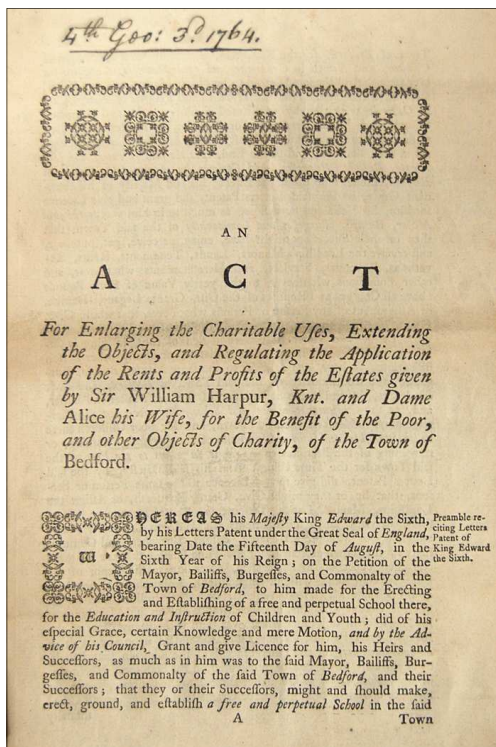


EVERY LITTLE HELPS - Updating The Bedford Charity Catalogues

The East of England Regional Archives Council (EERAC) aims to articulate, represent and support the needs and interests of archives and records, archivists, archive services and archive users in the East of England region by providing a vehicle for discussion, advice, outreach, advocacy and the exchange of information. Over the last three years EERAC have also run a small grants award programme aimed at providing support to projects focussed on 'traditional' archival projects for which it is difficult to find alternative funding.



In 2014 Bedfordshire & Luton Archives Service were pleased to be awarded £500 towards the completion of the cataloguing of the Harpur Trust collection (HT) and the revision of the catalogue of the Bedford Modern School (BMS). While the grant did not fund the whole project it gave impetus to it, helping us to achieve a task that the Archives Service had had on its backlog for many years. 2014 seemed the perfect year to bid for the additional funding and to carry out the project as it also marked the 250th anniversary of the founding of the Bedford Modern School under the 1764 Act of Parliament which reformed the Harpur Trust (ref: **Z417/91**).

Two members of staff have been working on the HT and BMS catalogues. Cataloguing Assistant, Sue Fowler, is gradually bringing the BMS catalogue, originally written by staff and pupils at the school in the early 1970s, up to modern cataloguing standards and loading the catalogue onto our online system. By September we were able to report to EERAC that 39 old catalogue pages had been replaced by 268 new catalogue pages! The records contain typical school material, though with some interesting more general items. For example, letters from

the son of a headmaster in late 1918 reported the devastation resulting from the Western Front. More recently Sue has discovered records that recall rebellions in 1960s Africa that left school fees unpaid while the boy's father, a tribal chief, was under arrest.

Below, archivist Alex Healey explains her work on the HT catalogue.

One of my first tasks as a new archivist at the service has been to undertake the EERAC grant funded project to merge additional materials deposited by the Harpur Trust into the existing catalogue. Also known as The Bedford Charity, the Trust was established in the sixteenth century by an endowment from Sir William Harpur, (pictured right, ref: **X306/89**) presumed native of Bedford who travelled to London, rising to the position of Lord Mayor. Its purpose was to provide education for the children of Bedford, with any residue to be spent on alms. The Trust continues to provide education and enrichment for residents of Bedford today.



Continued...



The catalogue already contained an extensive selection of title deeds and leases to Bedford property (these are in the process of being added to our online catalogue), as well as records of alms and apprenticeships featuring the names of recipients and plans of the school buildings. The new addition extends this collection's reach into the late twentieth century. It includes a particularly interesting selection of papers originating from George Hayward Wells of Charles Wells Brewers regarding his estate at Ickwell (some of which was left to Bedford School on his death). There are also a number of twentieth century plans as well as the correspondence of the Trust's clerks from 1904-

1978, and some excellent photographs showing the construction of the Harpur Centre in the 1970s (ref: **HT15/3/4/6/7**).

One of the strengths of this collection lies in the range of materials it contains, giving it research value to a range of different groups. I hope that the updated catalogue with its new additions will revitalise interest in this important collection which documents the activity of a charity which played such an influential role in the formation and continued development of Bedford.

To compliment the publication of the updated catalogue, there will be a small exhibition in the Archives Service's reception from February-April 2015 and an accompanying talk on Friday 6th March at 1pm – please check our website www.bedford.gov.uk/archiveevents for further details.

Pamela Birch and Alex Healey

Conservation Corner

Hello and welcome to Conservation Corner where you can find out about the latest conservation and preservation activities that are happening at Bedfordshire & Luton Archives & Records Service. As the Archives Conservator my role involves assessing the conservation and preservation needs of all the archival material held by the Archives Service, and subsequently carrying out preventative and interventive conservation work needed.

My role therefore includes repairing books, maps, wax seals, parchment and paper documents. I've only been in post for five months but already I've repaired three maps, seven wills from the C17, two bound volumes, and about fifteen further documents which span across the last three centuries. On top of this I've packaged at least 150 documents to preserve them in a safe environment so that members of the public can access them now and in the future. I've even managed to set up a few exhibition cases at the Archives Service so people can find out more about the sort of archives we hold.



People often ask me "what is the most interesting item you have worked on?" I have to say it is all interesting! However, the most interesting so far is probably the repair of a wax seal from the reign of George I. When the seal first came to me it looked like the picture on the left, and after repair looked like the picture on the right. As you can see the repairs themselves have not been toned in to match the

colour of the original wax. An important part of conservation (as opposed to restoration) is to show, (rather than camouflage) any repairs, as they are part of the overall history and provenance of an archive.



Vicki Manners

The 1589 Hagable Roll – a postscript.

Former County Archivist, Joyce Godber, says the term hagable is ancient, going back to the reign of Edward the Elder, King of the West Saxons in the 10th century. When writing about Bedford she says that *'Men came here to trade; they hired plots from the king, and the rent they paid him was called the hagable, haga being the hedge or fence round each new plot.'*

The Hagable Roll of 1589, when compared with the reconstructed map of Bedford in 1506-7 produced by W.N. Henman(1) and the drawing of Bedford Town centre produced by Speed in 1610, shows us that the modern layout of the centre of the town would have been recognisable to Tudor citizens. Most of the houses, shops, inns and workshops clustered on two plots of land north of St. Paul's church. Today the names of the streets which form the boundaries of these two plots are different from those in the early 16th century. Now they are the High Street on the east, Harpur Street on the west, Lime Street on the north, Mill Street /Silver Street in the middle, with St. Paul's Square at the south. Castle Lane still leads to the castle mound and roads to Ford End hamlet, Thurleigh and Goldington still converge north of the bridge.

Evidence about Tudor Bedford is very incomplete, but new details come to light as new building or restoration projects take place. In *Bedfordshire Times and Citizen* dated October 2nd 2014 there was a piece about 1 St. Pauls Square, now being restored. It is a substantial and rare 16th century survival, built first as an inn. After many changes of use, its timber frame is being recorded and it is being converted into housing.

No doubt further evidence of buildings, streets and documents will be found in the future, but at present the 1589 Hagable Roll complements and supplements other important records and accounts:

- Newnham Priory: a Bedford Rental 1506-7 – translated and transcribed by W. N. Henman and appears with the reconstructed map mentioned above in Bedfordshire Historical Record Society (BHRS) volume 25, published 1947. Mr. Henman wrote: *'This manuscript gives approximately the house-property and the agricultural land owned in Bedford by the canons of St. Paul a generation before the Dissolution of the Monasteries.'*
- A picture in words of the houses, workshops and lands owned in Bedford by former religious establishments during the 1530s can be found in BHRS 63, 'Augmentation Accounts Volume 1' edited by Yvonne Nicholls.(2) She writes that in order to carry out the dissolution of the monasteries and administer the Crown's new estates, a Court of Augmentations was set up. The country was divided into 17 districts and a Particular Receiver appointed for each district. Later a special Particular Receiver might be appointed within the district of another. The records of the Bedford Court of Augmentations suggest that here the process was dominated by John Gostwick and William Chambers. John Gostwick was a local man with several roles. Not only auditor of the Crown lands in Yorkshire and a Bedfordshire JP, he was Treasurer and Receiver-General of the First Fruits and Tithes, responsible for accounting for all the money, lands and other property which accrued to the Crown as the monasteries were dissolved. In addition, he was Particular Receiver for Warden Abbey. William Chambers was Particular Receiver for the Honour of Ampthill, which consisted mostly of the king's lands and properties in central Bedfordshire.(3)
- In her unpublished thesis 'Tudor Bedford – a sixteenth century town' Joan Anderson gives a detailed description, with comments, of Bedford in the 16th century, drawn from the researches of Mr. Henman and her own work.(4) Now that the 1589 Hagable has been given to the Archives Service, an updated version of her work could be written and published.

The evidence contained in the three items above, when combined with evidence from the Hagable roll of 1589, and the Speed map of 1610, might make it possible to identify changes that the Dissolution of the Monasteries brought to Bedford town centre. It may be that, as in the countryside, changes to the ownership of properties did not necessarily mean hardship for those who formerly lived and worked there, but until the research is done, we won't know.

Dorothy Jamieson

1. Henman, Walter Nichols, map at the back of BHRS 25, 'Bedford Rental 1506-7.'

2. Nicholls, Yvonne, (ed) BHRS 63 – the *Augmentation Accounts, (volume 1)* pub. 1984, p.2

3. Finberg, H.P.R. BHRS 36 – *The Gostwicks of Willington and Other Studies*, pub. 1956, p.62.

4. Anderson, Joan, *Tudor Bedford – a sixteenth century town*, unpublished thesis, BLARS book number 1748, class number 130 Bedford.

Gleanings from the Quarter Sessions

Nineteenth century novelists, such as Dickens, and the 1879 poem *In the Workhouse: Christmas Day* describe the grim side of the Victorian union workhouses. This may give us the impression that the small parish workhouses that existed before the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act must have been better. However, this was not necessarily so – the idea of the deterrent workhouse, where the regime was such that only the desperate would be willing to accept it, dated from the 1720s. On the other hand, the poor were seen more as victims of their situation and their betters should see the relief of the poor as a Christian duty.

In 1787 the churchwardens and overseers of Langford took over a copyhold property in Church End (X836/3/2). The cottage that had stood on the site 'was lately destroyed by fire' and it seems likely that the parish intended to build a workhouse. Unfortunately the parish records give no clue to the building of the workhouse, its occupants or its regime but in January 1802 conditions were so bad that it came to the attention of the Justices of the Peace at the Quarter Sessions Court. The justices ordered the repair of the house, the provision of furniture and apparel but went on to 'strongly enjoin it to the parish officers...to pay more strict attention to the situation and necessities of the poor...to rescue themselves from the Disgrace of a System of Management so cruel and oppressive to the poor...' (ref: **QSR1802/1** shown below).

Clearly the conditions had caused disease to take hold as the justices also ordered the overseers and churchwardens to pay the expenses of Doctor Yeats and Mr Layman, the apothecary. To prevent another outbreak the poor houses were to be repaired, paved, whitewashed, glazed with casements made to open, and the ground about them drained to prevent the floor being damp and a stagnation of water.

The first overseers account book in the parish archive dates from May 1802 (ref: **P99/12/1**, shown below). Although it does not record any payments for bringing the workhouse up to a standard fit for human habitation, it does include payment of Dr Yeats' bill and the expenses of the overseers for attending the Easter Quarter Sessions, where they assured the court that its orders had been carried out, the contagion eradicated and the poor properly taken care of and in a state of health (QSM21).

In 1840 the churchwardens and overseers of Langford sold the former workhouse (now divided into four) to Rev. Montague Earle Welby of Long Bennington, Lincolnshire for £78. The building had been demolished by 1875 when John Earle Welby inherited the property (X836/2/4 & X836/6/25).

Langford was not the only parish to be in trouble in January 1802, the parish officers of Houghton Conquest were ordered to carry out repairs to their poor houses and Haynes officers were told to provide clothes, 'bedsteads & bedding with a change of linen for each Bed, tables forms wooden bowls & platters with wooden spoons & a sufficient quantity of fuel' (QSR1802/3 & 4).

The Paths to Crime Volunteers

CUSTOMER NOTICE

The Archives Service will be closed on the morning of **MONDAY 9th FEBRUARY 2015** for staff training. We will open at 2pm that day and remain open as usual until 7pm.

We welcome ideas and material for future issues.

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