

## **NOTTINGHAMSHIRE ARCHIVES USER GROUP**

Minutes of the meeting held at Nottinghamshire Archives on 18 July 2006

Present: Prof. J. Beckett (Chairman), Mr. M. Dorrington, Dr M. Bennett, Mr. N. Clark, Mr P Jones, Ms D Johnson, Mr S Langford, Mr P Reddish, Ms. D. Ritchie, Miss. B. Sharp, Mr D. Walker and Mr C. Weir;

Visitors: Mr N James and Mrs E Hart from TNA

Before the business meeting:

- A The members were informed of the deaths of Mrs Yvonne Ash, a former member of staff and of Mr John Symington who had recently taken up the post of Archivist (Public Services and Cataloguing). A few moments of silence were observed.
- B The members were informed of recent developments at TNA by Norman James and Liz Hart (who were at NA doing an inspection) as follows:
- The recent merger with the Office of Public Service Information
  - The production of a new vision statement by the Chief Executive which is available on TNA's website. The strategy to implement it is being drafted and will be issued for consultation in the autumn.
  - The relocation of the Family Records Centre from Islington to Kew in 2008. This will not include the GRO section run by OPCS. Consultations will be held about the delivery of family history services at Kew, including a workshop in September.
  - The acquisition of Academic Analogue Status which will enable TNA to apply for academic grants.
  - Linking of archival networks eg A2A and the Scottish networks into aUK: discussions are being held especially re funding
  - Self assessment surveys are being requested from local authority archives which will complement the inspection

NJ spoke highly of the facilities at NA but highlighted that additional storage was required. The Chairmen remarked that NAUG were aware of this and would be happy to lobby on NA's behalf if necessary. It was agreed that TNA's final report about NA would be brought to a future meeting of NAUG.

NJ thanked NAUG for their support for NA which he considered of great benefit to the service.

## **1 Apologies**

Dr. D. Johnston and Ms M. Mawson

## **2 Membership and elections**

2.1 Mr O'Malley had not stood for re-election at the end of his term of office and the Chairman recorded his thanks to him for the work he had done for NAUG. The chairman welcomed Mr P Reddish who had been elected in his place.

## **3 Minutes of the last meeting on 31 Jan 2006**

3.1 With the addition of Mr P Jones and Ms D Johnson to the list of those present, the minutes were accepted as a correct record.

## **4 Matters arising**

4.1 Item 11.2: Leadership Programme: Mr Dorrington reported that he had finished this course and had found it very useful

## **5 Practical issues**

5.1 None had been notified to the Principal Archivist.

5.2 Mr Dorrington reported that work had been undertaken in the searchroom under the Disabilities Discrimination Act, whereby a counter had been adapted for use by wheelchair users. The opportunity had been taken to rearrange the issuing counter and improve the lighting. All that was required now was the replacement of the two sets of main doors so they opened automatically.

## **6 Archive Service Performance and Statistics, 2005/6**

6.1 Mr Dorrington pointed out that all the charter standards had been met or exceeded for which he paid tribute to the staff.

6.2 With regard to the statistics he pointed out the fall in user numbers which was over 10% and which would have been higher if the BBC programme *Who do you think you are?* had not been broadcast. The figures were however compensated by the number of virtual visits (NCC website and A2A) where there had been an appreciable increase. On enquiry, Mr Dorrington confirmed that there was a general downward trend of searchroom users within archive services, a trend which Mrs Ritchie confirmed was also being experienced by libraries. The Chairman mentioned a new House History website  
<http://www.hiddenhousehistory.co.uk/>

## **7 Acquisitions Strategy**

- 7.1 Mr Dorrington explained that this was the strategy which would implement the policy presented to members previously. He pointed out that its success depended upon staffing and storage availability.
- 7.2 The Chairman highlighted the inclusion of registered deeds (Strategy item 6 point 5.1). It was agreed to add here contacting Building Societies as well as solicitors and the Land Registry.
- 7.3 On being asked, Mr Dorrington confirmed that he would welcome any information about businesses going into liquidation.
- 7.4 The Chairman suggested a contact for both the Notts Wildlife Trust and Nottingham Playhouse (Strategy item 6 point 7.5-6).
- 7.5 Mr Langford informed the meeting that discussions were taking place about parish records (Strategy item 6 point 4.2).
- 7.6 Mr Walker questioned the availability of CAB records and was reassured that there were national guidelines about their retention and any deposited would be treated as confidential with a long closure period (Strategy item 6 point 6.17).

## **8 Reports on Recent Developments at Nottinghamshire Archives**

### **8.1 General**

- 8.1.1 Cabinet member: Mr Dorrington reported that the cabinet member for Culture was now Councillor Steve Carroll; our former portfolio holder, Councillor Baron now held the portfolio for Finance and Property.
- 8.1.2 NCC restructure: Mr Dorrington reported that the Council was being restructured and Libraries, Archives and Information (LA and I) would become part of new Communities Department which included the present Environment and Culture & Community departments. The strategic director would be our present director, Mick Burrows, and below him there would be service directors including one for Culture under which LA and I would fall. There would then be appointed a Head of LA and I to whom the Principal Archivist would report.  
  
There had been a budget cut of 1% this year and Mr Dorrington anticipated further cuts in years to come.
- 8.1.3 Staffing: the post of conservator had been advertised for the third time, the closing date being 21 July. The post of Archivist (Public Services and Cataloguing) was with the vacancy panel.

8.1.4 Research Service: due to the increase in written/email enquiries it had been decided to set up a paid research service. It would initially be for 10 hours a week. Staff would still answer enquiries about our holdings and suggested lines of research free of charge but any research would need to be paid for either by employing the Archives' research assistant or one of the record agents.

## 8.2 Archive Services

Miss Sharp presented her report (attached). Mr Walker enquired about the availability of the Southwell Chapter Archive and was assured it was available and NA had a copy of the Chapter's catalogue from which items could be found.

## 8.3 Public Services and Outreach

Mr Weir presented his report (attached)

# 9 National and Regional Archive issues

## 9.1 TNA Self-assessment

9.1.1 Following on from Mr James' earlier comments, Mr Dorrington explained that this was a pilot and that the results would not be published widely. From it however TNA will inform him whether NA is a 3, 2, 1 or 0 star service. In subsequent years a league table of archives will be published. There is also the hope by TNA that it can be used in the future with the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) audit. The pilot is taking longer than originally thought so when the results are expected is unknown.

## 9.2 Learn with Museums and Archives (Strategic Commissioning Initiative)

9.2.1 Mr Weir reported that a bid had been made for funds to create an on-line resource on Black History which would link with schools and be entitled 'From Slavery to Citizenship- the Nottinghamshire Experience'. The project has been short-listed and if final approval is received should begin in the autumn.

# 10 Any other business

10.1 University Dept of Manuscripts: in Dr Johnston's absence, Mr Reddish, who sits on the Manuscripts and Special Collections User Group, updated members about the Manuscript Department's move ie that all the archives were now at King's Meadow and that the Department hoped to re-open to the public in late August or early September.

# 11 Date of next meeting: 30 January 2007 @ 4.30pm at Notts Archives

## Archive Services Report: July 2006

**Accessioning and Cataloguing:** There have been 73 accessions since the last meeting including a large number of records relating to societies eg Newark Engineering Society, 1928-92 (acc 6950), Nottingham Gliding Club, 1930-36 (acc 6968), Nottingham Society of Artists (additional), 1991-2000 (acc 6984; 6996) and Nottingham and District Society of Organists, 1934-2005 (acc 6997).

We have also received papers relating to the National Council of Women: Nottingham and Notts Branch, 1936-1997 (acc 6979) and additional papers concerning the lace manufacturers Guy Birkin Ltd, 1919-2003 (acc 7017).

The customisation of the CALM software has been completed and work is now progressing on the transfer of the data from IMPReS to CALM. In due course the data will appear on the internet. Thanks must be recorded to Jo Peet for all her work on this project.

The cataloguing of the City archive continues.

**Records Management:** The annual review of files continues. Discussions are being held with departments in an attempt to resolve some of their storage problems.

**Conservation:** Work continues on the implementation of the action plan arising from the completion of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council's standard *Benchmarks in Collection Care*. In particular the storage of maps and plans is being re-considered.

A major project has just been completed on the repair prior to digitisation of the Greasley parish map of 1853. This has been a joint project with Kimberley Local History Society with funding from the Local Heritage Initiative. The map measures c15 feet by 8 feet 6 inches and so has been an awkward item to work on!

In addition work continues in the Unit on work for the local studies libraries, while the Temporary Preservation Assistant has undertaken a lot of the cleaning required on new accessions.

**Volunteers:** The entering of the Southwell Probate data has been completed but work still needs to be done on checking it before it is available to the public. Meanwhile the volunteers have begun a similar exercise for the Archdeaconry of Nottingham probate records. The first and second phases of the Bishop's Transcripts' project (ie from 1813-36 and 1836 onwards) have been completed and the project is continuing with phase three which is the listing of the transcripts from c1598 to 1812. Unfortunately the entering of the lists onto CALM has been held up by staff absence due to sickness.

## **Public Services Report: July 2006**

### **Search Room**

All the old foolscap catalogues have now been copied by the archive assistants on to A4 and placed into new binders with new labels. It is now impossible to get hold of foolscap binders so this project was a priority. Creating this new set has also allowed us to use the old catalogues as a security set and we are re-locating them to the Record Centre at Glaisdale.

### **Outreach**

Recent visits have included groups from New College, Nottingham, The Retired Teachers' Association and Bispham Drive School, Toton. The school visit introduced the 9-10 year-old pupils to using archives and as part of the morning workshop they created facsimile copies of mediaeval charters. On the 24 July the display in our reception case will feature the theme of 'Archives In Education' – the case has been put together by two people here on placements in April.

Since the 15 May we have had Jane Elliott here on a New Deal Job Seekers scheme in association with Chesterfield Job Centre. Jane come in each day from 9.30am to 4pm and has been cleaning and listing Warsop building plans. Jane was due to finish in early August but her stay has been extended until mid-September.

In the past few weeks we have been liaising with Parkhill Church in Nottingham on Afro-Caribbean history and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> August there will be a 5-week exhibition at the Council House on George Africanus that will include a variety of material from the Archives.

In the autumn we will be holding an Open Day and, as usual, a series of lunchtime talks. The Open Day, which is part of the English Heritage scheme, will be on the 9 September with two tours of the building, at 1.30 and 3.30pm. The lunchtime talks series will begin on the 25 October with myself talking about the life and career of cinema organist Jack Helyer. Then on the 8 November we have Michael Austin on the theme of 'Cheers, Cheats & Challenges: Nottinghamshire Sports 1750-1900'. On the 22 November there is Brenda Pask on Early Music in Newark and on the 6 December there is Peter Lester on Dream Palaces: the History of Nottinghamshire Cinema'.

Also this autumn we are providing a talk at Arnold Library for Local History Month on 'Discovering Local Archives' and we are providing a display of archives on the Abel Collins Almshouses of Nottingham in early October that will coincide with a seminar of the Almshouses Association in Nottingham at that time.