

Kent Archives and Local History Service

Report to the Quarterly Meeting of the Kent History Federation
7 Sept 2018

Kent Archive Service awarded Archive Accreditation

KCC's archives service has been awarded Archive Service Accreditation, the UK quality standard which recognises good performance. Our extensive and thorough written application, covered all aspects of the service, including the suitability of the building, management of both physical and intellectual property of the documents, the qualifications of the staff who care for them, accessibility of the documents and the conservation care they receive. It follows a visit by a panel from the National Archives at Kew, who spent a day examining documentation, discussing aspects of the accreditation application with staff and looking at onsite facilities. The Archive Service Accreditation Panel congratulated the Kent Archive service and said it was "glad to see the real effort to build collections and audiences to meet the needs of a modern Kent".

Digitisation of Kent's Parish Registers with Findmypast

A joint project between Kent Archives and the popular online genealogy website Findmypast is currently underway to digitise and make available online the parish registers held at the Kent History and Library. The project will cover registers dating from as early as 1538 to 1918, and includes records of baptisms, marriages, banns and burials. It is anticipated that the images will be available to be viewed online at Findmypast from January 2019, and will be free to access in the archive searchroom and across all of Kent's ninety-nine libraries. Once complete, the images will complement the 2.5 million digitised Canterbury Archdeaconry parish records held at Canterbury Cathedral Archives that Findmypast have already released. Kent Archives is creating completely new, high quality, full colour digital images from the original records. The registers in house enabling Kent County Council to retain the intellectual property rights over the digital images, so the decision was taken to digitise the registers in house. We felt that it was crucial for Kent Archives, and our depositors, that we retain control of all digital surrogates, both now and in the future. Over 2500 registers have been included for digitisation. This is an enormous project, and a first for the archives service. Digitisation projects have been undertaken before, but nothing on this scale. Before any digitisation could start, the finding numbers for all of the parish registers had to be checked by the archivists for consistency, and where necessary, were recatalogued. This was very important, as the image file names would need to include the archive catalogue reference, so they had to be correct. For the project, Kent Archives has recruited two full time digitisation staff: Soniya Lal and Alison Linklater. Although the project has been in the planning stage for some time, the digitisation itself began in late January 2018. Soniya and Alison have proved to be exceptionally dedicated and enthusiastic staff, and have far exceeded project expectations. Two Bookeye 4 Professional overhead book scanners were purchased to undertake the digitisation.

Canterbury Diocese archive transferred to the Kent History and Library Centre

In accordance with a decision by the Church of England, a large quantity of archival records of the Diocese of Canterbury is being transferred from Canterbury Cathedral Archives to the Kent History and Library Centre. The transfer marks the reunification of this important archive to something like its original integrity, after being split in recent years between the repositories in Canterbury and Maidstone. It is normally better to keep archival collections together because the internal parts correlate with each other, providing context and meaning. Two parts of the archive deserve particular mention as outstanding examples of their type. First, 'the probate records for Canterbury, in part because of its particular relationship with the archbishop, have a wealth, extent and completeness probably unparalleled in any other diocese' (F. Hull, *Guide to the Kent County Archives Office*, p107). Second, speaking of the Canterbury act and deposition books, the core element of the ecclesiastical court material, eminent canon law historian Charles Donahue Jr. says: 'these books taken as a whole represent the most substantial survivals of records from an English diocesan court' (*The Records of the Medieval Ecclesiastical Courts Part II: England*, p105). In the case of the court material, the archive dates back to the fourteenth century; in the case of a group of literary fragments, the tenth. The older records, some written in abbreviated Latin, can present challenges to those without the necessary skills and experience: rest assured the Archives and Local History Team can help with those! The archive is a rich source for historical investigation. Family and local historians, and anyone interested in the history of parish churches, their clergy, or simply that of the established Church, will find a treasure trove of material. Canterbury Diocese covered between half and two thirds of Kent, from Thanet up to the River Medway. Since Kent Archives already holds the archive of the Diocese of Rochester, the acquisition of the Canterbury Diocese archive consolidates our holdings of ecclesiastical records and completes the picture as far as the records of the two Kent dioceses are concerned.

Manorial Documents Register Project Update

Since last August Liz Finn, Manorial Documents Register Project Officer for Kent has been working on the manorial court rolls at Canterbury Cathedral Archives. The Manorial Documents Register (MDR) for Kent contains 956 entries for records at the Cathedral, representing almost 17% of the total. So she has made 501 entries for Canterbury on the MDR database from 469 documents.

Canterbury Cathedral Priory was one of Kent's largest landowners. The Cathedral acquired most of its manors before the Norman Conquest and in 1086 it held one-eighth of all land in the county. The Cathedral's manors were concentrated in East Kent, but they extended as far as Orpington in the west, Cliffe on the Hoo peninsula and Agney on Romney Marsh. When the Cathedral was re-founded in 1540 most of these manors were re-granted to the Dean and Chapter. In 1862 they passed to the Ecclesiastical Commission for England as part of a major re-organisation of the Church of England's assets.

The majority of court rolls were moved to the Commission's Westminster offices and by 1906 the earliest had been deposited in the Public Record Office (PRO). The Church Commissioners, the Ecclesiastical Commission's successors, withdrew them from the PRO in the late 1950s and in 1959 returned them to the Cathedral Archives where they became the U15 collection. They date from the 1260s to the 1750s.

The courts recorded transfers of land, making sure that all the relevant reliefs, entry fines and heriots were paid, and enforced the payment of rents, in money and kind, and the performance of labour services. The Cathedral also held courts leet for most of its manors. These dealt with minor breaches of the peace, cases of theft and debt, trading standards legislation (particularly the assizes of bread and ale), and 'nuisances' mainly relating to the obstruction of, or failure to repair, roads and watercourses.

Newly Catalogued: W. and R. Balston Papermaking Collection James Lloyd, Project Cataloguer - Archives

From the eighteenth to twentieth centuries, papermaking was one of Maidstone's biggest industries. Two of the biggest manufacturers were Whatman and Balston, and Kent Archives holds several collections relating to them. [U289] was acquired between 1951 and 1999 and concerns mainly the Whatman family.

The Kent History and Library Centre acquired a collection of Balston family records [U2161] in 1978. Unfortunately, many Whatman Ltd. records were destroyed in the 1990s, but GE Healthcare offered what remained to the Centre in 2015, and these have now been catalogued. Much of the collection is what one would expect of a company archive, including title deeds, diagrams of machinery, board meeting files, and account books. There are also samples of Balston's products, including their scientific papers, which have proven particularly interesting. Filmed documentaries and programmes relating to Whatman will be transferred to Screen Archive South East at Brighton for specialist preservation. In cataloguing the collection, James Lloyd acknowledges his debt to Stephen Hill, a paper historian who was brought in as a consultant by GE Healthcare in 2011. His research on the history of the Company's properties helped considerably with the preparation of the catalogue. He also devoted much time and energy to sorting the enormous collection of photographs that came with the archive. The W. and R. Balston collection [U4062] will complement the Whatman, Balston and [U1999] Hollingworth collections that the

Centre already holds, as well as providing a valuable resource for local and family historians.

Catalogue Transfer Project- update on newly transferred catalogues

We are now over halfway through our project to add all of our paper catalogues to our online catalogue. The following catalogues have recently been added and will be available on our website soon:

- RD/DA:** Dartford Rural District Council, 1836-1974
- U317:** Deeds of Appledore and Egerton, 1396-1822
- U678:** Warde Manuscripts, 1428-1941
- U713:** Deeds of Gravesend and District, 1292-1892
- U908:** Streatfeild Manuscripts, 13th century-19th century
- U969:** Records of Halstead Place Estate, 1585-1925
- U1087:** Deeds of Boxley Parsonage and other Estate of the Fowle Family, 1587-c1930
- U1185:** Documents relating to Kent Coal Concessions, 1911-1939
- U1194:** Volume of Prints and Drawings of Kent Buildings from the J. Fremlyn Streatfeild Collection, 1858-1882
- U1195:** Title Deeds and Estate Papers, Angley Estate, Cranbrook, 1660-1913
- U1220:** Manorial Document of Aldington, 1555-1952
- U1225:** Manorial and Tithe Records of St Margaret at Cliffe, 1671-1951
- U1229:** Acts of Parliament and Related Documents, 1843-c1930
- U1236:** Deeds, principally of Marden and Minster in Thanet, 1555-1808
- U1383:** Chambers' Family Farm and Fruit Accounts, 1879-1965
- U1396:** Boys Family Documents, 1778-1936
- U1415:** Leases and Estate Papers of Perry Court Farm, Preston next Faversham, 1665-1890
- U1471:** Deeds, principally of the Scott Family of Sundridge Park, Bromley, 1643-1919
- U1545:** Title Deeds of Norton Family Estate, centred on Shadoxhurst, 1683-1923
- U1547:** Pearse Family and Business Papers, 1758-1916
- U1548:** Title Deeds for Kent and other areas, 1597-1902
- U1553:** Deeds mainly of Cranbrook and Ramsgate, 1716-1825
- U1567:** Deeds from various sources, 1673-1923
- U1569:** Title Deeds, principally of Hollingbourne, 1663-1893
- U1612:** Talbot of Falconhurst MSS
- U1772:** Maps and cognate records for east Kent, 1810-1952
- U1783:** Miscellaneous documents, including several of the Lane, Muggeridge and Hassell families of Horton Kirby and Eynsford, 1605-1934
- U1795:** Gravesend Division Conservative Association records, 1923-1971
- U1812:** Deeds of Sittingbourne and nearby parishes, 1653-1964
- U1842:** Title Deeds of Faversham, 1629-1696
- U1843:** Deeds of Matfield and Brenchley, 1598-1881
- U1859:** Various Title Deeds, 1811-1957
- U1866:** Children Family Manuscripts, 1554-1946
- U1867:** Documents relating to the Bradbourne Estate, Sevenoaks (c1817-1921)
- U2539:** Radio Scripts, c1979-1981

Activities & Events

Forthcoming talk at the Kent History & Library Centre:

Thursday 01 November 2018: 6.30- 7.45 PM

Prisoners of War 1914-1918

Mary Kemp draws on family history & her research for the *Culture in Captivity* HLF funded project in her talk about the experiences of POWs and internees during the First World War. The stories of local men will feature. Mary will also play solo violin excerpts of evocative music.

Tickets £5.00

To book ring 03000420673 or email archives@kent.gov.uk

The Kent Archives and Local History Service has been involved in the programme for the *Shakespeare and His Sisters* research project which also links with The *Dramatizing Penshurst Festival*. The festival brings to life the remarkable literary history of the Sidney family by rehearsing and staging a fully costumed production of *Love's Victory* (1617), by Lady Mary Wroth, at her home, Penshurst Place. The first professional performance of the play will be introduced by Professor Alison Findlay and directed by Martin Hodgson, of Shakespeare's Globe Education. Ticketed public performances of the play will be presented at 2 pm and 7.30 pm on the 16th September. Tickets are available to purchase for the matinee and evening performances: tinyurl.com/lovesvictory

On Saturday 08 September 2018 project volunteers from the Fifth Continent project are visiting the Kent History & Library Centre for a training session on archive research relating to the landscape history of Romney Marsh. This is the second of two group training sessions made by special booking of the Archive search room in the Centre. The training sessions are led by project workers Nicola Bannister, Alan Dickinson and Lesley Voice with input from the Kent Archives & Local History team members. The Fifth Continent project is a Lottery Heritage Funded project run by Kent Wildlife Trust on Romney Marsh. The project is led by Fifth Continent Heritage Officer Lucie Bolton. The Fifth Continent Landscape Partnership Scheme seeks to deliver a number of exciting projects based around three key themes to Restore, Rediscover and Reclaim Romney Marsh: <https://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/get-involved/our-projects/fifth-continent>

Rob Illingworth- Community History Officer
07/09/18