

Friends of Wolverhampton Archives and Local Studies Newsletter

June 2016

Meeting on 5th May

Stuart Williams, an Egyptologist, who has worked at the Art Gallery and is currently involved with the Queen Street Project as Community Engagement Officer, presented a talk entitled "Egypt Through Victorian Eyes". Stuart is clearly very passionate and extremely knowledgeable about his subject; he gave us an entertaining and informative talk explaining how Victorian artists had painted their interpretation of Egypt. It was interesting to learn that many did not visit Egypt but the British Museum from where they obtained their idea of the country. We heard about the iconology included in the paintings and how they have, in many cases misled the uninitiated. It was an excellent talk.

Look out for Stuart on next year's programme as he has promised to come back. One for the diary!

Could you write a few words about a forthcoming talk for inclusion in a future newsletter? Here is your chance to get involved and do a little more for the Friends who may have missed a talk. Offers please, to Penny. Thanks in advance. I will leave your name out of the newsletter if you prefer to remain anonymous.

Forthcoming Meetings

2nd June – This is a change to the published programme: Ann Eales is to speak to us about Mrs Thomas Graham and the Suffrage Movement in Wolverhampton. This promises to be an extremely interesting talk. Please come along, support Ann and your Friends group, and learn about what Mrs Graham got up to!

7th July – Ann Eales will entertain us with her talk on Harry Nicholas & Sergeant Freeman. Do not forget that your friends are most welcome to join us at any meeting for a small charge of £2 each.

4th August – Join the Friends for a tour of St. Peter's Church. Meet 11 a.m. at the Lych Gate outside the church. Our guides are Tony & Joyce Perry. A suggested donation of £2 per person (more if you wish) to St. Peter's Church please.

Programme News for 2016/2017

Another exciting programme of talks is planned with the booking of speakers currently in progress. We can promise the return of several very popular speakers, together with a few new ones who have been very highly recommended. Watch this space!

Speakers for the Future

We are always keen to hear of new speakers so if you attend any other groups and hear talks that you think may be of interest to our Friends, please obtain contact details for our Programme Planners to consider. Email details please to m.bailey1234@btinternet.com

Express & Star Photo Archive Project - Update

Scanning trial

In April the photographs in the Industry Folder were sent to City Archives where staff are beginning cataloguing ahead of a digitisation trial. There are more than 2,600 images, which Steph, a trusted history student at Wolverhampton University, is beginning to catalogue.

Once this work is completed, the images will be passed to a specialist firm to scan. The resulting images will be the first to go into the database for the archive.

The digital images will be useful for the IT experts to plan the technical part of the project. All aspects of the process have also been tested now for the first time – the planning needed by the editorial dept. at the Express & Star, understanding how the photos need to be prepared, etc.

The Project

These are the main points:

The stage 2 bid for the full funding for the project will be submitted in late August.

The panel has a meeting with the Heritage Lottery Fund in June

The volunteer group is focussing on photographs in the three main areas to be digitised, based on 700 public surveys: landscape, industry and the war years.

Tricolor is completing their community work report for the HLF bid. As stated before, their findings will ensure as many local people as possible are able to make use of the collection. Tricolor successfully bid for a separate tender to do marketing and promotion planning for the project. This is a smaller piece of work, which will be helpful for the HLF to understand how local people will be informed about the archive.

IT consultants: Orange Leaf were appointed earlier this year and will put together a blueprint for how the photos will be stored digitally and presented via the website.

Queen Street Project – Update

There is now a formal, HLF (Heritage Lottery Fund) approved steering group in respect of the project – The Queen Street Gateway Townscape Heritage Partnership. This comprises groups representing

- architecture,
- the regeneration and preservation of historic buildings,
- cultural and heritage interests (the Friends group being among them),
- the improvement of business districts,
- further and higher education (the City of Wolverhampton College and the University of Wolverhampton) and
- the City Council.

The life of the project is expected to be about five years.

The project is now fully funded and moving into the stage where owners commission independent professionals to draw up a schedule of required work. The professionals appointed must fulfil HLF expectations regarding the knowledge and skill sets needed to restore and repair buildings of historical nature and interest. From the point of view of the City Archives and its Friends, the main work on the history of the street was completed about 12 months ago and since then several presentations have taken place around the City to share the research with the Community. The original research has been broadened out into 2 further areas of interest:

- University of Wolverhampton Students working towards degrees in ‘Architecture and the Built Environment’ have designed and constructed an excellent model of Queen Street and have agreed to provide flat-pack versions of the buildings for youngsters to reconstruct on a special event at the Art Gallery;
- The Council’s Community Engagement Officer attached to the Project is currently gathering volunteers to dig a little deeper into some aspects of the original historical research.

The City Council, on behalf of the Partnership group, has published a Queen Street booklet detailing the intent and expectations of the project plus a brief history pulled together from the original research by the Friends of the Archives. These booklets are free and available from the City Archives, the Art Gallery and several other venues around the town.

Local History Symposium 2017

The Friends are pleased to report that the planning for next year’s Symposium is well under way and we are hopeful that it will return to the Archives with several exciting new additions. Hopefully further details will be included in the next newsletter.

Share Your Discoveries

Other members of the Friends would like to learn about your research or interests. Would you like to write one or two paragraphs regarding your research to share discoveries?

Perhaps you would like others to look out for a certain item or topic as they research records that may help you. Maybe you are researching Guy Motors or Wightwick Manor: if another person notices a reference to your interest they could let you know. Would this help you?

Please email Penny with any article you would like to include in a future newsletter. (pennyannsmith@aol.com). To start this off

A Friends' Interest

I am also a member of Birmingham & Midland Society of Genealogy & Heraldry (BMSGH). At a meeting of BMSGH about four years ago another member, Viv Turner, gave a talk about her lifelong friendship with a children's author. During her talk Viv mentioned that this particular author had been born in my home town of Hastings and the author's father had a book shop there. To cut a long story very short, this led to my discovery of a Missionary Family which has, in turn, led to further research on missionaries and in particular, those connected with The London Missionary Society. I hope to share the details of this research with you all in the future but, in the meantime, if anyone comes across any reference to missionaries in Wolverhampton, or the wider area, I would be pleased if you would make a note of where I can follow up on this. Please email me – pennyannsmith@aol.com Thank you.

Do you have a story to share with our members?

Penn Local History Fair

At the last Committee meeting it was agreed to purchase a display board for the promoting of FWA. The first outing for the board will be to the Penn Local History Fair to be held at the United Reform Church, Penn Road, on Friday and Saturday 10th/11th June. Opening hours: Friday 10.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. Saturday 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. Please come and see FWA there if you can. Other displays will include the Black Country Living Museum, Guy Motors, Chubb, Sedgley Local History Society, BMSGH, Old Time Cinema, Schools, Hospitals, Industry & Archaeology, and much, much more.

The board will be on display at our next meeting at the Archives on Thursday 2nd June.