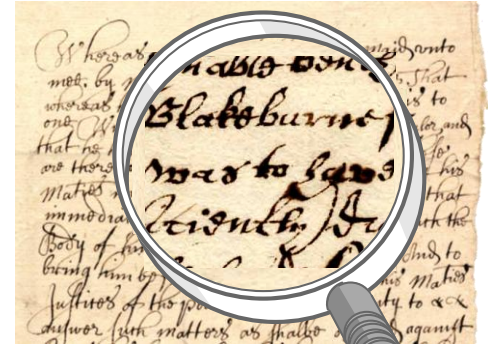


# News from the Archives

Newsletter of Lancashire Archives



## Happy New Year

2015 is our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary and I hope that it will be a wonderful year for everyone connected with Lancashire Archives. During this year we want more people to discover and explore the archive collections and to experience the thrill of holding a mediaeval parchment or reading personal stories from the past.

There will be a major exhibition of 75 archive treasures, and lots of opportunities to celebrate with us. The last weekend of April will offer a 1940s themed day on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup>, focusing on the service and our building, and a family history fair on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup>. There is another season of Tuesday Talks to look forward to and we hope to see some more cataloguing projects completed, including our own archive.

In the Spring we will extend our collections into a new area by taking in the Lancashire recordings from the North West Sound Archive. This will present challenges as we have to learn how to preserve new media and formats and how to make them accessible. It is however an exciting

opportunity for us to bring together the written and spoken word and to enrich Lancashire's archive collections.

**Jacque Crosby, Archives Service Manager**

## Pause for lunch

Just to remind you that from Monday 5 January we will not be producing documents from the strongrooms between 12.30 and 1.30pm. We are sorry if this causes any inconvenience.

## Time & Tide

Local poet, Sarah Hymas, will run workshops using coroners' inquests from the WWI period held by Lancashire Archives, to explore connections between our lives now and those a hundred years ago. The pieces created will form part of an exhibition including art, print and audio. Blackpool artist Lisa Wigham will also be involved in creating the exhibition, which will tour around the bay from next May.

During the workshops you will explore untold stories of everyday life to show how WW1 affected the local community. No previous experience of writing is necessary and you can be as creative as you like – you

could write poetry, prose, pieces for performance or lyrics for songs.

The project has been funded by Arts Council England, LCC and the Friends of Lancashire Archives.

The workshops will be in Morecambe Library, Central Drive, Morecambe, Lancashire LA4 5DL on the 3rd Sat of the month from 1.30-4.00pm:

**Saturday 24 January**

**Saturday 21 February**

**Saturday 21 March**

**Saturday 18 April**

The workshops are free and for more information or to book a place, go to [www.timeandtide.xyz](http://www.timeandtide.xyz).

## ***World War 1 blog***

Following the appearance of an article written by our searchroom team about a letter from William Baines from 1919 (DDX 2110/1) and his heart rending description of the loss of his son Captain Hurbert Baines, a member of the family visited Lancashire Archives to see the letter after his sister had spotted the piece on the Cultural Services WWI blog:

<http://new.lancashire.gov.uk/ww1/blog.aspx>

## ***Archdeaconry of Chester Wills***

As most of you who use our probate records know, the indexes to the probate records for wills proved in the Archdeaconry of Chester do not appear in LANCAT, our on-line catalogue. This is a gap we have been aware of for a long time and have in the last year or so started to make inroads on this mammoth task. John Keely who so ably inputted all the Archdeaconry of Richmond records is now tasked with doing the Infra series and has already done about 100

years' worth of records. The Thursday volunteers (who used to be the Guild Roll indexers) have started on the Supra series. They have begun at the end of the series with 1858 and are working backwards. The reason for this is that the indexes to the 1837-1858 wills have never been published so the information is currently only available here in typescript form in the Searchroom. It seemed to make sense to make these available first.

The first tranche of 14,836 Supra entries are now on LANCAT for the period 1850-1858. None of the Infra series are on LANCAT yet but this is very much a rolling programme and more entries will be added from each series on a fairly regular basis from now on. So keep looking!

There are tens of thousands of wills to index so this is not a short-term project and without the volunteers it would just not get done. We are very grateful to them all!

**Anna Watson**

## ***Collections***

Each month we bring you the highlights of this month's new acquisitions. In November we processed 17 new deposits of documents, all of which were selected for permanent preservation.

### **Campaign for Homosexual Equality (DDX 3085)**

CHE is one of the oldest gay rights organisations in the UK, and has its roots right here in Lancashire. It was founded by Burnley's Allan Horsfall in 1963 as the North-Western Homosexual Law Reform Committee. It became a national organisation in 1969, and organised the first national gay rights conference in Morecambe in 1973.

By 1975 a local branch of CHE had been founded for the Lancaster and Morecambe

area. The records which they have deposited with us include not only minutes and newsletters reflecting their own activities, but also a wealth of information produced by the CHE national office, giving a fascinating overview of the development of gay rights in the 1970s. Also included is information produced by other organisations, including Lancaster University Gaysoc and the Lancaster Gay and Lesbian Switchboard.



**YOUR COUNTRY DOESN'T NEED YOU IF YOU'RE GAY**

The Campaign for Homosexual Equality is fighting for the rights of gay women and men—the rights everyone else takes for granted.

**Come and join us!**  
CAMPAIGN FOR HOMOSEXUAL EQUALITY  
P.O. Box 427, Manchester M60 2EL.

## George Lyon, the Upholland 'highwayman', and the Walmsleys of Wigan

George Lyon, who styled himself the 'Captain of Thieves' was hanged at Lancaster Castle on 22 April 1815. Over the years all sorts of rumours and stories have attached themselves to him. He boasted that he had been 'lugged', or transported, although there is no documentary evidence of this. He is also reputed to have held up the Liverpool mail coach near Upholland and to have returned to one of his favourite inns before the distraught passengers came in to tell their tale. Again, this story cannot be proved, but it is likely that Lyon revelled in stories about himself to add to his reputation. His trade was actually handloom weaving, and it is likely that his crimes were committed at a time when the early industrial revolution was putting such skilled people out of work.

George Lyon's story is remembered two hundred years after his death, but his victim is seldom mentioned. Lyon was hanged with two accomplices for having 'feloniously and burglariously' entered Westwood House, the home of Charles Walmsley, the Lord of the Manor of Ince in Makerfield, Wigan. They made away with a number of silver articles and were later captured partly through the use of a thief catcher to whom they sold the stolen items. The three men lie buried in the churchyard of St Thomas the Martyr in Upholland.

Lancashire Archives houses the papers of the Walmsleys and the Westwood Estate (Walmsley of Westwood, DDWA) in 55 boxes. This has proved a treasure trove of information about the very different lives and fortunes of the two men – burglar and victim. Included in the collection which spans the 14<sup>th</sup> to the early twentieth century

are some documents of direct relevance to the burglary.

As a result of the gang being apprehended and hanged, Charles Walmsley was issued with what became known as 'Tyburn Tickets'. As a reward for having caught the three men (although he didn't personally do that!) he was excused from any further parish office.

Marianne Howell from the Community Heritage team has used sources in libraries, the Archives and Lancaster Castle to carry out research. A tour of the Castle can include seeing the cells which housed the prisoners, the very dock and courtroom where Lyon was tried and sentenced, and the courtyard where the hangings took place. Marianne is to give a presentation on the subject, as part of the regular Tuesday evening talks programme, at 6.30pm on Tuesday 10 February.

## ***Disaster!***

You may have spotted some oddly-dressed people around the building recently. Don't worry – on this occasion it was just a training exercise.

You will be reassured to know that Lancashire Archives has a plan for action in case a disaster overtakes us. We decided to test the plan and on a cold December day, dressed in full protective suits, gloves and hard hats, that's just what we did.

We hope to provide a fuller report in a future edition.

## ***Don't miss...***

**Tuesday 6 January, 6.30-7.30pm**

Preston in the First World War: Patriotic Preston, Part 2 - November 1914-April 1915, a talk by David Huggonson.

## **Our next Saturday opening is 10 January**

### ***'Mixing it' project***

Did a member of your family fight alongside the British in the Second World War or arrive as a war worker, prisoner of war or refugee? A research project at the University of Huddersfield is recording the histories of the different national groups which spent time in the North of England during World War II as part of a project investigating the diversity of Britain's war time population.

We are hoping to interview ex-service personnel, war workers and refugees but, as most are very elderly, we are also interested in speaking with their descendants. Besides recording memories and family stories the project team is looking for photographs, diaries and memorabilia.

Information gathered by this project will feed into an exhibition at the Imperial War Museum North which opens in September 2015.

If you can help we would be delighted to hear from you. Please contact Janette Martin, [j.martin@hud.ac.uk](mailto:j.martin@hud.ac.uk), Tel. 01484 472452 or write to:

Dr Janette Martin, 'Mixing It' project,  
History Department,  
School of Music,  
Humanities and  
Media, Queensgate,  
University of  
Huddersfield, HD1  
3DH.



**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](mailto:vicci.mccann@lancashire.gov.uk)*