



For immediate release

Tuesday 9 February 2010

DEVON RECORD OFFICE REVEALS LOVE IN THE ARCHIVES

You may be planning on sending a Valentine's card next week, or if you're pondering the appropriate amount of cards you should be getting, our ancestors maybe able to offer some pointers.

The diary of nineteenth century bachelor, highlighted as part of the Archive Awareness Campaign www.archiveawareness.com reveals that our Victorian ancestors spoke the language of love only too well.

On Monday 14 February 1852, Peter Orlando Hutchinson's diary, kept at Devon Record Office, notes: *Received five Valentines! Sent thirteen!! Bless the girls! Why don't they put their names to them?*

Nearly two weeks later, Hutchinson is still the object of desire. His diary entry for Sat Feb. 26 reads: *Three more Valentines! The lady in one of them asks me to kiss her! Why did she omit to put her name in some sly corner? In times past it has not been the custom for gentlemen to receive Valentines, but only to send them. The times, however, are changed: and the change came in last year – which was leap year. Now in Sidmouth at all events the gentlemen get as many as the ladies.*

Hutchinson diaries appear to reveal him as a nineteenth century gent from Sidmouth who had a taste for fun and a love for parties. Ten years after the Valentine's entries, in December 1862 he gives a colourful account of a Christmas ball he attended at the London Inn in Sidmouth. Our hero spends the evening watching the ladies dance from the sidelines before making his way home at a quarter to four in the morning.

Katherine Weston, Heritage Outreach Officer, Devon Record Office said:

“It’s an amusing read and is just an example of how human life really exists amongst records”.

Angela Owusu, Archive Awareness Campaign Officer said:

“Hutchinson’s diaries offer us a fascinating glimpse of life in Victorian Devon. This record is a great example of love in the Archives! The Archive Awareness Campaign aims to bring history to life through documents, photographs, maps and treasures. Archives across the UK are opening their doors to the public so that people can search for fascinating materials such as this”.

- Ends -

For further details, spokespeople or images on Archive Awareness Campaign, please contact **Angela Owusu** on **0208 392 5237** or email

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Notes to Editors

- Hutchinson (1810-1897) was an amateur archaeologist, local historian and antiquary who lived in Sidmouth from the age of fifteen until his death. During his lifetime he contributed to guidebooks of Sidmouth and its area, including its natural history, writing a five-volume manuscript history of the town which is now held in the Westcountry Studies Library, Exeter: <http://www.devon.gov.uk/localstudies>
- He was a prolific and gifted amateur artist; the Devon Record Office in Exeter holds five volumes of his illustrated diaries and over 750 sketches. Born a year later than Darwin, Hutchinson, like many others at that time, took a great interest in the flora and fauna of his local area. The extracts form part of his diaries written during the mid 1800s.

- For further information about Peter Orlando Hutchinson please contact the Devon Record Office.
Devon Record Office, Great Moor House, Bittern Road, Sowton, Exeter EX2 7NL
Tel: 01392 384253
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Email: devrec@devon.gov.uk
Web site: www.devon.gov.uk/record_office
- Archive Awareness is spearheaded by the National Council on Archives (www.ncaonline.org.uk) and funded by The National Archives (www.nationalarchives.gov.uk) and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (www.mla.gov.uk).
- Archive Awareness Campaign www.archiveawareness.com is an ongoing celebration of all kinds of fascinating archive treasures. It celebrates and promotes local and national archives. Throughout the year archives across the country open their doors to showcase history, hold open days and present workshops to help the public discover a piece of their own history.

HUNTINGDON COUNTY GAOL,
14th April 1874

PARTICULARS of a Person convicted of a Crime specified in the 30th Section of the Prevention of Crimes Act, 1871.

Name *William Coles*
and
Aliases

Age (on discharge) *26*

Height *5 feet 6*

Hair *Brown*

Eyes *Gray*

Complexion *Fair*

Where born *Lighten Hunt*

Married or single *Single*

Trade or occupation *Labourer*

Any other distinguishing mark *Yes*
Wound on left side of nose


Address at time of apprehension *Lighten Hunt*

Whether summarily disposed of or tried by a Jury *Summarily*

Place and date of conviction *Huntingdon 14th April 1874*

Office for which convicted *Stealing & Possession*

Photograph of Prisoner.



Summary Sentence *3 Cal. Mos. H. L.*

If liberated on License, date when sentence will expire

Date to be liberated *5th May 1874*

Intended residence after liberation *Lighten Hunt*

Summary Convictions.—Dates, nature of offences, and places where convicted.
1870—1st November Assault—1 Cal. Mos. on pay £1-4s-0

Trial by Jury.—Dates, nature of offences, and places where convicted.
*1871—Hunt March 22nd Breaking into a dwelling house
1872—Hunt December 22nd Possession Stealing money from a dwelling house 18 Cal. Mos. H. L.*

Names of police officers, prison warders, or others who can identify and prove convictions.

Any other particulars as to antecedents, associates, &c.

Governor.