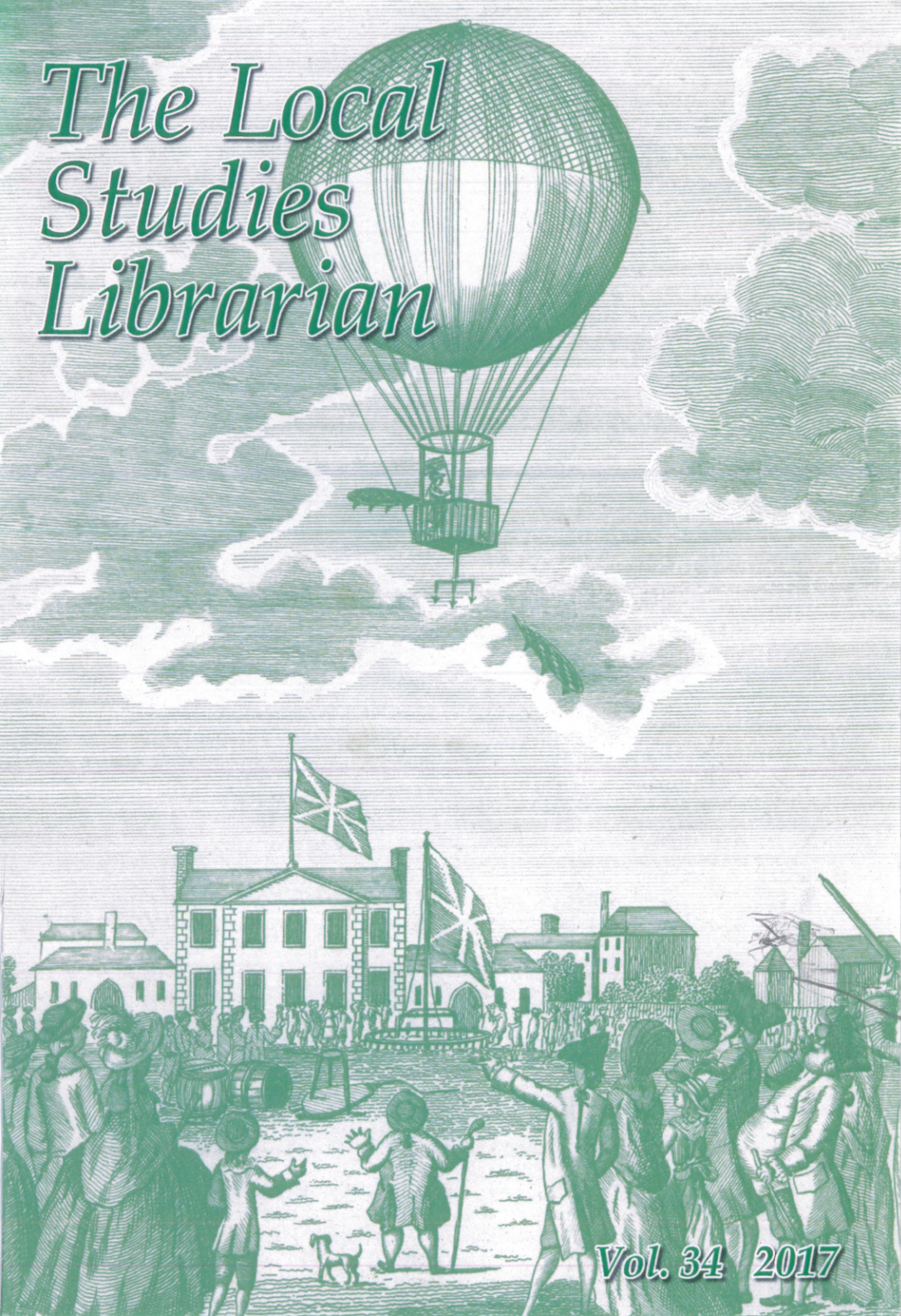


# *The Local Studies Librarian*



*Vol. 34 2017*

## THE LOCAL STUDIES LIBRARIAN

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Cover Illustration: *"The ascent of Mr Lunardie's celebrated baloon"*  
Courtesy: *National Aerospace Library/Royal Aeronautical Society*



## **EDITORIAL**

2016 ended on a note of uncertainty for British local studies. Local studies librarians and their collections were not immune from cuts in library services as a consequence of reductions in funding from central government. Draconian cuts have seriously affected local studies provision, resulting in some local studies librarians being made redundant and local studies collections being transferred to suburban sites. In November 2015 it was announced that all local studies posts in Lancashire would go in 2016 with an uncertain future for the collections. A similarly depressing situation followed in Cambridgeshire. At the same time, it was encouraging to record that a large number of local studies libraries have been leading exciting initiatives, designed to engage with a wider community, and to make previously inaccessible material available digitally, as a result of partnerships and Heritage Lottery Fund grants. Recognition of outstanding work by local studies librarians has been demonstrated by the excellent contributions by the winners both of the McCulla prize and the Alan Ball award. Besides their outstanding work it should not be forgotten that for both prizes the quality of the submissions was extremely high. It is encouraging to note that excellent websites are bringing hitherto inaccessible material to wide audiences and in many cases members of the public are being encouraged to participate actively in submitting and digitising their own material. It is also good to see that so many volunteers have participated in many of the successful projects.

The Local Studies Group continues to be active, arranging meetings at local venues and enabling members to exchange views on the Local Studies blog. We are delighted that we can produce a printed journal again as a result of careful management by our committee.

### **LSG TREASURER WANTED**

We desperately need a Treasurer to start with immediate effect. Full training and support will be given and you will part of a join a friendly committee which meets twice a year.

If you feel you can help please contact Terry Bracher for more information.  
Email [terry.bracher@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:terry.bracher@wiltshire.gov.uk)

## **CILIP Local Studies Group Annual Report 2015**

The Committee met twice during this year at Nottingham Central Library, At the end of the year the Committee consisted of Terry Bracher (Chair), Alice Lock (Secretary), Anne Sharp (Treasurer), Paul Hudson, Diana Dixon, Penny Allen, Nicola Cowmeadow, Richard Abbott and Cristina Raven-Conn. We were sorry to lose Cristina and Richard at the end of the year.

We are grateful to Anne for many years of keeping our finances in order and her enthusiastic contribution to all the work of the committee. Although 2015 was Anne's last year as Treasurer we are in her debt for her help with the 2016 Business Plan.

We also need to thank to Robert Jones for his contribution to our Twitter presence along with Tony Pilmer and Penny for their hard work on the blog and the website, all of which are vital for our Group to function. Penny has also revived the e-journal which is an important way to communicate with members about Group activities and local studies projects such as Lancashire's World War I project.

LSG has taken over the administration and judging of the Alan Ball Award and has widened the scope to include an award for a digital as well as a print publication. The criteria for submission have been extended to include all publications using public money including HLF. The first winners of the hard copy award under these new rules were Martin Hayes and Emma White (ed), *West Sussex Remembering 1914-18*, History Press in Association with West Sussex County Council, 2014, ISBN 978-0-7509-6065-6. Joint winners of the e-publication were *The Buxton Museum App*, produced by Derbyshire County Council's Buxton Museum & Art Gallery & *Milford Street Bridge Project Website*—produced by the Milford Street Bridge Community Project.

The winner of the 2015 McCulla Award was Christoph Bull. Christoph spent all his professional life with Kent County Council's Arts and Libraries service as a local studies librarian and area manager. He is well known in the Dartford and Gravesend area as an ambassador for local history and for the importance of the public library's role in advancing knowledge and pride in one's local area.

Our biannual conference was held in Newcastle in November and featured new initiatives in local studies in Manchester, Edinburgh, Warwickshire and Newcastle. It was very well attended and there were lively discussion sessions which allowed delegates to contribute. It finished with a chance

to tour the new library building in Newcastle. Thanks to Anne Sharp and Terry Bracher for organising this event.

A pull up banner was purchased to publicise the Group (available for loan to any local group for their events)

Subgroups in South, North West and Locscot in Scotland continued with a full range of activities. South sub group included a tour of the National Aerospace Library, a visit to Surrey Local History Centre and a talk at the National Archives on records for paupers. North West held a day school on digital content and social media, a joint session with ARA on dementia awareness and produced a newsletter. Locscot held two day schools, one in Edinburgh and one in Falkirk.

2015 was not a good year for local studies in general as many services and staff suffered cuts and closures. Our blog has drawn attention to these problems while highlighting the value of local studies.

### **“It’s All on the Internet”?!: Transforming Access to Local Studies Material in West Sussex 2002 to 2017**

*“Ironically, but interestingly, some of the most exciting digital developments have been in the re-imagining of local studies and history collections – long hidden from wider audiences”<sup>1</sup>.*

#### **Background**

The New Year 2000 was an opportunity for an informal review of the Local Studies service in West Sussex County Council Libraries, which I felt was in danger of stagnating under my watch.

New opportunities had emerged during the 1990s: the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) had been offering grants since 1994, the internet revolution had gathered pace, scanning and computing technology had advanced and specialist cataloguing programs for heritage services had emerged and become more sophisticated.

There were also issues with finding and using non-book material: photographs and pictures, newspaper cuttings, ephemera, property sales catalogues, all countywide collections based at Worthing Library. We had no individual records or catalogues of these (just basic folder structures), one had to travel, often long distances, to use them and the originals were at risk due to fragility and theft.

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1 ‘The Future of Libraries in the Digital Age’ by Ayub Khan, in *CILIP Update* December/January 2016. P.17

Finally I was aware of how out of touch and sidelined the service could become by the approach to 'research' of my two sons, aged 9 and 11: they and their peers were as blunt as children often are: "Dad, thanks for the Victorian books you brought home.....but we've done our research: it's all on the internet"! As you can imagine, that led to a lively debate about accuracy of information, editing, etc, etc.....but it did get me thinking.

I began to question my simplistic view that people always need to travel to access our local history sources. I now felt it vital to develop a more accessible, imaginative and relevant offer direct to researchers in general and moreover to young people, the next generations of users, and to teachers. There was no long term master plan by 2001: just a desire to begin digitising sources, develop some educational resources, put them online and see what happened! The biggest challenges were deciding on priorities for projects, finding the time and developing the expertise to write external funding applications, analysing HLF priorities, developing project plans, budgets and researching hardware and software requirements, while also continuing to run a countywide Local Studies service.

### **Summary of Projects 2002-2017**

Eight projects followed, involving over £490,000 of external funding, source digitisation, educational resources and online delivery, to varying extents. Some unexpected benefits accrued from the projects and additional elements emerged.

- West Sussex Past Pictures 2002 to 2004 £90,000 (HLF)
- West Sussex History E-Learning Project 2004 to 2007 £49,970 (HLF)
- Walter Gardiner Photography Project 2008 to 2009 £32,499 (HLF)
- Crawley Digital Heritage Project 2009 to 2010 £45,644 (HLF)
- The Young Ones Project 2010 to 2011 £49,600 (HLF)
- Wartime West Sussex 1939-45 2011 to 2012 £49,900 (HLF)
- Great War West Sussex 1914-18 2012 to 2016 £89,700 (HLF)
- Military Voices Past & Present 2015 to 2018 £82,900 (HLF £54,400 & Ministry of Defence £28,500)

Total: £490,213



## **West Sussex Past Pictures 2002 to 2004**

**Prompted by:** a desire to provide a more accessible service and ease pressure on our image collections

### **Background**

The Library Service teamed up with eight local museums whose staff and volunteers selected originals to be scanned at a new Digitisation Unit set up at Worthing Library. West Sussex Record Office already had a photo database. The volunteers also completed metadata sheets describing each original in detail. The museums are: Amberley Working Museum (industrial heritage), Fishbourne Roman Palace, Weald and Downland Open Air Museum (vernacular buildings) plus local museums at Arundel, East Grinstead, Littlehampton, Shoreham (Marlipins) and Steyning. The collections include photographs, postcards, 35mm and lantern slides, glass & film negatives, engravings, drawings and paintings. Small test collections of ephemera, (newspaper) cuttings, posters and playbills have been added recently.

### **Website**

Two project officers scanned the originals and added the metadata to CALM (Axiell Ltd) database software. The West Sussex Past Pictures website went live in June 2004, with 8,000 images. It was relaunched on a new web platform, CalmView, in April 2016 and thanks to more content supplied by subsequent projects (below), now has over 13,500 images. Each image is described in detail and both Quick or Advanced searches are available. The latter includes searching by subject (terms), date, period, artist/photographer, printer/publisher, colour/B&W, format, repository and reference number. Low resolution images can be downloaded or printed free for educational or private use. Prints and high resolution jpegs can be ordered & paid for online, and commercial use of images is increasing due to a special quotation form.

### **Impact**

Around 200 people each year used the photograph & picture collections prior to 2004. Since launch online the number of users averages 24,000 each year. From 2004 to 2016 totals are: 5.5 million hits, 3.3 million page views and 530,000 visits by 290,000 visitors. Around £20,000 income has been generated, of which around 70% is money and 30% book donations in lieu of fees.

Moreover, this database was the key project in that it created a ready-made platform for digitised images resulting from all future projects.



## **West Sussex History E-Learning Project 2004 to 2007**

**Prompted by:** regular demand for local history sources useable by primary schools

Two project officers funded for two years worked with four primary school teachers to create 1,500 digitised sources plus ready-made lesson plans (Victorians only). The sites specifically supported teachers of what was then Key Stage (KS) 2 History and KS1 Geography and underlined the problems with creating educational material: national curriculum changes! Despite the KS references being out of date the sources are still useable by any researcher and teachers able to introduce local history or geography into their teaching. This is underlined by statistics of some 1,300 visits each year to the Victorian site and 4,300 visits to the Seaside site, indicating continuing demand for such online content.

### **Victorian West Sussex**

Over 400 digitised sources include images and documents, such as census returns, directory & guidebook extracts, audio & video clips, newspapers, adverts and posters, from County Library Service and museum collections. It includes lesson plans, teachers' notes and downloadable timeline. Main topics are: Census, Changes during the Period, Leisure, Portraits, Poverty, Schooling, Town Trails, Trade & Industry, Transport and Work.

### **West Sussex Seaside Holidays in the Past**

Over 100 free downloadable resources aimed at KS1 Geography 'Going to the Seaside'. Resources are scanned copies of photographs and pictures, 1800s to 1970s, of West Sussex seaside resorts, plus some descriptions of holidays, bathing costumes & other documents. The main topics are: Getting There, What to Wear, On the Beach, In the Water, On the Water, Holiday Camps, Piers and Souvenirs.

### **Moodle VLE Local History Topics**

A very basic VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) containing over 1,000 free downloadable resources, aimed at KS 1, 2 & 3 teachers, accessible to teachers & pupils at WSCC schools and to all users. Topics are: Child Labour, Childhood & Schooling, How to Research Local History, History of Photography & Portraiture, Transport and Crawley in Victorian times and in World War Two. Resources include: images, contemporary documents, census returns, directory & guidebook extracts, newspapers, adverts and posters, from County Library Service, museum and West Sussex Record Office collections. Also see The Young Ones project below.

### **Walter Gardiner Photography Project 2007 to 2009**

**Prompted by:** the offer of this major collection

Partly thanks to West Sussex Past Pictures publicity, in 2007 the Library

Service was offered the extraordinary Walter Gardiner Photography Collection. Over 116,000 negatives and prints depict long gone aspects of local rural life, events, places and portraits, 1890s-1940s, including rare Second World War home front images. Walter Gardiner was among the earliest picture postcard publishers in Britain and later company photographers won national awards for their commercial work, 1950s-2000. Clients included Smith-Klein Beecham, Bowers & Wilkins (loudspeakers) and Datsun/Nissan. The originals were cleaned and put into archival storage products, research was undertaken on the company's history and an online educational package created on the history of photographic portraiture (Moodle VLE). Our two new project officers added over 1,000 of the best images to West Sussex Past Pictures and a marketing campaign culminated in two features on BBC1. An exhibition attracted over 6,676 people and sales of mounted prints and exhibition catalogues generated over £4,000 of income.

The project saw us take on volunteers for the first time and they enjoyed their preservation, cataloguing and exhibition stewarding work so much that they asked to stay on. We were so impressed with their work that we readily agreed and 9 of the original 12 are still with us and have now listed over 30,000 images. The volunteer programme has since evolved and expanded greatly (see projects below).

### **Crawley Digital Heritage Project 2009 to 2010**

**Prompted by:** bequest of a major collection & opening of a new library

In 2007 Roger Bastable, a local historian and teacher in Crawley, bequeathed to the Library Service in 2007 his collections on the town's history. These included 119 books, over 8,000 photographs, maps, ephemera, cuttings and his Ph.D. thesis. The HLF grant came just days before the official opening of the new Crawley Library in December 2008 and the Local Studies department was named in his honour.

Phase One saw the digitisation of 8000+ items from his Collection, of which 1,000 images were added to the West Sussex Past Pictures website and other sources, on Victorian and World War Two periods, to the Moodle VLE on Crawley. The cataloguing of all photos and pictures was started by volunteers and was completed in 2015. Phase Two encouraged schools and community groups to create digital presentations on heritage topics which were showcased on the multi-screen video wall in the new Library. Phase Three was a photograph exhibition on Crawley old town and New Town in May 2010 and included a mobile scanning unit which digitised privately owned photographs. A digital slide show was projected on to a large screen in the hall and an online exhibition put on Flickr: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/westsussexpast/albums>

## **The Young Ones Project 2010 to 2011**

**Prompted by:** approach from schools for help with anniversary & other local history activities

The aim of this project was to work with five schools on the West Sussex coast to create learning resources on the history of childhood and schooling and encourage their use in the classroom. The idea was prompted by an approach from Downsbrook Middle School whose centenary was due in 2010/11. Another two project officers, plus education consultant, were appointed and they worked with the schools, West Sussex Record Office and Library Service colleagues to identify and digitise sources.

Every school undertook various heritage activities. Downsbrook involved every child as the school made a year group responsible for researching each decade since their opening in 1910. They ran activities for a whole year, climaxing with an Edwardian Centenary Celebration, which involved ex-pupils and the local community, and every classroom was made an exhibition or heritage activity area. The other schools organised an exhibition & open day (Connaught), World War One play (Durrington), film-making & Victorian mystery (South Bersted), Victorian family research (St Nicolas & St Mary) and library research visits (Lyndhurst). Some 856 children were involved in these heritage activities. Our staff made some digital recordings of ex-pupils describing their childhood and schooldays. Some records were deposited at West Sussex Record Office during the project too and several volunteers (parents of schoolchildren) were involved in activities.

We also worked with Worthing Museum to create a special loans collection of objects on childhood. Finally all digitised material was uploaded to WSCC's Moodle VLE.

## **Wartime West Sussex (1939-45) 2011 to 2012**

**Prompted by:** a school request for more information on 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of West Sussex's worst wartime loss of life, plus continuing public queries on WWII

Petworth Primary school's request for more resources on the 1942 bombing of their school (32 dead) led us to develop a broader project with a major oral history element. Building on experience gained during the Young Ones project (above), we interviewed 24 people (four on the Petworth bombing) about life on the Home Front, using several new Zoom digital audio recorders. The full interviews on DVD was added to West Sussex Record Office and Worthing Library collections and 205 audio clips added to a new website.

Some 63 Home Front interview summaries were uploaded as pdf files, from earlier projects; namely the BBC People's War, Home Front Recall (Record

Office) and Chichester Festival Theatre New Ventures (Battle of Britain) projects. New interviews of local people were carried out by 26 volunteers, the first time we'd employed such a large number. Two project officers digitised around 250 digital sources such as official leaflets, bomb maps and extracts from the Home Front. Donations or loans of 420 photographs were also scanned, more than doubling our WWII images on West Sussex Past Pictures.

West Sussex Record Office kindly allowed the digital capture (camera) and uploading online of their Action Officers' Minute Books, 1940-45, a day by day account of all bombing and other serious incidents across the County. Alan Readman, County Archivist, contributed an illustrated history, *The Story of the Home Front in West Sussex 1939-45*, to the new website as a free downloadable pdf document. Another significant joint initiative was the digitisation of eight local newspapers, 1939-45, most owned by the County Record Office. These are available at the latter and Worthing Library as free to use, text searchable pdf files on DVD, and are very popular with researchers. Volunteers indexed events and significant people in two key newspapers and these appear online too.

Finally an education consultant was employed to create educational packages around original sources which could be incorporated into imaginative history lessons aimed at KS2 and 3. The packages consist of a scheme of work, topic summary, worksheet and up to 14 digitised original sources in each case. Themes are StalagLuft III The Great Escape (local man's involvement), Leslie Speller's War, Petworth School Bombing and Women at War; and all are online on the new website.

### **Great War West Sussex 2012-2016**

**Prompted by:** the centenary of the outbreak in 2014 and public interest in remembrance

Publicity for the project generated unprecedented public interest such that 150 volunteers came forward and enabled our aims to be more ambitious. A digital camera team captured over 19,000 pages of documents from the Royal Sussex Regiment (RSR) archive at West Sussex Record Office. A research team researched and wrote over 100 case studies of people & Home Front topics. An indexing team listed over 9,000 important events and 14,000 significant people in local newspapers.

This amount of content insured that the outcomes were of the highest quality: that is, the website, travelling display, book and talks programme. The themes covered in all four outcomes are: Agriculture and Food, Churches, Economy, Employment and Morale, Enemy Aliens and Refugees,

Fundraising, Hospitals, Invasion Counter Measures, Military Camps & Aerodromes, Post War problems, Recruitment, Royal Sussex Regiment, Social Life, War Memorials and Women at War.

The website has over 300 documents, 105 case studies of people and topics and 3,000 pages of digitised source material. Highlights include free downloadable pdfs of all surviving RSR battalion war diaries, a day by day account of the training, fighting, casualties etc. Downloadable learning resources showcase 14 projects on Worthing soldiers by Year 9 schoolgirls; plus four lesson plans, created by an education consultant, each taking one significant RSR man, and revealing his fate through a series of documents. Examples of the latter include John Barnes, a Littlehampton man shot at dawn for desertion in 1917 despite suffering shellshock, and John Searle, a Durrington boy, who joined up illegally, aged 14, only to be killed in 1916 aged 15½.

The travelling display visited 22 venues, including 14 libraries, a County Council meeting at Chichester, West Sussex Record Office and Worthing Town Hall. The book *Great War Britain: West Sussex Remembering 1914-18* (History Press/West Sussex County Council, 2014), ISBN: 9780750960656, was published in paperback and Kindle formats, and has sold around 1,500 copies. It attracted five star reviews on Amazon and received CILIP's Alan Ball Local History Award 2013-14 for printed books. The events programme continues to date, and over 60 activities involving over 2,200 people, have taken place, mainly talks by Library Service and Record Office staff and latterly Somme film showings in partnership with the Imperial War Museum.

### **Military Voices Past and Present Project 2015 to 2018**

**Prompted by:** the donation of a collection of interviews with WWI veterans and a new funding opportunity (MoD Community Covenant Fund)

This oral history project aims to compare the experiences and sacrifices made by Great War combatants with those made by modern day veterans. Key source, the Peter Baker Collection of 32 interviews with 1914-18 veterans was donated to West Sussex Record Office as a result of the Great War project, and the cassettes have been digitised and analysed. New interviews with over 60 survivors of various conflicts from 1939-45 to Afghanistan were conducted by 45 volunteers. In summer 2017 the outcomes will include a substantial book, travelling display, new web content with audio clips and an educational programme involving local schools. Worthing Library and West Sussex Record Office will preserve all resulting material.

## **PAWS Project 2017 onwards**

The PAWS (Public Access West Sussex) project from spring 2017 will replace all our public access computers but also introduce an intranet which includes a document delivery function. We plan to make available most of the digitised local history sources too weighty to go online. Main categories will be searchable pdfs of newspapers 1914-25 & 1939-45, around 14,000 postcards, Sussex County directories 1828-1938 and oral history interviews. Put into folders on a central server, these sources will be available to any computer user in the county's 36 libraries. West Sussex Record Office is part of the project, will have access to all data and has contributed important archival sources such as 19<sup>th</sup> century tithe surveys.

## **Conclusions**

### **Project Planning**

It's not always possible to plan perfectly! The projects originated in a variety of ways but all had to meet our long term objective: to make local history information and sources more accessible via digitisation and making them available online. Some projects, such as the first two, were planned by us to meet public demand which had been ongoing for many years. Later ones were prompted by anniversaries, which made it easier to recruit volunteers and to market the resulting products. Unexpected opportunities arose to acquire major collections, to use many more volunteers and make use of funds other than the HLF, and some organisations needed our help. So the conclusion is, have some long term aims, but be flexible enough to act or change as opportunities arise.

### **Project and Service Effects**

The outcomes are not always controllable and certainly not perfect! Although we have created five local history websites and eight Moodle mini sites with over 6,000 pages of information in 1,500 sources, their design is quite basic. How best to take control of design and functionality in the future is an issue which needs addressing. Also, due to National Curriculum changes there is a need to revise the text on the Victorian site in particular. Although the number of 'traditional' Local Studies enquiries, made by phone or in person requiring staff research (30 minutes free), have remained fairly static for the past 15 years, at around 150 per month and 1,800 each year, a decline may have been avoided thanks to the projects. Self-help researchers at Local Studies collections haven't been counted accurately due to the open plan nature of our Reference Libraries but estimates are in the region of 10,000 per year for the four main collections. By contrast, from 2014 to 2016 the West Sussex Past websites (excluding Moodle) had over 29,000 visitors each year on average (24,000 for West Sussex Past Pictures). These statistics are a good reason to create more online resources and to count these as researchers or 'visitors' using our service.

Another positive factor has been the major impacts on the quality and quantity of collections. The publicity from projects helped to establish the Library Service, as a major collector of images and the number of photograph and pictures we hold has increased from 30,000 in 2007 to 2.25 million today. Income generation through photo and book sales, has more than doubled from around £1,000 to around £2,500 per year.

Specialist paid employment has been provided for seven local people for varying periods, following which some went to work for the British Museum, Imperial War Museum and The National Archives. The volunteer programme has expanded greatly from zero in 2007 to a pool now of over 200. The challenge now is managing expectations, which we have done by working with around than 20 regular volunteers and bringing in many more for specific projects. Increasingly we're also working to support projects led by community organisations outside the Library Service and encouraging our volunteers to work on these with training from our staff.

### **The Future**

Social media, of course, has become a relatively new and important way of exchanging information. I'm conscious that we in West Sussex are not doing enough to engage with the numerous local history groups which are springing up. Part of the solution could be a specific project because staff time is the issue, though volunteers might assist too.

Convergence, or centralisation of heritage services (archives, archaeologists & libraries) has been a trend for some years and is a concept I very much agree with, but setting it up requires careful management. Convergence has led to specialist Local Studies posts being lost completely in some authorities and this is a great pity. Public libraries are at the heart of many communities and that connection of local library staff with their local researchers is invaluable. This powerful network also offers opportunities for archivists to engage with local communities directly, especially when aided by specialist librarians.

To my colleagues: never has there been more of a need to prove our worth to our local authorities in these difficult days of public spending reviews. Seize the day, be imaginative, try to make the time for external funding bid and prove your value to your authority. Analyse what you really want to achieve for your service, not just what your current users want, but what non-users may want. Once funding is in place and staff are running the project, it's easier to oversee initiatives which make a difference to services. You don't necessarily need a large team to achieve this. We in West Sussex Libraries have just two dedicated posts (Amy Perry, our Local Studies Librarian (PT) and I) although an excellent team of Information Librarians run our service day to day.



To heads of service: Local Studies staff are among the most committed and knowledgeable members of staff; they know their users, sources and their communities very well. Lose this expertise at your peril. Local Studies collections are one of the few unique assets owned a local authority, have been collected by specialists for over a century and the vast majority of this content, owned by libraries and record offices, is not yet on the internet.... despite what my boys said!

Martin Hayes, County Local Studies Librarian

West Sussex C.C. Library Service

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Please note these are my personal views and not necessarily West Sussex County Council policy.

### **Local Studies Librarian of the Year**

The Local Studies Group is delighted to announce that Sarah Harding has been awarded the 2016 Dorothy McCulla Prize for her outstanding contribution to local studies librarianship. She is currently working at Kirklees Library Service specialising in local studies, and is responsible for the Huddersfield Local Studies Library as well as the local studies collections across Kirklees. She now enjoys a more varied role, working on opening up these collections to the wider community. She was Project Co-ordinator for Kirklees Libraries First World War commemoration activities - which included running a working party to plan the library service activities for 2014-2018. She was an active member of the Kirklees Council First World War Commemoration Working Party - which included helping to create a micro-website and promotional materials and supporting local community groups with their own commemoration activities. Additionally, she participated in Heritage Open Days and the Greenhead College Project and Work Placement Scheme running a popular session on family and local history for the students. The Pathways project - working with an organisation, which supports adults recovering from mental health issues, to create interpretation boards along a circular walk in Almondbury involved working with the adults to use local studies resources to research the information to be displayed and helping them create the final boards. She has worked on innovative activities to link up the local studies collections to curriculum topics and with the Local History programming group - for local history event planning in conjunction with the University of Huddersfield.

The work that Sarah has undertaken with young people was why she was considered a worthy recipient of this award. Her success can be seen in the fact that in the past two years over 2,000 hours of young volunteer and work placement involvement with the First World War activities was recorded. Incredibly enthusiastic feedback about the project and of Sarah's

leadership is a mark of her success. One of the students recently wrote about the project: "I stand by the fact that it's a great example of how research placements can impact the lives of students".

### **Wigan and Leigh Archives Online**

In 2015 Wigan Archives and Local Studies launched their new collections and photographic website, 'Wigan and Leigh Archives Online'. Along with 1000s of additional resources, the database has transformed the service's online delivery making it easier for the team to manage digital content and it is also in line with Wigan Council's 'Deal for the Future'.

Previous to Wigan and Leigh Archives Online, the service's website was called 'Wigan Images Online' and although it was a great resource, the management of the site and revenue was handled by an external team. Arrangements for uploading content were costly and time consuming.

The First World War Centenary commemorations brought an opportunity to improve the digital offer. Staff were approached and asked to create a database of people from the Wigan Borough who had died during the First World War. 'Wigan Images Online' would not be able to deliver this request but Archivist Alex Miller had been impressed with the work of Pastview by Townsweb Archiving and websites they had worked on. Pastview design websites for digital archive management and allow easy access and management for staff.

It was agreed with the Wigan Council First World War Commemoration Fund that Pastview would create a new website. Funding was provided for the uploading of data, the licence and a digital scanner.

The project was led by archives and local studies staff. Over 1000 First World War documents were placed on the website which included both archive and local studies material such as newspaper cuttings, photographs, diaries, and military tribunals.

In addition to the documents around 1000 hours of volunteer time went into creating a database of information on over 3000 men and women who died as a result of the First World War in the Wigan Borough. The information they had captured was turned into a searchable database of individuals on the website. This initial set of data was uploaded externally by the Pastview team. Users would now be able to download digital images of documents for a fee of £3.00.

Wigan and Leigh Archives Online launched in May 2015. The website was declared open by the Mayor and volunteers were invited to attend the launch which was also a big 'thank you' event as well. Volunteers were key to the

success of this project and it could not have happened without their time and passion for the project. One of the most rewarding parts of launching the database was hearing from the volunteers how pleased they were with the finished product.

After the initial launch, staff began to manage the digital content themselves. Following a morning's training with Pastview, staff could upload their own content and create searchable collections. New collections which have been used since include newspaper collections, coroner's records, family and estate papers, and manuscripts. There are now also specific local studies collections in which users can browse publications and areas of local history interest. Family historians can search the collections for their ancestors. Individuals have been tagged into relevant collections and indexed in some. Wigan Archives and Local Studies work alongside Wigan Museums and this has also been the case with Archives Online. Objects from the Museum of Wigan Life have been added and users can now access digital images of their temporary exhibitions such as their 'Ancient Egypt Rediscovered'.

Not only can staff use the website but volunteers can too. Volunteers can access the site from the archives and local studies search room but they can also access the site from home. Access to the site can be managed by staff and they can authorise how little or how much access an individual can have to the content management system.

Other benefits of the website include having links on the home page for the Wigan Archives and Museums social media feeds.

The website has been well received from both volunteers and users and it has also helped to generate some revenue. The project also fits into several strategic aims of the organisation; developing online services; encouraging residents to volunteer and support their council; and assisting with the First World War Commemoration.

Although we do charge users to download digital copies, the site is free to view. The work poured into the website by both archives and volunteers did take a year to do but it has been worthwhile. Content is uploaded frequently and there have been new local history projects launched on the site including the Civic Project, an ambitious volunteer project to research and record past mayors and chairs of the boroughs and districts which do and have been a part of the Wigan Borough. It is also satisfying for both staff and volunteers to see volunteer research be put online almost immediately instead of waiting for external partners to do it. This has also happened with customer loans, some users do not want to donate their family archives but they have given permission for digital reproductions to be put onto the website.

Future projects for Pastview will be uploading highlights from a local rare book collection called the Dootson Collection; a Wellcome Trust project called 'Counting the Cost' will showcase documents from the Lancashire and Cheshire Miners Permanent Relief collection; the Greater Manchester Archives and Local Studies Partnership Heritage Lottery Funded project 'Made in Greater Manchester' will also highlight some of the wonderful business archives in the north-west.

Other possible future projects include inviting users to tag documents such as newspapers with names and subjects to help create ownership from local residents over their collections. It would also be feasible that we could add visual user guides for archives and local studies as well as creating downloadable educational resources for schools.

To find out more about Wigan and Leigh Archives Online please visit <http://archives.wigan.gov.uk/> or email [archives@wigan.gov.uk](mailto:archives@wigan.gov.uk)

Hannah Turner  
Local and Family History Officer Wigan

### **Report on CILIP Conference 2016**

**Key Note Speaker, Scott Bonner:** Scott is the Director of Ferguson Library in the U.S. state of Missouri. In 2014 it was the site of great civil unrest after a white police officer shot an unarmed black man. Scott told the story of what he did to help the people of this town when they needed their library the most. He didn't hold back in saying that he had made mistakes but the ultimate story was one of a man with a conviction in using the power of the library to help the community it served. He was very modest about his achievements, saying he was just being normal. However, he qualified this by saying that normal in libraryland is pretty damn awesome! So remember, as librarians we do amazing things to help our community every day, we are all superheroes!

**Engaging non-traditional library users outside of the library space, Kirklees Libraries:** The main method Kirklees use to do this is through 'family story walks'. These usually occur local parks but could be done in a number of places outside of the library. They start off with a story and then continue with an activity, such as a treasure hunt for images that were in the story, or a bug hunt if a non-fiction book on bugs was used, for example. It is easy to see how this could be adapted to work with local studies and I'm sure that many of you have already done something similar.

**Celebrating equality and diversity in the collections at Bath Spa University Library:** This involved the creation of a timeline using a web based computer programme called Tiki-Toki (<http://www.tiki-toki.com/>).

The theme of the timeline was equality and diversity and its aim was to engage with the students. This was achieved by students and staff suggesting books on the theme of equality and diversity and adding them to the timeline. I'm sure that tiki-toki would work great in a local studies context.

**The role of libraries in supporting and protecting communities from a rising mental health crisis, Becci Louise:** Becci describes herself as a poet/educator. She read out an amazing poem about anxiety that she had created with the help of some teenage girls she had been working with in a school. The poem described the difficulty teenagers have in expressing their emotions about mental health and how, because there are no obvious physical problems, they are often dismissed. A lot of Becci's motivation for her work comes from her own battles with mental health problems. Libraries can help by promoting literature and allowing people to discuss their illness with others. One of the best ways in dealing with one's own mental health issues is through artistic and creative work. I know many libraries have done a great deal of work on mental health based on the wellbeing agenda.

**Systematising Shakespeare, Image Management:** The Royal Shakespeare Company set out to manage one of their biggest assets, their image collection. They added value to the collection by adding the right metadata and making sure they had the image rights. The key aim of the project was to make it easier to find and share their assets with key partners. They introduced strict metadata standards to enable people to easily search their database. I think that in this day and age, no matter how you look at it, the images we hold in our collections are assets and making sure that we have good metadata makes those assets even more valuable.

**The Bodleian Library and social media, @bodleianlibs:** They have been roundly praised for the quality of their social media presence. I've added their Twitter handle, but they also have Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr and many more (nearly as many as Archives+ in Manchester!). Here are some of their tips...

- Make sure you talk back to people, engagement = better views
- You can put a human face on a corporate enterprise.
- Different platforms have different users, who's your audience?
- Teenagers use Tumblr more than other platforms, for example.
- Use them to the best of your ability, prove this using statistics.
- Keep an eye on the competition.
- Timing is important.
- Use the collections and being creative, silly and funny with them (see their Twitter for examples). You can do this better if you know how to create GIFs.

**The secret online lives of teenagers, Lara Dodd:** Lara studied the information seeking behaviour of teenagers as part of her PhD. Contrary to popular belief, despite the fact that they use technology a lot, they aren't very good with it. Here is a little bit of information about teens that may help you...

Teens use the net a lot but have little patience.

They don't want to read lots of text as it creates information overload. They have poor information literacy skills, this all means they find it hard to form search strategies.

This doesn't apply to all teens. Some want to use other sources of information, such as books, but they aren't as readily available as they once were!

They generally have a poor understanding of their information needs.

The most important website design features for them were...

Ease of use – nice and short.

Aesthetics – looks professional.

Online/media – has web 2.0 characteristics, you can interact with it.

**The Opportunities and Challenges of Open Data, Nigel Shadbolt:** Open data is information that is available to everyone to use. Data is produced all the time by various organisations, including public and private bodies and making that data openly available could be hugely beneficial to society. An example is the <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en> who made high resolution, digital copies of their old masters freely available online. They believe this has resulted in their images being re-used and repurposed in a way that has encouraged more people to visit the museum in person. How this success would work when it comes to local studies image collections is open to debate. What he was certain of was how open data can aid democracy by increasing transparency. His ideal would be that data can move freely around the world using the internet protocols for what they were designed for.

**Libraries and NHS Trust working in partnership, Staffordshire Council:** Staffordshire, like all authorities have faced massive budget cuts resulting in library closures. In the South of the county the local NHS trust has taken over the running of a number of branches. They have their own idea about how they want them run and have their own management team and resources to enable this. The County Council still maintains some control, such as maintaining the running of the Pnet computers and they also provide an advisory role. The libraries themselves are all staffed by volunteers. Whether this is a sustainable or suitable model for public libraries remains to be seen.

**Library Makerspaces:** A makerspace is a current library buzz word. It is where people and technology get together and make things happen. They help take away all of the fears people have when engaging with technology. [www.makinglibrarymakers.com](http://www.makinglibrarymakers.com) is a website that has been set up for people who want to start something like this up. If you do decide to start one, make sure to start with something small and keep it simple, like a code club or raspberry pi jam. Play around, tell people what you are doing and let it evolve. Have fun, be flexible and most of all, engage with the community.

**FAB Lab Devon:** A FAB Lab is primarily designed to get people to be creative by using things such as 3D printers. Most of the work is done by volunteers who provide three hours of their time in return for three hours of time to work on their own projects. A steady income stream is maintained through a membership scheme and by charging for workshops. There are currently 30 FAB Labs up and down the UK, housed with various institutions. They would be ideally placed for some partnership work if you have something creative in mind.

**Keynote Speaker, Lauren Smith:** Lauren is a self-confessed 'radical librarian', she is a very keen advocate of libraries and has furiously campaigned to stop library closures. The key messages from Lauren's speech were to not ignore the root causes of problems. Council's often push is to try and be positive about everything but that means that problems don't get solved. If we tell those in charge what the problems are they have no excuse to ignore them. We also need to keep talking about things, talking things through and supporting each other is important, even if we can't come up with a solution; this is essentially a form of librarian counselling. It was a bit of a sombre note to end on but without facing these realities we risk burying our heads in the sand.

### **High Street Project Opens Doors to Participative Learning.**

In 2016 I was given the opportunity to research High Street stories for a project led and coordinated by Stockton Borough Council. The initial brief was to attempt to find ten interesting stories which reflected the social history of different decades in the history of Stockton High Street – these stories could be factual or quirky. The project aimed to build on earlier research which had focussed on the architecture, building materials and changing use of certain properties within the town's conservation area<sup>1</sup>. The Stories from the High Street project, supported with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Stockton on Tees Borough Council, aimed to explore the human interest stories in greater detail.



The project appealed to me for a number of reasons: a passion for local studies, museum and archive collections, and the fascinating treasures that they care for; a desire for the collections to realise their full potential in serving researchers and communities today, while also being preserved for future generations; a love of historical research and the insights and inspiration that this can bring; an interest in High Street history generally, with a curiosity about the stories behind the facades, an interest in how High Street shops and shopping have changed, and a desire to understand how and why some High Streets flourish, while others flounder.

Above all, however, the project appealed to me for the potential it offered to promote an appreciation of collections by involving others in the research. A participative project provides opportunities for individuals to discover the many treasures that collections hold, and to enjoy the research experience. Participants could learn how to extract clues and information from the source material, how to link information from different sources, cross-reference and check facts; understand how to use collections effectively, how to plan and prepare for a visit, use online catalogues and indexes prior to visiting, how to order materials and reference sources, and to understand the challenges faced by those delivering services, including copyright restrictions and reprographic costs, the need to handle material with the due care and consideration, and to respect those whose stories were being discovered.

As interest and enthusiasm for this project grew, so did the scope of the project, with a request to cover the High Street's history from the Civil War period to the present day. I was invited to deliver this through an introductory workshop, a series of participative learning/research workshops<sup>2</sup>, culminating in a display and presentation at a celebratory public event<sup>3</sup>. Many of the research sessions took place in the reference library, with direct access to local studies and online information sources; visits were arranged to the relevant archives service and museum, with visiting speakers from the record office and an archaeologist. Sessions were introduced with a presentation and used case studies to share research and illustrate how a story could be developed. Given that that we had just ten sessions across three months, most of the active research focussed on the mid-nineteenth century to early twentieth century. An expert from Tees Archaeology delivered a session at the Georgian Theatre during which he summarised the history of the area generally, and the High Street specifically, using activities to identify place names which indicate Saxon and Viking settlements, examining old street plans to indicate the location of, for example the Bishop's manor house, which was subsequently fortified and occupied in turn by Royalist and Parliamentary forces, before being dismantled and later supplanted by a shopping arcade. We also had the opportunity to examine a sample of archaeological finds.

A strength in using local studies collections as a basis for participative research and learning, lies in the diverse range of formats in which information is presented – while some of us are drawn to print sources, some to maps and photographs, others are drawn to and can ‘read’ objects and diagrams. While some information is now available digitally, and accessible online, many individuals continue to shy away from using computers or lack the skills to do so. A natural curiosity about people who have occupied premises that we pass by daily, can motivate and inspire exploration as researchers seek out facts and clues from the wide range of sources available. These include guides and diaries; maps and plans; newspaper articles, notices, advertisements and price lists; trade directories, council and business reports and accounts; census returns and wills; ephemera and of course photographs and film footage, in addition to a wide range of other sources we now tend to associate with family history, such as parish registers and cemetery records. Museum artefacts, and archaeological finds provide additional dimensions to the research as we discover together, the highs and lows of the High Street.

One of challenges faced was delivering sessions to a relatively large group participants within a public library setting, and the lack of opportunities to support individual learners. A longer course with some classroom based sessions to facilitate more group work and more discussions would have been helpful. During the project opportunities arose which enabled individuals to express their fears and misgivings about technology. As the project attracted individuals who had some experience of research using special collections, and some who had experience of searching online, there were opportunities for individuals to work together to share existing knowledge and expertise, and help fellow participants overcome a few of the barriers they face. A shared interest in the history of the High Street helped to break down barriers. In spite of the limited time available, a number of participants were able to develop a narrative from their research, and appear on the Heritage Stockton<sup>4</sup> website while new images and memories have been added to Picture Stockton<sup>5</sup>.

In addition to the learning opportunities, planning to deliver the celebratory event provided heritage experts within the Council to liaise with other professionals within museums, libraries and archives, archaeologists, historians, and a wide range of interest and expertise within the community. This event shared findings with the public generally, through presentations and demonstrations, stalls and displays, which in turn promoted the websites which share the images, information and stories with an even wider public. Facilities and expertise within libraries, archives and museums were promoted, as were computer and other courses available through adult education and other providers. A group of participants now meet once a

month to continue their research at Stockton Central Library <sup>6</sup>, with the Heritage Development Officer based at Preston Hall Museum and Park<sup>7</sup>.

1. Grants for Heritage Buildings Stockton-on-Tees [www.stockton.gov.uk/grantsforheritagebuildings](http://www.stockton.gov.uk/grantsforheritagebuildings)
2. Stories from the High Street summary of project on [www.heritage.stockton.gov.uk/stories-from-the-high-street-3/](http://www.heritage.stockton.gov.uk/stories-from-the-high-street-3/)
3. Stories from the High Street Celebration [www.flickr.com/photos/stocktoncouncil/sets/72157670651464](http://www.flickr.com/photos/stocktoncouncil/sets/72157670651464)
4. Heritage Stockton [www.heritage.stockton.gov.uk](http://www.heritage.stockton.gov.uk)
5. Picture Stockton [www.picturestocktonarchive.wordpress.com](http://www.picturestocktonarchive.wordpress.com)
6. Stockton-on-Tees Central Library [www.stockton.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.stockton.gov.uk/libraries)
7. Preston Park Museum [www.prestonparkmuseum.co.uk](http://www.prestonparkmuseum.co.uk)

Anne Sharp, MCLIP

### **Skeletons in the cupboard: newspapers and family history**

'As a source for family history research, newspapers are unrivalled' wrote David Annal in his excellent *Easy family history guide*<sup>2</sup>. My own family history shows just how useful they can be in solving problems and fleshing out those details that do not appear in census records or in birth, marriage and death registrations. Although important and noble personages are mentioned in newspapers alongside felons and criminals, there is a wealth of information on more ordinary families too.

My own interest was based on a chance discovery some ten years ago when *Nineteenth British Newspapers* online became available. We were aware that some mystery surrounded my grandmother's half -brother. I decided to search under his name, John Charles Bell in the hope of finding an obituary notice. What emerged was much better.

'Major in Turkish Army found shot in Pall Mall club', was reported in *Reynold's News* for 26<sup>th</sup> February 1893 under 'Yesterday's inquests'. Full details of the inquest were given and there was absolutely no doubt that this was indeed my grandmother's brother. 19<sup>th</sup> century newspapers did not spare the gory details from their readers. On the following day the *Hartlepool Mail* give an almost identical account headed 'Suicide of Mr J C Bell'. What was helpful was the additional information it contained. He had been in poor health from overseas service and was a user of narcotics, with choral in his blood at the time of death. Even more interesting was that his estranged wife had instigated a lawsuit for a post-nuptial settlement which was due to be heard the next day. His uncle intimated that the deceased regarded this as just a domestic nuisance and that he was not short of money. Another newspaper ran the same story entitled, 'Surprising end to a lawsuit'.

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1 *Easy Family History: the beginner's guide to starting your research* by David Annal. A & C Black 2013.

Obviously, finding information about local dignitaries and criminals is easier, as newspapers focus on material that is newsworthy. However, by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century people were keen on inserting notices of births, marriages and deaths for a small fee. With the proliferation of local newspapers after 1855, this became popular with the more affluent middle and upper classes. The local newspaper sometimes adds useful snippets of information supplementing registration documents. A case in point was the marriage of my great grandfather. Having an unusual first name, it was easy to retrieve details of his marriage from the *British Newspaper Archive*. This revealed that Raylton Dixon was married to Elizabeth Walker, daughter of the late Robert Walker MD at her grandfather's house in Helensburgh in September 1863. I wanted to discover more about Robert Walker but as civil registration in Scotland didn't start until 1855 it seemed to be a dead end. Robert Walker is too common a name for easy searching in the *British Newspaper Archive*. However, this is where local studies libraries can be invaluable as, over the years there have been many projects indexing local newspapers. The quality varies but they are often very strong on indexing personal names. The Watt Library in Greenock has indexed births, deaths and marriages from the 19<sup>th</sup> century *Greenock Advertiser and Greenock Telegraph*. Census records indicated that the Walker family lived in Greenock. The advantage of the Watt Library indexing project was that it was freely available online and possible to focus on the Walker family. Again I struck gold, with an obituary of Robert Walker in the *Greenock Telegraph* in September 1842. Details of the marriages of his daughters and also the death of my great grandmother's sister Jessie in 1860 were all recorded in the Watt Library's *Intimations* database from which I learnt that two sisters married Middlesbrough men. The births of all their children were duly announced in the local press.

My great grandfather was an entrepreneurial businessman anxious to make his mark on the local community and stand (unsuccessfully) for Parliament. He therefore featured prominently in the Middlesbrough daily and weekly newspapers. Speeches, presentations and honours were duly recorded. By the end of the century attention turned to more mundane matters. In 1900 the *Northern Echo* recorded a narrow escape from serious accident. 'Raylton Dixon had an extremely fortunate escape from serious injury or death. Desirous to catch a particular train, he jumped into a cab driven by Mr J Galloway at his office and when passing a gate an object was shunted on to the track and dashed the forepart of the cab to pieces knocking the driver from his seat. Raylton sitting in the back escaped injury'. Local papers faithfully recorded anxiety about Raylton's health and on 17 June 1897 *The Hartlepool Mail* indicated that he had undergone a successful operation for an internal malady in London. Further reports indicated that he was making a good recovery. In 1901 local newspapers all carried fulsome obituaries and information about his will. *The Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer* 16 November 1901 gave the following extract, 'Having complete confidence

in my dear wife I give to her all my real and personal estate without reserve and with full power that she may dispose of the same as she thinks fit'. In 30 January 1915 her death was announced in the *Birmingham Post*. The extension of the *British Newspaper Archive* to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century is brilliant and means that much previously inaccessible information is now readily available.

Funeral reports are especially useful for the additional information contained about those attending. Raylton's brother Waynman died in 1930. The list of family mourners indicated their relationship to the deceased and from this it emerged that he had a sister and some nephews of whom I had previously been unaware.

For John Robinson, my grandmother's grandfather, it was harder to find information. However, even here help was at hand. The census revealed that the Robinsons lived at Silcoates near Wakefield. This assisted my searching and a notice in the *Leeds Mercury* 13 January 1839 stated, 'Death at Silcoates near Wakefield aged 25. Zillah, the wife of John Robinson'. From this it was possible to retrieve more material. For example, his new wife presided over the Huddersfield Collegiate School Meeting of Friends in June 1844. Then suddenly a startling piece of information was revealed. Provincial newspapers have always reprinted details of local bankruptcies from those reported in the *London Gazette*. On September 21<sup>st</sup> 1850 the *Leeds Intelligencer* carried 'Court of bankruptcy - Leeds District-Robinson and Moore Silcoates near Wakefield spinners'. This announcement appeared in the *Bradford Observer* and it was followed up by a 'Notice of Sale by Auction: the premises at Silcoates Mill' in the *Leeds Intelligencer* and the *Bradford Observer*.

The way in which newspapers recorded marriages has changed greatly since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the 1860s and 70s notices were brief announcements. For instance, the *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* for August 25 1869 announced, 'Major Hugh Stewart Cochrane 7<sup>th</sup> Royal Fusiliers, son of the late Colonel Cochrane Fort William to Amy eldest daughter of John Bell of Rushpool Hall, Yorkshire'. These announcements can sometimes offer useful additional information. By 1898 my grandparent's wedding at Skelton in Yorkshire merited a full column, naming the principal guests. Gradually, wedding columns became a staple of the local weekly papers. I discovered that one of my father's cousins married an Australian from an announcement in the *Yorkshire Post* 14 December 1922 'whereby the marriage arranged between Dudley Sawtell Lawrence of Bairnsdale, Victoria, and Elfie, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Waynman Dixon of Great Ayton will take place in Melbourne the end of March next year. She will leave for Australia early in February'. By 1933 papers reproduced photographs of the wedding party and provided extensive lists of the guests and even of the presents received.

Again the fact that the *British Newspaper Archive* covers recent material is a great asset to retrieving so much more incidental material.

My grandparents were pillars of respectability, but my grandmother's sisters were less so. Newspapers reported divorces in much more detail than would be the case nowadays. On 27 June 1914 the *Daily Record* announced 'Army divorce. Wealthy wife confesses to her husband' and this referred to my great aunt's misconduct with the man she later married. Without being salacious, the full sordid story was revealed.

Newspapers regularly covered military appointments and promotions. The unfortunate John Charles Bell's military career can be traced through the pages of newspapers. Likewise my grandfather's commissions are recorded in the *North East Daily Gazette* and the *Leeds Mercury*. All local newspapers regularly carried columns listing the casualties in World War 1. Thus my grandfather's death was included in the *Newcastle Journal*'s list of 'Fallen Officers' for November 11 1914. An unexpected notice relating to this appeared in the *Manchester Evening News* on 5 May 1915 entitled 'Dead officer's wish. Three sons for the forces. The testator expressed the wish that his three sons should serve in some branch of Her Majesty's forces when they have come to a fitting age but he wished no compulsion to be used if they should elect to follow another profession'.

Similarly, World War 2 casualties were well recorded in newspapers national and local. In November 1941 the *Dover Express* carried the news that Flying Officer Claude Strickland was missing. It went on to state that he was believed to be alive but severely injured after being shot down over Ostend and gave the names of his parents and former wife. Later reports indicated that he did not survive.

My grandfather was an established artist and various accounts of his work were published. As regular patrons of the Cleveland Sketching Club both my grandparent's names appeared in connection with this. On 14 December 1907 the *Yorkshire Post* stated that the President of the Cleveland Sketching Club Mrs Clive M. Dixon contributed only two pictures, a portrait in oil of Margaret Dixon being especially admired.

There is no doubt that searching is made much easier if the family members have unusual names. The Rayltons and Waynmans are gifts for exploring the *British Newspaper Archive* but their brother John is much more of a challenge. I am sure much more can be uncovered about Robert Walker, John Bell and John Dixon with some more identifiers. Adding Silcoates meant that it was possible to retrieve some useful information about John Robinson and his family. As a result of the *British Newspaper Archive* being

readily available in public libraries, family historians are able to discover hitherto hidden information much more easily. Recently a useful book on using newspapers for historical research was published and this should encourage more people to use them.

*2 Historical research using British Newspapers by Denise Bates. Barnsley: Pen & Sword 2016.*

Diana Dixon

### **The Alan Ball Award 2016**

The Local Studies Group received a number of excellent and varied nominations for both the printed and electronic awardsshowing just how much innovative and creative activity is taking place using local studies material. The winner of the printed category was *Ightham at the crossroads* by Jean Stirk and David Williams and available from Sevenoaks Books. This was based on the Ightham History Project covering all aspects of village history. The electronic category was won by Peterborough Local Studies and Archives for Peterborough and the Great War for an interactive website based on two visitors' books from the tearoom at Peterborough East Station during World War 1. Full details of these and all the other submissions will appear in a later edition of the Newsletter

### **Regional Round Up**

#### **NORTH WEST**

We were sorry to lose Paul Weatherall who has been a very active committee member organising and speaking at several day schools. He has retired from his job at Manx Heritage and also from the committee. We also lost our Treasurer, Julie Devonald, who not only looked after our finances but also dragged us into the 21<sup>st</sup> century by developing an email mailing list, encouraging us to do a SWOT analysis and update our fliers for events. She was very active in arranging some of our most successful events. We are very fortunate that Linda Clarke has taken over as Treasurer and is also willing to help with fliers and bookings for events.

Our joint event with ARA at Preston on dementia didn't seem to attract many LSG members but was a very useful session with plenty of ideas for using our sources.

We organised a very successful visit to three libraries in Salford – the University Library Special Collections, the Local Studies Library and the Working Class Movement Library. We all learned something about these collections and the feedback showed that people were most surprised by the wealth of material held at the Working Class Movement Library. The Alan Ball Award for Buxton Museum was presented at this event.



Another edition of our newsletter was sent out with the publicity for the planned events.

We organised a visit to the University Library and the Ruskin Library at Lancaster for 16 November. We're not charging for these visits as the costs are quite low and it seems to encourage people to attend.

## **SCOTLAND**

At our Day School event March 18<sup>th</sup> we opened the day with short introductions from our panel of representatives from the National Library of Scotland. Up first was Jennifer Giles who as Curator (Scottish Communities & Organisations) General Collections is also a committee member of LocScot.

Ines Byrne outlined her role and highlighted the National Library's wider digitisation strategy – Jennifer and Ian Scott then took an opportunity to throw some light on collections and material we all have but asking the question – what might be digitised? What's most useful to us all? How can we make these collections accessible? Graeme Hawley took us through aspects of licensed digital collections and then Fred Saunderson gave us a whistle-stop tour of copyright. Craig Statham rounded up with some information on the map collection ahead of the afternoon demo.

We then had an open forum for discussion and the main themes to emerge were:

### **1. Where do we start with digitisation?**

Which collections – Graeme said the target is to cover NLS collection BUT they don't want to miss opportunities-digitisation could also happen from microfilm – there are options to do clever things like format capture and faceted searches. Ines suggested there are precedents for digitising gaps in National Library of Scotland collections using other institution's material, for example like the Post Office directories.

### **2. Newspapers**

After Ian's intro we were all thinking about a 'new' Newsplan – how do we go about digitising small, unique newspapers we all have in our collections OR will the newspapers themselves and big websites overtake efforts we might make?

### **3. Income generation**

The NLS map website is about making maps available for free and their experience is that charging more just limits what people will actually look at. Map images are used differently e.g. local history viewing is very different

to commercial use, e.g. conveyancing – we need to digitise these differences. Sustainability of digitisation is highly questionable. NLS approach is to assume that materials have rights attached to them – Intellectual Property Office said that digitization copies are not sufficiently original to have new rights invested in them. NLS works with other academic libraries on a collaborative basis through SHEDL; could public libraries do this too?

#### 4. A portal – what would this look like?

How can we make it different from other, existing portals! It could be an information resource or a repository. The former could be achieved quickly and be a pointer to 'who has what, where, and who to contact'? SLHF interested in having this information. Further discussions could lead to an actual repository portal being developed. If we have engaged in digitisation where do we 'put' these things? Edinburgh Collected as a model for other parts of the country?

#### Action Points for the day

- Guidance wanted, and interest in having other workshops with
- NLS on 'outputting' digital content' to make it accessible.
- Portal scoping – information resource, repository, or both? What would be useful?
- 2017 year of history – could be a good time to launch a resource.
- Sound Archives. (info coming out from Scotland's Sounds)
- Set up a LocScot group and/or an email list to discuss this further.
- NLS to think about e-legal deposit publisher portal, which could work as a repository for newly digitized items, as they would have been 'published' and so claimable.
- Interest amongst the audience to work with NLS and to discuss all of this further.

Chris Fleet's map demo of the NLS map website really opened up the possibilities by demonstrating the variety of uses the site really has. So many of us can do standard searches but this session gave us an insight into what this resource can actually do and we were a hugely impressed audience by the end of the day! Our other group enjoyed a back stage tour of the library and they all welcomed this opportunity to see how our national library looks and operate behind the scenes. The interest around this has been tremendous with around 40 people attending the event in March. We continue to liaise with NLS on their future projects and from the Day School some people have been identified who wish to join a focus group when the time comes.

## **SOUTH**

In the last half of 2015 LSG South & ISG London and South East arranged a joint tour of the Farnborough Air Services Trust and the National themed collection of material on, including material on aeroplanes, the UK's Aerospace Library. Around 30 people enjoyed a trip around the gems held in the Royal Aeronautical Society's diverse aviation aircraft firms and hot air balloons, together with tour around a Museum which is dedicated to the UK's former aerospace research centre. The year ended with a talk on the Victorian Poor in their own words by Dr Paul Carter of the National Archives. Sadly we did not get as many people as we wished for an excellent event.

The Forum 'Past into future: making local history accessible for current and future generations' was held at Merton on 21<sup>st</sup> April, where our focus was on opening up our Local Studies Collections to current and future users. We were delighted to be joined by colleagues from 17 different library authorities, representatives from CILIP and Vision RCL and the winners of the Alan Ball and Dorothy McCulla awards. Christoph Bull gave us a fascinating personal view of his lifelong commitment to exploring, promoting and sharing his passion for local history through his work as a librarian, local writer, speaker and leader of walks in North West Kent. Christoph is now retired, but he continues to share his knowledge and enthusiasm and is not afraid to speak up about matters which concern him. He is a deserving recipient of the McCulla award.

Martin Hayes spoke about the World War 1 project that led to his award-winning book, *Great War Britain: West Sussex, Remembering 1914-18*. In the course of his presentation he showed us why he has been so successful in raising the profile of local history in West Sussex with his many externally funded projects. (see pp. 3-13 For his account of his work).

Sarah Gould, Service Manager (Heritage and Local Studies) for Merton gave us a brief rundown of projects, notably Merton Memories photographic archive; the WW1 initiative 'Carved in Stone' which offers unprecedented access to a unique collection of material charting the history of Merton during the First World War; and finally the Merton Heritage Alphabet: an A-Z of local people, events, and places. This is simple but effective way to raise awareness of local history which could be adapted for collections anywhere in the country.

After a question and answer and information exchange session we were given a tour of the local studies library by Sarah. This was a successful event, proving that it is valuable to meet colleagues face to face, to share experiences, good and bad.

Committee.

During the past year we the composition of the committee has changed, with some people having to step down from previous roles due to change in employment, Rob Jones and Helen Pye-Smith, and others expressing an interest in joining us. We hope to welcome Sally England (Hackney) to our team, and we thank Rob and Helen for all their help over the years.



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