

Kent Libraries, Registration and Archives

Quarterly Report of the Archives & Local History Team to the Kent History Federation, 02 March 2018

[All events and reports relate to the Kent History and Library Centre ('KHLC'), unless otherwise stated]

Consultation on proposed changes to the archive search room opening hours at the Kent History and Library Centre in Maidstone:

<https://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/archivesearchroom>

Our proposal:

The search room at the Kent History and Library Centre in Maidstone is currently open to the public during the following times:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday (9am-6pm)

Thursday (9am-8pm)

Saturday (9am-5pm)

We are proposing to change the public opening times to the following:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday (9am-5pm)

Thursday (9am-5pm)

Saturday (9am-5pm)

The search room would be closed to the public on Fridays, with a small reduction in opening times across the rest of the working week. This is a reduction from 55 hours per week to 40.

The proposed changes only affect the archive search room. The opening hours of Kent History and Library Centre are unchanged and all other archive services will be fully available by phone or email on the closed day.

Kent County Council needs to keep all its services and its opening hours under review to ensure we are using our resources effectively. We have looked closely at the daily usage of the search room and identified times when the search room is less

busy or underused. We are proposing closing on one of the least popular days. By closing the Archive search room at times when it is quieter we can make more efficient use of our staff resources.

We have also looked at the availability of other Archive Services across the county and beyond to benchmark Kent's opening times and avoid being closed at the same time as other nearby archives. During the times when the room is closed to the public, our staff will still be available to help with research, digital ordering, and enquiries by phone or email.

The council needs to make significant financial savings. This proposal is estimated to save KCC Libraries, Registration and Archives £10,000 a year on staffing costs....

No decisions have been made on the proposal at this stage and we are keen to hear all your views. You can comment until 12 March 2018.

Following the completion of the consultation the feedback will be analysed and then considered by the Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services before a final decision is made.

You can give us your feedback by completing our online questionnaire at www.kent.gov.uk/archivesearchroom Alternatively please speak to a member of staff to request a paper copy of the questionnaire or email libraries@kent.gov.uk.

We will consider everyone's views and your comments will help us to shape our final decision.

If you require any of the consultation documents in an alternative format or language please email alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk or call 03000 421553 (text relay service number 18001 03000 421553). This number goes to an answering machine, which is monitored during office hours. <https://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/archivesearchroom>

Changes to Front of House Team, Archive searchroom, KHLC

Regular users of the Kent History and Library Centre's Archive searchroom may have noticed a few changes to the staffing recently. Due to a reorganisation of the searchroom's supervision, it will now be staffed by dedicated colleagues from the Archive team. This will enable greater consistency and allow us to get to know you better. So, do chat to us about your research because we will then be able to look out for items which may be of further interest. Each member of the team has particular skills and experience of working with archives, and together we are a knowledgeable group of colleagues.

Not only do the team have a vital role in supervising the searchroom and retrieving the documents but we also undertake many other roles, including listing collections; updating catalogues; covering volumes; repackaging collections; answering enquiries; and digitisation. If you would like to see some of the work which is undertaken, do book yourself onto a 'behind the scenes' tour. These are free and happen every first Wednesday in the month at 2.00. Places are limited so booking is essential.

Find my past Agreement

KCC has signed a contract with Find my Past to index and make available digital images from the Kent Archive Service collections with the agreement of the depositors of those documents. We will be issuing more information on this initiative as it develops.

Projects and Events

WomensWork100 First World War Centenary Programme

In 2018 the First World War Centenary Partnership, led by Imperial War Museum, is presenting WomensWork100, a programme of events, exhibitions and activities exploring the working lives of women during the First World War:

<http://www.1914.org/womenswork100/>

The Kent Archive & Local History team has been taking part in the programme. Women's work in Kent during the First World War is well-documented in our Archives. For example, we have relevant archive items relating to war work for women at Richborough, Kent's "Mystery Port."

<http://www.1914.org/womenswork100/stories/work-for-women-at-kents-mystery-port/>

On Friday 23/02/18, The WomensWork100 programme managers organised a day of Social Media Activity with a Kent focus. We used the social media platforms for Kent Archives to signpost & showcase a broad range of our resources.

To find out more about women's war work in Kent during the First World War explore the webpage for Kent Archives on the WomensWork100 project website:

<http://www.1914.org/womenswork100/collections/the-kent-history-and-library-centre-maidstone/>

Walk 100 – Kent First World War Heritage Trail event

Several Kent libraries/buildings acted as start and finish points for walkers following First World War heritage trails as part of Screen South's 'Walk 100' event over the weekend of February 24-25:

<http://www.screensouth.org/newsarticle.aspx?newsid=2638#>

See the webpage below for more details of the heritage trails:

<http://kentww1.com/100-miles/>

Cataloguing and Accessioning

Newly Catalogued Material:

U4129: Nonconfirmist letters and sermon notebooks of the Stanger family of Bessels Green near Sevenoaks and Maidstone, 1801-1865

The Stangers were a Baptist family who originated from Bessels Green near Sevenoaks and Maidstone. Both John Stanger and his son, John, (born c. 1775-1777) were Baptist preachers, and two of their preaching notebooks record the texts used for their sermons and sometimes the occasions when they were preached. The letters in this collection reveal that they preached widely across the county, including at Maidstone, Oxted, Crockenhill, Sevenoaks, and Tenterden. There is much discussion between John and his son of the various Baptist congregations, dissent among the brethren, and of their religious beliefs. Letters from John Stanger to his future wife, Susannah, also record his efforts to secure his livelihood so that they could marry (they eventually married in 1805). Further letters from members of the Turner family reveal the Stangers' wider connections.

Ch185: David Varchell's Charities Records, Gravesend, 1739-2015

This substantial collection reflects the administration and activities of Varchell's Charity and Varchell's Educational Foundation, Gravesend, and comprises minutes and agenda from Trustee meetings; Charity Commission orders and schemes; correspondence; financial records; and title deeds and property papers.

David Varchell was a churchwarden and freeman of the borough of Gravesend. Under his will made on 15 September 1703, he ordered that the rental income from his house called 'The Chequer' and four houses in East Street, Gravesend, known as 'The Amsterdam', 'The Green Dragon', 'The White Hart', and 'The Boot' be used to fund the education of 10 poor boys from the parish of Gravesend and 10 poor boys from the parish of Milton at the Free School, and for covering the schoolmaster's salary of £20 per annum. Varchell also stipulated that £3 should be distributed to the poor of Gravesend on the Sunday before Christmas every year by the churchwardens in the form of sixpence and a sixpenny loaf each to 40 people, and 20s for a sermon and candles. Any surplus from the rental income after any repairs due to the properties and covering the costs of the trustees was to be spent on the purchase of clothes for the 20 boys, and the poor of the parishes of Gravesend and Milton.

After a devastating fire on 24 Aug 1727 that destroyed much of the town, the Charity's properties were rebuilt on the vacant ground, becoming 84 High Street, Gravesend, and 5, 6 and 7 East Street. Following the sale of the Charity's property in 1953 and 1954 its capital was reduced to investments in Treasury stock which produced a very limited income. By the early 2000s the Charity was only able to provide disbursements of up to £200 a year, and in 2013 it was decided to wind up the Charities and transfer their remaining assets to the St George's Church trusts.

U4074/P1: Estate map of Maidstone and Boxley, 18th century

This undated estate map was surveyed for George Ogle Esq. by John Holmes, and shows The Grange in Lower Boxley; Sandling wood; land owned by the Earl of Aylesford; and the hop ground. It was transferred to KHLC from East Sussex Record Office, and its original provenance is unknown.

Catalogue Transfer Project:

To make our collections more accessible archives staff and volunteers are currently adding the details of collections previously only available as paper catalogues to our electronic catalogue. These collections predate the introduction of our electronic cataloguing software and its online counterpart. Newly added catalogues include:

- PN: Probation Service, 1908-1973
- U409: Hussey Manuscripts: Deeds and Accounts of the Scotney Estates in Kent and Sussex, 1361-1913
- U522: The Dalison Manuscripts, 1435-1436
- U673: Chilston Manuscripts, 1622-1873
- U705: Deeds and other Papers mainly relating to Biddenden and District, Romney Marsh, and Knockholt, 1578-1878

- U854: Deeds and Estate Papers, 1625-1927
- U857: Tithe Schedules for Faversham and Surrounding Parishes, 1840-1936
- U863: Court Book of Burham, 1654-1728
- U962: Lambard Family Manuscripts, 1571-1934
- U1045 add.: Hallett & Co.: manorial Records of Ashford, Deeds and Papers of Ashford and Other Parishes,
- U1047: Manorial Records, Title Deeds and Maps, 1615-1917
- U1048: Title Deeds, Manorial Records and Probate Papers relating to the Petley Family and West Kent, 1626-1936
- U1074: Deeds of Kenardington and District, 1584-1770
- U1157: Letters and papers of 1st Viscount Chilston, 1875-1925
- U1287: Collet Manuscripts, 1617, 1782-1936
- U1448: Business Papers and Books of H. G. Henbrey, Auctioneer and Estate Valuer, 24 King Street, Maidstone, 1894-1950
- U1479: Deeds and Newspapers, 1552-1833
- U1531: Title Deeds, principally of the Medway Towns, 1650-1914
- U1542: Deeds and Cognate Documents Relating to Various Parishes in Kent, 1465-1919
- U1571: Documents of the Mary White Estate, 1752-1947
- U1575: Skeet, Tilden and Blakcmore Manuscripts (Tenterden), 1494-1852
- U1773: Deeds of Ashford, Brookland, Kennington and Orlestone, c1650-1900
- U1780: Insurance Plans, Canterbury, Chatham, Dover and Maidstone, 1905-1926
- U1889: Man Family Papers
- U2023: Title Deed of Shorne, 1614
- U2259: Deeds for Properties in Seal Chart, 1752-1896
- U2386: Papers of Miss Gladys Wright, Principal, Nonington College of Physical Education, 1814-1977
- U2540: Personal Diaries and Papers of Dr B. R. Billings, 1901-1983

- U2550: Records of Waller Metal Co. Ltd. and Waller Engineering Ltd. of Meopham and Borough Green, 1941-1970
- U2834: Diaries of Walter Whenday of Hadlow, 1905-1974
- U2999: Miscellaneous Papers of Bearsted Local History Society, 1911-1981
- U3255: Deeds for 'Miramount', formerly 'Church House', Leeds, Kent, 1630-1929
- U3447: Civil War Letters and Documents, 1622-1737
- WU5: Records of Hooker Bros., Printers of Westerham
- WU6: Grocer's Accounts [Sevenoaks], 1933-1951
- WU8: Title Deeds of Valence and Dunsdale Estates in Westerham, Brasted, Sundridge and Cudham, 1579-1921

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02 March 2018