter of Lloyd Bott, the Australian author of The Secret War booklet, is visiting

Dartmouth soon, and Ray will meet her and entertain her.

The group considered whether the Minutes of Dartmouth Museum, which had been summarised by Maurice Riddihaugh, should be produced as a booklet, and decided against this. They also considered a book by Ida Walker, organist and once curator of the Henley collection, but again decided against it.

Geoffrey Newman had agreed to write a revised version of the Blackpool Sands booklet to include both the 1404 Battle and recent events in 1944 in the preparations for D-Day. David Stranack reported that he had seen the Newman archives in which there was a 150-page index to their papers going back to the 12C.

DHRGHist003 History of the Dartmouth History Research Group 2003

(Copies of some Minutes for 2003 have unfortunately disappeared, but there is a Chairman's Report by Irene O'Shea for the year which is reproduced here. It is a much more readable summary of the year's achievements than the one based on minutes.)

DARTMOUTH HISTORY RESEARCH GROUP

Chairman's Report (for 2003)

Looking through the minutes of the past 12 months, what emerges is evidence of much activity, some achievements and also, I hope, pleasure taken in our involvement with local history and the sharing of it with other like minded people.

Our main activity since we started has been to publish and sell our booklets. They are still selling steadily and giving us a regular income which finances new publications, reprints and any other activities. The Oldstone booklet was reprinted this year to coincide with a television programme on the death of Laura Dimes which we hoped would stimulate the sales of the booklet. A new booklet on Blackpool Sands will be ready soon and there is more ongoing research on other subjects. It has been suggested that we reprint some of our other titles but this has to be carefully considered as it may be a financial risk and it is possible that a future website could hold copies of out-of-print publications. There has been discussion on the nature of a website after an offer to set up one for the group.

Queries keep coming in and are mostly dealt with by Ray Freeman. If there is lengthy research to be done we now make a charge of £5 per hour, and this resulted in £140 in payments this year thanks to Ray and Wanda. These queries came from around the world, Australia, New Zealand, as well as local families and businesses and we hope to deal with these more efficiently when our archives are indexed and catalogued.

It is another sign of the reputation that the group has acquired that we are seen as the appropriate recipient for information. We have been sent two sets of wartime memories of Kingswear, interesting additions to our knowledge of Old Mill Creek from Sir John Scale and the story of the Trist family from Australia.

We have established friendly and fruitful contacts with other local history groups and other local organisations. It is good to have representatives from St. Saviour's Church and the Guildhall around the table with us. Our articles for the Dartmouth Chronicle have almost dried up, with only one this year, written by Ray. The link with Dartmouth, Nova Scotia history group was strengthened by a visit, made in person, by Wally Fleet this year. We have been in discussion with the library service about the role of the group and our archives in the new library.

We have to thank Trevor Miles for three developments this year which are new, exciting, daunting in some ways, and have made us change direction while not losing what we have already achieved. The first of these is the "Study Session" held on the middle Monday of the month with Trevor leading the discussions on materials and resources on the study of early and medieval history. It provides, amongst other benefits, an opportunity to "talk history" which, due to the pressure of business matters, is not always available in our other meetings.

Our "Access to Archives" project aims to index and catalogue the documents and archival material held by members of the group. This will require IT equipment, training and secretarial and consultancy services and so needs more funds than we have. After funding applications to local charities and to "Awards to AH" were turned down, a draft application was made to the Lottery Fund, Local Heritage Initiative, and received a favourable reception from their consultant who attended our December meeting. The finalised application will be submitted shortly. Wally Fleet has worked very hard on this with assistance from Joyce Borthwick and Irene O'Shea.

The third new activity is the Local History Day to be held in March in Dartmouth. We hope that it will encourage closer co-operation amongst local history groups with mutual benefits and be a really good day out with interesting speakers and a chance to make new friends. There has been a lot of work involved in the initial preparation carried out by a subcommittee of Trevor Miles, Carol Harding, Rosemary Tiptaft and Irene O'Shea. More helpers will be needed later and on the day. It will be easier if we do it again next year!

Finally, the most significant change this year has been the resignation, in October, of Ray Freeman from the position of chairman of the group. Ray has guided, advised and worked hard for the group since its inception and this quotation from a 'country member' will strike a chord: 'I am sure that the DHRG is one of the finest local history groups in the country and this has been in great measure due to the leadership that Ray has given over the years.' We are fortunate that she remains a member so that we can continue to benefit from her incomparable knowledge of the history of Dartmouth.

I hope that the next year will bring us success in our new ventures and the enjoyment we have always had from our meetings and activities.

(signed) Irene O'Shea, (Acting Chairman.)

DHRGHist004 **DARTMOUTH HISTORY RESEARCH GROUP**

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT ON 2004
(Delivered by Irene O'Shea Feb. 2005)**

The past year has undoubtedly been the year of the Dartmouth Archives project. The delight of being 'given' over £17,000 to spend was quickly tempered by the realisation of the size and complexity of the task we had taken on. Spurred on by the conviction that it is worth doing and no-one else will attempt it, we have made a start on the three year project to computerise the local archives and collect more oral history memories. Equipment has been purchased, training sessions set up and much thought and discussion on the best approaches to the various challenges which face us, most of which do not have a commonly agreed solution. Wally Fleet insists that the project is a team effort, which it is, but we all recognise and appreciate his invaluable input. The oral history work, now being run by Joyce Borthwick, has benefitted from the generous, professional input of Ian Philips and David Harding. It has been good to welcome a number of new members who volunteered to work on the project. The IT training is ongoing and we have been fortunate to have the expertise of Graham Doney and sixth former

Robert at Dartmouth Community College available to us.

The Local History Day last March was a new venture and, to the relief of all concerned, it went off well, attended by members of other local history groups as well as individuals. The success of the day and the favourable comments made, show that regular meetings of local historians could satisfy a need. Maybe an umbrella organisation for the South Hams would be useful.

The Group's activities as a publisher continue. David Stranack's 'Blackpool Sands' was published early in 2004 and Eric Preston's 'Up the Hill to Townstal' is being prepared for publication. When Compass Books closed the stock had to be moved to a temporary home in the Guildhall and now some of the boxes have found a home in a garage in Oxford Street. We have a large stock of books without a satisfactory permanent home, and even if the current plans to sell books on the internet are successful, storage is likely to be a problem which keeps resurfacing. On the other hand, we have a steady income from the books and the bank balance is healthier than ever.

Two longstanding members have left the group and we are sad to see them go. Robert Franks has kept the accounts in good order for many years and often informed and entertained us with his memories from his many years of service in the navy. Jerry Coats is a founder member and has been setting up the booklets for publication ever since. Even in our penny pinching days, he made them look good. As we became more formally organised he audited the accounts each year. Whatever the issue under discussion, Jerry could be relied on for a calm, measured opinion. Sincere thanks are due to both for their outstanding contributions to the life and success of the group. Jerry moved to London in February to live near his son, and, sadly, died in October 2005.

This year has seen the usual flow of queries by e-mail, letter and telephone which are answered wherever possible. It was a pleasure to meet one of these correspondents, Mike Mitchelmore from Australia who has been corresponding with Ray for many years. We also receive information from a variety of sources and members share what they have discovered, leading to what is often the most fascinating part of the meeting as we talk history rather than business. The group maintains good contacts with other organisations in the area which are of mutual benefit. A meeting with the District Librarian was constructive and we look forward to making a contribution to the Local Studies Section in the new Library. I look forward to another busy and stimulating year of local history activities with you all.

DHRGhistOOS

DARTMOUTH HISTORY RESEARCH GROUP

Chairman's Report for 2005

Another busy and productive year for us. It is a great pleasure to be part of a group where there is so much participation by members in many different ways and in such a friendly atmosphere. Our diverse links with other local organisations are a continuing strength. Help is given to researchers far and wide and it was good to be able to offer advice and to lend equipment to a local student for her dissertation.

Now more than halfway through the Dartmouth Archives project, there is plenty to show for the efforts of Wally Fleet, mainly, and many others. There are two CD.'s in the library containing archive material which can be consulted by the general public. More taped interviews have been digitised and new interviews recorded. Some aspects of the project have been reassessed and the Local Heritage Initiative has approved the purchase of extra equipment, including a digital projector which will be used for a presentation on the local history day showing progress to date. The most significant extension of the project has been the approval from the funders for our decision to go ahead with an on-line web site.

A new venture in 2005 has been the Thursday morning help desk in the new library manned by

members. Most of the requests for assistance have been either about family history or about a property. Responses to these requests and the way we record them is being worked out and refined in the light of experience. Some queries can be answered promptly, to others we can give advice as to where answers may be found. Members of the group give time and expertise and in return we often gain access to documents and research data. I expect the number of people using this service to increase with more publicity and the filing system will soon be second to none, thanks to the efforts of Wanda Manktelow.

May this year saw the publication of a new booklet 'Up the Hill to Townstal' by Eric Preston - detailed research on a subject not previously covered. We gave sets of all of our booklets to the local schools and they sell steadily but we still have large stocks. The current storage space is kindly donated but it has its drawbacks. In this area of our activities we live precariously. Our hitherto slack approach to invoicing and auditing books is being remedied. Requests for out of print books can now be answered by the web site where they can be found, plus summaries of all the others.

Jerry Coats, a good friend and founder member of the group, left Dartmouth early in 2005 but we could still tap into his experience and advice at the end of a telephone. It was with great sadness that we learned of his death. He is missed.

The second local history day in March 2005 met with enthusiastic approval from those who attended. Numbers were higher than in 2004 and clearly there is a market for such an event. I hope that other societies will be prepared to host these days in future years. The partnership with Friends of Devon's Archives in 2006 has given us access to speakers and to a wider knowledge of organisations operating in local studies.

We have had another good year enlivened by learning about such things as the house where Parson Jack Russell was born, a seasick Queen Victoria who borrowed the Scale family coach to avoid a sea journey to Torquay, an aeroplane stored in a river Dart boathouse and WWII spies to name but a few. There are more projects in the pipeline. I look forward to working with you all in 2006-7.

Irene O'Shea.

DHRGHist006

**DARTMOUTH HISTORY RESEARCH GROUP
2006**

Chairman's Report for 2006 by Irene O'Shea.

We began the 2006-7 year preparing for what was our third successful Local History Day and with the Chairman's resolve not to do it again. Here we are at the start of another year busy organising a March Event which will be a showcase for the Dartmouth Archives Project and presents us with a new challenge as far as presentation is concerned. I am relying on you all to restrain your chairman next year.

The Archive project has been the main focus again this year, now coming to the end of the three year funding. We now have an online website, up and running, growing all the time and now being used by researchers. This is only the beginning and we all need to heed the requests to send copies of relevant material for inclusion. In June, agreement with Dartmouth Town Council was reached and we began to sort and transcribe the many documents held in the Guildhall. Although we have not made any outstanding finds, it is a worthwhile activity, ^{s^} with the participants enjoying the task and exchanging quirky extracts from the documents being worked on at the time.

Some of the highlights of the past year include the Local History Day in March with attendance in the region of one hundred including representatives from sixteen societies. I look forward to the event in Galmpton this year and hope that other societies will host such events in future years. In the Autumn

there was a visit to the Devon Record Office where we enjoyed a detailed, conducted tour. I hope that this will be followed up with research based visits to work on the many Dartmouth documents held there. We have welcomed a number of new members this year with different areas of expertise and their contributions add new dimensions to the group. The change of venue for our meetings to avoid parking problems in Dartmouth has worked well and attendance at meetings has been good.

The Help Desk in the library is one of the sources of the many queries which come to us and can prompt us to address new aspects of our history. Questions about street names led to work on them and we now have a growing list of names and the changes over the years. Queries also provide an opportunity for personal contact which can have surprising results such as the contact made in the library with Bob Boone. We have a very good working relationship with the librarians which is mutually beneficial.

This is my fourth annual report and looking back, what stands out is the continuity. We are still working to fulfill our aims and objectives to research and record local history and make it more accessible. It is evidence of the strength of our group that we continue to develop new ways of achieving these aims and do so by working together. There is plenty to look forward to with the Dartmouth Chronicle digitisation project in partnership with the Kingswear Historians and two new publications being planned as well as a need for a Dartmouth map project and more.

I note with sadness the death of Father Chris Smith, one of the founder members of the group and always a good friend.

I look forward to another challenging and rewarding year working with you all.

Irene O'Shea.

DHRGHistOO?

**DARTMOUTH HISTORY RESEARCH GROUP
Chairman's Report for 2007, by Irene O'Shea.**

This time last year, preparations were afoot for the March presentation which marked the conclusion of the funded Dartmouth Archive project. This event stretched our capabilities both in manpower numbers and presentational skills but the combined efforts of the few won through, Ian Phillips was a patient and inspiring director and the group proved that you could manage with a part time chairman. I found it disappointing that the Local Heritage Initiative management of our project became so distant but we succeeded in spending all of the grant and achieving our original aims and more.

This was by no means the end of our archive work and good progress has been made throughout the year. More Seale papers have been added to the website. Transcriptions of documents like the Tithe Apportionments have been and are being done as well as smaller pieces of research such as the history of the house "The Keep." Discoveries like the article on the 1377 Poll Tax for Dartmouth has delighted us all. The sorting and summarising of the Town Council documents in the Guildhall attracted a loyal band of workers who spend happy hours in the Clifton Room. The summaries are now on line and the decision has been taken to lodge the originals in the Devon Record Office. The painstaking work of digital photography of Dartmouth Chronicles and the subsequent preparation of the images has proceeded well and is ongoing. Some are on the website and more are available on a DVD in Dartmouth Library. We are pleased to be working on this joint project with the Kingswear Historians.

This year the website has attracted 7,118 hits of which 4,800 were returning viewers and there have been many compliments from researchers who use it. I believe that DHRG can be very proud of this particular achievement and thankfully acknowledge Wally's management of the site. However, it would make good sense if our webmaster had some assistance and training is available.

I feel sure that the library help desk is something we ought to be doing even though we have had fewer visitors than we would have liked in the past year. The resources available have improved thanks to Wanda and Librarian Maria, and we have a good team of members happy to man the desk for a two

hour duty each week. The ready agreement of the library and the Devon Record Office to set up a Services Point was another of the milestones of the year and the extra microfiches will be another tool for local researchers as well as giving us a closer relationship with the Record Office.

Membership remains steady. We have a contact list of about 50 who receive the minutes and about twenty of them are regular contributors to group activities. Attendance at meetings for the past year was an average of eleven members with the highest number of attendees fifteen and the lowest eight. The relatively high number on the contact list can be explained by several reasons as we maintain our good working relations with other organisations, keep in touch with ex members of the group and also with those who are not able to attend meetings.

Assorted highlights of the year included a visit to Earle farm on Jawbones and looking at the site of old abattoirs on top of the town. Meetings are enlivened by reports such as one about a skull in a box in St. Saviour's Church and its grisly West African origins. We all enjoyed a recent story of a Dartmouth man and the Order of the Rising Sun, still not fully explained. We welcome two new booklets produced by Eric, one on John Davis and the other on a Commando Raid on Sark.

Although I am writing this at the end of an administrative year, I can only look forward to what is already promised for 2008-9. On the horizon we have the official launch of the Service Point, Hawley 600, indexing the Dartmouth Chronicles, starting a Dartmouth Index, restarting the Bayards Cove history as well as the usual group activities and whatever else the next year brings to make Dartmouth historians a happy group.

HISTORY RESEARCH GROUP

Chairman's Report for 2008 by Wally Fleet

After three busy years spending out lottery money any thoughts that we could put our feet up in 2008 were short lived. While we as a group have not hosted events during this past year members have assisted or participated in a number of other events such as the opening in March by Ray of the Devon Records Office Service Point in the Library.

Sadly this was to be the last function our Chairman Irene O'Shea was to attend: although she had been unwell for some time she was looking forward to taking up the reins again in May so it came as a shock to us all when she unexpectedly collapsed and died a few days later.

Irene took over as Chairman from Ray Freeman in February 2003; during her time in office she oversaw the publication of a number of books, the successful application for a lottery grant & the creation of our online archive of material relevant to the history of Dartmouth & the surrounding villages. She will be missed during the years to come.

2008 marked the 600th anniversary of the death of John Hawley, special events being held to mark the occasion. Your Chairman attended the unveiling of a plaque in Southford Road commemorating the wartime evacuation to Dartmouth of a school from the Acton area of London.

Work on expanding the Dartmouth Archive has continued but at a slower pace as the work involved becomes more involved with new archive material arriving at a faster rate than it can be processed. Some progress has been made on producing an index of articles in the Dartmouth Chronicle but this is a very ambitious project that will require a good number of volunteer helpers if it is to be completed in reasonable time. The web site continues to attract a respectable number of visits with nearly 8400 hits from 90 different countries (over 40 different languages) being recorded during the year.

Genealogy questions continue to dominate, both via the Website & through the Library Help

Desk, There are occasions, mainly during the winter months, when there have been no enquiries to the desk but it is never the less a useful way of advertising our existence. It is at present not being manned but we plan to re-open soon after Easter.

Financially the group remains in a good position with income slightly up on last year with the main source of income continuing to be through the sale of our books. This is in no small way due to the excellent work of Gay throughout the year & the book stalls helpers at various events during the year. My thanks to you all.

For the first time in a number of years we have not published any books. A history of Bayards Cove is in the course of preparation & we will be looking at the material left by Irene O'Shea to see if we can complete the work she started on the history of Wadstray Farms.

I should not let the year pass without my thanks to all of you, with special thanks for the typing work done by Juliet Lambert, Marion Pritchard & Eric Preston. These tasks have not been straight forward by any means.

What of 2009? After a year of mixed blessing I look forward to a year of continued progress, a year in which we meet the aspirations of you the members.

Wally Fleet