

# WELLS CITY COUNCIL

## Report from the Archivist

### Conservation and repair

The rolling programme of remounting the charters is now complete. The Mayoress' chain has been repaired free of charge, by Byworth and Nowell of Wells.

### Display

There is a new display entitled "Archivist's Choice" in the wall-mounted display case to the left in the vestibule. This will be changed regularly, and is designed to highlight interesting documents and photographs from the Archives.

### Heritage Open Day

Between 10.00 and 4.00 on 12<sup>th</sup> September, the whole of the Town Hall was open to the public for 2015 Heritage Open Days. The event was a tremendous success and very well attended. There was an impressive total of 351 visitors - a great turnout, particularly given the rain that day.

The Archivist organised a large range of activities and displays. There were the first showings of a specially-created film of local interest (made by Tony Moon), a talk by Clare Blackmore on the "Baker Bard of Wells", and new local history displays. The latter were put together specially for the occasion by members of Mendip Postcard Club. They exhibited images of several local villages such as Westbury-sub-Mendip and Pylle, along with a display on the Nordrach Sanatorium and photographs taken by Walter Tully, a Glastonbury photographer of the past. Another activity enjoyed by visitors was having a nostalgic stroll along Wells' Broad Street and Queen Street in the year 2000. This was made possible by Wells Civic Society's loan of huge panoramic photos which were taken to mark the Millennium. There were also films of local interest made by Michael Green and exhibitions from the City Archives and by Wells Railway Fraternity and Janet and Peter James (the latter bringing to life some of the historical paintings). Visitors were offered a 'Self-Guided Tour of the Town Hall' and a children's quiz and tour created by the Archivist.

Some lovely written feedback from one of the visitors read, "The event at the Town Hall was an unexpected bonus to our visit to Wells".

The event would not have been possible without the 13 volunteers who so kindly helped on the day. Many thanks to the Councillors who did such a wonderful job (Councillors Briton, Gibson, Price, Siggs and Unwin), along with Mace-Bearers Jan Rood and Melanie Goody, Town Crier Len Sweales, and volunteers Linda Bishop, Clare Blackmore, Peter Trueman, Andrew Tucker, and Chris Winter of Wells Civic Society.

### 'Know Your Place – West of England'

This project (which we hosted on the last Heritage Open Day) received Heritage Lottery funding. The unique 1860 Sewerage Map of Wells will be digitised as part of the project.

### Somerset and Dorset Railway – 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Closure

Wells Town Hall will be helping to host some of the exhibitions and activities which are being created to mark this event, which has recently secured funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. After consultation with the Town Clerk, Councillor Price, the Town Hall Manager and Wells Museum, the Archivist has booked the following: (i) a pop-up exhibition (comprising four roller banner stands) for the entrance area of the Town Hall for the period 30<sup>th</sup> January to 7<sup>th</sup> March

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2016, and (ii) three sets of activities (facilitated and self-led) for families and children so we can hold a Family Activity Day in the Indictment Room on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2016. It is hoped to supplement the activities with small displays from the Archives and Wells Railway Fraternity. These dates are designed to tie in with the large-scale exhibition at Wells Museum which will open on 10<sup>th</sup> March.

Dr Julia Wood  
14.10.2015