

Report from the Archivist

Heritage Open Day

A record-breaking 821 people attended Heritage Open Day at the Town Hall on Saturday 8th September, smashing last year's record of 595 visitors. It would not have been possible without the superb support of volunteers, including a number of City Councillors, and the Archivist is extremely grateful to all of them.

In recognition of the centenary of the Universal Suffrage Act, the event incorporated the national Heritage Open Days theme of 'Extraordinary Women'. There were displays on "Women's Suffrage in Wells", "Women's Firsts in Wells", "Women of Wells: A Selection from History", and "Women at the Wells Charter Fairs". Moreover, the Archivist had organised a performance of a suffrage playlet which she had identified as having a unique link to the city, and it was standing room only. People flocked to see the Millennium Tapestry, created by a group of local women embroiderers, and St Etheldreda featured in another display, along with information on the Southover History Project.

The Archivist collaborated with the Wells Mills Interest Group to produce a brand new exhibition they had researched and written, called "Mills of Wells"; this was also extremely popular, as was a very professional display by Wells Railway Fraternity.

Looking at Heritage Open Days at venues across Wells, the Archivist again produced and organised distribution of the joint leaflet advertising what would be happening. She urged the other venues to take part in the national theme too, and many responded. Across the City, nine venues took part, along with Wells Walking Tours.

Mayoral Remembrance Project – "We will remember them"

The Archivist has been working on a special World War One commemorative project with the Mayor, the President of Wells Chamber of Commerce (Michael Johns), Clare Blackmore and Eric Preston. Specially designed posters will be displayed in 29 Wells shop windows for the month of November and there will be a trail leading people along the route where the posters are displayed. The Archivist and Clare have carried out research into the men who worked in these businesses and served during the war, and have located period photographs of the men and of the business premises. The Archivist also prepared all the text and images ready for the printer's.

Other City Archives involvement in Armistice projects

Images of documents and photographs held in the City Archives will appear in "Lest we forget", a book about the 99 men on Wells War Memorial who died during World War One. The book is being published by Wells Museum next month. The Archivist has been responding to many enquiries related to Armistice events, including providing information for St Cuthbert's School and for a special event at Wookey Church Hall

Restoration of Chairs and Conservation of Paintings

The first three chairs have gone for restoration and the paintings will be collected for conservation in mid November.

Dr Julia Wood
08.10.2018