

Charity Number: 1165223



The Friends are going places – but which way?

Autumn 2017

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*** ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ***

The Annual General Meeting of the
Friends of Gloucestershire Archives
will be held at **2:30pm** on **Thursday 19th October 2017**
at the National Waterways Museum
Llanthony Warehouse, Gloucester, GL1 2EH
[Enter via the main entrance.]

Current Work in the Archives

For the Record building project – The foundations and steel framework for the new strongrooms are in place, and the main building has been stripped out ready for refurbishment. There have been delays due to asbestos, and difficulties in procuring key sub-contractors, but a revised timetable is due to be issued shortly. Meanwhile, you can keep up to date with progress by checking our website or following our blog at www.gloucestershirearchives.wordpress.com

For the Record activities – This year’s Gloucester History Festival has been an excellent showcase for the newly developed Heritage Hub workshops and training courses, and provided an opportunity to raise the profile of the Archives and the Friends.

We continue to build our Hub community through regular meetings with our stakeholders, development projects such as the new partnership website (our virtual heritage hub), and inviting folk to sign up to the Gloucestershire Heritage Hub electronic newsletter. Check out:

glos-heritage-hub.tfemagazine.co.uk/heritage-hub

We have developed the archival and Gloucestershire content for the House of Memories App. This app will be used to engage with older folk, particularly those with early stage dementia.

Fundraising – Since the last newsletter, the Archives’ £31k bid to the Arts Council, was successful. This will enhance the site by working with five artists and different community groups and deliver part of the Activity Plan required by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Several Friends have met some of the artists, including Imogen Harvey-Lewis, who will be designing the donor tree. Imogen is based locally but works nationally and one of her other commissions is for the Royal Opera House.

Two of the Friends’ bids during this period were also successful. We are particularly grateful to the Foyle Foundation for agreeing £10k towards

the Heritage Hub fit-out, and the Henry Smith Foundation for £20k for the salary of the part-time Older People Engagement Manager to deliver the EVOKE (older people) series of activities.

Electronic Records and On-line Services – Gloucestershire Archives led a consortium of 11 local authorities (Archives First) in an investigation into the requirements to preserve key council records. The final report is due to be published shortly.

With £15k channel shift funding from the Local Government Association, archives staff are developing CALM, the specialist archive software, to enable on-line registration and advance on-line document ordering. The aim of this work is to enable the public to register and order documents from the comfort of their living room.

The on-line historical map resource, *Know Your Place West of England*, was launched this month at the History Festival. We're most grateful to the Friends for seed-corn funding this project. It was developed in partnership with GCC's archaeology team, Friends of Gloucestershire Archives, and South Gloucestershire, Bristol, Somerset, Devon, BANES and Wiltshire Councils, as well as many volunteers.

www.kypwest.org.uk

Staffing news – In the last six weeks we said farewell to two long-standing members of staff.

Julie Reynolds, Museums Development Officer, formerly based at Gloucestershire Archives, has left after 10 years to take up the role of Curator for Gloucestershire and Bristol for the National Trust. Museums development work for the region is now being delivered from Bristol.

At the end of September, Jill Shonk, Access and Learning Leader, left after 11 years to take up the role of Head of Cultural and Traded Services at Gloucester City Council. We look forward to working in partnership with both Jill and Julie in their new roles.

We will be re-assigning roles within the team and will be welcoming the following staff to help fill gaps for the next 6-12 months: Rosalind Farr, a former digital preservation trainee; Katie Halil, who will be joining the customer services team on Mondays; and Abigail Hartley, a newly qualified archivist.

We welcome back Ally McConnell as Community Cataloguing Archivist (former graduate trainee who has recently been working as an archivist at Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre). Ally's 3 year post is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, and from spring 2018 she will be working with a team of volunteers on the Dowty cataloguing project.

Heather Forbes
Head of Archives Service

Announcements

It is with regret that we record the death, last May, of

Cecil Ballantyne

who was a long-standing member of the Friends.

We have also recently been informed of the death of

Michael Sheridan.

. Our sympathy is extended to their family and friends.

From the Parish Registers

Horsley, 1732.

John Pegler and Ann Thomas were half-married Aug. 11th. I proceeded no further because they paid me but one half, viz. 2s 6d.

Update on Building Works

I recently went on holiday and returned to find a lot had changed in the space of a week. It was great to see! So I thought I'd bring you up to speed with what's been happening since my last post – hopefully you'll be pleased too. Here goes...

Outside, works on our new strong rooms have been coming along nicely. We've been taking sneaky peeks from the back door and are pleased to report the 10 metre deep piles (featured in my last post) are now part of a solid foundation that's supporting a steel –framed fort.



Steelworks in progress

Once the walls have been completed a specialist contractor will construct three internal concrete caves. These will eventually provide additional specialist storage for our collections. This set-up is similar to our existing strong room arrangements, which are very sustainable.

Moving indoors, the temporary props that were supporting the ceiling in the new open plan areas have gone, replaced by steel beams. This means we can see the actual size of the spaces that are to become the new Heritage Hub reception/shared area and the Archives research room/project workshops.



Remodelling to create Gloucestershire Heritage Hub

So what's next? Well, the building works will continue as planned and Archives staff are moving on to interior design choices. We'll be consulting with a range of people, including experts and volunteers from other organisations that will be sharing the Hub premises with us, to make sure we get things right. It's all very exciting! *Jill Shonk*

The Mayor views Gloucester City Charters

The Mayor of Gloucester, Councillor Steve Morgan, dropped in to view the beautiful Gloucester City Charters which have been held at the Archives for the past five years. He was welcomed by Julie Courtenay, Rachel Wales and three trustees of the Friends.



The City Council consider these Charters to be amongst the most significant items held in the Archives because they document the development of Gloucester as a city. The oldest Charter was issued by King Henry II in the year 1155, and the other twenty-two charters span the centuries from the Middle Ages right up to the last charter, granted in April 1974 by our own Queen Elizabeth II.

Each document is hand-written on one or more sheets of parchment, and most bear the Great Seal of the King or Queen who issued it. Some, like those of Henry VIII, Queen Elizabeth I and Charles II, bear elaborately decorated portraits of the monarchs. But in the case of the charter of Edward IV, dated 1462, there was space left for beautiful lettering to be drawn in but this never happened and the space is just blank.

Gloucestershire Archives is hoping to obtain grant funding from the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust (NMCT), a charity devoted to the preservation of nationally important documents, to help us preserve

our City Charters. The Archives has also been promised funding by Gloucester City Council and the Friends of Gloucestershire Archives. The Mayor and City Council are keen to offer help and support in our efforts to secure a grant from the NMCT.



The Archives is committed to doing its best to ensure that these ancient treasures last for centuries more. They are already stored in a secure climate-controlled strongroom which is diligently monitored to make sure that no pests such as mice or beetle larvae threaten to eat the parchment sheets and kept in the dark, to prevent fading of the fragile inks. But the old oak cabinet in which the Charters are stored isn't ideal. Some of the Charters are a bit too large to sit comfortably on the wooden trays that fit inside the cabinet, meaning that the seals have to be twisted round and made to sit on top of the parchment sheets. This puts stress on the fragile silk cords attaching the seal to its document. Also, it can be extremely difficult to move the Charters safely when they go on exhibition. Some of them are very large and very heavy!

Outings for 2018

Is there a place in Gloucestershire or slightly beyond that you think FoGA members would be interested in visiting next year? FoGA have now been organizing outings since 1993, so is it worth re-visiting some of the places that were visited then? eg. Hinton St. Mary (1993), Badminton House (1994), Prinknash Abbey (1998).

Please send me your thoughts either via email, cmbmeller@gmail.com or via the post: 30 Gretton Road, Gotherington, Near Cheltenham, GL52 9QU.

Many thanks, Caroline, Events Secretary.

FoGA Membership

The Friends have a new Membership and Giving leaflet. You may have seen them on display around the city during the History Festival and hopefully you picked some up to distribute to your friends and colleagues.



We need to increase our membership in future in order to do all we want to do to support the Archives. We especially wish to encourage a younger profile. Please do all you can to help us achieve this aim. If every Friend enrolled one new member each year, our membership would rocket.

A History Mystery Coach Trip

As with the previous outing in 2016, the only people who knew the direction the tour would take were John Chandler and the Marchants coach driver. Of course, everyone had formulated their own ideas about where we would be taken, but I doubt anyone actually pinpointed our first destination, Brecon.



(Above) A View of Brecon Cathedral.

(Right) The Cresset Stone, used to hold oil or candles to light the way to service.

John first took us to Brecon Cathedral, (left), a building given the relatively recent status as a cathedral, but with Norman origins. After outlining its history as a priory, John led us inside to explore the cathedrals' unique features: the substantial 'Green man' font, the arrow sharpening stone once embedded in a local garden, the Cresset Stone and the signatures of Matt Smith and Karen Gillan (aka Dr. Who and Amy Pond).



John then guided us around Brecon through the town's social and industrial past. Brecon is fortunate in retaining many of its old buildings, giving it the unique character lost in many similar small market towns.



Once aboard the coach again we journeyed south through the magnificent scenery that forms part of the Brecon Beacons National Park. The view of Pen y Fan, the highest peak in South Wales, was outstanding.



Our second destination was Blaenavon, a World Heritage Site since 2000, once a major producer of iron and coal. After being introduced to the history of the area at the World Heritage Centre, we took the short coach ride over to the ironworks, the best preserved 18th century foundry in the world.



A real feel for what it was like to work in such a place was encouraged through a contemporary light and sound show.



There was also an opportunity to step back in time, into the lives of the families who lived on the site. Rows of cottages had been converted into time zones: c.1790, 1840, 1940 and 1960, the later eras prompting many of us to recall our own childhoods.



Once again John created an outing to part of our region many of us had not visited for years. It was the perfect blend of different eras and aspects of history, inspiring those who joined him on this tour to return with family or friends before too long.

Travelling to Brecon 350 years ago

In the course of duty: travelling to Brecon 350 years ago

James Yorke, the new bishop of St David's, and Mary his wife did not follow quite the same route as the FOGA mystery tour, but Mary, who was a determined letter-writer, described part of their journey into Wales, calling first at Brecon, as we, too, experienced it.¹

James was a conscientious prelate, who set out on a visitation of his diocese almost as soon as he had kissed hands in June 1774. The Yorkes stayed for ten days in their own house, Forthampton Court, before they

‘sallied forth again in search of adventures. We dined at Castleditch [Eastnor] & lay at Hereford the first night, saw all that was thought worth seeing at that Town, namely a bad Cathedral & a very fine Publick Walk commanding a view of the Neighbouring Romantick Hills, Black Mountains &c with the River Wye in the front. From thence we passed over a most beautiful range of Country Hills of all sizes & shapes, some covered with hanging Woods others cultivated to the Tops, rolling over each other in delighfull confusion (the Black Mountain at a distance still keeping its preeminence) the River Wye winding through the Valley beneath us compleating the Scene! But how uncertain are the fairest Prospects! The clear sky which had hitherto accompanied us, was at once over cast, the Horizon thickened, Clouds as thick as smoke surrounded us, & prevented our seeing the nearest objects. A violent Rain followed, & continued for 14 Miles; the Bishop entered his Diosces of St Davids in the midst of Thunder, lightening, and a deluge. The same Weather with little intermission continued till we reached Brecknock, where we dined. In the afternoon the Sky cleared upon us; the Country appeared in all its beauty & taught us to lament what we had lost in the morning; we ascended gradually Trecastle, alias the black mountain being 5

¹ Some of Mary Yorke's spelling and punctuation, although not always present-day usage, has been retained to give the flavour of her letter-writing.

miles in the ascent; when we came to the Top we might have had it seems a most noble view of south Wales the Sea &c, but tho' the Sun shone on the Valley we were so surrounded with Clouds, as not to be able to distinguish anything but the Wild Downs we were upon, & we were glad to get down to chearfuller Scenes'.²

This letter to Lady Marchoness Grey, James's sister-in-law, was dated 'Aug 9th 1774. Tuesday Morn.' and was written from Aberguilly, where the bishop's palace was. That visit to Brecon was brief.

The next year James and Mary and their daughters may have stayed several night in Brecon. A letter from 'Brecknock' to James's neice Amabel, Lady Polwarth, was dated July 13th [1775], a Thursday, and described the scene.

'We reached this place last night & were received by poor Mr Bland who complains bitterly of our Roads (not without reason) & seems thoroughly tired. He is now at this moment enjoying the society of 40 more of his Brethren with the Bishop, who are all at Dinner together in a Room just by, my two Daughters enjoying the Bustle & the continual running up & down Stairs. Mr Bland is my Beaux, I took him with me in the Coach to Church & we were had up the middle Isle together preceeded by the Clergyman of the Parish white Staves etc much to my confusion when I found the Service had waited for us. The Bp (who was there before) could not conceive what grand ceremony they were waiting for, & I suppose expected at least a fine Mayor & Alderman in the Kentish stile preceeded by a Band of Musick. Guess therefore what was his surprise & what difficulty he had to keep his Countenance when Bland & I appeared together in all that state, the procession closing with Peggy & Polly, the Service beginning imediately upon Mr Bland's hanging his Hat up, upon a Peg over his Head.'³

Anthea Jones

² Bedfordshire Archives and Record Service L30/9/111/51.

³ Bedford Archives and Record Service L30/11/339/18.



The Baptismal Font at Brecon Cathedral.

Photograph courtesy of Anthea Jones.

A Visit to Owlpen Manor

Driving to Owlpen Manor is not for the faint-hearted. The road leading to the manor is still more suited to a horse and trap than any modern vehicle. It may also be part of the reason why this beautiful example of a Tudor manor house has retained that ‘other world’ feel and why it is so popular with film companies creating period dramas (‘Phantom Thread’, starring Daniel Day-Lewis, being the most recent). The visit by FoGA was arranged because only groups are welcome, the owners

keen to maintain the house as a family home as much as a destination for tourists.



Our tour with Hugo Mander, son of the current owners, began at the far side of the garden so that we could take in the full scope of the manor house, church and adjacent buildings.

Leading us then into the house Hugo gave us a fascinating and at times humorous insight into its history. We appreciated too the amount of time, effort and financial input his parents have made to ensure that Owlpen is preserved for future generations.

The visit also gave us the opportunity to visit the adjacent church, once a humble chapel before being enlarged and renovated in the early 19th century. The interior in general was much like any other parish church, but what drew our attention and held it were the beautiful and intricate mosaics at both ends of the church. Italian craftsmen created the chancel wall border during the period when the church was first renovated, whilst the Art Nouveau style of the mosaics in the tower dated from the early 20th century. They were certainly hidden gems in an otherwise ordinary church.



Snapshots from the History Festival

The first Friends-sponsored event that I attended was held in the Guildhall in Gloucester and was led by Julie Courtenay, from the Archives, and Tim Grubb, from Gloucestershire Historic Environment Record. Over 60 people attended the session on the developing *Know Your Place* website: (www.kypwest.org.uk)

First, Julie explained the ideas behind the website and the large amount of work that had gone in to co-ordinating the various maps so that they lined up accurately. She then gave a demonstration of how to use the information, showing how a place on two maps from different periods could be compared by using a slider across the screen. Next we were shown the additional information available on the maps, from old photographs to historical records.



Julie Courtenay explains Know Your Place to the Festival audience.

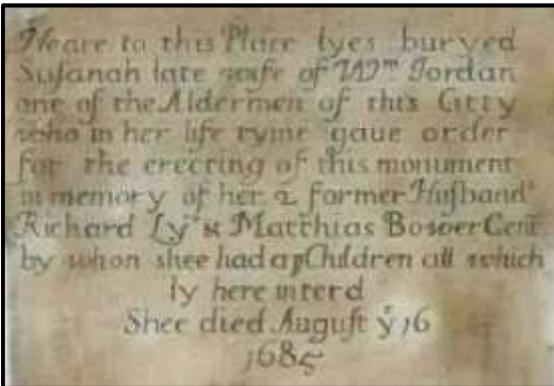
After indicating how members of the public could add their own knowledge about a location to the website, the public were then given the chance to try the system out for themselves using the laptops provided. Many were keen to test the system and happy to share their local knowledge. Everyone seemed very impressed with the ease-of-use and the potential of this new resource.

Talks by the Friends

Three members of the Friends of Gloucestershire Archives gave brief and wide-ranging talks at St Mary de Lode church during the History Festival; Fiona Mead spoke on 'Glimpses of Life in 19th Century Gloucester', Clive Andrews on 'The Sad Story of Susannah Jordan' and Heather Forbes on 'Discovering Music in the Archives'.

Fiona drew her fascinating insights from logbooks completed by some of the head teachers of Gloucester schools during the nineteenth century and covered such wide-spread subjects as epidemics and their effects upon school attendance plus the subsequent vaccinations and local events which caused much excitement such as Barton Fair, the Yeomanry Parade and the Barnum and Bailey circus procession.

She discussed the system of using pupil teachers and the need for them to pass their exams before they could be paid for their efforts. From a photograph it was evident that some of the pupil teachers were as young as 13. The effect of parental unemployment was obvious at times from the logbook entries, when pupils could not afford to pay the fees and so were absent. One of the earliest school photographs held in the Archives was taken in 1874 by Mr Rhodes.



Clive displayed this image, from St. Nicholas' Church, of the monumental inscription for Susannah Jordan, and went on to discuss her rather sad life. Susannah was married three times and became the mother of seven or eight children, all of whom died before her.

Picture by courtesy of Bob Tucker

Her first husband was Richard Lye or Lyes, who was buried in Bristol in 1657/8. A year after his death, she married again, this time to Matthias Bower of Gloucester by whom she had her children. Matthias was a rich man and when he died, in 1676, Susannah inherited much of his property. As a wealthy widow, she was again very much in demand and soon married a widower, William Jordan, an apothecary who was, at one time, Mayor of the City of Gloucester. However, the marriage only lasted for four years, with Susannah dying in 1685. Clive indicated the memorial and posed the question ‘Just how many children did Susannah have?’ What do you think?

The final speaker was Heather who enlightened us on the range of musical documents which can be discovered in the Archives. She began by telling us of a fragment of medieval music in Hampshire Record Office that survived as the cover of a 16th century account book, which first inspired her to learn how to read square notation. Similar examples exist in Gloucestershire Archives. Since parchment was too valuable to throw away when the music became out of date, it was used for other purposes.

Music is found in the most unusual of places. Take D3596/1 for example. This is catalogued as a ‘Farm Rent Account and Account Book’. It includes William Butts accounts for fields and property around Gloucester. It includes recipes for purging a horse and curing its cold – and then suddenly you find four pages of music and words for anthems to be sung by a tenor!

Heather’s next topic was an 18th century slave song, the only known manuscript of an African work song chanted in the sugar fields of Barbados. It was transcribed by Granville Sharp, one of the leading anti-slavery campaigners and came to the Archives in the papers of his kinsmen in the Lloyd-Baker family.

Finally, Heather mentioned some of the significant music collections held in the Archives, those of the Three Choirs Festival, Ivor Gurney’s music and poetry, including songs written in the trenches in the rain, and Herbert Brewer’s original score for Emmaus.

Hands on History for Families

178 people attended the Buttery in Blackfriars Priory on Saturday to participate in the Hands-on History session. They made charters and experimented with writing with quill pens.



They pretended to be policemen with encouragement from the Gloucestershire Police Archives Group.



Workshop Sessions

A full group of 16 people attended Heather's palaeography course in the Scriptorium where they learnt to recognise the old lettering and to practise transcribing early documents for themselves. Beginning with a discussion of spelling variations and peculiarities, Heather covered punctuation, or rather the lack of any, letters which were particularly difficult to read and abbreviations, especially those for 'per', 'par', 'pre' and 'pro', all of which have slightly different characters to represent them and numerals.

The group was then given various documents on which to practise what they had just learnt. They began with an illustrated indenture between Henry VII and Abbot John Islipp. Next came a section from the churchwardens' accounts of Upton St. Leonards for 1685 and 1689. An interesting account of how to make ink was the next challenge and finally the students were sent home with a recipe 'For Six Mince Pies of Indifferent Bignesses' for their homework – to transcribe, not to bake!



On the following day, thirteen people joined the workshop session on House History, led by Sally Middleton and Paul Evans. The session was

split into two halves, starting with a presentation on the types of records that exist to help the researcher, including title deeds, sale documents, census records, street directories, plans and maps.

After a break, the group divided into two parts, one part looking at examples of original documents of the type they might use during their research, whilst the other part had the opportunity to ask about their own particular property, with demonstrations of what they could find from the online 1939 Register and the Know Your Place website.

Cathedral Precincts Tour



Gloucester Cathedral at the start of the tour.

A group of Festival-Goers assembled at the Cathedral on a glorious sunny afternoon to tour the precincts. Our guide, Joan Tucker, began with the history of St. Edward's Gate leading to the early Minster church. We then proceeded to walk past each of the houses in College Green whilst Joan told us the origins and use of each property.

As we reached the shelter of St. Mary's Gate, the clouds began to gather but we continued on our way through

St. Michael's Gate towards Millers Green. And then, to the accompaniment of thunder and lightning, the heavens opened and we spent the next fifteen minutes sheltering while Joan bravely carried on with her talk. Eventually we continued but the rain eased only a little and, in the end, we had had enough. But it was well worth the drenching!

The Romance of Old Maps

Inspired by the Gloucester History Festival Event at Roots Community Café, Kingsholm, Gloucester)

There is something aesthetically pleasing – beguiling even – about maps. From the iconic and enduring tube map, connecting London’s “villages”, to the street map of New York, clearly showing the grids and blocks that make up the 5 boroughs. Many of us have representations of maps in our homes, on everything from tea towels to designer wallpaper. And the trade in antiquarian maps has never been stronger. I booked my annual holiday earlier this year and the next stop, after the travel agent’s, was my local bookshop to pick up a map of the Mediterranean island I will be spending a week visiting later in the year. People like to know where they stand – both literally, as well as metaphorically. And what better way than looking at a map?

I rediscovered my love of maps on September 5th, at a History Festival event all about the maps of Kingsholm in Gloucester, which is where Gloucestershire Archives is based. Human beings are fascinated by, and drawn to, patterns – they demand an emotional response from us. But it’s more than this. Maps are about making sense of our community. Maps help us find our way around unfamiliar territory (as with my holiday map), see where we have come from and, crucially, how our neighbourhoods and street-scene have changed and evolved.

Maps have three components – the actual cartography, calligraphy, and colour. Many of us as children will have created our own maps of imaginary islands, and hidden pirate treasure. But it is the colours that I find most appealing. With the maps we used at the History Festival event – the earliest one being dated 1880 – the colours were some of my favourites: ecru, eau de nil, oxblood, cream, indigo and grey. The colours reminded me of Henry Mayhew’s mid-Victorian street maps of East London, codifying income, class and poverty, with the blackest streets being the poorest. In our 1880 Kingsholm map there are many nurseries and fields, but it also shows the Victorian building boom of

terrace after terrace, with bay fronted villas shown as brick red oblongs and lozenges. I was reminded, also, of the “maps” of the inside of ships, especially the Titanic, with the strata of first class, second, third and steerage being a pictorial representation of the Edwardian class system.



The Victorian map of Kingsholm we used at the event showed the (now demolished) Vinegar Works, the local slaughterhouse, the City Sanitary Laundry, and the union Workhouse. But it also showed all manner of glasshouses and parks, a real variety of places of worship, small and large, Mission Rooms, a tannery, the old Iron Foundry and the site of eighteenth century Roman finds.

Around 40 people attended this drop-in event and we used a laptop and projector to display, and overlay, the maps of Kingsholm on the Know Your Place West of England website. Some people stayed for

the whole 2 hour duration, others popped in for a short while. Neighbours came together in small groups. One older man came with his daughter and she explained that he had been diagnosed with Alzheimer’s and she thought this would be a therapeutic experience for him. He immediately located the Vinegar Works and told me his

grandmother had been employed there. Every summer there was a holiday outing, and his first trip to the seaside was on one such works outing with his grandmother. He recalled his surprise and sheer joy at seeing the sea for the first time, at Porthcawl, “bluer than blue” and a “perfect day filled with sunshine”.

Other participants spotted the Roman road, took great delight in locating their houses, and were fascinated by the Lloyd George property valuations that took place in 1911 (property taxes are nothing new, and in fact have their origins in the medieval tithes). Above all, people talked to each other. The event was held in the upstairs room of a community café in the heart of Kingsholm, and there was a real buzz during the morning. There was a sense of community, of people coming together, of sharing stories, reminiscing, and valuing where they live. The maps engaged people and over cups of tea and coffee people actually queued up to talk to the Archives member of staff operating the laptop and projecting the Know Your Place maps onto the wall.

We had an artist in residence, talking to people about an Arts Council England funded mural she is designing for an outside wall at Gloucestershire Archives. It is part of our “For the Record” project. She was gathering ideas about memories and landmarks to be included in the mural – a piece of art inspired by the maps. People were engaged in a way I rarely see.

I am not an archivist, although I work at Gloucestershire Archives as a Community Heritage Development Officer. My job is to talk to people, and to promote our new Heritage Hub (due to open later this year), as well as widening participation through an expanded volunteering programme. I have rediscovered my love of maps, old and new, through an event I helped to deliver, but the last word should go to one of the participants who wrote, on their feedback form, that the event “Has helped people come together to discover the history of the city” and it “enhances Kingsholm’s sense of community”. Maps really do bring people together – cartography, calligraphy, colour, and community.

By Sally Middleton

In the Dock

During Gloucester Heritage Weekend, I took the opportunity to visit the historic Crown Court building. I had wanted to visit for a long time as it was there in 1834, when it was the Assize Court, that the brother of my 3x Great Grandfather was tried for murder. He had been involved in a vicious fight in Marshfield, (South Gloucestershire). The man he allegedly killed was Thomas YEELES who, according to his death certificate, died because of 'a blow upon the face given him by John ANDREWS'. A Coroner's inquest indicted John and he was transported to Gloucester Gaol.

John had been badly injured in the fight and a note in the margin of the gaol register recorded that he was in the prison hospital all the time. He was too ill to appear at the first Assizes and then seems to have been largely forgotten. When the next Assizes were held he was brought to court on the last day but I suspect no one had remembered to summon the witnesses. According to the *Gloucester Journal*, 'The bill against him had been ignored by the grand jury, and Mr. Skinner, for the prosecution, declined to call any evidence. The prisoner was, therefore, acquitted'.

In prison with John was the famous secularist George Jacob HOLYOAKE (1817-1906), who was serving a six-month sentence for blasphemy; the last person ever to be convicted of uttering blasphemy in a public lecture. On his release HOLYOAKE wrote a long letter to the *Cheltenham Free Press* complaining about the 'harsh and cruel' way he had been treated in Gloucester Gaol and condemning the surgeon for not insisting on better food and more exercise for sick prisoners. John ANDREWS went back to Marshfield and lived with his widowed mother until she died. He then disappeared from official records.

As I stood in the dock of Court No 1 I could not help but wonder how John felt when he stood there 183 years ago, faced with the death penalty and then told he was free to go home.

Clive Andrews

Additions to the Archives

It's been a busy time for new arrivals. We're really grateful for all these new donations and deposits, many of which have been hidden away in homes and offices for years. In particular, we were delighted that the Friends of Gloucestershire Archives helped us to purchase a small but significant group of architectural plans relating to Gloucestershire's early mental hospitals (then called 'lunatic asylums' – D14413). These iconic buildings at Coney Hill and Horton Road in Gloucester survive in very changed forms today. We were also pleased that an old minute book for the Bibury turnpike trust, covering much of the 19th Century, found its way home to Gloucestershire after being discovered in Devon (D14406).

Other interesting deposits include:

- J Air raid precaution records formerly belonging to A G Compton, Chief Air Raid Warden for Corse, Staunton and Hartpur. Include a log book of events, 1941-1945, and an Invasion Committee war book, 1944-1945 (D14380);
- J 1950s plans of trows deposited by the Company of Proprietors of the Stroudwater Navigation (D1180);
- J records of now closed sections of the Gloucestershire Royal British Legion, Women's Section throughout Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire, c.1937-2010 (D14397);
- J Records of Richard Kershaw Lumb's Foundation of the Cheltenham Industrial School (D14404);
- J Minutes of Gloucester County Amateur Swimming Association, 1914-1960 (D14405)
- J and Gotherington and Area Local History Society's text and photographic survey of houses in the village, 2012 (D14389).

We don't just collect 'traditional' paper and parchments documents. More and more we're handling digital material and we've been

developing ways of preserving these records safely too. Oral history is a popular activity for local community heritage projects and we're seeing the results of this in our growing digital archive. Newcomers in May include:

- J records of Clapham Court residents' reminiscences project in Gloucester, 2015 (D14414);
- J Dowty Heritage community archive project, 2017 (D14045, Accession 14426);
- J and, as a legacy of the Hidden Lives Project in Barton and Tredworth, more reminiscences of this area of Gloucester gathered by the St James & Christchurch community heritage project, 2014-2015 (D14419)
- J and from lifelong resident Norman White, now in his 90s, 2016 (D14416).

If you're planning on bringing items to offer to the Archives, please get in touch **before** you visit so that we can make an appointment for you. You can email archives@gloucestershire.gov.uk, or ring 01452 425295.



Clive and Heather with a sample from the D14413 purchase.

VCH Update

Undeterred by the Heritage Hub works at Alvin Street, Victoria County History volunteers have remained steadily active over recent months, as have our editors. Nearly all of Cheltenham up to 1945 has now been written up, leaving ‘just’ the post-war period to be tackled. Draft texts are being added to the VCH website.

We had hoped that the planned paperback on ‘Cheltenham before the Spa’ would be out in time to coincide with John Chandler’s talk on the same subject at the Cheltenham Literary Festival (1200, 6 October), but Christmas now seems a more achievable target, as there has been plenty to do in finalising the text, and in sorting out the maps and the illustrations.

In Cirencester, nearly all the drafting is complete, and we have commissioned extra introductory sections on the Roman town, and the area’s pre-history. Thanks to the continued generosity of the Winstone Trust, and very welcome support from the Bathurst Estate Trustees, we are now actively planning the next stage of VCH Glos 16, which will be the 9 parishes around and to the north of the town itself. This should get going early in 2018.

In Chipping Sodbury, things are going slower than expected because the part-time editor was unable to continue, but preparatory materials are still being gathered and we hope momentum will be regained in the new year.

And finally, if **any reader not already doing so** would like to join our regular supporters, please look for one of the VCH Glos leaflets on your next visit!

James Hodsdon

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Looking behind the words: what watermarks can tell us

This year's volume in the Gloucestershire Record Series is an edition of D2688 – the Giles Geast Charity Book, recording over 300 years of activity by a Tewkesbury charity. The hard work of transcribing its 334



manuscript pages fell to Dan Beaver, a US academic, but we needed to include in the introduction a physical description of the book itself, which I was happy to do. It has a rather unusual binding – see photo – and while examining that, I noticed a very clear watermark on one of the blank pages. This led to checking for any other watermarks, and eventually finding three different ones.

Watermarks are created by adding a wire pattern to the mesh used in making traditional laid paper. This much I knew, but

I'd never tried to date one before. Internet to the rescue! www.gravell.org is a good repository of comparative watermark images. The bulk of the book is made up of two separate batches of laid paper, possibly of continental manufacture. Folios 5 to 99 are watermarked with a single-handled lidded pot with two indistinct letters on its body; many similar marks are recorded in the 1560s–70s. You can see how the watermark is superimposed on the basic grid of fine wires, used to lift a one-sheet layer of paper pulp out of a large vat.



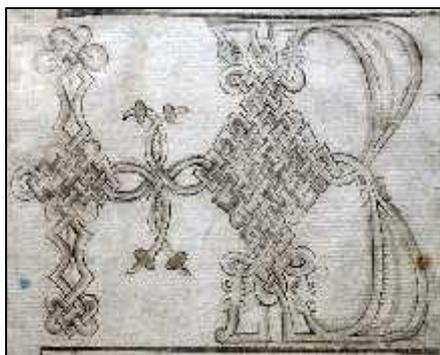


From f 100 to the end, the watermark is of a gloved hand with a fleur-de-lis at the wrist and the initials I K, and surmounted by a 5-pointed star. Similar types have been dated from the 1550s. Both these marks fit well with the content of the book.

By contrast, folios 1 to 4 are formed from two folded sheets of different stock to the rest of the book, and with a different watermark. These carry a garter badge with the motto HONI SOIT QVI MAL Y PENSE, associated with the famous papermill founded at Dartford, Kent, in 1588 by John Spilman, who benefited from a royal monopoly. Until Spilman set up his works, English paper-makers generally made only brown (wrapping) paper, the good stuff almost all coming from across the Channel. The slightly later date of the first pages matches other evidence that after wear and tear in its early years, the account book was rebound, and extra sheets tipped in as mounts for the first few damaged pages. In summary, an interesting little exercise in biblio-forensics!

We are hoping that when the edition is launched in Tewkesbury in October, our elderly friend D2688 will be on display – under GA escort, naturally! A reference copy will be available in Alvin Street, but to read more about it, or if you'd like one to keep, please see:

<http://bgas.org.uk/publications/bookblurb.php?volume=31>



The elaborate 'IB' monogram of John Bartley, who commissioned the Geast account book (GA D2688).

James Hodsdon (General Editor, Glos. Record Series)