

Gloucestershire Archives report for GLHA Forum, June 2025

Staffing

- **Posts at Gloucestershire Archives: Communications Assistant and Trainee Archivist** We have two new posts being advertised at present. One is for a Communications Assistant and the second is for a Trainee Archivist. Both posts are fixed terms of one year and will be externally advertised via GCC Jobs Vacancies. The closing date for both is 30 June.

Events & outreach

- **Food for Thought – Cheltenham Science Festival Week**
For the Cheltenham Science Festival, the Archives' Green Pledge Project and Project Grow (an urban community farming social enterprise who are growing the vegetables in the Hub Garden) on an installation called '*Food For Thought*' – essentially a mini-allotment in the centre of the festival site. It was aimed at school age children and was introducing the idea of growing food at home and creating a link between plants and the food we eat. The installation was a resounding success with over 2,000 children from schools in Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Wiltshire visiting the site and taking part in the activities.
- **Secrets Revealed online talks:** last Wednesday of the month.
 - 25 June – ***The Road to Recovery***: a Green Pledge Project talk exploring the county's journey to protect nature. We'll be looking at archive material which illustrates the evolution of this work from protection orders to national parks, nature reserves and beyond, finishing with a brief look at the very latest thinking on how best to care for nature.
 - 27 July – ***Three wheels on my Wagon!*** a moving look at the history of road transport in Gloucestershire. Humming the theme tune is optional.
 - 27 August – ***Got a (Family History) Secret – can you keep it?*** a look at the various records relating to family history in the archives.
- **Saturday events:** first Saturday of the month.
 - ***Journeys through time - International Rescue*** – 7 June, 1pm-4pm.
This afternoon looks at international travel in the archives. There are two talks: '*International Rescue*' – salvaging Cologne City Archives by Karen Davidson, Senior Archivist at Gloucestershire Archives and '*Around the World in 80 (almost) archives*' by John Putley. Stroud Textile Trust will have a display about *Vyshyvanka Day* (a Ukrainian textile festival) and traditional textile designs used by the women on canal barges in Gloucestershire.
 - ***Restoring the Natural Balance*** – 5 July, 1pm-4pm.
Gloucestershire's journey to protect nature - a Green Pledge Project event. Talks comprise '*The Road to Recovery – the early years*' by Green Pledge Officer Marion Hill and '*Nature Recovery – the move to landscape-scale working*' by Dr Juliet Hynes of Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust.
 - ***Under, Over, Through*** – 2 August, 1pm-4pm.
A focus on records relating to road transport – buses, cars, lorries, motorcycles and associated infrastructure – roads, bridges, highways, vehicle licensing. There is a talk '*Life in the bus lane: A social history of Gloucestershire's public transport*' by Dr

John Chandler and a film showing '*Vintage transport in Gloucestershire*' by Kate Peake. A Stagecoach heritage bus will be present onsite along with a staff-owned Sinclair C5! We will also have representatives from *Stagecoach West* and Gloucestershire County Council's Highways Team – both of whom will be happy to discuss current bus routes and tell you about sustainable transport and new electric buses coming to Gloucestershire. Also, there will be some road-transport related model dioramas in the research room.

- **Special Event**

- Dowty Film, 8 July**

- This is a celebration of Dowty heritage put together by Ethan Langfield, our recently appointed archives assistant and one of the Green Project team, as part of his apprenticeship (a London Metropolitan Archives Level 3 Libraries, Archives & Information Management qualification). More information will appear on the booking system in due course.

- Summer Sing Song Event, 27 July 2025**

- The event will feature a performance by Gloucestershire Libraries Over 60's Choir (who will be singing wartime songs) interspersed with readings by Gloucestershire Archives staff and Gloucestershire Family History Society volunteers. This will all be followed by afternoon tea in the Heritage Hub Community Garden. The event is free and open to all and a link to the event at: <https://www.heritagehub.org.uk/events/a-summer-sing-song/>

- **Blog:**

- Our latest Archives' blog is all about the price of food and can be found here: <https://gloucestershirearchives.wordpress.com/>

Collections

- Gloucestershire Archives have taken in 90+ new archival accessions during the last quarter, the majority being additional records to parish, parish council and school collections. However, other less standard material includes a collection relating to the Stroud Branch of Gloucestershire Beekeepers, sports clubs such as Upton St Leonards Football Club and the Angels Running Club, Gloucester. We have also received a fascinating oral history video detailing life along the Stroudwater canal – this will be allocated to our local studies collections. Finally, during our last week-long closure period, as well as a general sort out, we received and arranged over 800 boxes of inquest reports from the coroner's office!

Local Studies

- Another busy period for our local studies! We have received and accessioned some old issues of the Wotton-under-Edge Gazette, which were transferred from the Wotton-under-Edge Museum and Heritage Centre, alongside some Gazette newspaper sections – these are mainly from the 1930s and 1940s. New book accessions, already catalogued, include:

- Photographic books:

- Postcards from the Cotswolds, by Michael Whitefoot (2022)

Gloucestershire in photographs, by Aleks Gjika (2018)

Historical and overview books:

Brief History of Winchcombe, by Anne Crow (2021)

Storming of Cirencester (2024) (multiple authors)

Lost Cirencester, by Robert Heaven (2021)

Hill-Forts of the Cotswolds, by Sean Campbell (2016)

Wotton-under-Edge, by E.S. Lindley (2008)

Celebrating Gloucester, by Paul James (2023)

Poetry/ Literature:

Collection Poems, by Laurie Lee (2024)

Conservation Management

- ***GCC Highways plans*** - We have recently finished working on a series of Highways plans that needed to be prepared for digitisation and were in a bit of a state! Some of them are 100 years old and amazingly are still in use (although thankfully not as much as they used to be). There were 23 volumes of various sizes most with lots of wear and tear damage, and some with very bad creasing and folding which meant that a clear image was impossible without several hours of work on them first!
- **Strongroom condition management:** We are also streamlining the management of temperature and humidity in our strongrooms so that we are using less energy and staff time, while maintaining the conditions that will preserve our collections and reduce deterioration of the materials they are made of. We are working with a consultant - Nick Grant, Elemental Solutions (he worked on the Passivhaus strongrooms at Herefordshire Archives and Records Centre) who is developing systems for our circumstances here. We have already found solutions for getting more stable conditions in the three new strongrooms, in 1 & 7 and in 12 (the photo store), and are looking at a system to manage the air in the 8 strongrooms in Moons to ensure it is dry enough without dehumidifiers in the rooms themselves. Finally all our old expensive to run and maintain air conditioning plant has been decommissioned and the equipment that was on the roof of the main building has been removed completely. With these modifications and our new solar panels (which removing the old air conditioning equipment made possible), we are going to be making significant energy savings from this year onwards, and other archives are interested in what we are doing. The National Archives have also taken an interest in our strongroom work and have invited us to write a case study to go on their website. FYI, we aim for an average of 18°C over the year, and humidity levels between 40% and 60% - ideally around 50%. Our photo store we keep at 10° C and 40% rh.

Project News



Other News

- **GA & GHH Event online booking system**

Good news! At last, our online booking system has all been sorted out and (fingers crossed) we've been assured that there should be no more issues.

- **Health & Safety**

You may have noticed that we did have a shattered window in the foyer. This has now been repaired – but we don't know how it happened! There's no sign of a bird strike, no obvious stones or other projectiles on the floor outside.

- **Archive Closure period**

This is now confirmed as the first week in September. It will allow us to tidy up and take in some bulk accessions.

- **Christmas opening hours**

It may be a long way off, but we all know it'll suddenly be upon us and so this is advance warning that the archives Christmas closing will be from 4.30pm on 24th December. We will open for the usual volunteer groups on 5th Jan and re-open to the public on 6th Jan.