

# **HARC Newsletter**

## **Winter 2017 / Spring 2018**

There's an inevitable looking back / looking forward that goes on at this time of year. And as 2018 sees the sixtieth anniversary of Herefordshire Archive Service, you can expect to hear much more about past, present and future as the year unfolds.

As to the present, we have our programme of courses and craft workshops planned. Details of the former are attached. Details of the latter will appear in our regular mini mailings, and of course on our Facebook page. Speaking of which, have you been following our Advent Calendar on Facebook? Each day, we've shared an image or two – some treasures from the strongrooms, favourite photos, quirky bits and pieces about the building and what goes on here – do take a look. You'll have to provide your own chocolate though.....

And while we're being seasonal – did you see our winter wonderland photos on the Facebook page? Look for HARC Herefordshire if you haven't already liked and / or followed us.

And (also seasonal), we'll be closed on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> December, the week beginning Monday 25<sup>th</sup> December, and Monday 1<sup>st</sup> January. See you again from Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup>!

### **Did you know...**

our Learning Room is available to hire? Reasonable rates apply – please enquire, stating the dates and times you are interested in.

01432 260750

[HARCBookings@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:HARCBookings@herefordshire.gov.uk)

### **Forthcoming Events at HARC**

#### **Wassailing**

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2018

5.00 – 7.00pm

Entrance for adults: £1 includes a glass of apple juice; free for children

We'll be joined by Leominster Morris and the Bushel-Bag Wassailers again this year to wassail our little orchard. Bring something to make a noise with you – we need to scare the evil spirits away from the trees! Wrap up warm too. There'll be refreshments available – confirmed so far are Rocket Kitchen Café's wood-fired pizza oven, award winning sausages from Pork and Two Veg, and apple juice from Orchard Origins – bring some money!

If you can let us know if you intend to come, that'll help us with catering.....

## Investigating Family & Local History through Parish Records

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2018

10.30am – 12.30pm

£9.60 – advance booking & payment essential

Find out about the records of the parish chest, the processes which created them and how they can help with your family or local history research.

## Exhibitions

From 12<sup>th</sup> December, there'll be a chance to see all of the **commemorative bunting** made in memory of the Munitions Workers of Rotherwas. Usual opening hours.

There's information about our exhibitions in the HARC leaflet too, but briefly, they are:

- **Centenary of Votes for Women** – 30<sup>th</sup> January to 23<sup>rd</sup> February
- **Treasure Trees** (the Women's Land Army and foraging, an exhibition by Salt Road and New Leaf) – 27<sup>th</sup> February to 6<sup>th</sup> April
- **Past Futures – a Contemporary Response to HARC** (an exhibition by Salt Road and SHYPP) – 10<sup>th</sup> April to 18<sup>th</sup> May
- **Stories from the Wye** (part of Herefordshire Lore's River Voices project) – 22<sup>nd</sup> May to 29<sup>th</sup> June

## Workshops

Fancy trying something new in the New Year? We have a load of interesting and intriguing craft workshops planned. To whet your appetite a little, how about wet slip transfer on glass, watercolour birds, two colour lino prints, making your own sketchbook, embroidery, needle felting?

Watch out for details in mini mailings and on Facebook, or (go on, yes, we'll let you!) ring or email us, and we'll divulge more information!

## How to Book

Advance booking and payment for your place(s) is essential.

You can pay:

- by card online, on the telephone, or in person
- by cheque (made payable to "Herefordshire Council") sent in the post, or in person
- by cash in person

*Discounts apply for Herefordshire Archive Service registered volunteers! Please ask when you reserve your place.*

## New Books and Merchandise

We have a wide selection of new stock to help you manage and correctly handle your own archives, be they photographs, maps, documents or books. Call in to view book cushions (with washable Bolton Twill covers); paper and map weights and snakes; OS map storage tubes; magnifying equipment; bamboo, bone and plastic paper folders; metal rules and cotton gloves. If you don't see the item(s) you're interested in when you call in, do please ask.

We also have limited edition and unique earrings, bangles, gift tags and envelopes – made from old maps.

The range of books is often changing, so do take the time to browse in our shop area.

### **Shop early for Christmas (2018)!**

And yes, we did get Christmas cards! There are two designs available – and ok, we're a bit late telling you about it now for 2017, but we did mention them in a mini mailing, and we have some stock available if you want to get prepared nice and early for 2018.....



There are several talks coming up – either here at HARC, or featuring our expert staff – or even both!

You'll need to book for these with WEA, so please see the WEA leaflets and posters, or look at the website [www.wea.org.uk/westmidlands](http://www.wea.org.uk/westmidlands)

### **Online Index**

**Philip Bouchier writes:** I am pleased to announce that the Herefordshire Archive Service (HAS) online index has finally been completed. The project began in March 2014 with the sole purpose of retro-converting all the paper finding aids for subjects and locations in Herefordshire into a machine searchable database. Dozens of volunteers were enlisted to initially data input the information into Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Once this was completed volunteers and HAS staff data quality checked the typed information to ensure standardisation and accuracy. It was further processed by volunteers who added in machine readable dates and United Kingdom Archival Thesaurus terms to aid users in locating potentially relevant material.

Initially the online index went live in August 2015 containing only 5,000 searchable entries. Over the course of the next two years this total has ballooned to over 70,000 unique aids. Although there is no further data to ingest from the subject or location card index, this database will continue to accrue further entries as selected collections are indexed at page level.

This system offered an interim solution to online access normally facilitated through electronic archive management software. The online user interface allows individuals to search keywords, parishes, subjects and dates. The results provide a brief description of what the item(s) or collection is, along with their geographic location, associated subjects, corresponding dates and HAS reference number. Unfortunately the system is not as sophisticated as a 'Google search' and therefore it is important to remember that a search will only be successful if the words typed into the keyword field are identical to those in the database.

The success of this project could not have been achieved without the assistance of dedicated volunteers. The Archive Service is therefore eternally grateful for their contribution. In particular, I would personally like to thank Richard Smith who has been the heartbeat of the project ever since its inception.

With the recent procurement of an electronic archive management system the direction of the Archive Service for facilitation of online access is now shifting towards our catalogues. The first stage of this process has involved the migration of data from Microsoft Word catalogues into Excel spreadsheets that can then be ingested into the new system. Once this process is completed HAS will once again look towards volunteers to assist with the retro-conversion of typescript catalogues using OCR technology. I am confident that the volunteers will once again rise to the challenge and further consolidate Herefordshire Archive Service's transition into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**And we'll take this opportunity to wish Philip well as he heads for pastures new. He'll be missed!**

## **Volunteer Opportunities**

In the New Year, we'd like to re-establish and expand the Computer Buddies project. This mainly supports people as they get used to using Ancestry and Find My Past in the searchroom. If you feel able to share your skills and experience and help people get underway with their own family history research, do please get in touch.

If you would like to get involved or know more about any of these events or opportunities, please contact:

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Fir Tree Lane, Rotherwas, Hereford HR2 6LA

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archives@herefordshire.gov.uk

[www.herefordshire.gov.uk/archives](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/archives)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/herefordshirearchives](https://www.facebook.com/herefordshirearchives)

searchroom open to the public:  
Tuesday – Friday, 9.15am – 4.45pm  
Second Saturday in the month, 9.15am – 4.45pm