

## Online Exhibitions

### My Favourite Archive

To find out more about the archives that people use in Worcestershire we asked visitors and staff at Worcestershire Record Office which ones they particularly liked and why.

All the responses received made for very interesting reading. Some of the results are available here – from letters, photos, maps and accounts, to wills and tax records, illustrating the wealth of documents which can be found in Worcestershire Record Office.

#### List of archives included:

- Dougharty's Map Book of the Vernon Estates, 1731/2
- Quarter Sessions Extract, 1601
- Photograph of a Queue for Ration Books, 1942
- The Will of Sibille Fyncher of Himbleton, 1546
- A Register of Electors for East Worcestershire, 1851/52
- Diary of Victorine Janson from Surrey, 1860-1870
- Letter from George London to Mrs Vernon of Hanbury Hall, early 18thC
- Register of Apprentice Weavers, 1587-1632
- Extract from the household records of Anne and Phoebe Porter, mid 19thC
- Disafforestation Map of Malvern Chase, c1632
- Pirton Estate map drawn by Pearce, 1623
- Census of the Household at Witley Court, 1901

## Dougharty's Map Book of the Vernon Estates, 1731/2

Extract from Dougharty's map book of the Vernon Estates chosen by Penny Swinson, Record Office visitor.

'A beautiful book of maps of the estates belonging to Bowater Vernon drawn by John Dougharty in 1731/32. Not only is it lovely to look at, but it is also full of information about land ownership, particularly in Hanbury in the early 18th Century'.

*Penny Swinson*

Archives can be beautiful! Surveyed and mapped by John Dougharty of Worcester in 1731-2, this map was commissioned by Bowater Vernon upon inheriting the estate. These maps were working documents used to manage the estates as well as providing Vernon with the opportunity to demonstrate his high status. (Archive ref x705:7 BA 7335)



## Quarter Sessions Extract, 1601

Worcestershire Quarter Session Records [Extract from articles exhibited by Edward Buckland against John Genifer alleging that Genifer said of Mrs Buckland (being a mid-wife) that she was not fit to bring a dog to bed much less a women (1601)] chosen by Helen Curtis, Information Audit Officer, Worcestershire Record Office.

'My favourite documents are the ones describing rowdy happenings...unruly behaviour and drunkenness...proving that night life was much the same in those days...as well as the persistence and success of a midwife in one parish when delivering illegitimate babies-she had a duty to obtain the name of a father so that a bastardy order could be issued...One wonders how many women gave the name of any man they could think of...rather than the son of the lord at the manor who was most likely to be the culprit'.

*Helen Curtis*

The Court of the Quarter Sessions was held four times a year and presided over by a Justice of the Peace. Early Quarter Sessions dealt with the administrative tasks which were later carried out by local government as well as law and order. Proceedings were often recorded in detail and can tell us a lot about a person's life, family, housing and occupation. Worcestershire Record Office holds the Quarter Sessions records for Worcestershire (Archive ref: 110:16/49 xvi).



## Photograph of a Queue for Ration Books, 1942

Photograph of a queue for ration books outside Cripplegate House, Worcester c1942 chosen by Su Vale, Outreach Assistant, Worcestershire Record Office.



'For me this photo brings history to life, it was taken within living memory, but seems a world far removed from our own. When I see it I want to ask these women what their lives were like in 1942, were they working in the factories or the fields? How did

## Records Service

they cope with rationing, bombing and the loss of loved ones? By using a combination of photos, oral testimony and diaries we can perhaps begin to build picture of what their lives might have been like’.

The Worcestershire Photographic Survey is an important collection of over 79,000 photographs and other pictorial material covering the parishes of old and new Worcestershire. (Archive ref 899:156 WPS Worcester 45886).



## The Will of Sibille Fyncher of Himbleton, 1546

Testamentum Sibille Fyncher de Hymmylton 1546 chosen by Frank and Eileen Fincher, Record Office Visitors.

‘We choose this particular document because it was written in the year 1546, on the cusp of Catholic to Protestant church of Himbleton. It mentions the Priest asked to ‘sing for her’ and her husband for 2 years after her burial in the Lady Chapel. It also mentions the animals on the farm such as oxen, a heifer, a ewe and lamb and items of her clothes – ‘a rownde violet gowne’, ‘best kertyll’ and ‘my best cap’. It also includes a bequest ‘to my gostly father iiijs iiijd’.

*Frank and Eileen Fincher*

This is an extract from the Will of Sibille Fyncher of Himbleton, 1546. The Record Office holds thousands of Wills, this particular one was written at a time of great upheaval and reflects the social and religious turmoil at the time of the Reformation. (Archive ref 008.7 BA 3590/vol 5).



## A Register of Electors for East Worcestershire, 1851/52

East Worcestershire Register of Electors 1851/52 chosen by Diana Poole, Record Office visitor.



‘When I was researching the history of Great Dodford Chartist settlement in 1849 I was able to prove that the Chartist settlers did get the vote, as was their aim. This was contrary to the experts’ opinions’.

Archives can sometimes challenge long held beliefs. They provide an authentic record of events and leave the interpretation to you. Chartism emerged in 1836 with aim of gaining political rights and influence for the working classes. The Chartist settlement at Dodford was designed to provide working class people with smallholdings of four acres so that they could become self-sufficient and entitled to vote. (Archive ref: b153 BA 1015 vol 18).



## Diary of Victorine Janson from Surrey, 1860-1870

Diary of Victorine Janson from Surrey 1860-1870 chosen by Fran Ricketts, Senior Archives Assistant, Worcestershire Record Office.

## Records Service

'This diary written by a young lady, records her busy and carefree social life...she was related to the Milwards, needle-makers of Redditch and refers to the Redditch area. A very poignant postscript written in 1872, contrasts how her life has changed in just ten years from being carefree to careworn. She feels this change was retribution for how she treated a fellow human being.

Tantalisingly she breaks off before revealing exactly what she feels she has done. In researching her background...this Victorian lady & her diary will always be special to me.'

*Fran Ricketts*



Diaries can bring history to life. Victorine Janson was born on the 3rd July 1841, the daughter of Henri Etienne Janson, who was a master of languages and at one time French tutor to Queen Victoria. Her aunt was married to Henry Milward who owned the needle manufacturing business in Redditch. She died, unmarried, on 7th Oct. 1893. (Archive ref: 899:652 BA 11.401).

## Letter from George London to Mrs Vernon of Hanbury Hall, early 18thC

A letter from Mr. George London to Mrs. Vernon of Hanbury Hall chosen by Dr Murray Mylechreest



'An exciting find in the archives as it is a rare example of correspondence of George London, a partner in the Brompton Park Nursery, London and adds a considerable dimension to the history of the gardens at Hanbury Hall...because it shows the Vernons were in contact with a leading 18th Century nurseryman.'

Archives can provide us with new evidence about the lives of people in the past. George London (1681-1714) was an English nurseryman and garden designer who worked on the gardens at Hampton Court, Melbourne Hall and Wimpole Hall, the Vernon family lived at Hanbury Hall, nr Droitwich. (Archive ref: 705:7 BA 10794/5/iii).



## Register of Apprentice Weavers, 1587-1632

Apprentice Weaver's Register 1587-1632 chosen by Gaynor Hayes, a member of the Friends of Worcestershire Record Office.

'A fascinating document, not only listing apprentice weavers and masters in nearly 3000 entries, but also providing information about terms of apprenticeship monies and benefits received and the occasional idiosyncratic comment of the compiler. It also records the movement of apprentices between masters known as 'returns' sometimes because of death but more often I think because some apprentices were 'problems' An invaluable and I suspect, neglected source of information about one of the principle trades of Worcester at the time.'

*Gaynor Hayes*



## Records Service

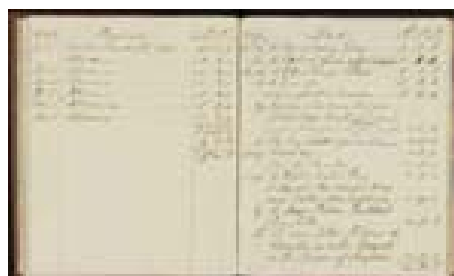
Apprenticeship dates back to the later Middle Ages (1300-1500). Master craftsmen, such as cobblers, blacksmiths, tailors and weavers, benefited from taking on an apprentice, usually a child in their early teens, offering board and lodging and training in return. (Archive ref: b705: 232 BA 5955/2).

### Extract from the household records of Anne and Phoebe Porter, mid 19thC

Household records of Phoebe and Ann Porter of Birlingham, chosen by Beccy Jackson, Archives Assistant, Worcestershire Record Office.



'At first glance household accounts might not seem like the most exciting of archives, but they can tell us so much about the lives of the people in the past. The records of Anne Porter are particularly interesting as she began keeping accounts during childhood, listing her allowance and purchases such as ribbons and gloves and continued into adulthood where she details expenses relating to the running of the household. Within the deposit, there is also a list of jobs to be performed by each servant on specific days, scrapbooks and diaries. Viewed together they provide a fascinating insight into the running of a 19th Century household.'



*Beccy Jackson*

Anne Porter was born in 1801. She lived at The Mansion, Birlingham with her sister Phoebe and, together, they managed the household and family estate. Anne was involved in a legal dispute when she broke off an engagement in 1840. She never married and died in 1877. Worcestershire Record Office holds a wealth of family papers which often include such archives as accounts, diaries, letters, estate records, deeds and photographs. (Archive ref: 705:262 BA 3940/18 & 29).

### Disafforestation Map of Malvern Chase, c1632

Malvern Chase Disafforestation map c 1632 chosen by Cora Weaver, Record Office Visitor and Valerie Goodbury, Archives Assistant Worcestershire Record Office.

'It identifies all the parcels of land that Charles I received for relinquishing his forest rights in Malvern Chase. It shows the huge extent of land enclosed from the commoners. It explains why some land today has neither manorial or monastic origins. But best of all it shows 3 important healing springs – Moralls & St Thomas's on the west and Holy Well on the east. It tells so many stories!

*Cora Weaver*



'This is my favourite because it shows the area in which I live, as it was during the reign of Charles I. It confirms information given in written documents and adds to them. For example it shows that lime burning took place close to where the last lime kiln was erected c.1907. Its purpose was to divide the land so that the king could raise money by selling his 'third'. Therefore we know the origin of names such as 'Thirds Land' on local tithe maps and 'Thirds Wood' above Jubilee Drive. My

## Records Service

daydream is that one day the southern section will be found.'

*Val Goodbury*

The Malvern Chase was a Royal Forest in the hands of a private individual until the 17th century. Change began when Charles I saw disafforestation as an easy way to raise some much needed money and a degree to that effect was made in 1631. One third of the wastes and commonable land (the King's third) was to be enclosed the remaining two-thirds to be left free and unenclosed for the lords, freeholders and commoners. This confirmed by Act of Parliament until 1664. Prior to the Act a survey was carried out and this map was the result. (Archive ref: 705:24/366).

### Pirton Estate map drawn by Pearce, 1623

Pearce's Pirton Estate, 1623 chosen by Peter Walker, a member of the Friends of Worcestershire Record Office.



'It is a beautiful map, full of colour and detail not normally seen in maps. It shows detail of rural life of a period nearly 400 years ago. Every time I see it, I see some new detail that gives me a buzz!'

The Pirton Estate map is part of the unique archive of the Earls of Coventry from Croome Court which was allocated to Worcestershire Record Office in 2006. This archive has been created over hundreds of years by the Coventry family and includes historical sources such the development of the parkland by 'Capability' Brown.



### Census of the Household at Witley Court, 1901

An extract taken from the 1901 census showing the household at Witley Court chosen by Sophie Noble on a visit to the Worcestershire History Centre.



'It was cool seeing the names of all the people who worked at Witley Court in 1901.'

Image courtesy of The National Archives: ref. RG13/2774

A census of the population of England and Wales has been held every 10 years since 1801, except for in 1941; from 1841 to 1901 the enumerators' returns give information about named individuals such as age, sex and occupation. Microfilm copies of the census returns for Worcestershire from 1841-1901 can be viewed at the Worcestershire History Centre.

