

News from the Archives

Newsletter of Lancashire Archives



Lancashire and the First World War ***A Son Remembered***

The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, on 28 June 1914 by a Serb nationalist, set in train a series of diplomatic events that led inexorably to the outbreak of war in Europe at the end of July 1914. Throughout 2014 there will be a series of events and exhibitions by Lancashire County Council's cultural services to mark the anniversary of the start of the First World War. At Lancashire Archives there will be a programme of talks, creative writing projects, a new schools session and a day looking at how to trace your First World War ancestors.

There has already been a lot of interest in the archives we hold relating to the First World War, and the following letter is one document that came to the attention of our searchroom team. Around 700,000 British soldiers were killed in action, died of wounds or disease or were missing presumed dead by the end of the war. The following is the sad story of the loss of just one young man from Preston who is fondly remembered by his father.

Every now and then a document is ordered in the searchroom which really makes us sit up and take notice. **DDX 2110/1** is one such document. It is an eloquent and heartbreaking letter in which a proud Preston father tells a friend about losing his eldest son in the Great War. This personal tragedy made the war very real to us, and we wanted to share it with you:

*"Dear Mr Hartley,
I am sending your birth certificate, as requested by Mr Ripley.
Do you remember me being with you at Miss Blackford's school at Carnforth – possibly nearly 40 years ago! My father was registrar, preceding Mr Ripley: and we lived at Hall Gate Farm on the hill outside the station.
I have just been demobilised, having, fool as I was, voluntarily joined up for technical work in the R.A.F. and I was acting major. They nearly killed me with work; but I have the satisfaction of thinking I did invaluable work in aero-engine development.
I lost my eldest son in the war. After nearly 4 years' fighting in every battle of the war in Arabia, he was killed in the very last engagement against the Turks! He was a*

very gifted boy, only 20. Passing 5th out of 4500 sitting and at just 17 for Woolwich in February 1915 with distinctions in every subject, he was sent to India + joined the Aden Field Force. He spoke 8 languages, was adjutant at 18, gained his M.C., acting major + brilliantly mentioned in despatches for surprising original work and marked out for a fine army career. His V.C. is under consideration for the last engagement. Physically he was over 6ft + weighed 13 stones; mentally he was high: but above all he was the most perfect character and the idol of his regiment. Every general of the force attended his funeral + all of the sepoy's voluntarily, which is the hall mark of esteem. His death is a blow I shall never get over; he and I were so very intimate. I have never known such a beautiful understanding and relationship between father and son. My whole desire is to join him: the world no longer holds any longings. In this I may be morbid inasmuch as I am the happiest married man in the world, and have 5 other dear children. I should be very pleased to see you at any time you may be in Preston to talk over very old times.

*Yours very truly,
William Baines*

You will remember me as the boy with one hand."

Intrigued by the letter, we did a little detective work online. Using Ancestry and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission sites, we learned that William's son was Captain Hubert Baines. He served in the 75th Carnatic Infantry, and was killed in action on 22 Oct 1918 in Aden, Yemen. He is buried in Maala cemetery, Aden. The five other dear children from the letter are Margaret, Philomena, Marie, Cyril and Henry Gerard. A Google search revealed that he was head boy at Preston Catholic College on Winckley Square, and appears on their war memorial. In a letter to his

parents, his commanding officer remarked: "The doctors say...he was the pluckiest lad they had ever seen... [he] was immensely liked by all ranks."

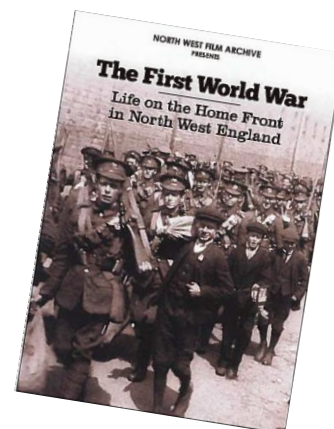
DDX 2110/1 can be viewed on request in the searchroom.

Deborah Emmett and Alison Ferguson

As part of our day on tracing your First World War ancestors on 4 Oct there will be an opportunity to go on a heritage walk looking at some of the places associated with Captain Baines and the war. Details of this event will be publicised nearer the time and for details of events and exhibitions across cultural services visit the County Council's web site at www.lancashire.gov.uk.

North West Film Archive DVD now on sale in our searchroom

The First World War: Life on the Home Front in North West England narrated by Maxine Peake. In this unique DVD to mark the centenary of the First World War, the North West Film Archive



opens its vaults to share the compelling footage of life on the home front in the North West. Drawing on rare archive footage this DVD features, amongst others, the Accrington Pals, the Lancashire Fusiliers and the Cheshire Regiment as they prepare for active service on the Western Front. **Buy a copy now for just £10.**

Box Clever and a magic carpet ride to Arabia

When specialist textile conservator Louise Squire, with a London based studio, could not find a local supplier to make an acid-free box large enough to accommodate a precious rolled rug from Arabia she turned to Lancashire Archives for help.

The rug is part of the prestigious al-Sabah Collection of art from the Islamic world, at the Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiyyah Museum in Kuwait City. It is an early horsehair and wool rug from Central Asia, possibly Afghanistan. It features a small diamond pattern throughout, originally it would have been a very distinct bright red colour but most of the wool has faded to brown.

Considering its age it is in reasonable condition but over the years has suffered a lot of wear and has several darned patches and other areas of deterioration. Louise was tasked by her client with stabilising and conserving the rug to enable it to go on display.

Louise made three wishes; 1). The box had to be robust but easy to assemble around the rolled rug, 2). The rug had to be suspended inside the box without touching the sides. 3). The box couldn't be too bulky at it had to be transported by private jet to Kuwait.

Our own box-making genie; Chris Gannon, who looks after the 'Box Clever' service at Lancashire Archives, designed a custom made acid-free box with a unique modular construction and innovative suspension system for the rolled rug, to protect it during its magic carpet ride to Kuwait.

Louise said; "having failed to get a box made using my usual contacts for archival boxes, I found Box Clever on the internet. Chris provided an innovative and unique solution for storing an oversized rolled

carpet. He not only delivered promptly, but explained the dynamics of the box and its assembly. He was extremely helpful and undaunted by the demands of the job. Needless to say the box was perfect!"

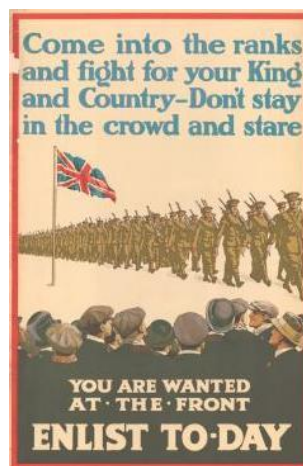


Chris Gannon, Box Maker

Collections

Each month we bring you the highlights of this month's new acquisitions. In April we processed 21 new deposits of documents, 20 of which were selected for permanent preservation.

First World War Recruitment Posters (Ref: DDX 1101/121)



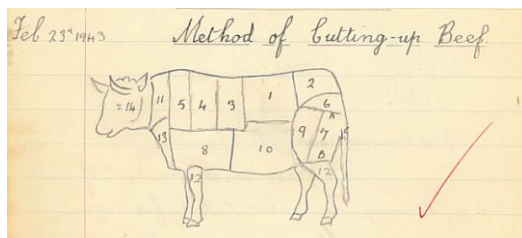
We were fortunate to receive a small collection of military recruitment posters from Burnley Library, which have been carefully restored and repackaged by our conservation team.

PRESCAP (Ref: DDX 2901)

Prescap was a community arts project which ran projects relating to race, gender, disability, health and environmental issues. It was set up in 1985 by Preston Borough Council and the North West Arts Association. They worked with individuals, groups and schools in Lancashire in order to help them develop their self awareness, self confidence and shared cultural identity through the means of art and creative resources, but were forced to close in 2012 due to loss of funding. Records were deposited with us shortly afterwards and have now been fully catalogued.

Heap family of Cliviger (Ref: DDX 3038)

Most of the records in this collection relate to the management of Birks House Farm, which was a dairy farm on the Worsthorne Estate. However there are also some interesting personal items, including a school cookery book belonging to Alvena Heap which is full of traditional recipes, as well as instructions on food storage and the method for cutting up beef and mutton.

**Don't miss...**

Tuesday 3 June, 6.30-7.30pm

Jan Bridget

Heathcliff and Richard Sutton: Dangers of Linking Literary and Historical Characters

Jan Bridget joins us to talk about the true story of one of her ancestors and his link to the character of Heathcliff in Emily Bronte's classic novel, *Wuthering Heights*. This talk will include a short film followed by a discussion.

Monday 9 June to Saturday 15 June

Chinese Lives in Lancashire: A Photographic Perspective

Join us for an exhibition of contemporary photographs of Chinese people in Lancashire as part of a project funded by Grants for the Arts - with accompanying stories.

Our next Saturday opening is 14 June

Digital copies

Did you know that you can have copies of archives in digital format – on CD or USB stick – instead of as a hard copy print? Please ask for details.

Hulton estate collection

Lancashire Archives has been offered the opportunity to buy the Hulton of Hulton archive (DDHU). This estate collection of national and regional importance has been in our care for 70 years and includes the only known surviving document relating to Cartmel priory [illustrated] as well as a lot of significant 18th and 19th century material.

Together with the Friends of Lancashire Archives we will be launching a major fund-raising campaign later this year. Please get in touch if you can help.

Jacquie Crosby, Archives Service Manager



**ANY
COMMENTS?**

If you have any comments on, or suggestions for this newsletter please send them to: Vicci McCann, News from the Archives, Lancashire Archives, Bow Lane, Preston, PR1 2RE. Telephone: 01772 533039. Email: vicci.mccann@lancashire.gov.uk