

## **NOTTINGHAMSHIRE ARCHIVES USER GROUP**

Minutes of the meeting held at Nottinghamshire Archives on 27 January 2009-

Present: Prof.J. Beckett (Chairman), Mr.M. Dorrington, Mr.P.Gaw, Miss B. Sharp, Mr.C. Weir, Mr.P. Jones, Ms B. Lockyer, Mr.P. Reddish, Ms.D. Johnson, Mr.D. Walker

### **1 Apologies**

Prof.M. Bennett, Dr.D. Johnston, Ms.D. Ritchie

### **2 Membership**

It was reported that Mr.S. Langford had taken early retirement owing to ill health. It was agreed that Prof. Beckett would send him a letter of thanks on behalf of the Group thanking him for his contribution. Mr. Dorrington will write to the Diocesan Chief executive with regard to a successor.

### **3 Minutes of the last meeting**

These were accepted as a correct record.

### **4 Matters Arising**

4.1 Item 4.2 Service Director (Culture). Mr. Dorrington reported that the new director, Patrick Candler, starts on 16 February.

4.2 Item 7.2 Car Parking. Mr. Dorrington indicated that the car parking situation/information continues to be addressed where practicable.

4.3 Item 8.2. Virtual Visits. Mr. Dorrington commented that the recording of web hits was moving from Net Tracker to Google Analytic and this would enable some geographical breakdown of hits though not by individual places.

### **5 Practical Issues**

5.1 Mr.P. Reddish raised the issue of the number of lockers currently out of order. Ms.B. Lockyer commented that some keys had now been replaced so those lockers were now operational again but a number had faulty mechanisms. Mr. Dorrington remarked that the possibility of key fobs were being pursued and that a code system might be considered in the future

5.2 Mr.P. Jones raised the issue of markers in the place of removed card indexes. It was noted that the Code of Conduct discouraged the removal of cards but a number of cards would be made for 'occasional use'.

## **6 The National Archives Self-Assessment**

Mr. D. Dorrington reported on the results of the 2008 assessment. The Archives had now gained a 4 star rating and were in the top 10% of local authority services. The Assessment also noted that the service was 'likely to improve further'. The full national results had still not been released. The next Assessment would not be until 2010. Prof. Beckett congratulated the service on the results and offered to write to the relevant cabinet member with a copy to the new Director, also highlighting the need for an extension.

## **7 Public Consultation**

The survey would take place in February and would seek to gather views on opening times, any ideas for the new extension (public facilities) and on ideas for improvements to the Reprographics service.

It was noted that visitor numbers had risen, possibly as a result of WEA course on Family History at the Archives, student visits and community projects.

It was agreed to distribute the survey forms to Thoroton Society members and the Nottinghamshire Family History Society and to some Libraries.

## **8 Security review and revised Code of Conduct**

The review and revised Code follow a number of security breaches at some institutions around the UK. Among the changes to procedure are more stringent guidelines on what can be brought into the search room, laptop searches prior to exit, the issuing of only one bundle at a time a new visitor's book which will only have visitors' postcode, not full addresses.

After discussion it was agreed that the new Code should indicate that all laptops should be examined prior to exiting the Archives search area. This issue of see-through bags would be kept under consideration. Ms. D. Johnson asked if an out-of-order bundle could be drawn to the attention of staff- Mr. M. Dorrington replied that this was acceptable.

## **9 EMRAC User Conference**

Mr. Dorrington reported that the Conference was to be held on the theme of estate records on 19<sup>th</sup> March at Holme Pierrepont Hall. Publicity was going out.

## **10 Reports on recent developments at Nottinghamshire Archives**

### **10.1 General**

10.1.1 Mr. Dorrington reported that though the Regional bid to the National Cataloguing Grants Scheme, to list business records, had not been successful for, the Nottinghamshire Archives bid to list the Minster archives had been successful. This was the largest single grant (£38,000) and one of 10 successful projects to receive a grant. The grant would allow for the employment of an archivist for 15 months. Related to this work would be a volunteer project to preserve/number the archives. The project would begin during April. Mr. Dorrington outlined the nature of the Minster archives (they relate to Southwell Chapter and Peculiar).

10.1.2 Mr. Dorrington reported that the service currently had two temporary archives assistants (Kathryn Rooke and Thomas Kippenburger) to help cover staff absences.

10.1.3 Mr. Dorrington reported that the Archives On-Line catalogue had been launched

10.1.4 Mr. Dorrington reported that the service would be acquiring through an Ulverscroft grant, a video magnifier that could enlarge up to x60. It would largely replace the ultra-violet light. It had many adaptations, for example different colour backgrounds, to help with various visual problems.

10.1.5 Mr. Dorrington reported that 'Southwell Inns and Alehouses' had been launched in September 2008. The launch had proved very successful.

### **10.2 Archives Services Report (see attached)**

Ms. Sharp presented her report.

### **10.3 Public Services & Outreach Report (see attached)**

Mr. Weir presented his report.

## **11 National & Regional Archive issues**

### **11.1 MLA East Midlands**

Mr. Dorrington reported that this would be wound up by the end of March this year. There were concerns in the archives community about the continuity of some work areas, including the emsource website, the Regional diversity group and a projected 'ancestral/literary tourism' project.

### **11.2 Government Strategy for Archives**

Mr. Dorrington reported that a strategy had been due to be launched at the Society of Archivists Conference in September 2008, in consultation with the Chief Executive of MLA, but this had not been forthcoming. It was hoped that further progress would be made in due course.

**12 Any Other Business**     None

## **13 Date of next meeting**

**Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2009 at 4.30pm at Nottinghamshire Archives**

## Archive Services Report

**Accessioning and Cataloguing:** There have been 129 accessions since the last meeting; a greater number than usual in a six-monthly period because 26 separate deposits were transferred to NA from Newark Library. These included mainly society records such as the YMCA, Boys' Club and the Newark and District Football League.

Other recent accessions include the records of Rampton Hospital (acc 7444), the papers of John Samuels (acc 7443), those of WE Hopkin of Eastwood, which includes papers relating to DH Lawrence of whom Hopkins was a friend (acc 7434) and those of the International Sheep Dog Society, 1955-1963 (acc 7459).

With regard to cataloguing, work continues on the Tallents correspondence and the City Engineering plans while work on the parish council and district council records is nearing completion. In addition 59 small deposits have been catalogued; this includes all newly acquired parish registers and school logbooks and admission registers which we always catalogue immediately.

**Conservation:** National Preservation Office's Preservation Assessment Survey: the draft of this report on the preservation condition of our holdings has been received and the final report should be received in the next couple of months. An action plan based on its findings will then be drawn up. Work has continued under the MLA's *Benchmarks in Collection Care* standard and enclosures have been made by the conservation staff for many of the more heavily used volumes in storage. A review of our flat item storage is now in progress.

**Volunteers:** These have continued to spend Thursday afternoons wrapping or re-wrapping volumes and with their work and that of the archive assistants we hope to have all the work completed in the next few months. The volunteers are also continuing with the Bishop's Transcripts and the Exchequer court probate records project.

A further project has been undertaken by Mr and Mrs Reddish on the Playhouse Archive. This archive includes the names of many identifiable people for which we require birth and death (if applicable) dates and a brief description for the personal index on NAWCAT. Mr and Mrs Reddish have been gathering this information for us which can then be added to CALM.

## Public Services Report

Since the last meeting there have been talks to various groups, including 2 family history adult education groups, Arnold History Group, the University of Nottingham Certificate in Local History students, pupils from Holgate School , Hucknall, 3 groups of Nottingham Trent University students with a total of about 90 students all together, and a visit from the Notts Industrial Archaeology Society on the theme of the Raleigh archives. We also hosted visits as part of the Heritage Open days, we put on the annual series of lunchtime talks, which had full bookings, and we hired the meetings room to a WEA Family history class for a period of 10 weeks and provided a session on archives for the class.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> November we contributed a 'stand' at the BBC First World War Remembrance event at Nottingham Castle. This had been very well publicised on local radio and on East Midlands Today and it was very busy – in total there were about 2000 visitors to the event. We had taken along a display that featured a number of individuals from the 1914-18 period, including Albert Ball, and we had our large bannerstands. It's possible, though not definite, that the BBC will be putting on a similar event at the Castle later this year to mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of WW2.

More recently we had a visit from 7 city museum staff and the Schools Loans service based in Lenton, and we are hoping that this will lead to some future partnership links.

At the last User Group meeting I reported that we had led a project in partnership with a creative writer for pupils at Rosslyn School, Aspley in Nottingham to create a drama based on the archives relating to the life of George Africanus. I'm pleased to report now that the drama was performed recently at a Diversity education conference held in Nottingham.

At the last Group meeting I was also able to report that we had started working with teachers and pupils at Holgate School, Hucknall, on a project to build a curriculum resource on Industrial Change. This work is now well advanced and we will be working on a final draft of the Learning Package over the next two to three weeks.

At present we are working on a display that will start in Mid-March this year on the theme of poor law apprenticeship. This is being put together by Jo Peet in association with the Workhouse staff and Workhouse volunteers. It will include material about the Cuckney Mill apprentices. Jo will also be doing a talk on apprenticeship at the Workhouse on the 7<sup>th</sup> April and there will be an outreach event linked to the same theme at some time during the display period.

We are also planning two weekend activities which will be based at the Archives. Both the dates are currently provisional. Firstly we are holding an Archives Family Fun Day on the 18 April that will include activities for children

like marbling paper and papermaking, signing on apprentices, and tours of the building. The other event, on the 13 June, will be a study day on Manorial records and Landscapes. The day will aim to give an insight into a range of manorial records and how to use them and a module on local mediaeval landscapes while the afternoon will involve a trip to a manor house site. These events will be included on our programme of events for the first half of the year which is in the course of preparation. The programme will include booking details for our next Family History Hour which will start on the 28 April and again be on Tuesday evenings.

This year sees the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of the Archives service so we are organising an anniversary event in August – this would be a Social Evening, possibly at County Hall, though we haven't confirmed any details yet and we will badge the autumn series of talks with the Anniversary theme.