



Who is working for WASP? Meet the team...



Kathryn Steenson (right)

Kathryn moved to Worcester to take up the position of Project Archivist for WASP in May 2008. Her main role is to arrange and catalogue the collection, making it as accessible as possible. Previously she was Project Archivist at the University of Aberdeen's Special Libraries & Archives working with business archives. Kathryn says, "The Worcester City Archive is different to any collection I've worked with before, and I am very much looking forward to it!"

Elizabeth Roper

Elizabeth has spent most of her career working in heritage education and on outreach projects at a range of sites including a reconstructed Iron Age village, a community woodland and a medieval castle. She is looking forward to indulging her interest in history even more; "I can't wait to get local people involved," she said, "The collection is full of intriguing accounts and records that were at the heart of some of Worcester's key moments in history. The story of the ordinary man in the street is there too, and unlocking and sharing those tales is going to be great fun and provide some unique opportunities."

WASP volunteering opportunities filling up fast!

Our funds from HLF will allow for Kathryn to catalogue the collection. However, there are some associated tasks that we will be using some volunteer help to complete. These opportunities mean we can draw on skills from outside of the team to help provide information and deliver events to the wider community.

We are already working in partnership with **Worcester Technical College** to involve a group of students in a regular archive conservation session. Back in their classroom, the students are learning a range of life skills and are incorporating volunteering and new interests into their studies. They are a small class and broadly speaking students suffer from learning disabilities and mental health issues. The group will visit the Record Office fortnightly and provide valuable help with conservation tasks, working on some of the more fragile WASP documents. It is also hoped that the group's involvement can culminate in a small research project about the area of the city around their college. There will be good news from this group to come soon hopefully!

We are currently recruiting to fill other volunteer roles with the help of the Worcester Volunteer Centre, the excellent 'Do It!' website, and other friends and contacts. These roles include:

- **Listing unsorted (currently mystery!) materials**
- **Creating a name index to associated with the archive**
- **Guided research – to detail key Worcester people and places or specific neighbourhood histories**
- **Volunteer Outreach Assistants** to help at events with children and community groups

Opportunities are open to all. If anyone you know may be interested, please email ERoper@worcestershire.gov.uk, or call 01905 765926



Outreach news

During the Autumn and Winter 2008-09 staff will be making an appearance at several community events and venues to help raise awareness of the project, before working on specific projects with groups.

Opportunities to hear more about our plans, and to discover more from the City archive:

Tuesday 18th November – Pumphouse Environment Centre – 7.30pm We will be bringing along material to help illustrate a talk by Dr Malcolm Nixon on the 'People of the River Severn'. This is part of the Northwick Heritage Project and details about the evening can be obtained from Sheena Payne on 01905 721133

Saturday December 6th – Cripplegate Park – from 10am. We will be bringing an exhibit of City Archive records all about Worcester customs & celebrations of the past, to the Friends of Cripplegate 'Tree Dressing Day'. We will also bring an activity for children to introduce them to using old documents.

Saturday 22nd November – St Andrews Methodist Church, Pump Street – from 9 – 11am. WASP information stand at church bazaar and coffee morning.

Sunday 30th November (Victorian Fayre) – St Andrews Methodist Church, Pump Street – from 9 – 11am. The church is just off of the route of the popular Victorian Fayre and we hope to attract Fayre visitors to come and see us while they are in the mood for history! The church hosts a Christmas bazaar to help get shoppers through the door.



Visitors enjoying our display at the Butts Dig Open Day

Outreach plans for the coming months

We already have a busy time scheduled! We are working on evening classes, classroom visits, research opportunities, arts projects and community celebrations with a number of local groups. These include Worcester city community centres; primary and secondary schools; The University of Worcester; the Friends of Ghuelevelt Park and the City Museum and Art Gallery. We will bring you detailed news in later newsletters and look forward to bringing you some photos too!

The WASP website is now live!

The WASP website is now live and accessible to all at www.worcestershire.gov.uk/wasp. The website features permanent sections relating to: collection highlights; ways to get involved; outreach, plus an all important news page to keep you up to date between newsletters. All WASP publicity and press releases will feature the site address, and we are hoping to get plenty of hits as a result of outreach work and general interest.

Current online exhibition: Private Frederick Dancox VC to commemorate Remembrance Day.



Kathryn's Corner



In each newsletter, we will feature a **cataloguing update** from Kathryn when she will fill us in on her progress with cataloguing the City collection, and will also feature a bit more detail on one of the records she has found. This time it is the turn of...

'A Full & True Account Of The Horrid Murders, Robberies And Burnings Committed At Bradforton And Upton Snodbury, 1782' This tale probably relates to the villages we now know as Bretforton and Upton Snodsbury. The story goes that in February 1707, Ann Cornel from Bretforton was murdered and her house burnt down, the culprits at that time unknown. Nine months later, Mrs. Palmer, her maid suffered a similar fate. The tale becomes even more 'Horrid' when we read that, amongst those convicted and sentenced to hang were Mrs. Palmer's son John and his brother-in-law Thomas Symonds. Both of these were relatively wealthy young men who enjoyed socialising (although John was married with an infant son) and the nature of their social standing made the murders even more intriguing to the public. This book in the City Archive was published to counteract the more lurid and scandalous accounts of the murder that people were still indulging in 75 years later! Despite this honourable intention, the book interestingly offers the reader an illustration to help inspire their imagination. It does give an in-depth account of the events immediately after Mrs. Palmer's murder plus trial proceedings, letters written by the condemned to the Bishop of Oxford, the Bishop's eyewitness account of the executions, and remarks on the men's dying speeches. The book was presented to Bishop Lloyd's Charity School which has the unusual claim of being founded using an executed man's forfeited wealth – that of John Palmer the rogue son of Bretforton.

Members of the public using the City Archive are now free to read through this mystery and decide upon their own verdict, had the fate of the accused been in their hands!