



# Time *from* 2 Time

Staffordshire & Stoke on Trent Archive Service Newsletter

Issue 2 November 2001

## New light on a passionate swan: some unpublished letters of a Lichfield poetess

**Visitors to Lichfield Record Office can gain insights into the views and character of the poetess Anna Seward, known in her hey-day as "the Swan of Lichfield", from some letters sent and received by her and members of her family between 1764 and 1807 (D262/1).**

In them one can read of the impending marriage and untimely death of Anna's 20-year-old sister, Sarah; of the fear of Canon Thomas Seward, Anna's father, that she might be straying from Anglican orthodoxy; of her views on parliamentary reform and on those two other leading Lichfieldians, Samuel Johnson and Erasmus Darwin.

Anna professed herself indifferent to public reaction to

her literary work because she did not seek to make money from it, and she comforted herself with the thought that even great authors only got all the recognition they deserved after their deaths. Two hundred years on, it cannot be claimed that she has established herself in the first rank of the literary pantheon (as she might have put it), and the style of these letters is often prolix and affected to the modern eye. Yet they show that she was a



*Anna Seward*

woman of intelligence and spirit who looked beyond her immediate surroundings and who gained some measure of celebrity in her own time.

## Extension to the Staffordshire Record Office: LATEST NEWS

**Work on the extension to the Staffordshire Record Office finally began on 6th August 2001.**

There was considerable slippage on the original projected start date of November 2000, not least because of the complexity of the design and specification and the need for further modifications to minimise disruption to the existing building. In particular, the new archive storage areas at first and second floor levels must comply with the revised and very stringent British Standard for Archival Storage (BS5454). This has been a major challenge for the engineers working on the project. It was also necessary for us to obtain further funding for the building and we are most grateful to the County Council for their continued support for the project. The building contract is for nine months so do not expect completion until April 2002.

We have been advised that it will not be necessary to close for a lengthy period during the building work so we hope to maintain business as usual. We do ask people to be patient, as we may have to make changes to the operation of the public service as the contract period moves on. In the later months we expect that there will be restrictions on the availability of some collections when the builders reach the stage of joining the new extension to the existing building at first and second floor levels. We also advise you in the interests of your safety not to use the Members' car park at the back of the Record Office as a short cut from North Walls during the building work. The back gate to the car park will be used regularly by contractors' traffic.

We have been keeping you informed about progress in our series of Extension Update leaflets and on our web site and will continue to do so.

## GATEWAY TO THE PAST

Since the first issue of the Newsletter in January 2001 considerable progress has been made with the Heritage Lottery Fund funded project, Gateway to the Past. The catalogues of a range of collections have been entered on to the database using the CALM 2000 archive management software, and significant progress has also been made in proofreading and indexing the catalogues.

The catalogue database now contains the records of around 350 Anglican parishes covering not only the current administrative county, but also the City of Stoke on Trent and the West Midlands boroughs. Complimenting these collections are the administrative records of the Diocese of Lichfield and its predecessors, which in the medieval period covered three entire counties and significant parts of three others. The family and estate papers of the Dukes of Sutherland constitute the largest individual collection of records deposited with the Archive Service, with the catalogue running to 2,000 pages. They illustrate the rise in importance of a local gentry

family to national prominence, as well as the means by which the estates were exploited both economically and politically. The records of the pottery industry and of the Methodist churches held by Stoke on Trent City Archives have also been entered onto the database.

It is planned to make a partial copy of the catalogue database available on a trial basis in the reading rooms at Staffordshire Record Office and Lichfield Record Office by the end of October 2001. This will give users the opportunity to comment, and for those comments to be fed into the review process before the catalogue is made available over the internet in April 2002.

Gateway to the Past is an exciting development for the Archive Service. It will provide us with an excellent base on which to build an archival network for the future. We also hope that, by facilitating access to the archive collections in our care, it will help to encourage their further use and heighten public awareness of Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent's rich archival heritage.

## INVESTING IN OUR PEOPLE

Earlier this year, the Archive Service was delighted to be awarded recognition under the Investors in People Standard.

Working towards the Standard involves a considerable amount of hard work for a small service and it demanded a strong commitment from all of us. It made us take a long and hard look at our training, development and evaluation processes, to see how we could improve them to achieve a better result for our staff. All of this work is crucial in helping to support continuous improvement in our services for our customers. In particular the assessor commended us for our own programmes of in-house training, carried out on Friday mornings at the Staffordshire Record Office, and our good service delivery results against our performance indicators.

The award was presented on 2nd April by County Councillor TR Wright, Chairman of the County Council and a member of the Joint Archives Committee, at a very informal and enjoyable event at the Staffordshire Record Office.

Our staff are our greatest asset and achieving Investors recognition is a demonstration of our commitment and our pride in them.



Deeds Clerk Ruth Humphreys accepting the award from Councillor and Mrs Wright

## EVENING OPENING AT THE STAFFORDSHIRE RECORD OFFICE

In response to public demand, the Staffordshire Record Office has extended its opening hours by introducing a Wednesday evening opening. From 4th July the Record Office has remained open until 8pm every Wednesday. A full service is in operation, so bookings can be made in the usual way.

The evening opening will run for a 12 month pilot period. During this time its use will be monitored very carefully and towards the end of the trial period, evening users will be consulted about whether it should continue or not.

This extension of the Record Office opening hours will

enable those people who cannot usually visit during our normal office hours to make use of our holdings at what is hopefully a more convenient time. We very much hope that people will see it as a positive service improvement.



Archive Assistant Liz White and Jacqui Barker welcome our first evening visitor

## Caring for your Family Papers:

A leaflet for users of the service that explains briefly how they can best care for their family collections.

The leaflet provides advice on the basic preservation and packaging techniques available to arrest current problems and to prevent further damage to the documents.

It does not provide details of conservation techniques and procedures.

The leaflet is divided into categories which include: A general introduction; Environment and Storage advice; Do's and Don'ts; along with sections which provide advice on paper, photographs, volumes and a list of useful addresses and suppliers.

## Recent Publications

Our latest publication is *Dwelling in the Past*. This is a History of House pack introducing you to some of the main sources available within the Archive Service for tracing the history of your house. It contains nine leaflets on different aspects of house history. It costs £5.50 plus 81p (UK) or £1.38 (Overseas) postage and packing.

### Other publications:

*Cup and Saucerland*, reprint of the book by the Rev Malcolm Graham, originally published in 1908, with an introduction by Miranda Goodby of the Potteries Museum £4.99 plus 81p (UK) or £1.38 (Overseas) postage and packing

*A History of Burslem*, reprint from Victoria County History vol VIII £4.00 plus 81p (UK) or £1.38 (Overseas) postage and packing

*A History of Stoke upon Trent*, reprint from Victoria County History vol VIII £3.50 plus 71p (UK) or £1.19 (Overseas) postage and packing

*A History of Tunstall*, reprint from Victoria County History vol VIII £3.00 plus 59p (UK) or £1.00 (Overseas) postage and packing

*List of Accessions for 2000, Staffordshire & Stoke on Trent Archive Service* £1.00 plus 24p (UK) or 62p (Overseas) postage and packing

These are available to personal callers to the Archive Service or by post from Staffordshire Record Office.



Dwelling in the Past

## Local Events

The Tamworth local history fair was held in the historic surroundings of Tamworth Castle on 2nd June this year. Besides Archivist in Charge at Lichfield Martin Sanders and Archive Assistant Ruth Hanslow, it was attended by representatives of the Arts and Museums Service and a number of local voluntary groups. We had a display of our publications and we offered visitors advice on research and on the deposit of documents.

The Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service was also present at the **Border History, Local & Family History Day** at Alsager Civic Centre on Saturday 6th October 2001 and at the **Walsall History Fair** at Walsall Town Hall on Saturday 13th October 2001.

## Access to Archives

The Archive Service is participating in A2A, a joint partnership between the British Library, Historical Manuscripts Commission and the Public Record Office, to establish electronic access to the archives of England by making the catalogues of local and central archives available on the Internet. Photocopies of catalogues of most of our Quarter Sessions and Petty Sessions records have already been sent to the Public Record Office, with the exception of a few lists which are unsuitable at present due to their nature.

Muck and Brass, an A2A project based in the West Midlands, reflects the historic character and geography of this region with its industrial heartland and rural hinterland. It is retrospectively converting the catalogues of estate and personal archives (which contain many of the most spectacular archives in repositories) and those of industry and trade. Photocopies of relevant lists will be sent to Shropshire Records and Research Centre where the marking up for this project will take place. All these catalogues will be mounted on the Internet on the A2A database.

The provision of catalogue information from archive bodies of every kind across the country via a single search on a single Web-site will open up archives to the whole public, in England, the UK and world wide.

## OUR PERFORMANCE IN 2001/2002

Under Best Value the Archive Service is required to set local performance indicators for aspects of its performance and to publish its performance against its estimated targets under each indicator. Our performance indicators have been chosen to reflect: user satisfaction, the use of our reading room premises by the public and our level of activity in getting in collections of archives. The results are published annually in Staffordshire County Council's Best Value Performance Plan and on our own web site, but if you have not had the opportunity to see either of these, here are last year's results:

Description of indicator	Actual 1999/2000	Target 2000/2001	Estimate 2000/2001	Actual 2000/2001
Occupancy rate for public work spaces in reading rooms  The purpose of this is to indicate the extent of use of the reading room facilities	100.5%	101%	102%	106%
Percentage of visitors expressing themselves satisfied or very satisfied with services overall	97.3%	95%	95%	final figure not yet available
Number of approaches to/by owners regarding deposit of collections with the Archive Service	160	190	185	185

## cdroms @ staffordshire record office

Staffordshire Record Office has recently purchased the following cdroms

### Soldiers Died in The Great War 1914-1919

### Army Roll of Honour- Soldiers Died in The Second World War 1939-1945

### 1851 British Census (Devon, Norfolk and Warwick)

### 1881 British Census and National Index

### Vital Records Index British Isles

### Mormon Immigration Index

These can be used by booking the computer for one hour slots.



*One of our regular readers using the CD rom*

## ADDITIONAL GENEALOGICAL SOURCES AT STAFFORDSHIRE RECORD OFFICE

Staffordshire Record Office has recently purchased a set of the Birmingham and Midlands Society for Genealogy and Heraldry **Monumental Inscriptions for Staffordshire churches on microfiche**. Together with the survey of monumental inscriptions undertaken by the County Planning Department in 1967 and held by the record office and further transcripts held by the William Salt Library, these form an invaluable record of the county's graveyards.

The record office has been successful in obtaining additional funding from the County Council to purchase all the **Census returns, 1841-1891 for the historic county of Staffordshire on microfiche**. We have also purchased additional microfiche readers to replace some of the film readers. We hope that this will simplify booking procedures and enable self service census copies to be made on the reader printers in the reading room, so speeding up our reprographic service.

We have also made use of donations from readers and additional income to purchase a further 10 years of the **General Register Office index up to 1880**. This now costs £72 to purchase a year of indexes and we always welcome donations to extend our holdings.

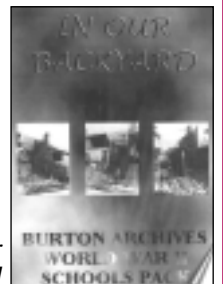
## Burton at War

10th July saw the launch at Burton Library of 'In our Backyard', a pack of facsimile documents relating to the Home Front in Burton during the Second World War. The pack is designed to be used for teaching in primary schools and is the result of collaboration between the Archive Service and four history co-ordinators from Burton schools: Sue Ruddock, Ann da Silva, Lynda Knowles and Clare Cotton. Martin Sanders, Archivist at Lichfield who also looks after the archives in Burton Library, delved into records in search of possible items. The teachers then decided how they and their colleagues might use them in the classroom.

This project is part of our effort to raise the profile of Burton Archives, which are currently underused despite being a rich resource for the study of local history, particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The pack contains laminated copies, most of them in colour, of extracts from school log books, letters from officials and members of the public, photographs and newspaper cuttings. It can be used to study subjects such as evacuation, rationing and the threat of air raids. It has already been well received and we hope that it will bring the experience of using original sources to many local children.

Copies of the pack costing £15 can be obtained at Burton Library or Staffordshire Record Office by teachers from schools and other educational institutions run by Staffordshire County Council. Payment will be by inter-committee transfer or cheque. In addition, a bound version of the pack will shortly be available for sale to the general public. Please contact Staffordshire Record Office for details.



*In our Backyard*

## NEW CODE OF CONDUCT AND PROCEDURES FOR USERS

The Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Joint Archives Committee approved a revised set of regulations for readers at its meeting on 18th July. These comprise a generic Code of Conduct, which will be operational at all the Archive Service access points, and specific Procedures, to be operated at each office. This revises the previous

regulations which had been in place since 1983. The Code of Conduct and Procedures are designed to ensure the long term preservation of our archives. Readers will notice some changes as they are implemented and we hope that you will appreciate the reasons behind them.

## STAFFORDSHIRE RECORD OFFICE MICROFILMING PROGRAMME

As the next stage in our programme of conservation microfilming gets under way we regret that the parish registers and nonconformist registers listed below will be unavailable for consultation in the reading rooms of the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service until further notice. Please check on the availability of any of the registers with a member of our staff before making an appointment to view any of the registers listed.

### STAFFORDSHIRE RECORD OFFICE

Anglican Parish	Baptisms	Marriages	Burials
Aldridge, St Mary	1912-1926	1901-1929	-
Anslow, Holy Trinity	1860-1908	1862-1989	1860-1971
Bednall, All Saints	1886-2001	-	1813-1992
Branston, St Saviour	1868-1949	1871-1963	1870-1957 1914-1933
Darlaston, All Saints	1872-1891	-	-
Fenton, St Margaret & St Anthony	1921-1948	-	-
Fenton, St Matthew	1895-1934	-	-
Fenton, St Michael & All Angels	1895-1927	-	-
Great Barr, St Margaret	1653-1940	1653-1753 1756-1928	1653-1948
Hints, St Bartholomew	-	-	1813-2000
Ingestre, St Mary the Virgin	-	1837-2000	1813-2000
Marchington Woodlands St John	1859-1980	-	1859-1995
Tipton, St Matthew	-	1922-1934	-
Weeford, St Mary	1890-1992	-	1813-2000
West Bromwich, St Peter Greet Green	1900-1926	1910-1930	-
Nonconformist Church	Baptisms	Marriages	Burials
Hednesford Station Rd PM	-	1925-1946	-
Halmerend Wesley Place M	-	1925-1940	-
Huntington Methodist PM	-	1925-1994	-

## MAPS AND PLANS SEMINAR

The Archive Service will again be hosting an autumn seminar. This will take place on Saturday 24 November 2001 at the Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Pirehill, Stone. The theme this year will be Maps and Plans. Dr Dudley Fowkes will speak on Staffordshire county maps, Dr Tony Philips on Gregory King, Robert Plot and the map of Staffordshire in the 1680's, Dr Paul Carter on Enclosure maps, Chris Welch on Using maps for archaeology and Dr Keith Goodway on Using maps for garden history. The cost will be £20 including lunch and refreshments. Please contact Staffordshire Record Office for a booking form.

## Recent Accessions

### Staffordshire Record Office

In June this year we were pleased to reach accession number 6000. This is a collection of ledgers from Brookfields Gentlemen's Outfitters of Greengate Street, Stafford, c.1910-1970. In the same month we also received additional records of Skinner & Son, ironmonger of Leek. This latter accession was tinged with sadness however as it followed the death of Mr Skinner himself, our oldest active depositor, who had retained a keen interest in the records he had deposited here.

Additional personal and estate papers have come from the Sugnall Hall estate, and from two different sides of the Gibbons

family, descendants of the iron manufacturing family of Corbyns Hall, Kingswinford. Among these are papers of William Gibbons, Mayor of Bristol, relating to his campaign against iron taxes in the 18th century.

The Staffordshire Yeomanry Museum has deposited records illustrating the administration of the regiment in the 18th and 19th centuries, together with a definitive history of the Palestine Campaign in which it fought, 1917-1918. Some of these records were recently discovered by a London bank and subsequently returned to Stafford.

Among local authority records is a large collection of minutes from

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and predecessor authorities, 19th - 20th centuries. We have also received plans and notebooks of W E Lamb, the county's Education Architect, early 20th century. We have continued to receive deposits from Anglican churches,

including some outstanding early 19th century registers. We have also continued to receive the results of local Millennium projects, from Armitage, Brewood, Chebsey, Ellenhall, Ingestre and Tixall, providing a photographic snapshot of these villages in the year 2000.

### Lichfield Record Office

Photographs, scrap books and other records of or relating to the Friary School, Lichfield, 1858-1991. These include both formal school photographs and pictures of cultural, sporting and academic activities. This school once occupied the building used by Lichfield Record Office and Library. It was attended by certain current members of staff, who have identified their teenage selves on the photographs. The deposit was featured in an article in the Express and Star. The school records themselves begin in 1891. The item from 1858 is a letter from Florence Nightingale to Sir Graham Balfour, who later became Staffordshire County Council's director of education and presented the letter to the school.

Website: <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/archives/>

### STAFFORDSHIRE RECORD OFFICE

Eastgate Street, Stafford ST16 2LZ  
Mon, Tues, Thurs 9-5, Wed 9-8, Fri 9.30-4.30  
Sat 9-12.30

Tel. (01785) 278373

E-mail [staffordshire.record.office@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:staffordshire.record.office@staffordshire.gov.uk)  
Appointments essential

### LICHFIELD RECORD OFFICE

The Friary, Lichfield WS13 6QG  
Mon-Fri 9.30-5

2nd Saturday in each calendar month 9.30-12.30

Tel. (01543) 510720

E-mail [lichfield.record.office@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:lichfield.record.office@staffordshire.gov.uk)  
Appointments essential

### STOKE ON TRENT CITY ARCHIVES

Hanley Library, Bethesda Street, Hanley,  
Stoke on Trent ST1 3RS

Wed 9.30-7 Thurs & Fri 9.30-5 Sat 9.30-1

Tel. (01782) 238420

E-mail [stoke.archives@stoke.gov.uk](mailto:stoke.archives@stoke.gov.uk)  
Appointment advisable

### BURTON UPON TRENT ARCHIVES

Burton Library, Riverside, High Street  
Burton upon Trent DE14 1AH

Mon, Tues, Thurs & Fri 9.15-12 & 2-6

Wed 9.15-1

Tel. (01283) 239556

E-mail [burton.library@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:burton.library@staffordshire.gov.uk)  
Appointments essential

### WILLIAM SALT LIBRARY

19 Eastgate Street, Stafford ST16 2LZ  
Tues-Thurs 9-1 & 2-5 Fri 9-1 & 2-4.30

1st Saturday in each calendar month 9-1

Tel. (01785) 278372

E-mail [william.salt.library@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:william.salt.library@staffordshire.gov.uk)