

# Archdeacons' Briefing No 6 February 2010

This briefing is intended as an introduction to the Diocesan Archive and how clergy, churchwardens and PCCs may access the services that it offers. We recommend that this document is read in conjunction with 'Keep or Bin ...? The care of your parish records. Church of England Record Centre Records Management Guide No. 1', which may be found on the Church of England website at <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/about/librariesandarchives/recordsmanagementguides/careofparishrecords.pdf>

**Geoff Miller and Peter Robinson**

## Accessing the Diocesan Archive

The Diocesan Archive is held at Woodhorn as part of the Northumberland Archives, for which the contact details are:

**Woodhorn**  
**Museum, Archives and Country Park**  
**Queen Elizabeth II Country Park**  
**Ashington**  
**Northumberland**  
**NE63 9YF**  
**Telephone Number: 01670 528 080**  
**E-mail: [collections@woodhorn.org.uk](mailto:collections@woodhorn.org.uk)**

The website and catalogue for the Northumberland Archive may be accessed in two ways.

1. [www.experiencewoodhorn.com](http://www.experiencewoodhorn.com): click on 'County Archives'
2. [www.northumberland.gov.uk](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk): search for 'Archive' which will lead you to 'Northumberland Collections Service' and click on 'Electronic Catalogue Quick Access Point'.

Woodhorn Museums and Archive is an independent charitable company and has responsibility for Newcastle Diocese's historical records. Those parishes/churches in County Durham (Edmundbyers and Muggleswick and Hunstanworth) and Cumbria (Alston, Garrigill and Nenthead) are included in the Diocesan Archive.

Sue Wood, a member of the Archive staff, is always very happy to take detailed questions from members of the clergy and churchwardens. She is available on 01670 528 038.

## **A DEPOSITING RECORDS**

If any parish wishes to deposit records, they are required to bring them to Woodhorn, where advice will be given by the Collections staff. It is usual to deposit parish registers, PCC minutes books, accounts, parish magazines, photographs and electoral rolls. The Archives are interested in other

'ephemeral materials', but they will discard circulars or cheque book stubs. If a parish is not sure whether something is worthy of placing in the archives, then they will be advised by Woodhorn staff. Records may be deposited during opening hours from 10am to 4pm, Wednesday to Sunday. It is possible just to turn up at these times. It is also possible to deposit material by making an appointment with the Archives' staff on Monday and Tuesday.

When the Archives receive deposits, the parish will be given immediately a temporary **receipt**. Later, they will be sent by mail a typed receipt for the parish's own records. There will also be two copies of a **Depositor's Declaration** sent. One is for the parish to retain and one is for the parish to sign and return. It is important that the options that do not apply to parishes are deleted, but note that it is usual for a parish to retain copyright. Parishes will also be sent two lists. The first will be a copy of a catalogue list and the second is a **green list** which is to be stored in the church safe. The green list will include any comments that are made about the condition of the records deposited.

It is this green list that is important to keep for Archdeacons' Inspections. If a parish needs a replacement green list or green folder in which they are stored, these can be supplied at a cost of £10 each. It is noted that often there is a rush of inquiries about green lists in May and June, when Archdeacons do their Inspections!

## **B ACCESSING RECORDS**

The most usual register searches requested by clergy concern baptism records for confirmations and on occasion wedding records are required.

The procedure is to ring Woodhorn switchboard and ask for a member of the Archive staff, who will be happy to search over a specified period, given a particular date of birth and parish church. A search can usually be conducted within 24 hours, but this cannot always be guaranteed. The Archive staff are happy to relay the information by telephone and would usually read out the full record in leaving a message.

If you require a copy of a baptism record, then there is a charge for administration (currently £1.40). If a copy certificate is required, then this can be requested for either a baptism or a wedding, and there will be a charge for administration (currently £12.00 + postage).

If a baptism record cannot be quickly identified, then the Archive staff are unable to do a more extensive search. It is possible for the person researching their baptism, or for clergy and churchwardens themselves, to conduct their own search, but this can only be done by visiting Woodhorn. It is also possible to commission a wider search for a record, but there would need to be a charge made on hourly rate.

Occasionally the Archive staff get requests for confirmation details (perhaps for those being ordained) and it is important to be reminded that these can be traced not only through Confirmation Registers but also through the Archives' store of confirmation returns deposited by the Bishop's Office.

At present, Faculties and Archdeacons' Certificates are kept by the Diocesan Registry for approximately three to four years. All Faculties deposited at the Archives are now available on line, catalogued by parish, and the catalogue of Archdeacon's Certificates is currently being put on line.

Please note the following codes used in Diocesan records:

**DN** signifies 'Diocese of Newcastle' which means that it was deposited by the Diocese (the Bishop's Office, Church House or the Registry)

**EP** signifies 'Ecclesiastical Parish': this is the material that has been deposited directly by parishes.

**12<sup>th</sup> February 2010**