



Norfolk Records Committee

Annual Report 2002-2003

Overview

After a year of intensive construction work on the Martineau Lane site, The Archive Centre building is close to completion. The task of converting the NRO's older paper catalogues to fully searchable electronic versions has also seen substantial progress during the year and, through the partnership with Access to Archives, many of the lists are already accessible to the public on the Internet. Planning has begun to ensure that the embryonic Norfolk Sound Archive begins life on a professional footing.

The Archive Centre

The foundation stone of The Archive Centre was laid on 6 June 2002 by the Lord Lieutenant and *Custos Rotulorum*, Sir Timothy Colman. Construction work was substantially completed during 2002 and work in the early months of 2003 concentrated on fitting out and decorating the interior.



Accessions

312 deposits, gifts or purchases of documents were made during the year, compared with 357 the previous year.

Architectural plans and related records came from both Norfolk County Council and Norwich City. Additional County Architect's plans relate to police stations and houses, court buildings, former poor law institutions and other Council-owned buildings from the 1870s to the 1940s. Plans of the Theatre Royal, 1934, Pearcefield Hostel for Adolescents, 1966, St Michael Coslany church, 1981-1982, and Whitlingham Conservatory, 1988, are among the Norwich City Architect's Department records, 1920s-1990s, relating mainly to housing schemes and other significant projects.

Plans, correspondence and other records of the architectural practice of Henry Robert Rix at Great Ellingham, 1948-2000, comprise several thousand files. Other business archives received include shoe designs produced by Christopher Arnall between the 1920s and the 1950s, and records of Anglia Lead Ltd of Barker Street,

Norwich, 1960s-1999, including minutes, scrapbooks and photographs of the firm's work in Norfolk and further afield, on churches, stately homes and other buildings.

A substantial additional deposit of Hastings of Melton Constable estate records from the 1820s to the 1930s consists mainly of accounts. Ledgers kept by Harry Lawrence Bradfer-Lawrence, land agent at King's Lynn, 1925-1941, were among additional records of Anthony Avis of Gaywood, 1610-2000. These also included proceedings of commissioners of drainage for fenland in Northwold and adjoining parishes, 1771-1814, and court books or minutes for seven manors in west and south-west Norfolk, 17th-19th centuries

A map relating to the manor of Eccles, 1742, was received among additional records from Breckland District Council. A large, highly coloured map of East and West Runton, 1840, of unknown provenance, appears to be based on the contemporary tithe map. Three small estate maps of the early 19th century are among a group of deeds and papers relating to estates acquired by the Springfield family in Alburgh and Wortwell, 1542-1953.

The literary, personal and family papers, 1805-1977, of and relating to the Norfolk writer Mary E. Mann (1848-1929) are a significant addition to the Record Office's holdings of literary manuscripts. The archive includes manuscripts of novels, stories and plays, both published and unpublished, diaries, correspondence (including seven letters from Alfred Munnings and one from Arthur Rackham) and family photographs, many taken at the family home in Shropham.

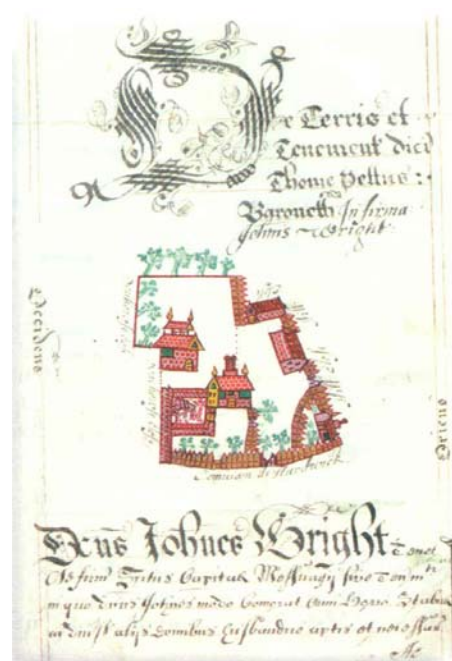
Among societies and voluntary organisations represented are Norfolk Protestant Dissenters' Benevolent Society from the 1820s to 1952, Norfolk Beekeepers' Association, 1923-1969, Norfolk and Suffolk Nomads Cricket Club, 1946-1983, Norfolk Young Naturalists Society, 1966-1990, and Norfolk and Norwich Novi Sad Association, 1984-1995.

Substantial accessions of health authority records, 1913-2002, document the work of the NHS in Norfolk and its

immediate predecessors for the first time in any depth. They include minutes of the management committees of several hospitals, 1948-1974.

Series of records relating to management of county schools in west and north-west Norfolk from 1887 to the mid 1980s came from an Education Department office in King's Lynn.

Additions to the series of shipping registers for Norfolk ports were registers of fishing boats at King's Lynn, 1942-1988, and at Great Yarmouth, c.1950-1988.



Above Hardwick Farm house near King's Lynn, from an estate survey of 1648.
MC 308/1, 700X1

Cataloguing and stocktaking

Backlog cataloguing completed included papers of the Ames Family of Lakenham, 18th century-20th century, correspondence and other papers of Peter Henry Emerson, the East Anglian photographer, 1886-1920, business records of Wallace King Ltd of Norwich, 1889-1992, records of the Grade 'A' Dairy Farm at Heacham, 1945-1973, and records of more than thirty county schools.

Further advances have been made in the conversion of the Record Office's paper catalogues into electronic formats. Much of this work is being carried out as part of national, regional and NRO Access to

Archives (A2A) projects, which means that the lists are also mounted on the A2A website (<http://www.a2a.pro.gov.uk>). The site so far gives access to 1,943 Norfolk Record Office catalogues, including those describing records of parish and nonconformist churches, the County Council, some Diocesan series, the City of Norwich post 1835, the boroughs of King's Lynn and Great Yarmouth, pre 1974 district councils, and a range of non official records, among them some business records and estate and family archives. Many of these have already been re-edited into the NRO's own electronic CALM catalogue. Overall, the NRO CALM catalogue now encompasses over 3,000 *fonds*, or archival collections.

Work over the last three years by the Norfolk Record Office and the Historical Manuscripts Commission (HMC) on the Norfolk section of the HMC's Manorial Documents Register (MDR) database came to fruition in December 2002, when the newly computerised Norfolk MDR was launched at the Record Office and on the HMC's web site (<http://www.hmc.gov.uk/mdr>), giving online access to more than 14,000 index entries describing Norfolk manorial documents from the 13th to the 20th centuries.

Over 800 linear metres of records have been boxed or had boxes replaced or relabelled as part of the ongoing strongroom programme of storage improvements. Series covered included Norwich Guardians of the Poor, City Engineer's, Town Clerk's, and Health Department records, Great Yarmouth Petty Sessions records and architects' drawings in the Boardman collection.

Public Services

This was the first full year of operation of the Norfolk Heritage Centre, which offers duplicates of the most heavily used Norfolk Record Office sources on microfilm and fiche together with local studies collections in the Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library. This had its effect on the numbers of people visiting the Record Office searchroom at Gildengate House, where

9,264 visits were made in the year, compared with 12,246 in 2001-2002. 26,165 original documents were produced, compared with 32,679 in 2001-2002. The proportion of visitors to the Record Office using manuscripts rose steadily during the year from just under 40% to over 50% and the last two months of the year saw a marked increase in demand. 12,389 postal, telephone and e-mail enquiries were answered, compared with 10,068 in 2001-2002.

Use of NRO sources at the Norfolk Heritage Centre is not recorded separately, but anecdotal evidence indicates that the most popular NRO films and fiches available there are parish registers, tithe maps and electoral registers. A duplication programme for the Norfolk Heritage Centre resumed, in order to update the NRO stock which it holds and in preparation for the temporary closure of the Record Office.



Above The swan as a royal bird, 1693, from a register kept by the deputy swan master of the Rivers Yare and Wensum. *Accn Han 13/07/1972*

Conservation

Documents treated by the Record Office conservation section included a volume of letters from Viscount Yarmouth and family, 1661-1676, which had been damaged by water following the fire at Norwich Central Library in 1994, as was an Archdeaconry of Norwich will register, 1584-1597. A 16th-century Marham terrier from the King's Lynn Borough Archives had been rendered unfit for handling partly as a result of flooding at King's Lynn in 1978.

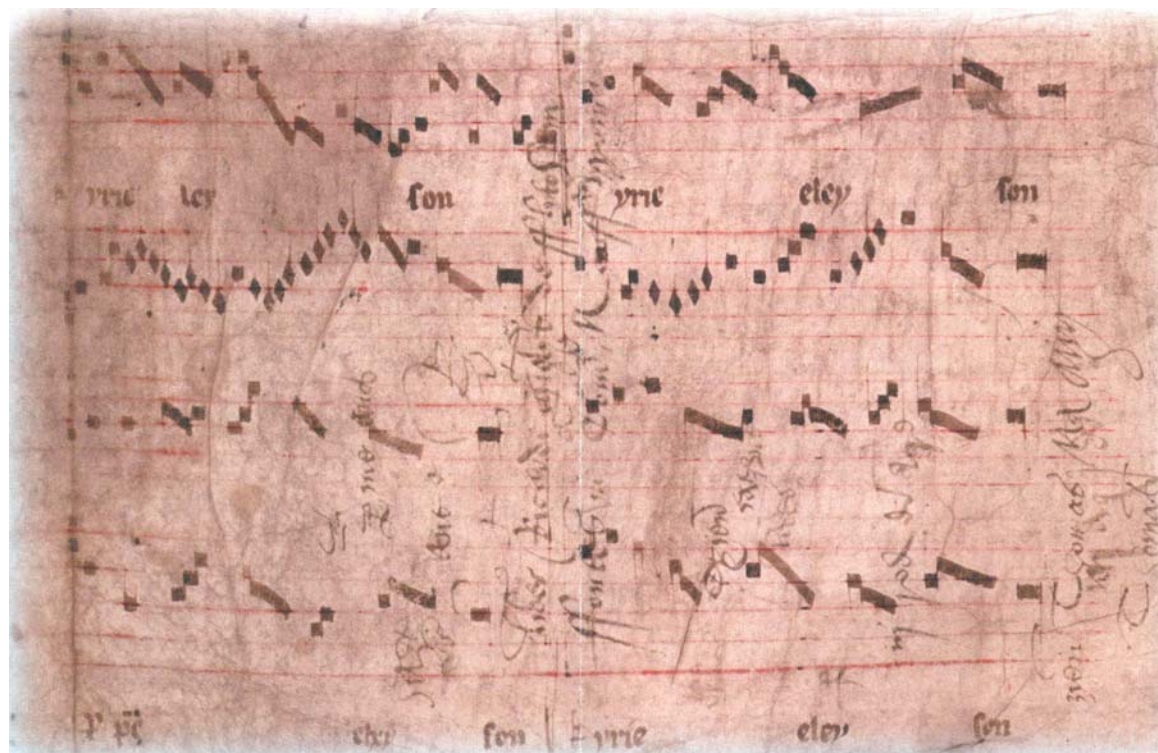
A file of 249 original Consistory Court wills, 1660, which required paper conservation had previously been inaccessible because of their poor state. Parchment documents treated included two fragile mid 12th-century charters of William de Warenne from the Hare of Stow Bardolph estate archive and five tithe maps.

Volumes treated by contractors to Record Office as part of the post-fire conservation programme included over 60 from the records of St Andrew's Hospital and others from the Bradfer-Lawrence and Neville collections. Almost 60% of the documents which were damaged by water after the fire at Norwich Central Library in 1994 have now been treated either in-house or by outside contractors to Record Office specifications

Education and Outreach

Since April 2002, the county's primary and secondary schools have requested more than 230 NRO resource packs, including 25 of a new pack on *The Tudors*. Demand for individual local history packs continued to be high: these include complementary sources from Norfolk Heritage Centre, and are

Music for the Masses



Above Part of a 14th-century setting of the Mass for three voice parts, which survived as the cover for a Flicham field book dated 1512-1513. *Flicham 299*

On a Swan Roll



Above The 'Haveringland' swan roll for the Broadland area, c. 1650. NRS 27123, 361X1

produced in collaboration with the NRO Archive Specialists there. At the Royal Norfolk Show in June, the NRO's Education and Outreach service was featured in a display aimed at schools and teachers. It was also mounted, by invitation, at the Annual Headteachers' Conference at the University of East Anglia in September.

Groups visiting Gildengate House, 20 in all, ranged from members of a Young Archaeologists' Club, who joined in a papermaking session, to postgraduate students following MA courses at the University of East Anglia. At King's Lynn, a small group of College of West Anglia BA students visited the Borough Archives for an introduction to the use of original sources. The County Archivist and other staff have also given 11 talks off-site at locations within the county and beyond.

Norfolk Heritage Centre in the Millennium Library also attracts visiting groups. Here, the NRO Archive Specialists work alongside library staff to welcome these groups and to give information about resources held at the Centre.

Publications and exhibitions

The bimonthly NRO *Newsletter*, quarterly *The Archive Centre Project News* and termly newsletter for schools, *It's about Time* have continued to appear regularly.

Additions to the NRO website include a new page about the retro-conversion programme for archive catalogues, with a link to the Access to Archives site and a guide to the Norwich City records, principally of records before 1835.

An exhibition on the Anglican Church held at the Vatican in June 2002 included one original document – the grant of the deanery to Dean Pellew – and a number of facsimiles from Norwich Cathedral archives. A version without original manuscripts was subsequently shown at Norwich Cathedral as the first stage in a tour of Anglican Cathedrals, including Canterbury and York.

Exhibitions in the Record Office reception and entrance areas at Gildengate House have featured records relating to strangers, the centenary of Norwich City Football Club, and, using images from the ongoing photographic record, the construction of The Archive Centre.



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