



# Flintshire Record Office

## Annual Report

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2014/15



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*Front cover illustration: Accredited Archive Service Scheme logo*

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## Staff

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Principal Archivist:	Claire Harrington
Senior Archivist:	Steve Davies
Archivists:	Steph Hines Liz Newman
Archive Assistants:	Sue Copp Sue Millward Bridget Thomas James Wasiuk (to 17 October 2014)
Conservator:	Mark Allen
Admin Officer:	Helen Waite
Project Conservator:	Maggie Harris (23 June to 12 Sept. 2014)



*James Wasiuk*



*Maggie Harris*

# Introduction

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I am thrilled to be able to report that FRO has achieved Accredited status this year. Accreditation is a new scheme for the UK archive community and record offices all over the country are applying for the first time. Preparation was hard work for FRO staff as we examined our policies and procedures, updated and rewrote or created from scratch where necessary. An original plan to submit our application to the November panel was put off until March. The delay was worthwhile as by March we were well prepared and confident in our application.

We received valuable feedback from the panel, which was summarised thus:

*The Panel congratulated Flintshire Archives on their performance, which showed strong service delivery in all areas. The Panel specifically welcomed the service's commitment to achieving and retaining Accreditation in the long term. They highlighted particularly the well-planned and effective use of volunteers to feed into service development. The service's admirable record in conservation, supporting wider professional training and development and making possible regional improvements, was also singled out for praise.*

We are proud to be only the third archive repository in Wales, and the first in North Wales, to achieve this standard. We are grateful to Sarah Horton of CyMAL (the Welsh Government body for museums, archives and libraries) for her valuable advice and support.

Throughout the year we have continued to commemorate the centenary of the First World War. Amongst other things the card index of Flintshire soldiers, which has for many years been held at FRO, was photographed in its entirety by Vic and Jen Roberts and is now available to browse on our search-room computers.

We continue to be very fortunate in applications for grant funding for a variety of projects. Welsh Government funding, administered through the Archives & Records Council Wales, has supported our Little Time Travellers sessions (see p.5) and a new camera with associated equipment. It also enabled me to attend the Archives & Records Association annual conference in Newcastle upon Tyne.

A grant-providing partnership between CyMAL and the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust made possible a major conservation project - the Erddig family book (see p.6). This volume is a wonderful creation but due to its composition a conservation nightmare. Mark Allen took plenty of expert advice before putting together a conservation plan and was ably assisted in carrying it out by project conservator Maggie Harris.

Most importantly of all FRO continues, as it has done for over 60 years, to provide a home for unique archive material from the local area and to make it available to be viewed by anyone who wishes. We give a warm welcome to all visitors and do our best to provide a congenial place to work and study. As can be seen in Appendix B, those who use our service think we do it extremely well!

**Claire Harrington**

## User Statistics

Archive Service	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10
Searchroom visits	2,005	1,997	1,798	2,246	2,584	2,890
Postal enquiries	81	101	102	175	166	199
Telephone and fax enquiries	361	401	425	512	501	573
E-mail enquiries	608	626	649	873	695	641
Documents consulted	5,991	6,296	4,779	6,403	6,089	5,816
Photocopies sold	3,263	3,385	3,968	5,628	5,510	4,460
Photographs sold	371	225	379	448	370	536
Photo permits issued	188	139	114	144		
Research service orders	32	45	38	66		

Origin of searchers	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10
Flintshire	1,306	1,081	997	1,119	1,419	1,509
Rest of Wales	286	428	234	343	342	462
Rest of UK	358	433	543	625	767	843
Overseas	55	55	24	59	56	76

Classification of searchers	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
Education & publication	439	465	326	397	448	438
Genealogy	607	816	944	1,152	1,489	1,705
Local history	809	545	420	563	551	668
History of house	69	66	39	64	51	37
Official & legal	81	105	69	70	45	42



*Young researcher Aimee Copp with an archive volume*

## Outreach

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The centenary of the First World War has taken centre stage in our outreach this year. We have been very pleased to team up with Flintshire War Memorials to offer some training sessions for the researchers in sources they might use to trace the backgrounds of soldiers killed in the war (see photo p.8). We also hosted BBC Wales filming a report about the project, which has received Heritage Lottery funding and produced a very popular website. BBC Radio came to record a piece about the death and home-coming of Lt William Gladstone, killed by a sniper in 1915. We have worked with Ysgol Maes Garmon in Mold on a wonderful project resulting in a booklet, film and exhibition. We held an Open Day in August (when we presented to the Royal British Legion a cheque from the sales of our centenary calendar. See photo p.10) and another in November as near as possible to Armistice Day. Our World War I exhibition proved popular both in our own foyer and on tour – to Mold, Northop Hall and Ffynnongroyw.



*Little Time Travellers enjoying a Punch & Judy show*

The local re-enactment group Samhain took us back to an earlier period for a mediaeval day in August. The weather was kind enough for us to hold most of the activities outdoors and our visitors enjoyed a puppet show as well as having the opportunity to try archery and calligraphy.

Our Open Doors day has now become a regular event. This year we added to the “behind the scenes” tour an outdoor section on the lawn, from where it’s possible to see how this very complex building developed over the centuries.

We were very grateful to receive funding from the Flintshire Learning Festival Group for our Adult Learners’ Week activity – a taster session in bookbinding. Each participant made his/her own notebook using traditional bookbinding techniques. This was followed up by a more extensive course with Mark Allen guiding students through working on their own books which they brought in to repair themselves.

We have continued our work with Flintshire schools. As well as Ysgol Maes Garmon, we have hosted visits by schools in Brynford and Ffynnongroyw, both working on local heritage projects, Ven. Edward Morgan Catholic Primary School and Alun School Mold.

Our “Little Time Travellers” venture into sessions for pre-school-age children has begun, with a seaside themed event in the summer and Victorian Christmas in December.

The demand for speakers off-site continues steadily. Claire gave talks on the work of FRO to a Kindness in Mind group in Mold and to the Delyn Heritage Group; Liz and Sue Copp attended a “community archive” day at Connah’s Quay Library.

## Conservation

The conservation studio has, as always, been a busy place this year. Many maps and plans have been newly packaged to preserve and protect them both in storage and from possible damage caused by handling. Mark continues to respond to public demand by repairing documents which have been requested in the search-room but are too fragile to be handled.

Funding from CyMAL and the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust enabled us to employ a conservator for 12 weeks to work on a particularly interesting and important document. The

Erddig family book is a complex volume, comprising many individual documents pasted into a pre-bound book. As far as possible repair work was carried out in situ although some items had to be removed to be worked on. The whole book was then digitised to make all the constituent items readily accessible in the search-room whilst retaining the integrity of the book.

This year Mark has been teaching the bookbinding module on the ARA conservation course and has had three trainees from Gwent, Lancashire and Bedford Archives. He has also delivered training to a conservator from the National Museum of Wales.



*Annie Starkey  
from Lancashire  
applying gold  
lettering to the  
spine of a book*

Conservation work	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10
Exhibition items	0	68	20	37	66	40
Paper documents	948	165	844	1,229	1,024	68
Parchment documents	4	14	60	51	32	307
Maps & plans	68	46	31	55	109	58
Manilla & hard cover bindings	32	38	37	67	35	20
Folders, boxes & OS map guards	57	1003	351	239	205	53
Photographs	24	2	15	31	53	29

# ICT

## Visits to website

	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
April	3,978	448	529	288	360
May	5,036	462	491	369	421
June	4,478	426	506	376	460
July	3,912	471	538	293	571
August	5,242	611	468	511	644
September	4,387	514	446	530	520
October	5,169	5,057	490	553	414
November	6,265	6,717	476	514	477
December	4,224	4,894	317	425	274
January	6,194	6,478	508	706	461
February	5,581	4,965	534	581	562
March	5,695	4,402	453	496	511
<b>Total for year</b>	<b>60,161</b>	<b>35,448</b>	<b>5,756</b>	<b>5,642</b>	<b>5,675</b>

As from the end of September 2013, when a new website was introduced, the old system of receiving statistics became obsolete. Unfortunately the new statistics provided do not include the equivalent of the “site visits” we had been using until then. From October 2013 onwards the figure is “page views”.

## Flickr usage

We created for ourselves a Flickr presence in July 2012. Monthly stats only became available in February 2013.

	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13
April	544	494	
May	661	521	
June	453	242	
July	531	413	From 6/7/2012 to 6/11/2012
August	590	347	
September	396	363	
October	572	433	488
November	709	398	From 6/11/2012 to 31/1/2013
December	940	408	
January	546	441	1,717
February	527	470	746
March	700	489	553
<b>Total for year</b>	<b>7,169</b>	<b>5,019</b>	<b>3,504</b>

## Facebook Usage

We created a Facebook page on 4 March 2014. It's a great way of advertising events and other news. Usage fluctuates a lot depending on what we post on it.

	2014/15	2013/14
April	902	
May	2,849	
June	1,509	
July	2,397	
August	1,822	
September	1,504	
October	2,050	
November	4,511	
December	10,143	
January	6,053	
February	7,095	
March	7,921	1,064
<b>Total for year</b>	<b>48,756</b>	<b>1,064</b>

## Other online usage

In March 2012 Flintshire's parish registers went online on the Find My Past website as part of a Wales-wide project. Unfortunately FMP is unable to provide usage figures for us.

In July 2014 our online catalogue, CALMView, went live. As yet, we have not been able to extract usage figures for this.



## Activities Behind the Scenes

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Stocktaking week at FRO is an annual event, generally taking place during the last full week before Christmas. That week is chosen because public demand at this time of year is relatively low so minimum inconvenience will be caused by closure of the search-room. It is an opportunity for staff to catch up with back-room tasks for which there is insufficient time whilst the search-room is open. The checking of our “stock” (the archive collections) is an important part but not the only activity to take place during this week.

Box-checking is the literal “stock-taking” part of the week – checking collections box by box to identify items incorrectly stored and where items are missing. Collections worked on this year included: CC/TC – Theatr Clwyd records; D/BV – Bevan Evans mss.; D/E – Erddig collection; D/IP – Iscoyd Park collection. A number of mis-located items were rediscovered and returned to their proper place.

FRO holds a lot of material containing personal and sensitive information and it is not found always where one might expect, so careful searching is required to identify items which need access restriction. All staff are constantly alert to identify such material when requested for use in the search-room but stocktaking week is an opportunity to check in a more systematic way. This year parish and community council records up to PC/31 (Argoed to Hope) and about half of FCC minutes post 1995 were checked.

As reported last year, FRO has started to use commercial storage for material where copies are available for search-room use. This year parish registers were top priority to be transferred as they are available both on-line (on the Find My Past website) and in microform in the search-room. During stocktaking week these were repackaged in preparation for the move.

We were very pleased to receive an invitation from Louise Martin, the archivist at the Grosvenor Estate, for all the FRO team to visit the archives at Eaton Hall. Records of Grosvenor property in Flintshire have been held at FRO since the closure of the Halkyn estate office so it was very interesting to see how the records held at Eaton relate to what is held at FRO. We are grateful to Louise and her colleagues for their hospitality.



*A training session for the Flintshire War Memorials researchers*

# Staff

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## Changes

This year we were very sad to say goodbye to James Wasiuk, who left us for a job with Wrexham County Borough Council. James has been a valued member of FRO staff for 6 years. His talents were diverse: as our only fluent Welsh speaker he was much loved by our Welsh-speaking, regular users; his facility with IT came in very handy when computers were recalcitrant; he was a competent first-aider and his level-headed common sense was invaluable in all situations. He is much missed but we wish him the very best in his new career.

A welcome short-term addition to the team was Maggie Harris, who joined us for three months to work on the conservation of the Erddig family book (see p.6).

## Training

Record Office staff have attended a number of training events run in-house by Flintshire County Council. Steve Davies, Claire Harrington, Steph Hines and Bridget Thomas have all updated their first-aid skills; Claire and Steph attended training on Understanding Change; all the archivists were trained in dealing with requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act.

Having achieved her Masters degree, Steph Hines is now working towards registered status in the Archives & Records Association. To that end she attended a workshop on the registration process and is compiling her portfolio.

Claire Harrington completed her ILM (Institute of Leadership & Management) Level 5 course at Coleg Cambria, begun last year, and Liz Newman started and completed ILM Level 2.

CyMAL (the Welsh Government body for museums, archives and libraries) and the Archives & Records Association (ARA) have both been very active in providing training and FRO endeavours to take full advantage. Staff have attended training sessions in digitisation, archivists and records managers working together, disaster preparedness and digital preservation.



*Children from Ven. Edward Morgan  
Catholic Primary School reading letters  
from the Front*

## Voluntary Work

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We continue to be strongly supported by our band of volunteers who help us in a variety of ways. The data-entry volunteers are coming to the end of the enormous task of typing from paper catalogues for entry onto the CALM computer system. Whether here in the Record Office or at home, we are very grateful to them for all their hard work.

Further details of all the volunteers' activities can be found in the Spring 2015 edition of our newsletter, The Hourglass.

The accreditation panellists were especially impressed with the relationships we have built with our volunteers (see Introduction p.3).

*FCC Leader, Cllr Aaron Shotton, presenting a cheque to Mrs Joan Aird, Secretary of the Hawarden, Ewloe & Mancot Branch of the Royal British Legion*



## External Links

Staff continue to be involved in professional issues at local and national levels. Steve Davies serves on the Archives & Records Association (ARA)'s Legislation & Standards Working Group and represents FRO on the Digital Preservation Group of the Archives & Records Council Wales (ARCW); Liz Newman, having acted for some time as mentor to candidates on ARA's registration scheme, has become a scheme assessor; Steph Hines represents FRO on CyMAL's Archives Marketing Steering Group whilst Mark Allen serves on ARA's Conference and Preservation & Conservation Group committees.

Claire Harrington, as Principal Archivist, attends meetings of ARCW, Friends of the Clwyd Archives and Flintshire Historical Society. She is currently Vice-Chairman of ARCW and in that role represents it on a number of Welsh and UK national bodies.

We continue to have a warm relationship with the Friends of the Clwyd Archives. At the beginning of the year they bought us a set of stacking chairs which we have put to very good use throughout the year at events and training sessions.

## Flintshire/Clwyd County Council

- 4833 Annual reports of Medical Officer of Health, School Health Service &c., 1908-1965
- 4845 Performance programmes from Theatr Clwyd, 1980s – 2000s
- 4872 Flintshire CC grazing agreements, 1954-1973
- 4880 Flintshire/Clwyd CC list of contracts, 1894-1994
- 4884 Flintshire/Clwyd CC register of properties, 19thC – 1980s
- 4885 Clwyd CC Clerk's Dept files re fatal accidents, 1974-1990
- 4886 Order of service, Holocaust Memorial Day service at County Hall, 2015
- 4890 Census small area statistics, 1971-1991
- 4897 Register of electors, 2014

## Other Local Authorities

- 4871 Hawarden RDC plan re sewerage, 20thC.
- 4873 Hawarden RDC abstracts of accounts, 1952-1973
- 4876 Dee & Clwyd River Authority records, 1959-1974
- 4896 Welsh Water/Dŵr Cymru records, 1902-1988

## Schools

- 4836 Buckley CP/West Lea Infants' School log book, 1925-1997
- 4842 Hawarden Grammar School - school photographs and cap, 1949-1963
- 4850 Records of Shotton Infants' School, 1945-2013
- 4892 Ysgol Uwchradd Glan Clwyd, school magazines and text book, 1940s - 1968

## Central Government

- 4834 Lists of Flintshire war graves, 2013

## Businesses

- 4859 Shareholder's papers of Talacre & District Mining & Drainage Co., 1896, 1897
- 4865 Records of Elfed Bartley Road Haulage, 1920s-2010
- 4881 Hawarden Estate records, c.1808-1970s

## Appendix A (cont'd)

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### Property Records

- 4830 Lease re Strand Cottage, Holywell, 1866
- 4832 Deeds and other papers re Knolton Hall, Overton, 1853-1920
- 4841 Copies of details re properties in Flint, 2014

### Church in Wales

- 4835 Microfilm copies of various Flintshire church registers, 2014
- 4843 Mold parish church accounts and annual reports, 1990-2013
- 4853 Hope marriage register, 2009-2014
- 4857 Sealand marriage register, 1991-2001
- 4866 Bettisfield parish records, 1878-2011

### Nonconformist and Other Churches

- 4889 Records of Bryn Mair Convent, Pantasaph, 1860s – 1990s
- 4895 Baptism register, Victoria Rd Congregational Chapel, Prestatyn, 1950-1970

### Clubs/Societies

- 4839 Hawarden Action Traffic Group, minutes of public local inquiry into Chester by-pass, 1972
- 4848 Scrapbooks re Glan Alun Choir, 1982-2009
- 4849, 4851 Records of various local chess clubs, 1976-2014
- 4858 Records of Hawarden Lodge Freemasons, 1945-2006
- 4862 Records of Hawarden Park Cricket Club, 1993-2014
- 4883 Records of Hawarden Women's Institute, 2010-2013

### Personal Papers

- 4837 Papers re Barnett family of Leeswood, 20th C.
- 4838 Groom's notebook of remedies for horses and dogs, 1890
- 4844 Framed memorial card of William Hughes, son of Samuel & Catherine, died aged 15 months, 1859
- 4852 Typescript history of Samuel & Jonathan Bennett of Queensferry, 2014
- 4855 Records of Reg Rowlands of Buckley, c.1938-1996
- 4864 Account of Charles Gladstone's service in World War I, 2014
- 4869 Records of John Frederick Carr, World War I soldier, c.1916
- 4882 Records of Tom Bailey of Hawarden, 1857-1921
- 4900 Local history notes by late Ken Lloyd Gruffydd, 1990s

## Appendix A (cont'd)

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### Printed Items

- 4846 Official programme of football match, Buckley Wanderers v. Oakenholt St David's, 1949
- 4863 OS map showing Holywell Branch Railway, 1870
- 4868 Printed items re National Eisteddfod, 2006, 2007
- 4870 MA dissertation, "Property, Crime & the Magistrates in Flintshire", 2014
- 4875 Degree dissertation, "The Industrial Development of the Greenfield Valley", c.1980
- 4877 Menevia Diocesan Newsletter, 1954, re opening of Blessed Richard Gwyn Secondary School, Flint
- 4879 OS maps showing 1974 local authority boundaries, 1970s
- 4887 Vols of maps and topographical prints, 1616-1914
- 4893 Journal of the Gallipoli Association, 1988, cont. article re Lt Col. Basil Philips
- 4895 Booklet, The Lordship of Mold, Mines & Minerals, 1943
- 4898 Three Parishes Monthly News, c.1974-2014
- 4899 History of Shotton Steelworks 1896-2014, 2015

### Electronic Media

- 4847 Photographs of St Asaph, 1840-2014
- 4856 Electronic copies of records of Signal Sgt Charles Kneale, 1910s
- 4860 Electronic copies of records of John Jones of Gwespyr, 1916-1921
- 4861 BBC Wales Today programme featuring flintshirewarmemorials.com, 2014
- 4878 Photographs of Jones Mortimer family of Hartsheath, c.1910-1920

### Miscellaneous

- 4829 Photographs, publications &c. re Maelor area, c.1900-1988
- 4831 Copies of indexes to tenants, Flint, 1990s
- 4874 Misc items re Rhyl, 1894-1956
- 4891 Misc items of Flintshire interest, 1885-2014
- 4894 Misc items of Flintshire interest, 1820s-2001

*Group photograph including Sgt Kneale, from AN4856*



## Appendix B

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### PSQG Visitor Survey 2014

This national survey of visitors to record offices took place over four weeks from 9 June to 4 July 2014. During this period all visitors to the search-room were invited to take part in the survey. It was organised and run by the Public Services Quality Group (PSQG) of the Archives & Records Association (ARA) which has for some years run such surveys regularly.

Altogether, 72 questionnaires were issued and 69 returned completed. Of these, one was in Welsh.

The survey provides a profile of our visitors as well as feedback on what they think of the service they receive. We usually have a fairly even balance between men and women but this time 60% of respondents were men and 40% women. Our youngest was 23 and oldest 84, although many respondents preferred not to tell us how old they were. Of those who did, more than half were over 60. Our visitors came from as far away as the USA and Australia, although most were local. Within the UK, roughly half came from Flintshire, one sixth from elsewhere in Wales and one third from England.

Of our respondents, 41% were studying their family history, 38% local history, 20% were conducting academic research and 14% came in connection with their work. 13% were studying military history – a figure probably boosted by the centenary of the First World War. All felt they'd improved their knowledge through the visit and 98% also enjoyed themselves.

As always, we were shown to be an asset to the local economy. Whilst half our visitors came specifically to the Record Office, 12% stayed locally over-night, 18% ate out and 15% visited other places of interest in the area.

Nearly half looked at our website for information prior to their visit for guidance on such things as location and opening hours. Our website is not universally popular but only 3% had difficulty finding us so presumably the directions page is effective.

Our staff, as always, receive high scores for their attitude and the quality of their advice (9.9 out of 10 for both) and 97% were satisfied with the welcome they received – the other 3% were indifferent rather than dissatisfied.

11% of respondents were not satisfied with our opening hours. Our building is almost unanimously liked, with a very small percentage indifferent. The facilities on offer inside it, however, are not so well thought of, with 8% dissatisfied with the reception area and 13% dissatisfied with the speed of our computers. 14% did not like our on-line catalogue, which is a little worrying but it hasn't been available for very long so I hope some of our regular users will like it more when they're used to it.

## Appendix B (cont'd)

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As always, respondents were invited to comment and 16 took advantage of this. Most comments were highly complimentary, here are just a few examples:

*The staff were friendly, courteous, helpful and knowledgeable. One could not ask for more;  
I have always found the staff extremely helpful and the range of archive material staggering;  
The archive is a very helpful asset for local historians. It must be protected – cuts!;  
Lovely building in lovely surroundings.*

Some had suggestions for improvements. A Welsh speaker thought it would be useful for Welsh-speaking staff to wear badges. Unfortunately, since the survey took place we have lost our only fluent Welsh speaker (see p.9). One dissatisfied customer thought the toilets were disgusting, the car park in a dangerous condition and the microfilm readers hard to use. However, the conclusion was:

*Being here is a pleasant and worthwhile experience. The staff deserve support to be able to meet the points contained in the survey.*

Overall we were given a rating of 9.5 out of 10. I don't think we can be displeased with that!

*Visitors to our Open Doors event viewing the exhibition on the history of Hawarden's Old Rectory, home to Flintshire Record Office*

