**FRIENDS OF DEVON’S ARCHIVES**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Thursday 4 November 2021

Chairs Report

I am delighted that we have been able to hold a proper AGM and in a real not virtual archive. A huge thanks to DRA for facilitating today.

in sprit of Cop 26 – I am also pleased to have travelled here by electric car courtesy of Des. So I found myself musing on the importance of records in the climate change debate – how many climate change stories can be gleaned from our archives. Could FODA be more pro-active? Not just wait for projects/purchases to come to us but rather use our funding/collective expertise to realise the potential of archives of all shapes and sizes to be part of the climate change discussion. Later in the procedures we will be looking at the benefits of working with Devon History Society and bringing some of the numerous local archives groups into our membership – through this maybe we can launch a fund/ competition/exhibition whatever to support climate change research/comparison over the centuries. What a wealth of photographic material there is ( and pointed out what an archive of self - sufficiency and sustainability). I would like to see FODA at the forefront of heritage climate action. After this AGM Des will be telling us about the amazing progress of FODA’s very own Norden project so – yes we can “do” projects and within Norden there are the mini local projects and activities – I challenge these to include a climate change message.

Any way to turn reporting on the committees business over the year. Circumstances once again obliged the committee to meet remotely

I once again remind you of our objectives - the preservation and use of historical records throughout Devon and to raise public awareness of their importance for research and education . This year has been comparatively quiet for FODA on the grants front– a few successes and a major disappointment Shining through has been progress on the Norden project – to be described by Des later.

Reported to the last AGM but appearing in the accounts to be presented today was the grant for the purchase by Devon Heritage Centre of the account book of the Walrond family of Bradfield, c.1647-1660

We gave £750 to Devon and Exeter Medical Heritage Trust for the Exeter Assylum printed reports:

1. INSANE ASYLUM EXETER. WONFORD HOUSE Hospital for the Insane, Near Exeter. Report of The Committee of Management,

 Date Published: 1872-1879

2. EXETER ASYLUM REPORTS.

 Committee of Visitors of Pauper Lunatics

 Date Published: 1886-1890. Folio.

And we gave

 To DHC £312 for Kings Book manuscript. It’s a list of patrons of ecclesiastical benefices in the Diocese of Exeter, with their value in the ‘Kings Books’, a colloquial term for the Valor Ecclesiasticus, compiled during the reign of Henry VIII, although this book is from a much later date

That is all.

There was disappointment re DHT unsuccessful bid for Cary Estate Archive- for cataloguing for which FODA wrote in support. SWHT thinking of other ways to expedite the project. So far £10,000 has been earmarked and a further £10000/£20,000 is needed. FoDA has agreed to offer £2,000 as well as its support to the project.

In September a very successful Joint DRA/DHS FoDA Conference was held at the DRA

**Dr Ian Mortimer,** *The chief rents of Moretonhampstead, 1639-1840: how to use a problematic source*.

Earlier this year David Stone had regretfully to give up the Norden Survey Project due to a career change to Maths teacher with all its time commitments; he arranged a seamless take over from himself to Des Atkinson from whom we will be hearing shortly.

WSe have also spent time discussing a new group membership proposal .FODA has become increasingly aware of community archives in many villages and towns across the County and has responded positively to overtures from DHS that we offer a joint membership to local groups. FODA does not have many local affiliations and this way we can greatly increase these. We shall be discussing later on the agenda and making a formal proposal. Many thanks to Abi Gray for driving this.

Our president John Allan is standing down as is membership secretary Peter Tovey and secretary Frances Billinge. They have given outstanding service to FODA and I ask that fulsome tribute be paid by those who have worked with them far longer than me immediately after this report. (Duly given)

I must also pay tribute to Sue Jackson for continuing to produce the highly informative and invaluable newsletter.

Finally – while I keep my report strictly to FODA activity . I must say it has been exciting to hear the archive news from across the County – Janet Tall keeps the committee well informed. There has been so much good work and exciting projects. I give one example:Famous *People From Torbay- a partnership woth Torbay schools with University of Exeter using technology to reach a new audience using archives on famous local people to inspire children, This is linked to local trails.*

And in Plymouth – I was so impressed by The Box, I have to confess I made an incognito visit to the archive and asked the person on the desk how I could consult records. I got a very friendly and helpful response. I also liked the public visibility of research.

Congratulations all round !