



Newsletter

Issue 29

January 2015

ISSN 1748-7676

The independent voice for
archives in the Capital

Happy New Year!

Another 365 days have passed since my last New Year greeting to you in the Newsletter, and it seems as though in a flash.

AfL has had a busy 2014 and will have just as busy a 2015!

2014 saw the culmination of our major project, *Through the Door*, a collaborative project with Poet in the City, funded by the Arts Council. A full report can be seen in this issue, written by the Board Lead, Alison Walker. By all accounts, it has been a worthwhile innovative piece of work, enjoyed by the archivists, poets and the audiences, some of the latter of which were new to both areas of expertise, so a good result!

We duly commemorated the centenary of the start of WWI with our conference run by King's College, with insightful presentations and inspiring discussions over two afternoons in May, and backed up nicely by their exhibition associated with their own commemoration.

Our summer Soirée in June was oversubscribed, and so instead of the intended guided tours, people made their own tours of the splendid Sussex House School in Cadogan Square Chelsea. Members came from as far afield as Oxfordshire to view the house, and also enjoyed socialising over a drink in the ballroom.

We are working on our next summer soirée even now, so watch out for the advertisements in due course.

AfL's stand at the family history show *Who Do You Think You Are Live* in February was

Early Music at the BM

A piece of polyphonic choral music written for two voices has been found in a British Library manuscript, MS Harley 3019. The inscription is believed to date back to the start of the 10th century and is the setting of a short chant dedicated to Boniface, patron Saint of Germany. This makes it the earliest practical example of a piece of polyphonic music ever discovered. No one knows exactly when polyphonic singing started, the earliest written example known to date is the Winchester Troper, which dates from c.1000, although polyphony was recognized in theory earlier than that.

well staffed by volunteers, for which many thanks, and brisk business was done with the attendees, with our quick guide to London's archives being snapped up eagerly. In 2015 the show will be held at the NEC in Birmingham, so AfL will not be attending – we really are Archives for London, which is a large area to cover!

I'm delighted to announce Ruth MacLeod as AfL's new Vice Chairman. As many of you know, Ruth is the Heritage Officer at Wandsworth Council and she will retain her role as practitioners' representative for AfL. I would like to thank Siân Wynn-Jones for her stalwart support and work as Vice Chairman, and am pleased to say that she will continue to be the Board Lead for Publicity.

My thanks, as always, go to all who work to keep AfL events and media systems functioning well and providing coverage of London's archives for our members. Many thanks of course to our members who support what we do and give us suggestions for what they would like to see us put on – much of which includes socialising opportunities after seminars and other events – we have listened!

2015 being the 800th anniversary of 'the great charter of liberties' – the Magna Carta, Liberty will be our conference theme, run by our home base archive, LMA, and with a long brief, as it includes the Guildhall's copy of 1297.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible during 2015. Best wishes Anne Barrett Chairman Archives for London

Written using an early notation from before the invention of the staff, it was inked into the space at the end of a manuscript of the Life of Bishop Maternianus of Reims.

The manuscript was discovered by Giovanni Varelli, who noticed the unusual form of the notation, and realised that it consisted of two vocal parts, each complementing the other. His research suggests that the author of the newly-found piece – a short antiphon with a second voice providing a vocal accompaniment – was written around the year 900.

Visit phys.org/news/2014-12-earliest-piece-polyphonic-music.html#jCp for a recording.

Inside this Issue (highlights)

Law and Order in London	p3
Cartoons	p4
Modern maps of London	p4
George Orwell	p4
Pre-war leisure in London	p5
WW1 records	p5
Memory of the World	p6
Clockmaker's museum	p6
Bedlam	p7
Tallis London Street Views	p7
Orleans ho., Twickenham	p8
Online Wills	p8
Gin	p8
Raleigh bikes	p9
Royal Albert Hall archive	p9
History of La Serenissima	p9
David Gentleman	p9
Seminar reports	pp10-11
Maps – their untold stories	p10
Inside London's County Asylums	p10
First World War memorabilia	p11
Virginia Woolf	p11

Through the Door

This autumn just gone saw the culmination of almost two years work on the 'Through the Door' archives and poetry project. This is a partnership with the poetry charity *Poet in the City* to put seven distinguished professional poets in a short residency at a London archive, to be inspired by the holdings, to create new poetry and, via later performance and workshops at the archive, to draw new audiences in "Through the Door".

In 2013 we bid for a substantial grant from Arts Council England. Although only 40% of bids succeed, we won it because of the unusual collaborative nature of a poetry and archives project. In early 2014 poets were chosen and introduced to their archive. Archives had volunteered to take part, and we were glad to have a wide variety of different types (public, private, ecclesiastical, professional, academic). Each poet was allocated to an archive which seemed to chime with their previous interests. The poets and archives are:

Simon Jenner at Borough of Hackney Archives

Imtiaz Dharker at St Paul's Cathedral Archive

Mario Petrucci at the Royal College of Surgeons Archive

Fiona Sampson at Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives

David Harsent at the Library and Museum of Freemasonry

George Szirtes at Imperial College Archives

A project coup was securing Andrew Motion, the former Poet Laureate, at the British Library Archives.

During the spring and summer, poets visited their archive, composed work and in some cases held educational workshops with school or university students. The range of material which sparked the poets' imagination was

very wide. At Hackney, a refuge for destitute girls. At St Paul's, wartime bomb damage. At the Surgeons, body-snatching and plastic surgery. At Tower Hamlets, many generations of immigrants. At Freemason's, the wide range of surprising people who have been masons. At Imperial, the invention of holograms. And at the British Library the experiences of private soldiers in the first world war. Simultaneously, the project team were designing publicity, building the website and arranging for the publication of the anthology of poetry.

During the autumn, a public event was held at each archive, attracting an audience of up to 160. The archivist spoke about their holdings and highlights, then the poet commented on the experience of working with the archivist (all expressed enthusiasm!) and read the new compositions.

Although the project has now concluded, you can of course still look at the website (throughthedorproject.tumblr.com), which includes short films of the poets and archivists talking about the holdings and the new poetry. Also the book is still available. This is a handsome illustrated paperback containing introductions from the poets and the archivists, and most of the poetry. It is available to AfL members at the reduced price of £5 including post and packing (the cover price is £7.99), please contact Alison Walker (aewalker1@btinternet.com) if you would like a copy.

Finally, we must express thanks to the archivists and poets for taking a risk on this unusual project, and to Poet in the City for their excellent choice of poets and efficient administrative work.

Alison Walker, *AfL Special Projects*



LAMAS Autumn Meeting Law and Order in London

The London and Middlesex Archaeological Society (LAMAS) holds a local history conference each autumn. The editor attended that last November, and this is his personal write-up. The material has not been kept in strictly by speaker.

The first talk, by Penny Tucker, that dealt with a much earlier period than the others. Her topic was *Portals of the Law: How People Got Access to Justice in Medieval London* and drew on her book *Law courts and lawyers in the city of London, 1300-1550*.

In 1417 it was said: "The portals of law are wide open to everyone" but were they? Justice was local, a case would be brought in a local court which might not be convenient to all the parties, especially in a time when transport was slower than today. And of course the better-connected and better off people would be better placed for access (plus ça change). There were several courts: the court of Husting, the Sheriff's Court, the Mayor's Court, and the Court of Requests.

The Court of Husting sat at the Guildhall: it was in existence by 1258, from which date wills and other deeds are recorded there, and probably started earlier. It was not a very busy court: it typically sat on a Monday, and on a Tuesday too if business was not completed, but there were many weeks in which it did not sit, there being no business. It had some 70 to 80 actions annually around 1310, dropping to half that by 1475. At the time of the Black Death its emphasis shifted, the testamentary work taking up a larger proportion of its time, possibly the result of those who died from the plague not having had time to make their intentions clear. As well as the wills, it handled writs to recover possession of land and the property in them, and matters like the recovery of a widow's dower of lands, recovery of lands and rents and recovery of distress wrongfully taken: it also dealt with outlawry.

The Sheriffs' Court was by the early 1300s also held in the Guildhall, at the opposite end, although it was separate and historically may have been held at counters at the sheriffs own houses: the counter sessions were for routine business, and also the initiation of cases: the Guildhall ones were more formal. It handled cases of debt and trespass.

The Mayor's Court was held in an upper room, until the Aldermen decreed, c 1410, that it should be held openly in the Guildhall. It could sit daily, by the late 1400s possibly even on Sundays, as it handled cases involving travelling merchants who might otherwise be delayed and foreigners who needed 'hastif remedie': in these terms a 'foreigner' might be an English person from outside London.

Tim Hitchcock, Professor of Digital History at the University of Sussex, has as his title *Transported Beyond the Seas: Criminal Justice and the Experience of Punishment in the Late 18th & 19th Centuries*. He is also developing a website www.digitalpanopticon.org/ which explores the way in which computers can analyse and present large quantities of data in a diagrammatic way which makes it much easier to spot trends and patterns in the data. He is applying this to transportation records, and he also spoke about the history of

transportation. The word panopticon goes back at least to Jeremy Bentham c.1798, when he suggested the idea of a prison with a central viewing point from which everything could be seen, without those doing the monitoring being too obvious to the inmates;

As is well-known, the Americas were the first destination to which 'undesirables' were shipped. With the War of Independence, this was no longer possible after 1776, and new measures were needed. In the longer term we shipped out convicts to Australia, Botany Bay: it has been estimated that 90,000 prisoners were shipped there. In the shorter term prisons were built. One, the Clerkenwell House of Detention, stood in Bowling Green Lane, well known to members of A&L who come to LMA.

In the context of shipping prisoners overseas, we must take a nod in the direction of the 'hulks' often de-commissioned war-ships which were moored on the Thames at Woolwich, or nationally at Portsmouth. They were in use for many years after the slave trade had ceased, but the conditions were often far worse than anything slaves had to contend with.

As an aside, I might note that another prison, known as Coldbath Fields, stood near from its foundation in 1603 until its closure in 1877: its site is now Mount Pleasant Sorting Office. (Online readers click [here](#) for a plan.) This was a 'House of Correction': you were committed to one of these for shorter periods, not exceeding two years. Even shorter terms, as little as three months, were served in Bridewells. These took their name from one of the oldest, Bridewell itself. The location of this is still commemorated by Bridewell Place, close to Blackfriars although the site was lost in 1666: the nearby St Brides church is a post-fire Wren church which commemorates the name, but, sadly, nothing else. Newgate prison, built 1782, demolished 1902, stood where the Old Bailey or more accurately the Central Criminal Court, was built in 1907.

Early policing was often in the hands of the local vestry or parish, who appointed a watchman to patrol the parish at night: if he found someone up to no good, he could pursue him (or her) to the parish boundary, but there his authority ended, so knowing your shortcuts along the crowded narrow lanes, especially in pre-fire London, was possibly useful! The watchman might raise a 'hue and cry' with a shout of "Stop, thief", which would often bring local residents out to help. But it could be a dangerous job: on Christmas Eve 1769 a constable was hit over the head by a drunk on Westminster Bridge. He died from his injuries. Those responsible were caught and convicted, sentenced to death, but through 'influence' this was later reduced to transportation, and there is a question mark over whether even that sentence was actually carried out.

In the nineteenth century it was realised that this parochial system would not work, and Robert Peel acted. He created the Metropolitan Police under an act of Parliament operative from 1829. The force under the supervision of two commissioners, Charles Rowan (c.1782-1852, commissioner 1829-50) and barrister Richard Mayne (1796-1868, commissioner 1829-68). They did a very effective job for 21 years, from an office in Great Scotland Yard, a name still active in the public mind.

Cartoons

Isn't the word 'cartoon' interesting. An etymological dictionary (I like to use *Origins* by the late Eric Partridge) derives it ultimately from the Greek χαρτης meaning a leaf of papyrus, referring back to the use of papyrus leaves in Egypt where leaves were often used as we would a sheet of paper. The word comes into classical Latin as *charta*, meaning 'something on paper', and to mediaeval Latin as *carta*, as in 'Magna Carta' (1215), and is the root of the modern English words *chart* and *charter*. Sailors still refers to their 'maps' as charts. The Latin had a diminutive *chartula* whence *chartularium* 'keeper of archives' (literally 'little bits of paper', archivists take note!) As well as diminutive suffixes, which English has (-*let* is the commonest, as in 'booklet'), Italian has an augmentative in -*one*. (Augmentative suffices form a feature which we do not have in English.) Applying this to *carta* gives *cartone*, a large or heavy sheet of paper, one which an artist would use for a full-size sketch.

The Raphael drawings in the V&A are called cartoons for this very reason. Although these cartoons were designs for tapestries, it would have been more common to prepare a cartoon for fresco work. Fresco needed to be painted quickly onto wet plaster whilst it was still fresh (i.e. fresco), and the work would have been aided by having a detailed sketch to copy, rather than the painter having to think out his composition. The predominant modern English meaning of 'cartoon', as a humorous drawing, is traced by some sources to an issue of *Punch* in 1843, which contained drawings satirising the historical frescoes being painted in the Palace of Westminster, newly rebuilt after the fire of 1834, for which presumably cartoons were needed. Incidentally, the word 'carton', a container made of heavy paper, has the same origin.

All the above is prompted by visits to the Cartoon Museum, at 35 Little Russell Street (just south of the British Museum), which had on display Hogarth's London. The display is, unfortunately, due to end on 18th January, about the time this newsletter reaches you. The exhibition opened to mark the 250th anniversary of the death of Hogarth in October 1764. Hogarth was a great illustrator of London life, with his series *Gin Lane* and *Beer Street*, illustrating the evil effects of the former and the healthy use of the latter, being particularly well known.

Whilst on the subject of cartoons, it is worth noting that June 2015 sees the bicentenary of the death of James Gillray. Gillray is said to have admired the work of Hogarth, one can certainly see a common theme in the work of the two, both of whom loved to satirise. Gillray's work is more 'international', his caricatures showing events at the French National Assembly and Macartney in Beijing, as well as poking fun at figures in the English establishment under George III, including the future George IV, shown as an overweight voluptuary. Sadly, Gillray's eyesight failed from 1806 on, he turned to drink, and produced little work in his latter years.

Gillray's work will feature in an exhibition opening

shortly (5 Feb) at the British Museum. This celebrates the 200th anniversary of the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo, in 1815, by combined Anglo-Prussian forces.

Modern maps of London

The National Library of Scotland has put online images from the Ordnance Survey mapping of London from the post-war years, 1950-55 (it also includes Edinburgh). The link [here](#) (too long and complicated to include in full) should take you to an overview map from which you can zoom in to an image of the detailed sheet of interest. The detailed sheet scale is 1:1250, so when you select a single sheet you get a view with individual houses marked and many numbered. I was able to find the house where I was brought up, and of course the street layout and street names reflected what I remembered from school days, rather than the development that has occurred since. So good both for a walk down memory lane for older members of AfL, and as a possible resource if you are studying the modern history of London's development.

George Orwell

Under the pseudonym Edward Burton, the man born Eric Arthur Blair, who became famous under another pseudonym, George Orwell, was found "drunk and disorderly" as a fish porter. A record of his conviction at Old Street Police Court on 21 December 1923 can be found online. Click here for a [link](#) to the page. It is suggested that it was part of his research for the book *Down and Out in Paris and London*, his writings on poverty in the two cities. His aim, if such it were, to experience prison life failed, since he was simply fined 6s or given 1 day: he took the latter option, which would probably mean he was simply held in the court room rather than being sent to the cells.

It is suggested in the article that some of the characters Orwell used in his book were based on those who appeared alongside him in court. Their names and offences appear in the court record, but seeing them and their behaviour in court would have given Orwell an even better insight.

Foundling Museum and Handel

Citation from the museum awards...

The Gerald Coke Handel Collection is unique and presents a fine example of how to run a specialist collection not only for the serious scholarly research undertaken using it, but to reach out to the wider potential user base through a variety of means. It is the largest privately-owned collection of material concerning Handel and its unique and rare materials are of international significance. In-depth research work is supported and exceptional attention paid to documentation through "extreme cataloguing". Balancing the research focus are a wide range of educational activities at all levels, partnerships with performers and ensembles, exhibitions, publications and outreach initiatives upon which the staff are to be congratulated. See www.foundlingmuseum.org.uk/collections/gerald-coke-handel-collection/

Pre-war leisure in London

The November 2014 issue of the London Journal takes as its theme on *Leisure in London's suburbs 1880-1939*. After a short introduction by the guest editor, the articles deal with early photography of houses, Ilford Hospital carnival, the leisure activities of public librarians in London, motoring and the Great West Road, sport at Regent Street Poly, and Catford Cycling Club.

Personally I most enjoyed reading the last-mentioned of these. I was delighted to find that the club still exists and is so up-to-date that it has an extensive web site www.catfordcc.co.uk, recording not only its current events but also the club's history back to its founding in 1886. It emerged from the 'hare and hounds' running club in that area — *hare and hounds* is still used as the name of several running clubs across the UK, as a quick search with your favourite Internet search engine will reveal. The London Journal article, by Geraldine Biddle-Perry, places the club in a wider context. The last quarter of the 19th century saw the emergence of the modern bicycle, as opposed to machines like the 'penny-farthing'. These were easier to ride, and became popular with both men and women. The development of the pneumatic tyre, c1888, made the machine more comfortable to ride, too: the older solid tyres must have been rather bumpy, whence the term 'bone-shaker'. She has also cross referenced the recorded membership with census information, to come up with an age and locality breakdown of the members (although this gets only a brief mention in the article).

These improvements popularised cycling, and in turn led to the emergence of cycling clubs. Geraldine seems to suggest that possession of one of these new machines may have been something of a status symbol, especially if you have the right 'cycling gear' to go with it. Cycling was good healthy out-door exercise, which reached across the social classes, and was not restricted to a particular milieu. The article suggests cycling was a recreational activity, and was not used as a convenient means of transport, as in London today. The Wikipedia article of the history of cycling, somewhat US-centred, claims that women took to the new mode of transport in large numbers as it gave them greater freedom, and that it may have contributed to a change in fashions, as the big voluminous skirts that had been worn were clearly unsuitable, far too likely to get caught in chains or wheels; bloomers, or 'bicycle suits', with the trousers legs tucked into calf-length socks, became the thing to wear when out on a ride.

The increase in the volume of road traffic, especially in the last 50 years, made cycling more dangerous and there was a decline in its popularity. In London, at least, the start of the TfL/Barclays cycle hire scheme, and the increasing number of dedicated cycle routes and lanes, have led to a recent reverse, and cycling is on the up. Given the congested nature of London's roads today, a bike can be as fast as anything else on the roads (especially given the tendency of some cyclists to ignore red traffic lights).

If you wish to read more on this, or explore the other topics in the issue, copies of the most recent issue of London Journal can be found on the shelves at LMA.

WW1 records –those who survived

Researchers from the military genealogy website Forces War Records are in the process of transcribing and digitising 1.5 million unseen medical records from the First World War that are held at the National Archives. The full project will take two years, but an initial tranche is already available. (Anyone interested in these records should note that www.forces-war-records.co.uk is a subscription web site.)

The description of the work on the web site claims that the data is invaluable, for little data exists for those who were injured but survived, as opposed to those who died. The latter are also often commemorated on war memorials, or can be found in rolls of honour or in war dairies. Many medical records were destroyed after the First World War or lost in the Blitz of London in World War Two, whilst those who survived the war are often poorly documented, compared with those who lost their lives and are remembered in rolls of honour in the communities from which they came. For example, volunteers from the British School in Hitchin have produced a 155-page book about ex-pupils who made, as they put it, 'the ultimate sacrifice'.

The war records are hard to read as they were handwritten by busy clerks in the field, who did not have a lot of time in between attacks and floods of patients to ensure that their notes were tidy. The handwriting is old, with the same word or even the same letter written by two different people looking very different, and since pencils were used to make them the notes have faded over the years. Handwriting experts had to make out the different surnames, and all of them had to be checked multiple times to ensure they were correct, with questionable ones sometimes being cross-referenced with several different historic registers. Sometimes the clerks misheard a name in the din of battle, or spelt it as they imagined it should be rather than asking for the correct spelling; other times, the patient giving the name simply couldn't be properly understood due to serious facial injuries.

Expected occupational hazards such as gunshot wound, trench foot and mustard gas poisoning feature heavily in the previously unseen archive. The increased pressure on their knees and ankle joints from having to constantly crouch down led to complaints of arthritis despite their relatively young age. Rheumatism was another hindrance as soldiers were unable to stand up tall in the trenches in case they were picked off by a German sniper. And a rather surprising ailment that often had to be treated by medics was wasp stings. From conditions such as gunshot wounds, trench foot and mustard gas poisoning to tonsillitis, Spanish flu and even in-growing toenails, few men escaped unscathed. It seems that apparently minor wounds, like a cut to the finger, may have become infected and led to much more serious illness due to the level of bacteria in the trenches. Injured Tommies were jolted and banged about so much during their journey on a stretcher from the front to a field ambulance and a casualty station that the fractured femur bone would often rupture an artery.

UNESCO Memory of the World register

A total of nine UK items were added to the register last June, of which two are held in London. Full details at www.unesco.org.uk/2014_uk_memory_of_the_world_register

The London items are **Robert Hooke's Diary**, 1672-1683, held at the LMA. The inscription records that "Robert Hooke, 1635-1703 worked at the forefront of physics, astronomy, microscopy, physiology and geology and published the first fully illustrated scientific textbook, *Micrographia*. He was the first UK professional experimental scientist.

"His enormous contribution to 17th century scientific research and London architecture is clearly revealed in his Diary. Kept as a memorandum book to remind him of the many places he had been and people he had met each day, along with his pithy thoughts and observations about scientific research and the world around him, the Diary offers an unparalleled glimpse into the exciting and vibrant world of Restoration scientific discovery and the rebuilding of London from the ashes of the Great Fire.

"Hooke did not intend his Diary to be read by anyone else, so he could be candid in his observations about himself and his contemporaries. The Diary shows us a man striving to be open and honest with himself. He found his body and habits to be worthy of investigation and research, so he noted his symptoms and the experimental, sometimes dangerous medicines he self-administered.

"The Diary suggests he was often both gregarious (with many evenings in taverns and coffee houses recorded) and collaborative – working closely and amiably with many colleagues, especially Sir Christopher Wren. At other times he confided in the Diary his bitter feelings towards scientists whom he believed had stolen his ideas and inventions or deliberately under represented his achievements and contribution. Entries in the Diary have allowed historians to cast light into these painful rows and also to see areas where he was ahead of his time.

"Hooke contributed greatly to the rebuilding of the City of London after the Great Fire of London. The Diary contains daily entries for his work as the chief City Surveyor for the rebuilding of the City. With Sir Christopher Wren, he was employed to rebuild the City Churches. Indeed, the Diary notes so many meetings and conversations with Wren that it is also a key source for Wren's career."

The second London item is **The Royal Mail Archive 1636 – 1969** "The British Postal Museum and Archive (BPMA) is unique in giving insight into the developments of communication within the UK and abroad.

"All aspects of this organisation's history, from employment records to stamp artwork, are held within The Royal Mail Archive, making it one of the oldest business archives in the world with 300 years of continuous records.

"The archive shows the development of the postal service and the impact it had on villages, towns and cities throughout the UK (and Ireland to 1922). For

example, maps show how postal routes grew over time; the status of becoming a postal town had an economic impact, the records show how the postal town network grew.

"There is no other comparable archive for stamp design from the Penny Black in 1840 through to the Tony Benn/David Gentleman experimentation, in 1964, of removing the Queen's head from the stamp. It holds the story of all existing UK stamps and includes artwork for unadopted designs, such as stamps for Wales and Scotland in case the devolution referenda resulted in a Yes vote in 1979."

Clockmaker's Museum

The museum, which has for 140 years been located at Guildhall, has now closed after the expiry of the lease and failure of the two parties to agree mutually acceptable terms for the collection remaining at Guildhall. It is moving to the Science Museum, where it will join the latter's collections of timepieces, and will reopen in the summer of 2015 as part of a new gallery with the existing Measuring Time gallery, providing visitors with a collection spanning five centuries.

The press release reads:

"Established in 1814, the Clockmakers' Collection is the oldest collection of clocks and watches in the world, with the majority of the 1250 timepieces dating from between c.1600 and c.1850. Within the collection is an important group of marine timekeepers, including the celebrated fifth marine timekeeper made by John Harrison and completed in 1770.

"The Science Museum's Measuring Time gallery features an impressive display of important early electrical clocks as well as rare and beautiful handcrafted clocks, watches and sundials from different eras. The collection includes the magnificent Wells Cathedral Clock, built around 1392 and on long-term loan from the cathedral, which is the third-oldest clock in the world. Other highlights include a rare early balance-spring watch by Thomas Tompion, the father of English watchmaking, and a 1500-year-old Byzantine sundial-calendar, the second-oldest geared mechanism known to have survived."

Ian Blatchford, Director of the Science Museum, added that the science museum was "perfectly placed to provide a new home for the outstanding Clockmakers' Collection. The Science Museum already holds an important collection of timepieces and other scientific instruments dating from the medieval period to the 21st century, and I am delighted that our 3 million plus visitors each year will also be able to enjoy the Clockmakers' Collection here at the Museum."

Wedgwood Collection

As a result of the Art Fund's public appeal, £2.74 million has been raised to save the collection, which would otherwise have had to be sold to meet pension liabilities. We read that the Art Fund will gift the collection to the V&A, but it will remain on display in the museum at the Wedgwood factory site in Barlaston, Staffordshire.

Crossrail Bedlam

No, not a reference to the various bits of building work that have popped up all over London as Crossrail is built, but rather a note that as part of construction of the new Liverpool Street Crossrail station, archaeologists have found up to 3,000 skeletons.

The burial ground near the Bethlem Hospital opened during London's response to the plague crisis which swept across Europe during the 16th Century. It lies within the site of Crossrail's Liverpool Street station.

The burial ground was the first in London not associated with a parish church. It did not keep its own burial records, but rather the City's parish churches recorded which of their parishioners were buried at Bedlam in their own records.

Fifteen "Buried at Bedlam" volunteers have begun hunting through centuries of parish records at the London Metropolitan Archives to build the first list of names of those buried at the cemetery located under Liverpool Street.

Those believed to be buried at Bedlam include Robert Lockyer who was a soldier executed under the orders of Oliver Cromwell for leading the Bishopgate mutiny. Furthermore John Lilburne, an English political Leveller before, during and after the English Civil Wars of 1642 to 1650 was buried there too.

Jay Carver, Crossrail's Lead Archaeologist, said: "The Bedlam burial ground is a unique site that spans a fascinating period of London's turbulent past. What makes this exciting is that through the various records made by the parish clerks of the time we can gain a snapshot of the people who lived and died in the area and provide biographic details to supplement the excavated evidence.

"As so many of the records of time are likely to be missing we will only obtain a snapshot of who was buried at Bedlam but it will provide a unique record of the lives and deaths of 16th and 17th Century Londoners from the local area. We're keen for anyone who may have family connections to the site, or anecdotes about the area to get in touch."

Volunteer Alan Cotterell, from Barbican said: "If you live somewhere like London you know that you're in a city with a really deep history. I love the idea of unravelling the stories of the people buried at Bedlam and finding out as much as I can about their lives. From what I've seen so far, there are so really intriguing stories, some really entertaining stories and some really tragic ones. I've found records for people of all ages from infants to older people. Hopefully the work we do can help historians in years to come get a clearer picture of 16th and 17th Century London."

Excavation of the site will commence in 2015. To date Crossrail has found more than 10,000 archaeology items, spanning 55 million years of London's history, across over 40 construction sites. (In May 2013, Afl Newsletter 24 noted Crossrail's discovery of the Black death pit near Charterhouse.)

Crossrail's archaeology team is also keen to hear from other members of the public who may be able to enlighten the research with further details of burials at Bedlam. If you think you have something to contribute, email bedlamrecords@crossrail.co.uk.

Tallis' London street views

John Tallis was a native of Worcestershire. His father, also John, came to London when his son was about 3 years old, but John jun. must have gone back west as he married in Aston in 1836. In 1838 from an address near Smithfield, they published a series of over 80 London 'Street Views' in a series of 'booklets'. A book of them was first published by the London Topographical Society (LTS) in 1969, and was so popular it was reprinted in 2002. It contains maps of each street, illustrations of selected features, but, most impressively, long drawings of the elevations along the streets, many marked with notes of the occupiers and their businesses. The original also contained advertisements and street histories that the LTS version did not include. Many have now been put online and may be viewed at crowd.museumoflondon.org.uk/lsv1840/ together with a pin map of where they are.

What are archives for

The editor stumbled on an interesting piece by Kate Theimer; She wrote "archivists aren't trying to hide interesting sources from researchers; that we want them to use the archives, they are entitled to do so, many archives are publicly owned and are a societal resource, but people don't know their way round, don't know what to ask, so are afraid to ask. They need to be told about finding aids, and told how to use them.

"Not everything is catalogued right down to the individual piece level, so you may have to hunt through a collection, you may not find it, but "yippee!" if you do.

That it's not all digitised, because there can be more than meets the eye, so it's a sort of adventure. It takes time and effort but the results rewarding. And collections grow rather than being given or purchased all one go, and some of it is contemporary, or has contemporary relevance: we don't just have 'old stuff' but are busy swiping history as its made.

"That it is pronounced 'Ar-kiv-ist', and no, putting a whole bunch of things on the web is not 'archiving'".

International Medieval Congress (IMC), Leeds 2015

The IMC claims to be the largest annual gathering of medievalists in Europe, focusing upon all aspects of the Middle Ages (c. 300-1500). Participants at the IMC present research in all areas of Medieval Studies, ranging from Art and Literature to Science and Technology. It attracts more than 2000 delegates from all over the world and offers a unique opportunity for Historical and Archaeological Societies to network with this specialist audience. A booking form for potential participants is online at www.leeds.ac.uk/ims/imc/imc2015_call.html. The event runs from 6th to 9th July.

Orleans house, Twickenham

As the forthcoming February visit (see back page) is to Twickenham, this item links in nicely.

The London Borough of Richmond, in which the house stands, hopes to obtain a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to undertake work on Orleans House. The house is to be used, at least in part, to house the borough's art collection. Standing right on the banks of the Thames, the present house was built in 1710, although there are known to have been two previous houses on the site. The 1710-house was built for a scot, James Johnston, and is described as having been rather plain, befitting a 'dour scot'. It takes its name from Louis Philippe, Duc D'Orleans, who lived here in exile in the 1810s: he became King of France in 1830, the last to bear that title, a reign that lasted until 1848, when he made a second visit to Richmond. Much of the main building was demolished in 1926; however, the Octagon Room, a slightly later addition designed by James Gibbs survives (most of the now-demolished house was by John James, described as the 'King's master carpenter'). The Octagon Room is to be the centre of the new 'attraction'. At the time of its construction this part of the country was quite rural, but with royal palaces at Kew and Hampton Court, convenient for courtiers, and with the added advantage of easy access to the Thames, a very useful route to central London in the days before tarmacked roads, it was a desirable place to live. The Borough of Richmond's website has pages on the house, including a well-illustrated history: visit www.richmond.gov.uk/orleans_house_gallery

Online Wills

An article in the online pages of the Independent suggests that the probate service is putting online its collection of wills post 1858, the date at which church courts ceased dealing with probate and the national service took over. However, it appears that what is being made available is an index, and if you find a will of interest, it can then be ordered at a cost of £10. This online facility is replacing the search room, which was located at First Avenue House in Holborn.

The Independent's article says "Among them [the wills] are the last wishes of Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill, economist John Maynard Keynes, who wanted his unpublished manuscripts and personal papers destroyed, and war time code breaker Alan Turing. Turing, who died of cyanide poisoning in 1954 and whose story was recently adapted for the big screen in *The Imitation Game*, who left a brief will sharing his possessions equally among colleagues and his mother.

"In his will, Dickens stipulated that there should be no monuments put up to him, instead "I rest my claims to the remembrance of my country upon my published works". When he died he left about £80,000, worth more than £7m in today's money."

Wills are a wonderful source for family history, they can often shed light on both the testator's relationships, and enable you to get a picture both of what they owned, and also what was thought valuable in the community by the fact that specific bequest was made, as opposed to being lumped in 'the rest of my chattels unbequeathed'.

Gin

Tucked under the railway arches in Stanworth Street, Bermonsdey, beneath the line from London Bridge is a small distillery called Jensen's. It has been there only since August this year, although the name is older.

The English word comes via the Dutch *jeneverbes*, which in turn comes from the Latin *juniperus*, hence the name *jenever*, the source of the English name. The Dutch are credited with flavouring it with juniper berries, which is still the predominant flavouring in most gins, although a variety of 'herbals' is also used, the combination sometimes being a closely guarded secret, as it is what makes each gin unique. The Dutch origin may also link to the phrase 'Dutch courage', bravura stimulated by alcohol.

When King William III came to the English throne in 1689, he passed statutes to encourage the distillation of English spirits, quite possibly to discourage the import of French distilled spirits like brandy (cognac). Anyone could now distil by simply posting a notice in public and just waiting ten days. Soon the volume of gin sold daily exceeded that of beer and ale, and it was cheaper.

Licensing, introduced in 1729, put the cost up, making good gin expensive for many, but the demand was such that production continued, much of it bad spirits. London had some 7,000 shops that sold spirits. Daniel Defoe wrote of "the prodigious number of shopkeepers whose business is wholly and solely the selling of spirits". In certain areas, spirits were sold on average from one private house in four.

The abuse of alcohol by the poor became a major problem. Smollett wrote: "In these dismal caverns ('strong water shops') they lay until they recovered some of their faculties and then they had recourse to this same mischievous potion".

On 29 September 1736 the Gin Act came into force, making gin prohibitively expensive. Riots broke out and the law was widely and openly broken. About this time, 11 million gallons of gin were distilled in London, which was over 20 times the 1690 figure and has been estimated to be the equivalent of 14 gallons for each adult male. The Gin Act, finally recognised as unenforceable, was repealed after only 6 years, in 1742.

Gin had been known as 'Mother's Milk' from the 1820s but later in the century it became known as 'Mother's Ruin', a description perhaps originating from the earlier 'Blue Ruin' of the prohibition era in the previous century.

By this time the battle for trade was hotting up between the beer shops and the gin shops. Following the 1820 'Beerhouse Act', beer was sold free of licensing control and 45,000 beer shops - aimed to be the cosy homes from home - had appeared by 1838. Spirit retailers still required licences and, to compete with the beer shops, they devised the 'gin palaces' which first appeared about 1830. These were designed to be an escape from home. As homes for the poor were often slums, the gin palace was large, and luxuriously furnished. By the 1850s there were about 5,000 such places in London and Charles Dickens describes them in the mid-1830s as "perfectly dazzling when contrasted with the darkness and dirt we have just left."

Raleigh bicycles

Most of us have ridden a bicycle at some time in our lives, even if only as a kid. It's quite possible one of your earliest was made by Raleigh. The company is based in Nottingham, and famous as the manufacturer of bicycles. It took its name from Raleigh Street in Nottingham, where the founder of the company, one Frank Bowden, discovered a small 3-man outfit building bicycles. He took it over, enlarged it, and the company prospered. However, it no longer manufactures in the UK, having exported its manufacturing side to the far east. In 1997 parts of the Raleigh site were sold to The University of Nottingham for use as the new Jubilee Campus and (as a tribute?) the university has put together a web site detailing the history of the company, with numerous images and press clippings. Visit www.iworkedatraleigh.com. The site also contains interviews with employees (although I have to say I found it difficult to get them to play). However, the University is to be congratulated on pulling together so much disparate material into a coherent website: I am sure other web site builders can learn from it.

Royal Albert Hall programme archive

The Royal Albert Hall opened in 1871, named after Prince Albert, whose interest in the area, sometimes called 'Albertopolis', after the Great Exhibition of 1851 stimulated much of the development. Albert did not live to see the hall completed, the design was put in the hands of Henry Cole (also associated with the V&A, just a short walk away), who apparently had the idea of a hall for some 30,000 people. This did not happen, the capacity was a mere 7000. After 140 years of events, the programme archive, if they have kept every one, must be truly enormous. A selection of images of flyers and programme covers from the hall has been put online at www.vads.ac.uk/collections/RAH. The archive includes mainly musical items, no boxing matches which have been quite a feature of the hall, and no images from any of the Proms seasons. One wonder of they have a programme from the opening event on 29 March 1871, when the hall was opened and named by Queen Victoria. For the hall's own archive, visit life.royalalberthall.com.

History of La Serenissima

Making old manuscripts available to researchers around the world is a big challenge. Swiss researchers are developing new tools to help scan and read the archives from Venice's history.

Because of the amount of material, finding a document in the State Archives of Venice can be like looking for the needle in a haystack. That is about to change thanks to a partnership between the University of Venice and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne, EPFL. The project is called Venice Time Machine.

First the EPFL researchers have to find a way to scan the fragile documents - and quickly. There are a billion

pages in total. Then words and sentences are isolated using a special algorithm. The hardest part is to get the computer to read handwritten words in languages that have changed over the centuries.

In the end, researchers and history fans will only have to click on a name or word inside a historic text to find other related documents. The goal is to have the Venice Time Machine up and running in ten years. Not long - when compared with the one thousand years of history contained in the Venice archives. Visit www.swissinfo.ch/eng/multimedia/digitising-venice-s-huge-archives/41119926

David Gentleman at Foyles bookshop

Foyles dates back a bit over a hundred years, to 1903 when two brothers, started selling books from their kitchen table: the following year they started a shop in Cecil Court, where some bookshops still exist. But this continued for only two years before they moved to Charing Cross Road, which has been the home of the shop, albeit at different buildings, ever since. In 1928 Christina, daughter of co-founder William Foyle joined the business, aged just 17, and was to remain in charge, and sole charge from 1950, until 1999, shortly before her death. William remained associated with the business until the 1960s, so the enterprise was looked after by a small number of long-serving members of the family. The business declined in the 1980s, gaining a reputation amongst some as being well-stocked but poorly-staffed. Last year (2014) Foyles moved a few yards south to 107 Charing Cross Road, the former site of Central St Martins arts college, which itself has moved to the Granary development of Kings Cross. As well as four floors of books, there is a café on level 5 and a meeting space right at the top.

At the last of these the editor attended a talk given by David Gentleman, <http://www.davidgentleman.com>. If you use the Northern Line and have travelled through Charing Cross, you have seen his work: he drew the designs that enliven the platforms. They depict the work of constructing the Eleanor Cross, erected in the 1290s, which stood in what is now Trafalgar Square. The original drawings were a lot smaller, and they have been magnified by a factor of 20 to make life size images. I was unaware of his authorship, but on looking closer found his signature can be seen discreetly at the bottom of some of the panels, which he drew in 1978. David spoke about his life: he is a Londoner, born in Ealing of artist parents, although he lived in Hertford and St Albans, attending the School of Art there, before a short spell in Clapham: it seems he did not much care for life south of the river. He settled in Camden Town over 50 years ago and has lived there ever since. One of his more recent books is *London You're Beautiful*, 2012, reflecting his life as a Londoner, but his books (and there are many illustrations on the web site, well worth a visit) include the cover illustration for Penguin's set of Shakespeare plays. The Wikipedia article about David Gentleman lists 15 books he has written, and over 30 by other authors for which he has done illustrations.

SEMINAR REPORTS

Maps – their untold stories

The September seminar was given by Andrew Janes and Rose Mitchell, who are both involved with maps at The National Archives. Last year Andrew hosted an AfL visit to the National Archives to view some of their maps.

The seminar coincided with the publication of a book, with the same title as the seminar, and written by the two presenters. The story, as told at the seminar, was that the authors were approached to write a book on the history of London maps, which of course would have been of great interest to the AfL membership, but, given the vast holdings at TNA, of much less interest as a general publication, so the book was broadened to cover all their holdings. They estimate that TNA's total holding of maps runs to some six million items. The earliest map dates from the fifteenth century, but the majority come from the last 250 years.

The book is produced in a rather usual square format and a requirement was that map should fit the pages: the meant the exclusion of anything that was the wrong shape, too long or too broad. And as the book was for commercial publication anything that would not reproduce well because it was faded or damaged was also excluded. Given the wealth of the collection this was hardly a serious limitation.

TNA does not have a specific map department: maps were very often drawn for specific purposes to illustrate some aspect of 'work' being done, and are held along with the other documents on the topic. Some maps were prepared for defensive or offensive purposes, and these will be found with the records of the conflict with which they are associated. Others may be drawn to show proposed developments, although maps and plans drawn to show the development of London are more likely to be held at LMA or at the local borough archives.

As well as maps of the United Kingdom, there are numerous maps from overseas: areas which were British colonies are of course much better represented than those which were not. As well as general maps and plans there are Hydrographic charts drawn for naval purposes and also the survey for the tithe apportionments, a popular source for nineteenth century studies, although copies for their localities exist in many local record offices. Also popular today are maps recording battles from the two world wars.

TNA does not hold copies of Ordnance Survey maps: these are subject to legal deposit and so are held at the BL, and other copyright libraries such as the university libraries of Oxford and Cambridge.

On the lighter side, Rose showed us that the book contains maps of Treasure Island, and also of Purgatory. I liked the map of Methwold (Norfolk) drawn in 1580 following a dispute over the warren, complete with rabbits. From an adjacent part of the world is Jonas Moore's map of the fens from 1658, just after the first attempts at draining the fens.

Previews of all these maps can be found on the web at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/maps/, although stamped with a watermark to inhibit copying.

Inside London's County Asylums, c. 1900

For the October seminar Louise Hide gave an account of her research into the history of the development of mental health institutions of London, using the records of the former LCC held at the LMA.

By the turn of the 20th century, general medical knowledge and methods had advanced significantly from previous centuries, but understanding of mental illness was still limited. However, this period did see a development in the way those diagnosed with mental health problems were treated in hospitals in London.

Between 1871 and 1921, the number of people diagnosed as 'pauper lunatics' grew substantially, especially in London. London's population grew from rural-urban migration and from overseas. London inhabitants had to deal with cramped living conditions, and the breakdown of family support, which could exacerbate mental illness. There was a consensus that the London poor were inherently prone to insanity.

In 1889 the London County Council (LCC) was formed, and took over the old system of dealing with pauper lunatics. It inherited four existing asylums, and began to build several new hospitals for the mentally ill, with state of the art facilities.

One of the largest of these asylums was Claybury, at Woodford Green. It was built on a site of 20 acres, and included wards for those with acute and chronic illnesses, and a separate ward for those with epilepsy. The hospital was segregated between men and women, and aimed to be self-sufficient, with a working farm, kitchen, laundry and workshops. It was the first asylum to be lit by electricity, and had a telephone system.

Admission of a patient into an asylum such as Claybury was done in several stages. Most patients came from workhouse infirmaries in debilitated conditions, and could be brought either in ambulance or by public transport. Once at the asylum, they would be assessed by the medical officer, who took case notes. They would have their clothes replaced with asylum clothes, representing a symbolic transition into the hospital; and finally have their photograph taken. At this period, mental illnesses were divided into four types: mania, melancholia, dementia, and idiocy.

The treatments that patients received were based around getting bed rest, exercise and a good diet, as well as 'moral treatments' where it was believed that patients would improve via physical work such as cleaning for the women and outdoor work for the men, and by being surrounded by stimulating decor. Photographs from the period show the wards being decorated with plants, ornaments and pictures, which were believed to help distract the patients from their inner thoughts. Drugs were minimal in this period, and could have dangerous side-effects, so were not used often. Hydrotherapy and electrotherapy were also used.

For more information about the history of asylums, interested readers should seek out Louise Hide's new book, *Gender and Class in English Asylums, 1890-1914*, out now in hard back and as an eBook

SEMINAR REPORTS

First World War Memorabilia on eBay

On 4 December 2014, Geraldine Charles, archivist at the National Maritime Museum, family historian and trustee of the Families in British India Society (FIBIS) gave a very interesting talk about her quest to buy up historically valuable items relating to the First World War from eBay, in order to preserve them and transfer them to appropriate repositories. Geraldine introduced herself as Anglo-Indian, and explained that her interest in the items available online primarily stemmed from her research into her heritage and that of other Anglo-Indians, especially that of her grandfather George Charles, who was a Gunner with the 7th Battery, Royal Field Artillery, during the First World War.

Geraldine started by discussing the resources she uses online, in addition to eBay. For digitised records, she uses Ancestry for Medal Cards, Award Rolls, Service records and parish records, and Find My Past for census records and the India Office records. Other websites include The National Archives, the Commonwealth War Graves website, the Imperial War Museum's WWI Centenary partnership website, and FIBIS.

There are a number of historic artefacts from the First World War and related to Indian people available to purchase online, ranging from 'Widow's Penny' medals to hand-engraved cigarette cases, which are now highly sought after by collectors as examples of 'trench art'. After buying up the items online, Geraldine often conducts research into their history, using the online resources mentioned above. For example, she discovered that one of her most-cherished pieces, a Princess Mary tin (an embossed brass box given to soldiers Christmas 1914), which had been hand-engraved by an Anglo-Indian soldier who identified himself as Isa Kemal, had once been displayed at Paul Raymond's 'Theatre of War' exhibition held at the Whitehall Theatre in the 1970s. She also found out that 'Isa Kemal' was a pseudonym, and though she has yet been able to find the true identity of the man who once owned the tin, she believes his real name was Isa Giray, a soldier of the 2nd Battalion, who survived Gallipoli.

Geraldine has also bought up a number of packets of correspondence, including 19 letters from Acting Sergeant Sydney C Barrett, of the Royal Army Ordnance Corps, which turned out to have connections to the other items in her collection, a series of postcards sent to from the UK to India to Gunner L Sensier of the Royal Field Artillery, India, Egypt and Mesopotamia, and a distant relative of the Barrett family.

Another coincidence of this kind revealed itself to be unexpectedly related to Geraldine and her own history. After being disappointed at having bought a copy of a document relating to a soldier called Douglas Cramb, that she thought had been the original, on researching his history she was excited to discover that he had gone to a school that Geraldine's own mum had taught at, several decades later. One of the wonders of archival research is that it can reveal connections you could not have previously imagined.

Virginia Woolf

The January seminar was given by Frances Spalding, Art Historian and biographer of Virginia who spoke about Woolf's life and times.

Frances started her talk with a charming tribute to those who run archives, saying how much support and assistance she had received from archivist and librarians, particularly at the British Library and at Kings College archives in Cambridge. In an amusing touch she compared them with Cerberus, the gatekeeper between the living and the dead. The librarian at Kings was A.N.L. Munby, also a writer himself, was reported as commenting "people like you working on my friends". Frances reported Roger Fry as referring to Virginia as "that old trout"!

The catalogue at Kings was an array of index cards, and finding what you wanted could present quite a challenge. However, she established a friendship with the librarian through common interests, and then found that she was being passed items with the remark "you might find something interesting in this".

Frances observed that archives enable you to move around in time and place, understanding how things were done in other times. History, she added, is not just about great men, but small details, networks and exchanges, these all add details to the chronology.

The background to the biography Frances has written is that Virginia's nephew Quentin Bell was seeking a biographer, and had invited some American academics who wished to undertake the task to submit a sample chapter. This was obviously some years ago as Frances described a frantic phone call from a public phone box with buttons 'A' and 'B' (older AfL members like your editor will remember those), and a pile of coins to feed the machine. It worked: not only was she invited to submit a chapter, she was the selected biographer. As well as the biography Frances has also published an edition of some of the letters, which no doubt helped with many details. The full set of letters run to six volumes.

The outline of Virginia's life is that she was born as Adeline Virginia Stephen in 1882, married Leonard Woolf in 1912, and died by drowning in the Sussex Ouse, probably suicide, in 1941.

She was a notable member of the Bloomsbury Group of intellectuals, a novelist whose works include *To the Lighthouse* and *Orlando*, The former work is the subject of a web site www.woolfonline.com which contains transcripts of some of Virginia's letters from 1926 when she was working on the book, also commenting on the general strike at the time. A good quote is that "she [Vanessa] is a democratic highbrow—interested in the best, but it should be available to all"

The Bloomsbury Group was a fascinating set of individuals active in the period during and after WW1. Many had links with Cambridge where they were educated. If you are interested to follow up Vanessa and the group, Wikipedia is a good place to start.



AfL Events: Seminars and visits

The following seminars are planned: please check your monthly email for last minute changes and for those marked 'To be advised'.

- 8 January Virginia Woolf: Art, Life and Vision *given by* Frances Spalding
- 5 February To be advised
- 5 March John Donne, *given by* Mark Oakley
- 2 April To be advised, possibly a talk on Sherlock Holmes
- 7 May Robert Hooke, *given by* Felicity Henderson
- 4 June HSBC 250th anniversary *given by* Claire Twinn

Visits

February Arcadian Archives: Richmond upon Thames Local Studies Collection

Visits co-ordinator Jane Insley writes of this visit:

As the only London Borough to span the Thames, it is appropriate that Richmond's archives are housed in the Old Town Hall overlooking the river. The same stretch of river along which Elizabeth I would have travelled between her local palaces at Hampton Court and Richmond, and which generations of market gardeners from Barnes, Mortlake, Twickenham, and Hampton used to transport their produce to London. The spectacular landscape formed by the river and many green open spaces inspired local residents including Alexander Pope and JMW Turner to christen the area, Arcadia, in reference to the ancient Greek idea of utopia.

The story of this unique locale is told in the archives at the Local Studies Collection, which include local authority records from 1596 to the present day, workhouse admissions, building plans, business records, and personal papers

Jane is wishing to step down from her role as visits co-ordinator: if any AfL member would care to take up this role, please contact Jane or any member of the board.

Snippets

The parish register for Dedham, on the Essex / Suffolk border (Constable country), has an entry from 30 May 1564 recording the death of Father Christmas, so if you didn't get what you asked for it may be because you were too late in getting your request to him. A [photo-graph](#) of the page can be found on the Daily Mail web site. (It is suggested that 'father' was away of showing respect to a man of greater years: *Christmas* was apparently a well-known Essex surname at the time.)

Secret Weapons

Found in one of the school logbooks the editor has been scanning (see newsletter 28). 'Soldiers came from the Ministry of Munitions to collect chestnuts collected by girls'. So that was how we won the war, firing chestnuts at them. I was puzzled by this, but Nicola Avery at LMA filled me in, saying it was an important job undertaken by children, especially in Dorset (where she grew up). There is something in horse chestnuts which can be made into cordite for use in ammunition.

The editor welcomes contributions to the Newsletter and letters for publication. Please send your contribution to: Peter Jackson, Archives for London, c/o London Metropolitan Archives, 40 Northampton Road, London EC1R 0HB.
Or preferably by email to: newsletter@archivesforlondon.org
If any material has been used inadvertently without acknowledging the author or copyright holder, please contact the editor (as above) who will include an acknowledgement in the next issue.

*The AfL Newsletter is published by Archives for London Ltd, a limited company registered in England and Wales
Company number: 5635424*

Registered offices: 40 Northampton Road, London EC1R 0HB.

Opinions expressed are those of contributors and are not necessarily endorsed by Archives for London or its officers. The original contents are copyright, January 2015.