

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE ARCHIVES USER GROUP

Minutes of the meeting held at Nottinghamshire Archives on 29 January 2008

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

1. Apologies

Mr. S. Langford, Ms. D. Johnson

2. Membership, Co-option & Elections

1.1 The Chairman welcomed Dr. D. Crook to the User Group. Dr. Crook had recently retired from The National Archives after 34 years service; he has a particular interest in mediaeval records.

1.2 It was noted that two positions on the Group were coming up for election. Mr Jones indicated his interest in standing again for election.

3. Minutes of the last meeting on 17 July 2007

With one amendment, that for item 11.1, the words Charity Commissioners should read Poor Law Commissioners, these were accepted as a correct record.

4. Matters Arising

4.1 It was noted that David Lathrope had been awarded the MBE

4.2 Mr. Dorrington reported that two alternative designs for the office's extension were being considered. The Group authorised Prof. Beckett to liaise with Mr. Dorrington on consideration of the designs.

5. Practical Issues

None had been submitted but there was some discussion of car parking problems. Mr. Dorrington noted that there was a potential problem with parking because of the intended City Council parking levy.

6. The National Archives Self-Assessment

Mr. Dorrington reported that the Archives had retained its 3 star rating and was in the top 10% of local authority services.

Prof. Bennett highlighted the low scores in some categories of 'Access & Outreach'. Mr. Weir outlined the work that was being undertaken in these areas. Mr. Gaw indicated that there might be opportunities to develop this area

of work subject to a review of the Library's structure. Prof. Beckett welcomed this possibility.

7 Reports on Recent Developments at Nottinghamshire Archives

7.1 General

7.1.1 Staffing

- Mr. Dorrington reported that a Service Director for Culture had not yet been appointed.
- Archivist Will Bell had left for a records management post in Cumbria and Richard Burman had been appointed to this post.
- Peter Hammond has been appointed to the Research Assistant post.
- Claire Armstrong has been recruited to the trainee conservator post.
- 2 staff have been on long-term sickness but both have now returned.

7.1.2 Publications

- 'Turning Back The Pages of Old Broad Marsh & Narrow Marsh' has been published – it is produced by the Archives from images mostly in its own collections.
- 'Poor As A Stockinger' has been reprinted at the request of Ruddington Framework Knitters Museum
- 'Castles of Nottinghamshire' is to be launched at Newark
- Work by Archives staff continues on 'Turning Back The Pages of Raleigh Cycles of Nottingham' for production at some time after the opening of the Raleigh exhibition. The exhibition is being undertaken in association with the University of Nottingham Manuscripts Department and will open on 12 April.

7.2 Archive Service (see attached report)

7.3 Public Services and Outreach (see attached report)

8 National and Regional archive Issues

8.2 MSD reported that the Regional bid for cataloguing business records to the Esmee Fairbairn/Pilgrim Trust had not been successful. It was agreed that it would be useful to check what criteria had been used for the assessment of bids. Prof Beckett will write to the Trust to ask for more details about the bid's rejection.

8.3 The Archives has been liaising, as part of the Young Cultural Creators programme, with Rosslyn Park School, Aspley and a creative writer to create a drama based on the life of George Africanus. MSD would raise concerns, along with some other East Midlands offices, on the lack of direction from the management consultant on the YCC programme.

8.4 David Crook reported that The National Archives is going through a period of considerable upheaval, in part linked to the removal of the Family Records Centre to the TNA and to finance problems relating to their digitisation programme.

8.5 Prof Beckett reported that he had met Mrs Hodge, (DCMS) as part of a delegation that included Vic Gray but the meeting had not been positive.

9 Any Other Business

9.2 Dr D. Johnston reported that the Manuscripts Department had made a successful bid in 2007 for funding for the preservation and digitisation of Middleton manuscripts.

Dr D. Johnston indicated that she was very pleased with the recent collaboration of Nottinghamshire Archives and the Manuscripts Department on the forthcoming exhibition at the Weston Gallery.

9.3 Prof. Beckett reported on the successful Southwell Diocesan HLF bid, led by Stephen Langford, for the Church History website which would include a guide book, and education programmes. It would begin in April/May.

10 Date of Next Meeting

15 July 2008 at 4.30pm at Nottinghamshire Archives

Archive Services Report: January 2008

Accessioning and Cataloguing: There have been 98 accessions since the last meeting.

Additional deposits were received from the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Field Club (acc 7201), the Thomas Underwood Charity (acc 7287 and through the BRA, deeds and papers relating to the Belper of Kingston estate (acc 7214).

In accordance with this year's objectives in the *Acquisition Strategy*, all schools have been circulated requesting they deposit their log books and admission registers. Four responses were received in the first week and we hope they will continue. In one case there should be the additional deposit of some parish council records.

Also as part of the *Strategy*, the National Farmer's Union were contacted and an article should appear in the summer encouraging the deposit of farming records; the article will highlight the holdings of NA but also mention the other Archives in the region.

This year saw the transfer of the licensing of betting and gaming from Magistrates Courts to local authorities and so each court was contacted, their records surveyed and where appropriate, deposits made.

With regard to cataloguing, work continues on the District and Parish Council deposits. Work on Tallents has been interrupted by the preparation of the exhibition at the University, while all archivists have been involved in the editing of cataloguing data in preparation for it to be launched on the web. Unfortunately this project has been held up by the re-organisation of the Council's IT department and the personnel involved in the project leaving and not being immediately replaced.

Conservation: The rearrangement of the storage of volumes to meet the recommendations of the MLA's *Benchmarks in Collection Care* standard has nearly been completed in one storage area.

The separation of the tithe maps and schedules has been completed for approximately 60 parishes (just over a third of the total) and many of the documents recorded as being in need of conservation during the stock take of the parish records have been repaired.

Volunteers: The Bishop's Transcript project, c1598 to 1812, is progressing well, letter G having been reached while the half way mark has been reached in the Exchequer court probate records project.

Microfilming: the annual microfilming of this year's parish registers should begin shortly; it should not take long as there are only c20 volumes to film.

Public Services Report: January 2008

Since the last report we have held a heritage Open Day, that was fully booked and a series of 4 lunchtime talks, as part of the Archive Awareness campaign on the theme of 'Freedom & Liberty', which were also fully booked. Last December we also held a series of 15 minute taster sessions for newcomers. There were 3 sessions on 'Finding Your way Round the Search Room', one on 'Cemetery indexes' and one on 'Poor Law Finding Aids'. They were held at different times of the day to allow people with different schedules to join in. The evaluation of the talks seemed very favourable and we are planning to organise another autumn series for this year linked to the 2008 Archive Awareness theme of 'Community Participation'. For the autumn we would also like to mark the fact that 2008 is 'The Year of Reading'.

In October the publication 'Turning Back the Pages of Old Broad Marsh & Narrow Marsh' was launched at the Archives. This was compiled by Nick Smith and Chris Weir and included a variety of photographs and other documentary sources on the history of the Marsh areas. Some of the material came from the manager of the Broad Marsh Shopping Centre which has purchased copies for their own staff and to sell in the Centre. As a follow-on to the publication of the book we have organised a Saturday morning event at the Archives on the 1st March on Discovering The Marshes which will include a talk about the area and a session by The Storytellers of Nottingham'.

The publication 'Poor As a Stockinger' originally produced in 1998 has recently been reprinted with minor alterations and corrections – many of the copies have gone for sale at the Ruddington Frameworkknitters Museum.

Group visits to the Archives have included WEA family history groups, the Thoroton Society and I was very pleased to be invited to Aspley Library, as part of their 70th anniversary activities, where I led a session for 50 people, mostly schoolchildren, on 'Children's Lives'. I also presented a paper at the 2007 Society of Archivists conference on Education Work at Nottinghamshire Archives.

Last November we undertook another PSQG survey that will help us assess our services. At present the returns are with PSQG but in due course the analysis will be available and this will also enable a level of comparison with other Archive services.

In my last report I highlighted work we had undertaken for the emsource website on the topic 'Slavery To Citizenship'. Out of that work we have now completed a series of 6 display panels, titled 'Nottinghamshire's African-Caribbean Heritage' and we have done a duplicate set so that one set can circulate around external venues from this year on. We have also just completed a series of 5 display panels on the theme of 'Archives 4 Youth'. These panels, funded under the Positive Action Initiative via MLA East Midlands, were created through consultation with pupils at Elliott Durham

School in Nottingham and pupils drawn from across the East Midlands through a voluntary project called Embrace. Their views guided the format and content of the panels. Again we have done a duplicate set of the panels which can now be loaned out to external organisations.

On the subject of exhibitions we have been working in association with the University of Nottingham Manuscripts department in putting on an exhibition in the Weston Gallery pavilion at Highfields on 'Wheels Of Fortune The Story of Raleigh Cycles of Nottingham' that will run from mid-April to early August. It will be based on the archives of the Company which include advertising posters, catalogues and photographs of all kinds of bicycles, factory interiors and welfare trips by the staff.

We are also liaising with Nottingham City Council on a civic exhibition being held at the Council House in mid-April that celebrates the life and civic contribution of councillor Frank Dennett. The exhibition will include some of Nottingham's charters and archival albums of images of former sheriffs and mayors, where they have survived, are being created by the Corporation in association with the archives as part of this work.

Finally, we are working currently on a Young Cultural creators' project that brings schools and the Archives together to create a drama based on archive material relating to the life of George Africanus. This involves 16 junior pupils from Rosslyn Park School in Aspley, with Nottinghamshire Archives and a creative writer and hopefully will result in a performance event held in Aspley for parents.