

December 2010 - Closure week report

Appraisal of collections

During December closed week we continued to look at uncatalogued collections in need of reviewing. Two large deposits were appraised and six shelves of records were earmarked for destruction.

Cataloguing

Work continued on collections that cataloguing was started on during earlier closure weeks, including Education Department records, Social Services adoption and other files, Coop archives and Rous papers. We will need to continue work on these collections in future closed weeks as they are very large collections

The cataloguing of the following collections where was completed during the week:

- Jackson cricketers autographs etc. BA 13866
- Thomas Horton and Sons deeds BA 13566
- Porter deeds re Claines BA 13319
- Willans solicitors BA 13443 and 13444

The projects to catalogue the Croome and Worcester City archives continued as usual.

Training

Staff attended specialist training in the safe use of ladders, step ladders and kik stools; a vital programme of training given that staff are using these pieces of equipment every day in the strong rooms to access collections.

Mould work

During this closed week we again had a real push on identifying material in need of the specialised cleaning provided by Harwell. This continues to be very painstaking work; the mould is not always apparent and could be inside or on the edges of volumes. Staff spent the equivalent of nine days working on this task and were able to check nine bays of records and to fill three crates for collection by Harwell.

Staff were also able to continue work on cleaning the lightly soiled items previously identified as being capable of being cleaned in house; 38 volumes were cleaned throughout the week.

Other work

It is important not to forget other work which continues in the background whilst searchroom and collections staff are working on specific tasks. For example, the darkroom staff spent the week filming Herefordshire Record Office parish registers and digitising Worcester City planning applications. These are important, income-generating external orders.

Searchroom and Index Activity

Box weighing - 70 shelves (approximately 420 boxes) were weighed and labelled red, yellow or green according to their weight. This helps the searchroom team when retrieving the items for use in the searchroom, but will also greatly aid planning new locations for the boxes when they move to the new building.

Microfilm box checking - now that the new labels and lists of films have been completed we started checking them for accuracy. Once this has been finished the films will be re-boxed into harder-wearing plastic boxes with the new labels and the list of films will be made available on our website.

Handlists - work continued to transfer paper indexes into electronic format for use via our website. Many indexes have been removed from the searchroom as a result of this ongoing work and responses to the online versions have been very positive so far. In December, the List of Tithe maps held was completed and checked and will soon be available online. The list of manorial documents and the index of pupils admitted to the Worcester Royal Grammar School (1921-1945) were both completed and are awaiting checking. Work also continued on the index of patients admitted to Powick Asylum (1857-1903).

Library

Work continued on the task of weeding out of date stock from the library and in December, 120 volumes were withdrawn for further investigation.