

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

Report from the Archivist January 2016

Curatorial matters

The 1613 Anne of Denmark chair has gone for woodworm treatment, and will be followed by the other two historic chairs from the Mayor's Parlour. The Archivist has arranged for Alan Bush (painting conservator, of the Bush and Berry Conservation Studio) and Ashley Sands (picture frame conservator) to visit on 28th January to inspect the condition of the paintings and frames and give us advice on whether any of them need restoration work done. They will also give a quote for the cost of cleaning the frames.

Archival storage

The Archivist takes regular readings of the relative humidity and the temperature in the Archives strong room and other locations at the Town Hall. Following discussion, the Town Hall Manager may be able to adjust the ventilation in the main Archives storage room in order to improve the conditions.

Display

The "Archivist's Choice" display case now features a First World War Christmas card from the Somerset M.P.s.

Town Hall paintings on the Internet

While William Smith was still here, the Town Hall's collection of paintings was photographed by the Public Catalogue Foundation (PCF). These images were subsequently made available on the Internet on the BBC Your Paintings website (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/>). The Archivist has just received news that this website will be enhanced in late February 2016.

'Know Your Place – West of England'

The Archivist arranged for the unique 1860 Sewerage Map of Wells to be digitised as part of the project, and this has now been done by ICAM Archive Systems Ltd. ICAM have recently completed the digitisation of maps across the region, with an estimated c. 2700 'captures' of approx. 1500 maps. They are finishing final preparation of files to share with the project in Spring 2016.

Retention and disposal of records

The Archives at the Town Hall has long contained a large number of unsorted records in big storage boxes labelled 'Finance'. The Archivist has been through these with the RFO, who has selected those records which he wishes to retain. The Archivist has since been going through all the records in more detail and selecting those which she judges should be preserved permanently as part of the Council's Archives and for historical research. She is making good progress with this task. The unwanted records (which constitute the bulk of them) will be disposed of as confidential waste.

Somerset and Dorset Railway – 50th Anniversary of the Closure

Wells Town Hall is currently hosting a pop-up exhibition in the entrance area of the Town Hall which has been created to mark this event. It will be there for the period 30th January to 7th March 2016. The Archivist is organising a Family Activity Day on Saturday 27th February, to commemorate the S&D Railway. It will take place in the Indictment Room and will involve three sets of activities for families and children.

Talks

On 15th February, the Archivist will be giving a talk on the City Archives to the Mendip Postcard Society. She already has several bookings for talks in 2017 and 2018.

Dr Julia Wood
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