



# Time 2 Time

Staffordshire & Stoke on Trent Archive Service Newsletter

Issue 26 Autumn 2011

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## Designated Status - Top Award for Archive Service Collections

On 2nd August 2011 the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council confirmed that the collections held by Staffordshire & Stoke on Trent Archive Service had been awarded Designated Status by the panel of assessors.



### What is designated status?

The designation scheme is currently administered by the Museum, Libraries and Archives Council and identifies the pre-eminent collections of national and international importance held in England's non-national museums, libraries and archives, based on their quality and significance. Originally a museum scheme, it has been extended to archives and libraries. It helps to raise profile and promote awareness of collections in archives, libraries and museums and in so doing helps to safeguard them. Organisations holding designated status are expected to work towards the provision of high quality services with the fullest possible access.

A collection must be outstanding in terms of its evidential, aesthetic, scientific, historical, cultural, literary or economic importance. It must demonstrate richness and variety and where appropriate the uniqueness or rarity of individual items or groups.

The application is in two stages with a Stage 1 application to establish eligibility and then a Stage 2 full application. The Stage 2 application was submitted at the end of March by the then County Archivist Thea Randall. This was her last major piece of work for the Archive Service before her retirement on 31 March 2011. Her considerable length of service (over 35 years) and extensive knowledge of the collections held meant that she was uniquely qualified to prepare the application. It is a fitting testament to her work and knowledge of the Archive Service that our entire collections should receive designated status.

The benefits of designation are principally that it recognises the significance of the collections held in the County and City and in doing so these collections will have a higher profile. It will help to protect these collections for the long term future and enable the Archive Service to promote them in a local, regional and national context. Quite simply it reinforces pride in the county of Staffordshire and its heritage. It will also assist the Archive Service in attracting external funding for specific cataloguing or conservation projects.

### Why are the collections so important?

The application covered over 7,000 unique archive collections dating from the 10th to the 21st centuries, reflecting virtually every aspect of life in Staffordshire. These collections equate to approximately 5 miles and about 11,000,000 items. The major strengths are in family and estate archives, industrial and ecclesiastical records. The principal, overriding and unifying theme of the collections is the history of Staffordshire and

the impact of the county and its people in the national historical and cultural context. The range of subject matter within the collections is very wide, with strong inter-connectivity across several themes.

Designation reinforces the importance of the archival heritage of the County and City and the importance of the work of the Archive Service, it is also very unusual for designated status to be given to a whole archive- normally it would be a particular collection within an archive. It really is an important achievement and one which will raise the profile of the Archive Service.

### Staffordshire & Stoke on Trent Archive Service gets top results

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service has been rated as the leading archive service in the West Midlands and one of the top ten archive services in the country.

Last summer the Archive Service participated in the National Archives Self Assessment process. The National Archives has powers to assess and inspect local authority archive services in England and Wales. The assessment covers five areas within archive services: Governance (leadership of the service); Documentation of collections (catalogues and information about collections); Access and public services (public access, availability of the service and quality of customer care); Preservation and conservation (how documents are preserved and cared for); Buildings and environment (the quality and conditions of buildings to store archival material). Each area is rated on a scale of one to four stars with four stars being the highest. Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service was rated at four stars for three categories and three stars for two categories and achieved a four star rating overall. It was placed joint tenth out of 124 local authority archive services taking part. The national results were published at the end of March 2011 allowing the service to compare how it performed against other services.

The Archive Service achieved an overall score of 81% which was an increase of 2% compared with the 2008 assessment. When compared to the 2006 assessment this is an increase of 8.5% and shows sustained improvement. The Service also achieved a four star performance rating in three out of the five areas examined with a four star rating overall. The Service had the highest overall score when compared to neighbouring archive services in the West Midlands.

## International Staffordshire

Local archives in Britain are a treasure trove of the unexpected. Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent's archives are no exception, so when the announcement was made that the 2012 Olympic Games were to be held in London we were curious to find out how many competing nations were represented within our archives.

The documents that we have found and presented here reflect Britain's interaction with the wider world over four centuries. Currently 60 countries are represented in the exhibition, from Armenia to the United States, but this number will increase significantly over the next few months.

Wealthier members of society set out to experience other cultures for themselves, in times when travel was not as comfortable as it is today. Soldiers and sailors left for conflicts great and small around the world. All recorded their experiences in letters to friends, journals and sketchbooks.

Merchants ventured to distant lands in search of profitable commodities for trade, and businesses supplied products to new markets overseas, keeping records of production, purchases and sales.

British government officials and military officers posted all over the globe sent reports back to their superiors in London or suggested new projects to be undertaken, such as the surveying of the waters around the Maldives.

Discover more about all of this, and more.

### "Write the World"

In the autumn of 2011 the "Write the World" Creative Writing Project will provide an opportunity for young people in Stoke on Trent and north Staffordshire to use the documents in this exhibition as inspiration for prose or poetry.

Find out more at : [staffcc.net/staffsinternational](http://staffcc.net/staffsinternational)

## Local and Family History Roadshow

Each summer the Archive Service goes out 'on the road' to a village location to reach people in rural communities who may not be able to visit the Archive Service. This year we were delighted to be invited to St Lawrence's Church in Gnosall for the day. Our Roadshow formed part of the village's 'G-Fest' celebrations and we were pleased to be able to bring a taste of what the Archive Service has to offer for the day.

Over 167 people joined us in the wonderful Church of St Lawrence's for our annual Roadshow on Saturday 16 July. The day included a variety of activities and exhibitions to showcase the Archive Service and the sources available about Gnosall.

For children there were a number of activities on offer including colouring illuminated letters, making a family tree or have a go at old handwriting. On offer for all ages was the opportunity to make paper using traditional techniques with expert help on hand from our two conservators and digitisation assistant. The exhibition "A Glimpse of Gnosall" highlighted the sources available for Gnosall and revealed the development of the village and community life. The exhibition also drew attention to interesting architectural features inside the church. A second exhibition on Medieval Gnosall was produced by the members of the voluntary Staffordshire Communities' Research Group, which meets every Friday at Staffordshire Record Office. Members of the group were on hand to explain the findings from their research. The Family History Surgery had a constant stream of visitors seeking expert advice from the City Archivist and Research Assistant.

The two exhibitions were left in the Church for a further week to allow other members of the community to see it. We were warmly welcomed by the people of Gnosall and we would like to record our thanks to the rector, Rev Mark Bridgen and parish councillor Maggie Hughes. Without their help and support the event would not have been possible.



*Eric Gao and his mother Josephine Gao making a family tree together at the Gnosall Roadshow.*

## A Sense of Place: Popular Course to run again

Earlier in the year we ran a new course, Sense of Place, aimed at people who were interested in researching the history of their community, village or area connected with family history. The course was well received and so the course is going to be run again this time at Stoke on Trent City Archives to attract people from the city and north of the county.

This course is aimed at people interested in finding out more about their village or community, tracing the history of specific streets or buildings in their area, family historians who want to broaden their family trees by studying the area their family came from and groups who want guidance on starting to research the history of their area. The course focuses on the sources that are available and does not focus on one particular part of the county or city. It will draw on examples from around the county to help explain what is available and how it can be used.

The first session will look at how to start off and how to use the reading rooms at the Archive Service and William Salt Library. The next six sessions will focus on a theme covering the sources available within the Archive

Service including: understanding the landscape, trades and business, sources for individual buildings, people and population, the development of public services and community life. The last session is a practical session which will help and guide attendees on how to continue with their research and offer one to one advice.

The course will run for eight weeks with the first seven sessions taking place at Stoke on Trent City Archives on Tuesdays. The final session will be at Staffordshire Record Office and the William Salt Library on a Wednesday to introduce participants to that part of the service. The course starts on Tuesday 4 October 2011 between 2.00pm and 3.30pm. The rest of the sessions will be on the following dates: 11 October, 18 October, 25 October, 1 November, 8 November, 15 November, 23 November (at Staffordshire Record Office)

The cost of the course is £25 for all eight sessions. Booking is essential so please contact either Daniel Jones on 01785 278380 or Stoke on Trent City Archives on 01782 238420 to reserve your place. Alternatively please visit our website to download a booking form: [www.staffordshire.gov.uk/archives](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/archives)

## Exhibition Success!

This year the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service, in conjunction with the William Salt Library, held a three week exhibition of their unique and irreplaceable Anglo-Saxon Charters which went on display for the very first time in Stafford. The display was timed to coincide with the Staffordshire Hoard on Tour Exhibition.

The Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Mercia was one of the most powerful kingdoms of the period. However, due to the conflict in the 10th century with Vikings to the north and the kingdom's eventual merger into a greater Wessex, the survival of written sources for Mercia is poor. Those records that do survive that mention the kingdom, such as the writings of Bede, are generally hostile in tone, as Mercia was often in conflict with its neighbours including Bede's Northumbria.

Therefore the survival of the charters that relate to Staffordshire is of huge importance to the early history of the county as well as Mercia. The survival of the will of Wulfric Spot is all the more remarkable. These documents form the basis for all we know about this period of history and offer us a unique opportunity to learn more about the kingdom of Mercia and Anglo-Saxon Staffordshire in particular.

The exhibition held at Staffordshire Record Office proved to be a great success, visitor figures were more than twice the anticipated number and the feedback we received overwhelmingly positive. We are most grateful for the support given to us by our volunteers who manned the exhibition through-out the three weeks, around 170 hours in total.

### What People said about the exhibition:

"A superb and fascinating display, presented so well as to rival exhibitions at the British Library."

"WOW!"

"An excellent exhibition - really fascinating - brilliant work in explaining all the background and 'interpreting' the Will..... What a glorious celebration of our local heritage."

"Fabulous display, very well presented with excellent interpretation."

"A fascinating insight into the history of our County, beautifully displayed a real privilege to see such amazing treasures."

"A stunning exhibition who called the Anglo Saxon period 'The Dark Ages' in Stafford. Much important Anglo Saxon material on display. Well done to everyone involved."

"An outstanding display of documents and information dramatically exhibited."

"Amazing exhibition. Informative and visually excellent. It is wonderful looking at the original documents."

"Shivery spine, looking at these documents, the sheer age, conserved for us to look at thank you."

"An inspiring and beautifully presented exhibition. I am determined to pursue more learning of this period."

### And from abroad

"Molto bello!"

"Des archives belles!"

"Vraiment interessant!!!"



*County Councillor Patrick Corfield Cabinet Member for Culture, Communities and Customers  
Janene Cox, Commissioner for Culture, Leisure and Tourism and Joanna Terry, Head of Archives at the launch of the 'Out of Darkness Exhibition'.*

## Recent Accessions

### At Staffordshire Record Office

Two associated collections have come in to complement the large deposit of records of WG Bagnalls, locomotive engineers. These consist of material collected by a former employee that includes some original material such as catalogues and photographs (7086); and the descendants of WG Bagnall himself have deposited some personal papers about the man and his family (D7078).

Records from sporting organisations have continued to come in, as a result of our recent survey work. We have had deposits or donations representing the sports of golf (D7053), hockey (7054), swimming (D7061), boating and rowing (7065), and orienteering (D7114); also the more gentle sport of rambling (D7067). The swimming collection consists of the full set of minutes of the historic County Amateur Swimming Association dating back to 1898, one of the earliest in the country.

The Moorlands has been well accounted for this year. We have received donations of 19th century records for Ball Haye Building Society including its building club (7084); and a quantity of the late 19th and early 20th century letters sent from the Leek area to family in America (7097). These give a lot of background about life in the Moorlands area, and we are pleased that they have been returned to this country from the USA.

Also from the Moorlands is a plan of Swythamley estate, 1831 (7108), and on the other side of the county, we have had a further deposit of plans of the hall and out-buildings at Weston Park, 19th -20th centuries (D1287 addnl.). Other estate material comes in the form of another album of vouchers from the Trentham estate, 1834 (7051), which record expenditure on all sorts of estate matters, including outdoor labour on the gardens and woodlands.

As usual, we have received deposits from Anglican churches, the following including 19th century or early 20th century parish registers: Fulford (D7101), Salt (D7105), Stanton (D7102), Swindon (D7093), Wolverhampton All Saints (D7050) and Darlaston All Saints (D7090). The latter also includes papers about the church's destruction during the wartime bombing, and its rebuilding. An early missing parish register for Weston-under-Lizard also came to light this year (D7056). Fortunately the Bishops Transcript had filled the gap in the meantime, but it was good to know that such important documents may still survive. For the nonconformists, we have received a deposit of records of the Newcastle-under-Lyme Unitarian Meeting House dating back to the early 19th century (D7089). This includes a good set of accounts from 1854, and a scrapbook of original and copy material about the origins of the historic Meeting House.

### At Lichfield Record Office

From official sources, we received the minutes for the Commissioners of Income Tax meetings for Offlow North, Lichfield City and Tamworth divisions, 1858 to 1988 (D516). From Lichfield diocese, minutes of the Diocesan Pastoral Committee 1957 to 1968 arrived to fill a gap in the series. In

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addition, we took in further instalments of faculties 2005 to 2010 and diocesan newsletters and mailings for 2010. Meanwhile, the St John's Hospital trustees deposited their service registers 1936 to 2010 (D519). The secretary of the St Johns Lodge of Lichfield (1039) deposited their minutes from 1864 to 2005 (D517).

We also received three disparate collections of business records. Three volumes of account books 1886 to 1906 for Ewers and Co., butchers of Burton arrived (518), having been purchased at auction by a neighbouring county archivist. Annual audited accounts of W.T. Dukes, a local farmer, 1956 to 1994 (521) were given to the office by his daughter, following a house clearance. Finally, through the auspices of the Brewery History Society, thirty boxes of records from the research and technical departments of the former Allied Breweries in Burton between the 1950s and 1997 were delivered to Lichfield following (or, more accurately, the day before) the sad closure of the Tetleys Brewery in Leeds (522).

## What's New on "Gateway to the Past"?

Collection catalogues are being added to our online catalogue on a regular basis. Key recent additions include:

Heaton and Co. was a prominent firm of surveyors, based in Endon. Members of the Heaton family have been surveyors in north Staffordshire since the early nineteenth century, having clients both within the county and further afield. The collection includes large numbers of maps, plans and sale catalogues, and other client papers, as well as some administrative records of the company itself.

The papers of the Sulyard family of Haughley, Suffolk, which form part of the archives of the Lords Stafford, have been catalogued. Despite the modest nature of their estates a wonderful archive has survived, including title deeds and manorial records. Extensive correspondence also throws light on the family's complicated personal lives from the 16th to 18th centuries, and the business dealings of Edward Sulyard, a lawyer in the latter part of this period.

Work is continuing on the extensive archive of the Leek solicitors, Challinor and Shaw. Clients included individuals, businesses and public bodies from across north Staffordshire. Recently the papers of the following clients have been made available: Brunt, Finney and Co., silk manufacturers, Leek; Ceramic Transfer Co., Hanley; Froghall Stone Crushing Co., Cheadle; Samuel Howson, builder and joiner, Leek; Edward Malam, brewer, Hanley; Leek and Manifold Valley Railway.

If you would like to be on our events mailing list then contact Daniel Jones at Staffordshire Record Office, Eastgate Street, Stafford ST16 2LZ Tel. 01785 278380

### Comments or Suggestions...

If you have any comments or suggestions on the contents of Time 2 Time please send them to: Matthew Blake, Staffordshire Record Office, Eastgate Street, Stafford. ST16 2LZ  
E-mail: [matthew.blake@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.blake@staffordshire.gov.uk)

## Staffing Changes

At Staffordshire Record Office, there have been a number of staffing changes. Helen Legge, Administrative Assistant resigned in February 2011 to take up a post as a legal secretary. We welcomed Daniel Jones as her replacement in May. On 31st March 2011, after over 35 years of service, County Archivist, Thea Randall retired. We all wished Thea well at the end of her long and very successful career in archives. Joanna Terry (formerly Assistant County Archivist) took up the post of Head of Archives on 1 April and Andrew George (formerly Archivist in Charge, Lichfield Record Office) took up the post of Principal Archivist.

At Stoke-on-Trent City Archives we welcomed Louise Ferriday back to the service in November as Archivist (having previously worked at Stoke as Project Archivist on the Sutherland Papers project).

Stoke-on-Trent City Council proposed budget savings for 2011-12 across all of its services. At Stoke Archives this resulted in three members of staff leaving through redeployment, voluntary or compulsory redundancy. These were: Barbara Rogerson, Local Studies Librarian (Feb 2011)

Martin Hassall and Philip Wheeler, Archive Assistants, 31 March 2011. We wish all the staff every success for the future.

### Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service website: <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/archives/>

#### STAFFORDSHIRE RECORD OFFICE

Eastgate Street, Stafford ST16 2LZ

Mon, Tues, Thurs 9.00-5.00, Wed 9.00-7.00, Fri 9.30-4.30, Sat 9.00-1.00

Tel. (01785) 278373

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

Appointments essential

#### WILLIAM SALT LIBRARY

19 Eastgate Street, Stafford ST16 2LZ

Tues-Thurs 9.00-1.00 and 2.00-5.00, Fri 9.30-1.00 and 2.00-4.30

1st Saturday in each calendar month 9.00-1.00

Tel. (01785) 278372

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

#### LICHFIELD RECORD OFFICE

The Friary, Lichfield WS13 6QG

Mon, Tues, Wed and Fri 9.30-5.00 Thurs 11.30-7.00

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

City Central Library, Bethesda Street, Hanley,

Stoke on Trent ST1 3RS

Thurs, Fri, Sat 10.00-2.00, Wed, 10.00-7.00

Tel. (01782) 238420

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

Appointment essential

#### BURTON UPON TRENT FAMILY & LOCAL HISTORY CENTRE

Burton Library, Riverside, High Street

Burton upon Trent DE14 1AH

Mon, Wed, Fri 9.00-6.00 Tues 10.00-6.00 Thurs 9.00-8.00 Sat 9.00-4.30

Tel. (01283) 239556

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

Appointments essential

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