

## Transforming the CRO

### Feedback on Collection Week 27 – June 2011

One of the most exciting things to happen in the June Collection Week was the arrival of Jonathan Wathen Waller's commonplace book. Many of you will remember the 'Outside the Box' project from a few years back, in which the Waller of Woodcote archive was catalogued and arranged. The commonplace book was written by Jonathan Wathen Waller, one of the family about whom so much information is already known. It became available at auction a short while back and with the kind generosity of the Friends the archive has been purchased for Warwickshire. The book has been given the number CR 4436/1, and although not yet fully catalogued will be available once Conservation have checked its physical condition.

## Collections

### CR3230 – Leamington College for Girls

During this month's Collection Week, the cataloguing of an accession of records relating to Leamington College for Girls was undertaken (CR3230). Two previous accessions have already been catalogued, but the most recent accession has remained untouched in the three large boxes in which it was placed in 1995. There were many folders containing much correspondence along with many other kinds of records such as photographs, minute books, account books, pages of lists and so on. The classification scheme which had already been used to arrange the previous accession had to be expanded to accommodate this. Through these new records, it is possible to obtain an insight to the kind of school Leamington College was. In addition to the standard academic subjects, sport and drama loomed large in the curriculum. There are plenty of photographs of sports teams and a wealth of material relating to school plays in terms of scripts and programmes. Most interestingly, is the material relating to Cecil Waterfield who was headmistress during the period 1902-1962. Many letters from past pupils evoke a picture of this lady and indeed, a sense of the lives of the pupils at the school.

### **CR 3286 - Binley Woods First School, 1954-1995**

The full catalogue for this school - formerly known as Binley-Roseycombe County Primary School - has now been produced in draft form. Although consultation with the depositor is now required regarding some of the records, the catalogue will be completed in time for the next up-date of Warwickshire's Past Unlocked. The records include governors' minutes and associated papers, logbooks containing some fascinating detail about school activities and dating from 1955-1994, and admission and attendance registers. There are some access restrictions to the more recent records, but these are explained in the catalogue.

### **CR 3294 - Napton C of E Primary School, 1822-1996**

The catalogue for this collection is almost complete and again, should be ready in time to be included when Warwickshire's Past Unlocked is next updated. The collection includes governors' minutes, detailed logbooks covering 1975-1996, admission registers, plans and some very early correspondence about the school, dating from the 1880s. Again, there are some access restrictions to the more recent records.

### **CR 4310 - Willoughby Society, 1835-2009**

The Willoughby Society has collected a wealth of documents relating to the village of Willoughby and its residents, both old and new, which are now deposited here at the record office. As well as administrative records of the society, this collection includes photographs, recollections and histories written by the local inhabitants, which offer a fascinating insight into the village. There is much documentation relating to property in Willoughby, especially the 'Rose Inn' and its owners, from The Arnold family in the 1920s to the transfer of the licence to the Martin family in 1930; amongst these papers you can find recipe's for buns, such as lemon curd and raisin chutney and even a souvenir booklet of the Afghan and Zulu wars, 1879. This collection has now been catalogued and will be available on our online catalogue 'Warwickshire Past Unlocked' at the next update.

## **CR 4432 - Solihull Widney Girlguiding Division, c1926-1939**

This relatively recently received collection consists of 2 log books of the 1930s, created by the guides of 1<sup>st</sup> Balsall Common Company, and a notebook, c late 1920s early 1930s, concerning the camping activities as recorded by one Katy Beaufoy, Lieutenant-Captain of 1<sup>st</sup> Chadwick End Company.

Each logbook contains a summary of events arising from weekly meetings and delightful diagrams of girl guides in action, including figures in semaphore positions to highlight their activities.

Appended to the notebook of Katy Beaufoy are several photographs of guiders attending camping expeditions at Foxlease, the first training and activity centre opened for the girl guide association (which had opened in 1922) situated in Wales, with descriptive plans for days at camp and some insightful view points of the writer.

These artefacts are a welcome addition to the county record archives, as we have few Warwickshire guiding records to represent what is a national organisation.

Having been catalogued this collection is now available to view at the county record office, however, the notebook has been temporarily withdrawn by the depositor for a short time; to be back with the record office by the end of June.

## **Deed Collections**

### **CR 954 – Farnborough Deeds**

A further ten deeds were listed in June Collection Week. The main families mentioned in this collection are the Greaves, the Eycotts, the Astells and the Knibbs (so far!). There are several properties in the Farnborough area, both in Warwickshire and over the county boundaries of Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire, and the collection should be a valuable resource once the catalogue is finished.

## **Building Regulation Plans**

### **CR 4164 – Nuneaton Borough Building Plans**

Work has now finished on this batch of building plans, and we report that there are now 6977 entries in this database covering the years 1923-1965. The database continues to be accessible only by staff in the searchroom, but the items themselves can be produced in the searchroom. Work has continued with the repackaging of the plans so they are better preserved and easier to handle.

## **Record Office Staff**

### **Who are we and what do we do...?**

#### **David Hodgkinson, Archive Assistant**

For the last four months I have been working as an archive assistant, at first for two and a half days during the week and latterly on Saturday mornings as the document production assistant, working with the duty archivist and two other archive assistants.

As the document production assistant, my main duty is to retrieve documents from the strongrooms, issue them in the searchroom to members of the public and subsequently to return them safely to the right place. On a busy day, this can be almost non-stop, with a steady stream of documents to bring up and little time to sit down. When it is quieter, however, I spend my time answering the email and postal enquiries which come into the office. I'm also on hand to answer enquiries from people in the searchroom and to help people make the most of their time at the office by guiding them through the various resources available.

Document production can, at times, be quite a demanding role, carrying heavy boxes back and forth from the strongrooms, or producing cumbersome tithe maps and laying them out in the searchroom. At these times, it can be a great relief that I don't have to do this role for a full day. Equally, however, document production is a great way to get hands on experience with a wide range of documents and an introduction to many different collections.

As well as working as an archive assistant, I have been volunteering at the record office for one afternoon each week, working on the Quarter Session project. This involves indexing the Quarter Session Minute Books in order to make them more accessible. The books contain a wealth of information, both on the judicial work of the court

through the trials heard before the Justices of the Peace, and on the administration of the county through the court's dealings with policing, prisons, rates and roads.

This project has been running for a number of years now and the ultimate aim will be to produce a database which will lead a researcher directly to a particular page in one of the many volumes of Quarter Session Minutes which relates to a person or event relevant to their research.

Some of you may remember that I previously worked as an archive assistant at Warwick in 2008-2009. I was one of the two one-year post temporary archive assistants for that year, a post which is specifically designed for people looking for experience working in archives prior to studying on one of the courses to become a qualified archivist.

After leaving Warwick, I moved down to London for a year to study at University College London for my Masters in Archives and Records Management. The course was very engaging, looking at both the theoretical and practical aspects of archival work, but certainly the most interesting part for me was learning to tackle the handwriting from a variety of periods in the palaeography module. Apart from the course itself, living in London was something of a revelation for a country lad like me and certainly an experience I won't forget quickly.

Since finishing the course and receiving a Masters degree, I have been searching for a full time job as an Archivist. In the meantime, returning to the record office to volunteer and to work as an archive assistant has provided an excellent opportunity to remain in touch with the archive sector and to add valuable experience to my CV.

More recently, I have been very lucky to be given the opportunity to work as an archivist at Warwick to catalogue the papers of Doreen Wright, a local woman with many strings to her bow. This is part of a wider project being run in conjunction with Leek Wootton History Group, centred around the diary written by Doreen during the Second World War after she lost her husband, who was a Flight Officer in the RAF. As well as this valuable account of life in Warwickshire during the war, the collection contains fascinating material from Doreen's time as a sports woman representing her country at the Empire Games, designs she submitted to the Royal Society of the Arts during her time at the Royal College of Art, as well as evidence of her involvement with the creation of the Lace Makers Guild.



Catalogues online at: [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/archivesunlocked](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/archivesunlocked)