

West Yorkshire Archive Service

Issue 2 7th July 2011



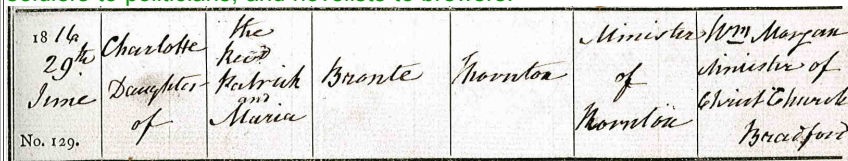
West Yorkshire
Archive
Service

West Yorkshire Joint Services

Welcome to the newsletter from WYAS keeping you updated about what we are up to across the service. June saw the launch of West Yorkshire Archive Service parish registers on Ancestry, an exciting and busy time for the service. We have also redesigned our website and updated content. See below for more details of both activities.

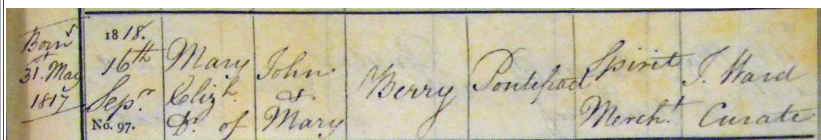
WYAS joins Ancestry.co.uk!

June saw the launch of the new Yorkshire parish collections at Ancestry.co.uk. You can now browse and search the parish registers for most West Yorkshire Church of England parishes on Ancestry. This provides access to over 500 years of history consisting of 8m records of baptism, marriage and burial. They not only provide information about your ancestors but also contain a wealth of information about the people of West Yorkshire from artists to engineers, soldiers to politicians, and novelists to brewers!



For example you can find records relating to Percy Shaw, the creator of the cat's eye; Barbara Hepworth whose work is on display in Wakefield's new art gallery; Sir Thomas Fairfax, a native of Otley and Civil War General; Charlotte Bronte and her siblings; and Joseph Hobson Jagger better known as the 'Man who broke the bank at Monte Carlo'!

These records not only help to fill the gaps in your family tree but also give details of the society they were living in. You can find records referring to the English Civil War, outbreaks of plague and cholera, civil unrest and uprising – including the Luddite rebellion, and work-related death and disaster such as the Thornhill pit disaster which saw 110 men buried at Thornhill church in 1893.



Free access is available from each of our offices and from many local libraries or follow the link above to log on from home! Any questions please [contact us](#).

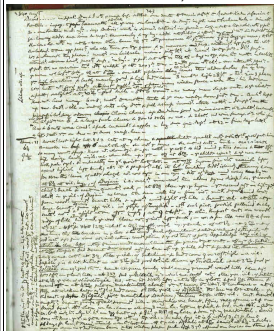
Prestigious UNESCO Award for

West Yorkshire Archive Service

We are excited to announce that the diaries of Anne Lister held by West Yorkshire Archive Service have received a prestigious award from UNESCO.

The award for 'Best of UK Heritage' recognises the outstanding but lesser-known heritage of the UK.

This unique set of diaries (1806-1840) which run to four million words were written by Anne Lister of Shibden Hall, Halifax, West Yorkshire (1791-1840) a remarkable landowner, business woman, intrepid traveller, mountaineer and lesbian.



In comparison, Samuel Pepys' diaries comprise just 1.25 million words. The diaries, whose survival has been a miracle, intrigue and inspire people all over the world, primarily in the field of United Kingdom Gender Studies and Women's History.

Despite needing to keep her orientation secret from society at large, Anne defied the conventions of her times by living with and marrying her female lover. She kept a fascinating and painfully honest account of her life and loves, a 1/6th of the diaries written in a code of her own devising which she felt confident would never be broken! Sarah Waters, the award-winning author comments, "Engaging, revealing, at times simply astonishing... Anne Lister's diaries are an indispensable read for anyone



What's on

Kirkstall Festival

9th July
Kirkstall Abbey

Come along and see what we are up to.

Exhibition: Agricultural & Horticultural Shows

All WYAS Offices
On throughout July

Exhibition: Recipes from Across the Years

All WYAS Offices
On throughout August

Exhibiting Community Heritage Training

2nd August
Wakefield

Advance booking only - to book a place email rtapp@wyjs.org.uk

Network Group

17th August
Bradford

12th October
Wakefield

To find out more see below or email rtapp@wyjs.org.uk

Accreditation Scheme Workshop & Legislation Training

7th September
Wakefield

Advance booking only - to find out more email rtapp@wyjs.org.uk

Oral History Training

2nd November
Bradford

Advance booking only - to find out more email rtapp@wyjs.org.uk

Accreditation Scheme Workshop

30th November
Wakefield

Advance booking only - to find out more email rtapp@wyjs.org.uk

Quick Update

Calderdale Gold Open Weekend

The West Yorkshire Our Stories project will be hosting a stall on the Saturday of this event as part of the Sporting Heroes project. July 2011 marks the one year countdown to London 2012 and Calderdale Gold are hosting a events during the Open Weekend on 22nd - 24th

interested in the history of gender, sexuality, and the intimate lives of women".

Maxine Peake who starred in the 2010 BBC drama based on the diaries commented, "You look at how abundant the diaries were, and when you think of all the dramas we have and the fact everyone's fascinated with Jane Austen, you wonder why these diaries are not more heard of. Aside from her sexuality, they are absolutely such detailed documents of that period of time".

These are the second inscriptions to the UNESCO UK Memory of the World Register, an online catalogue created to help promote the UK's documentary heritage across the UK and the world. The register is part of a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) programme to support and raise awareness of archives. The Anne Lister Diaries are one of 20 collections to have received the award this year from across the whole of the UK.

The UK Register is available at www.unesco.org.uk/ukregister

PSQG Update Visitor Survey

In February we took part in the National Survey of Visitors to UK Archives. The full results will be published later in the year but we are taking this opportunity to provide some feedback on the comments noted on the survey forms:

Several visitors commented on the poor quality and location of our offices in Leeds and Wakefield:

- "How would disabled people visit?"
- Leeds - "The building is marooned and surrounded by roads."
- Wakefield - "It is clear that a brand new building is desperately needed."

We do recognise the inadequacy of these buildings and the need to replace them. Senior staff in the service are currently working with officers from Leeds and Wakefield Councils to make progress towards replacing these buildings. We hope to have some news soon re future developments.

Visitors asked us to improve the information on our collections available on-line and requested access to family history web sites in our searchrooms:

- "It would be useful to get more details of archives online and searchable."
- "Put search facilities and indexing online so we can go direct to fiche when visiting."
- "Access to Ancestry.co.uk"
- "The online catalogue could be deeper with more information at item level."

We are pleased to say that in June we launched our new archive service web site at www.archives.wyjs.org.uk. Due to partnership with Ancestry.co.uk to digitise, index and make available on their website copies of the Church of England and non-conformist records in our care we launched browsable images of all the registers included in this project along with a number of indexes to the registers. We are giving free access to Ancestry.co.uk in our searchrooms.

Regarding the on-line catalogue; we are continually adding to the item level descriptions, converting the existing paper catalogues and planning further enhancements. As many of our collections are unlisted if you can not find what you are searching for please contact one of our offices or email archives@wyjs.org.uk

Several visitors asked us if the opening hours of our searchrooms could be improved:

Calderdale - It would be good to see the archive open at times when people at work can more easily get to it. Bradford – hours are extremely limited.

We do continually review our office opening hours, to match them with patterns of use and to make the most efficient and effective use of our resources. Currently there appears to be a particular demand for Saturday opening. Our Wakefield and Kirklees offices are currently open one Saturday per month and we will be reviewing opening hours at other offices.

July 2011. Visit www.thepecehall.co.uk for more details.

New website for WYAS

We have recently revamped and updated our website. The new site makes it simpler to find out about our services, what we are up to and has lots of new and updated information. Why not visit and find out more.

Visit www.archives.wyjs.org.uk

Collections Care Training

Conservation have extended their collection care training to the Bradford Bulls Foundation for their HLF funded Past Times project to three new volunteers. Laura, Daniel and Annette are all graduates who are new recruits to the project for which they will be researching, cataloguing and preserving the collection of memorabilia relating to historic Osdal Stadium at Bradford.

The team are spending a total of 7 days in WYAS Conservation learning basic archive preservation skills such as assessing, cleaning, packaging and storing collections.

www.odsalspastimes.org/Top-Level/Volunteers.html

Don't forget we're on Facebook

The West Yorkshire Archive Service has its own Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/wyorksarchives>. Keep up-to-date with everything that is going on across the Service (including the West Yorkshire: Our Stories project), with event info, galleries and what our staff are up to day-to-day. We are trying our best to move with the times and you can also see us on Twitter and Flickr. We keep our accounts fresh with lots of news and information, so make sure you keep your eyes open.

Conservation Salvage Collection

The Conservation team salvaged a collection of textile pattern books for a mill in Bradford which have been wet since January due to a leak from a frozen pipe. The water had secretly seeped into the fire-proof strong room where the valuable collection is kept, saturating the contents of a number of shelves and creating a damp environment for the rest of the collection. A mould and insect infestation swiftly developed until discovered only recently. This week, WYAS Conservation removed the worst affected books and packaged them for freezing at Doncaster Museum Service's specialist freezer to kill the insect infestation. Once defrosted, the collection will be carefully dried and assessed for cleaning and restoration.

Community Archives Network Group

The Community Archive Network group run by West Yorkshire Archive Service Our Stories Project is going from strength to strength. The group meets every other month and offers training, support and networking for community archives. If you are involved with a project or just thinking of starting one why not come along to find out what the group has to offer. Meetings move around West Yorkshire but always take place between 10.30 to 12.30 on middle Wednesday of the month.

Call or email Rachel Tapp for more information 0113 289 8223

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