

April 2011

News from the Source



Partners' and friends' update from Worcester Archive Source Project

Welcome to the Worcester Archive Source Project's sixth newsletter.

WASP and Museums Worcestershire – Fun at the Commandery

In February WASP joined forces with the City and County Museum Service to offer a range of workshops at the Commandery in Worcester. Over the 4 days we welcomed up to 1,000 members of the public (including many children, parents and grandparents) who danced to medieval music, made quills, candles and floor tiles and got muddy in mock archaeological excavation pits. Our Project also gave visitors the chance to scribe in 'secretary hand', a common style of writing used to draw up official papers, and therefore a style used in many of the documents being catalogued by Kat.



Youngsters writing in Secretary Hand



Visitors taking part in a mock mini-dig



More of Justin's Outreach in Schools



Since our last issue Justin has continued to run curriculum sessions in local schools using Beth's well tested resources with pupils aged 7 to 11. The Record Office has taken original documents to Northwick Manor, Gorse Hill and St George's (C.E) Primary Schools. The children explored historic topics relating to Medieval and Victorian Worcester, examined documents from as early as a water bailiff's report of 1392, through to a policeman's charge book of 1848.

The pupils also investigated clues through the eyes of a variety of local characters from the past: including clothiers, bell-hangers, shoemakers and a nurse working in a fever hospital. The class groups were able to scrutinise primary sources and to become some of the characters in role play activities.



Class 3TR from Gorse Hill Community Primary School

At Gorse Hill Class 3TR reported that:

"we went on a walk of the local area to learn about its history and role during the 2nd World War with Justin Hughes from WASP Outreach. We became archaeologists and studied the remains and landmarks around Elbury Mount and Leopard Hill, to work out what the area was used for and why. We thoroughly enjoyed walking in the mud (especially Miss Neil) and pretending to shoot Mr Harrison!"

Outreach for the summer and autumn of 2011

Beth Roper will be returning to her post in May and will be working with Justin to continue engagement in schools and with community groups in the city and surrounding area. We will be putting together a major exhibition of the WASP programme, initially to be presented in 'The Hive' to be opened to the public in July 2012.

The Project will create new material for this venture relating to the history of city life in Worcester. We will be working with Worcestershire Archaeology Service and with Museums Worcestershire, with community groups who have already been involved with WASP, with volunteers and, finally, with people who have a connection with the former site at the Butts where the new building is fast coming to completion.

For more information about the WASP programme please contact Paul Hudson at the History Centre: phudson2@worcestershire.gov.uk

Kathryn's Corner:



1231 boxes (67%) of the collection have been catalogued – most recently papers relating to the Civil Defence Volunteers, The Civil Defence medal, awarded for those with a minimum of three years (or were killed/wounded on duty) in the civilian defence service between 1939 and 1945.

Book of Oaths, 1723.

This contains the oaths for all Worcester Corporation Officers, including familiar ones such as Mayor and Town Clerk, and the more obscure like the Ale Taster and Searcher & Sealer of Leather. An earlier Book of Oaths is dated 1679, but is not nearly as attractive as this one with its decorative lettering and use of different coloured ink. Offices were held for a period of one year, although in some instances the same man could be re-elected to the position annually for many years. The oaths appear roughly in order of seniority and importance. It was not cost effective to produce a new book every time there was a new monarch or an officer's duties were altered slightly, so some pages have been annotated or amended.



Table of Oaths	
Taken by the several Officers of the City of Worcester	
Mayor Oath	1
Sheriffes	2
Aldermen	3
Sherrifs	4
Coron: Clerks	5
Exchequer	6
Judge of the Orphans	7
Auditors	8
Chamberlains	9
Coroners	10
Sheriffes	11
Serjeants	12
Keeper of the Beall	13
Searchers and Sealers of Cloth	14
Searchers and Sealers of Seaftes	15
Constables	16
Collewrights	17
The Distres	18
Water Bailiffs	19
24 and 48	20
Attourney	21

Extract from the Book of Oaths

Friends

The "Death & Disease in Worcester" talk, from last September's public event at the George Marshall Medical Museum, was reprised, this time at the Friends of Worcester Record Office's AGM on 12 April. Approximately 20 of the Friends and members of staff were present.

Volunteers

On 6th April, the Record Office held another Volunteers Tea-Party to thank all our dedicated volunteers for all the work they do for us. The event, at the Bishop's Palace, was well attended and it was a good chance for the different volunteers to meet each other.

We are happy to welcome our newest volunteer, Robin Whittaker. He will be familiar to many people, having only retired in February after 30 years at the Record Office. As a qualified archivist and medieval enthusiast, Robin has a great deal of knowledge that will prove extremely useful in his first undertaking, which is to individually catalogue some of the few surviving Worcester City medieval deeds.

