



Devon Family History Society  
Joint Project Publication with  
Devon Record Office



**DEVON RECORD OFFICE**

**DEVON AND EXETER BOYS REFORMATORY, BRAMPFORD WOOD:  
ADMISSION REGISTER**

**1875-1893**

**DRO Reference – 5880**

**DFHS Book Reference - D033**

The Devon and Exeter Reformatory Farm School for Boys was founded in 1855 and began its life at premises at Brampford Wood, in the parish of Brampford Speke, just north of Exeter. It was an institution for the industrial training of juvenile offenders - that is, for boys under the age of 14 years, who had been convicted of a crime punishable by imprisonment. They spent a short time in an adult prison, followed by a period in Devon and Exeter Reformatory, which was a certified reformatory school. The order for detention was made by the Court before which the boy appeared, in accordance with the Youthful Offenders Act of 1854. The inmates were employed in garden and farm work, under the superintendence of the master, who was assisted by a bailiff. Part of each day was spent in the reformatory schoolroom. The reformatory was supported by subscriptions, and by a weekly Government allowance which in 1857 was 5 shillings per week for each boy. At that time the Honorary Secretary was Dyer Knott Esquire, who was based at the Castle, Exeter.

Note that reformatories were different to industrial schools, which were for potential, and not actual, offenders.

In 1900 the school moved to premises at Whipton. In 1955, it became part of the new Northbrook House School at the Whipton site.

Devon Record Office holds the surviving admission and discharge registers of the Devon and Exeter Reformatory Farm School for Boys, in collections 5880F and 4449F. Collection 5880F, which is uncatalogued, includes the admission register for 1876 to 1893 which is indexed here.

Additional records include the admission register for 1894 to 1905 [ref: DRO 4449F/R1/1] which includes the period when the school moved to Whipton. There is also an unattributed register of discharges covering 1889 to 1905 [ref: DRO 4449F/R6/1] which appears to be for the same reformatory school. All of the above records are open to public access. Due to the sensitive nature of such records, information from more recent admission and discharge registers is available at the discretion of the Devon County Council Social Services Department.