

## April 2010 – Closure week Report

### Bringing archives to life in digital format

The April closure week at the Record Office has seen a huge success in securing future access to audio archive material, meaning it will be available to users for many more years to come.

Here at the Record Office we hold archival material in a wide variety of formats including cassette tapes, videos and reel-to-reels. One of the biggest problems we face with analogue audio and visual archives is that the recordings themselves can deteriorate or the format in which they are stored can become obsolete as technology progresses and new mediums emerge. The specialist equipment necessary to play recordings becomes difficult to obtain as new technology replaces old – which means we face the risk of losing this material for good if we cannot convert it into a modern format supported by current technology.



Conversion of video footage on to DVD has already taken place at the Record Office, thanks to a partnership project with MACE (Media Archive for Central England), and the conversion of cassette tapes has also been possible as we still have access to cassette players. Recently, we have been looking for a solution to the problem of converting reel-to-reel tapes. This is now a very old technology, meaning that there are very few reel-to-reel players or recorders available. As it is virtually impossible to buy this equipment new, the Record Office advertised for a second hand one and we have been very lucky to have received the generous donation of a reel-to-reel player by the Reverend Stephen Owens, Vicar at Far Forest.

The machine dates from the 1970s and needed repairing before it could be used. Our Senior Digitiser, John France and our Assistant Digitiser, Johnathan Brusby worked hard stripping the machine down, cleaning the 40 years worth of accumulated grime from inside and coaxing it back to life. With the additional help of specialist cables and computer software, the machine was successfully used for a pilot conversion of almost unusable reel-to-reel audio material dating back to the 1960s into a digital format that will last for many more years to come. A copy of the converted material may be made available for users to listen to in our public searchroom in the future, subject to investigations into copyright restrictions.

The Record Office is currently formulating a policy of how we will deal with obsolete formats; how we will store both archival copies and access copies of any converted material; how we will ensure the survival of any archival copies taken once technology progresses further; and how we can make this material available for the public to use in line with copyright agreements.

### Appraisal of collections

We continued the appraisal work begun in the previous closed weeks and were able to appraise a further 22 parish council deposits and remove a further 10 boxes from the Educational Resources deposit from Pitmaston House that had already been reviewed. This latter collection is now ready to be input into CALM.

### Cataloguing

The cataloguing of the following collections was completed during the April 2010 closed week:

- Lambert and Wade solicitors
- Kidderminster drainage plans
- 3 Worcester City Library deposits

Work continued on collections started in previous closed weeks such as the Education Department records, the DVDs from the film project, Whatley Weston and Fox solicitor's

deposit, Whitbread archives, and the Lechmere archives. We also started, but did not complete, two other collections – Feckenham parish records and Bewdley High School records. We will need to continue work on these collections in future closed weeks. The projects to catalogue the Croome and Worcester City archives continued as usual.

### Searchroom and Index Activity

The Worcester Royal Grammar school index was completed during this closed week. This is an index of the admission registers, which list the boys admitted to the school between 1850 and 1921. It was previously available in hard copy at the Record Office, but is now easier to search as well as more widely available.

	A	B	C	D	E	
1	LastName	FirstName	OtherNames	DateOfBirth	Father / GuardianName	Attended From
2	Abbot	Arthur	James	2 October 1895	Wm Abbot	September 1909
3	Abbot	George	William	25 June 1868	G W Abbot	January 1882
4	Adair	William	Garrod	29 December 1907	William G Adair	May 1917
5	Adams	Cecil	Ruthin	01 January 1907	L Adams	September 1918
6	Adams	Donald	Henry Beauchamp	3 April 1898	F G Adams	September 1909
7	Adams	Leslie	John	15 July 1902	F G Adams	September 1913
8	Adams	William	S	11 December 1887	F W Adams	September 1900
9	Adgers	Frederick	James	19 January 1910	J H Adgers	May 1919
10	Alcock	Cecil	J	22 August 1889	J Alcock	September 1902
11	Alcock	Richard		28 May 1841	Thomas Alcock	December 1851
12	Aldington	Geoffrey	Albert	5 October 1898	R Aldington	September 1908
13	Aldridge	Francis	James	24 July 1904	J Aldridge	June 1917
14	Aldridge	Frederick	J	2 July 1883	William Aldridge	September 1889
15	Allcott	Charles	Henry	17 January 1903	C Allcott	September 1916
16	Allen	Albert	Frank	30 September 1896	A E Allen	September 1906
17	Allen	Charles	Ewart	20 January 1898	R A Allen	January 1909
18	Allen	Charles	James Trimnell	26 December 1910	C J Trimnell	September 1918
19	Allen	Jesse	John	19 June 1906	Mrs Davison	March 1918
20	Allen	Kenneth	Ward	29 March 1906	Alfred W Allen	September 1915
21	Allen	Robert	Truman	03 August 1900	R A Allen	January 1911
22	Allen	Roy	George Douglas	03 June 1906	G H Allen	September 1917
23	Allen	William	Henry Grantham	7 November 1870	Rev W H Allen	September 1882
24	Allison	Alfred		10 March 1848	Benjamin Allen	June 1858
25	Amphlett	Ernest	Harold	11 May 1876	J W Amphlett	January 1889
26	Amphlett	Thomas	S	not given	T Amphlett	May 1902

The index gives information including date of birth and parent/guardian names as well as the home parish and the dates that the pupil attended the school. It will be a useful resource for those researching the history of their family and those researching educational records. This resource can be found at:

<http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/community-and-living/records/using-our-services/search-our-records/online-indexes.aspx>

Work continued this month on:

- The County Hall Branch library; 6 shelves of books were inspected, resulting in 2 volumes being withdrawn from the library stock to add to the archive collections and 121 books identified for permanent withdrawal
- The Index of the admissions to Powick Asylum 1857-1903; another 1000 entries were added, which takes us to surnames beginning with the letter 'V'
- Enquiries; 37 were received and completed