

NEWS FROM THE ISLE OF WIGHT RECORD OFFICE

2015 has been an interesting and varied year here at the Isle of Wight Record Office. One significant change has been saying goodbye to Sue Oatley who retired at the end of September. Sue worked at the Record office for well over 20 years and has helped countless people with their research, particularly in family and house history, for which she wrote two very useful study guides which continue to be of great value. They are an excellent resource, particularly for those new to house or family history, and give a great idea of the wide range of sources we have available at the Record Office. Both guides are accessible in our searchroom or online through the Record Office website. Her wealth of knowledge of the Island and its history, and her almost encyclopaedic knowledge of our collections, along with her passion for archival work made her an invaluable asset to the office and to the wider Isle of Wight Heritage Service. She will be greatly missed by both her colleagues and customers. Sue is now busy enjoying her well earned retirement, spending time with family and caring for her dogs and horses; her other great passions in life.

Upon Sue's retirement we welcomed new member of staff Joanna Stuiver as a full time searchroom assistant. Jo is no stranger to the Record Office, having spent three years between 2010 and 2013 volunteering with us one day a week whilst completing a distance learning Post Graduate Diploma in Archive Administration. Jo was born and grew up on the Island and did her undergraduate degree in History and Medieval Studies at the University of Wales, Lampeter. She has worked for English Heritage on the Island at Carisbrooke Castle, where she helped the donkeys turn the well house wheel, and in Salisbury at Old Sarum Castle. She has also worked on the mainland for a charity for children with special needs, affiliated with the Donkey Sanctuary in Devon. In her spare time Jo loves horse riding (she is currently taking western riding lessons!), walking, reading, listening to music and playing the guitar. She is passionate about history, archives and the Island, and hopes that she can help the Record Office expand and endure into the future.

We are currently in the midst of the hundred year anniversary of World War One and, as promised at the end of 2014, a list of WWI sources held across our various collections is available in the Record Office and online at the Record Office website and at www.wightatwar.org.uk. In the second half of 2015 and into 2016 we have been working on a Heritage Lottery Funded project focusing on the Isle of Wight Rifles and Gallipoli. In partnership with the Island Heritage Education Officer and Carisbrooke Castle Museum the aim is to explore the untold stories of the soldiers of the Isle of Wight Rifles, particularly their time at Gallipoli, with the use of previously unseen archive material. At the end of the project a resource pack on the topic will be produced for Island schools which will also be available in the libraries and on the Heritage Service website. At the Record Office we have been focusing, with the help of a team of dedicated volunteers, on digitising and transcribing some of our World War One sources. In particular we have been working on contemporary diaries, such as those of George Vernon Upward and Florence Oglander, and letters written between Ryde girl Emmie Tutton and her sweetheart Rifleman William Buckett, who

died at Gallipoli. More information on the project along with examples of original documents and transcriptions will be provided in an additional article in the May edition of this journal.

Our thanks goes out to all the hardworking, dedicated IWFHS volunteers who have been working on transcribing our House of Industry records, which will be an invaluable resource for family historians for years to come. Don Hayward's article in the last issue explains these volumes. Each entry is interesting in its own right but cumulatively they give extraordinary detail about the support given to the Islands' poor in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

2015 saw some interesting accessions of archive material come into the Record Office. Of particular note is copy of the diary of Georg Grist, whose family emigrated from the Isle of Wight to Germany in the 1900s. The diary covers from 26th July 1914 to 21st September 1917 while he was serving in the German army. This gives an interesting insight into what the Great War was like for those on the other side of the conflict, although it should be noted that it is in German. We have added to our collection of marriage registers with Langbridge Congregational Church, Newchurch, marriages 2005-2008, as well as St Helens Marriage Registers 1998 -2013 and Seaview Marriage Registers 1989-2014. Church records which contain material potentially useful to the family historian include the records of Wellow Baptist Church, founded 1801, which has, amongst other material, the minutes, including church rolls, for 1806-2000, Wellow Young People's Society of Christian Endeavour minutes covering 1897-1900, Sunday School minutes for 1913-59 and the Sunday School's register from 1941 to 1974. The records of Castlehold Baptist Church include the membership roll and baptisms for 1943-1987. For those interested in Island scenery we now have the 1956 RAF aerials views of IW on CD and for those searching for pictures of their family and ancestors in their school years we have a photograph of the 3rd Ventnor Cub Pack c.1928 with names written on reverse, a school photograph of Ventnor County Secondary School, dated October 1966, and Arreton School photographs for the years 1889-1909 and 1928-36. Business records include those of A Carpenter and Son, builders of Shanklin and West Cowes Waterworks, the latter kindly bought at auction privately and then donated to us. Guidebooks and tourist brochures feature in our accessions for 2015 with some lovely examples from the 1950s and 70s which give a snapshot of the Island and tourism in the mid to late 20th Century. Of particular interest is The Isle of Wight Tourists' Large Scale Road Map published by G. Dean and Co (Sandown) dated c.1950 which shows all railways including Ventnor via Whitwell. A newly compiled list of illustrations which includes all photographs, post cards, and other visual images held across the Record Office's collections is now available in the searchroom and features sections on guidebooks and sale particulars.

If you are particularly interested in the state of the Island's Roads, not just today but in the past, we have the Local Act of Parliament for the amending of the Roads and Highways of the Isle of Wight, dated 21st May 1813 which we received from the Friends of Dundee Archives. As a side note we have recently had our driveway and parking at the Record Office resurfaced, our apologies for any disruption caused by

the work, but the parking facilities are now much improved eliminating the need to dodge pot holes on your way in and out!

Discussions are progressing well with the National Archives, with a view to applying for Heritage Lottery funding at the end of the year for a potential new Record Office at Seaclose. We will keep you posted on this work as we progress, as the views of the Society's members will be important in helping us to plan any new facility.

Finally we would like to thank you for your continuing support and look forward to seeing as many of you as possible in 2016.