

Nurturing Worcestershire's Treasures



Heritage Lottery Fund Skills for the Future in Worcestershire

January 2012, Issue 1



'Worcestershire Treasures Graduate Trainees in Victorian costume at Blists Hill Victorian Town'

We are five graduate trainees working across six different heritage sites in Worcestershire. Our training positions are funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund part of the Skills for the Future funding stream. The project aims to provide practical experience to pursue a career in the heritage sector. Through the five editions of this newsletter, which will each be edited by a different Graduate Trainee, we will keep you updated on all of our activities including training, site visits and planned events and our heritage sites.

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George Marshall Medical Museum The Hurd Library

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Skills for the Future Graduate Trainees

Sarah Baker: Elgar Birthplace Museum



I completed my degree in Archaeology, Heritage Studies and English and Literary studies at the University of Worcester, in 2009. Upon completing my degree I maintained my position as cinema manager whilst looking for something more relevant to my qualifications.

When the skills for the future programme was first advertised in Worcester - I was immediately interested. I have a musical background as well as previous paid and voluntary work experience with English Heritage and the University in both archaeological and heritage based settings. With that background, this position seemed ideal for me. During this placement the majority of my time will be spent working with the collections and developing education and outreach. I am particularly interested in learning more about how archaeological sites and monuments are managed from a heritage point of view.

Shabeena Anait: Worcester Porcelain Museum



My desire to 'experience the new' attracted me to the Skills for the Future Programme and the placement at The Porcelain Museum. Studying for a Masters in Museum Studies amidst the parliamentary changeover in 2010 was an eye-opener. The shift within the sector highlights the importance of garnering fundraising, marketing and business skills: most of

which are new territory for me. I have predominantly worked in research and curatorial roles within a range of museums, libraries and archives. My most exciting role was with the Learning and Access team at the Imperial War Museum North, where I created KS3&4 self-directed resources on the topic of Cold War and Black History. I am especially interested in the development of intercultural dialogue between belligerent groups and how to interpret social history to engage with new audiences.

Tamsin Rowe: Worcester Cathedral and Archive



I joined the Skills for the Future programme from the University of Exeter where I completed my PhD on medieval liturgical blessings, and was employed as both a Graduate Teaching Assistant and Lecturer in Medieval History.

Although my background is in academia my interest lies in promoting an awareness of, and access to, historical documents and artefacts among more general audiences. I have an especial interest in the ecclesiastical environment, so my placement at Worcester Cathedral Library is ideal!

Sarah Stretton: University of Worcester Research Collections & The Hurd Library



I came to my traineeship fresh from teaching English as a second language to Spanish and Italian teenagers and adults in York and Spain. Prior to this I achieved a History degree from the University of York. I added flavour to this background through gaining experience in a variety of heritage and amateur media settings.

This traineeship appealed to me because it allowed me to build upon my existing skills base and to get a feel of a career in the heritage sector. My combined experience history and education reflect my interest in opening up history to wider audiences by exploring ways to dissolve some of the boundaries between formal education, academia and the heritage sector. I also have a particular interest in the 18th century and material culture.

Laura Butland: George Marshall Medical Museum & Infirmary project, University of Worcester

My place in the Skills for the Future Programme comes a year after completing a degree in Applied Genetics from the University of Liverpool. During my time studying I co-wrote and delivered educational materials for a temporary science exhibition with National Museums Liverpool, and went on to work as a demonstrator on further temporary and permanent exhibitions. My interests lie in engaging audiences in medical science, both in historical and current contexts, and developing skills in managing successful outreach projects in the community, whilst contributing to the continued success of my organisation.



A Trip to Ironbridge

by Tamsin Rowe, Graduate Trainee at Worcester Cathedral Library



With the dust having finally settled after our appointments, our training got underway in earnest in October. We embarked on a week-long visit to the Ironbridge Gorge Museums in Shropshire in order to find out how this impressive UNESCO World Heritage site is managed and maintained. During our stay we were given the opportunity to meet a variety of people, look around the majority of Ironbridge's ten museums, and get utterly covered in clay, charcoal, paint and candle wax helping out with the children's half term activities.

On the opening day we heard presentations from CEO Steve Miller, Director of Operations Traci Dix-Williams, Director of Finance and Resources and Deputy CEO Anna Brennand, and Maureen McGregor, Manager of Learning, all of whom were keen to demonstrate the diversity and versatility of the site. In the afternoon we were taken on a tour of Coalbrookdale by archaeologist Shane Kelleher and Mark Ashby, Conservation, Buildings and Maintenance Manager. Mark introduced us to a number of conservation issues related to the Coalbrookdale sites, ranging from how best to preserve and interpret Abraham Darby I's pioneering coke-fuelled blast furnace to dealing with subsidence in a Quaker burial ground. Our tours continued midweek with visits to Blists Hill Victorian Town, the Coalport China Museum and the Jackfield Tile Museum. We also had the opportunity to meet Ironbridge's only full-time curator, Gillian Whitham, who kindly showed us the stores at Jackfield and Coalbrookdale. Needless to say it was a real eye-opening experience.

Of course, we were not there simply to observe, but also to work. Our help was enlisted for the 'Creepie Crawlies' half term activity at Coalport and 'The Big Draw' at Blists Hill. Laura and Shabeena stepped courageously into the fray at Coalport, assisting Education Office Holly Jarrett with the making of Halloween clay monsters. Sarah Baker, Sarah Stretton and I headed to Blists Hill where Education Office Hugh Simmons was supervising the production of an 80-foot long masterpiece in charcoal and pastels. Sarah Stretton and I got in touch with our artistic sides, encouraging the children to draw kilns and winding engines, while Sarah Baker acquainted herself with the noble art of candle-dipping. It was exhausting work, but it was great to gain hands-on experience of the Museum's education programme. Having seen the sites and met the staff and volunteers we could not resist throwing ourselves fully into Victorian life at Blists Hill and dressing up for our group photograph!



Putting up "The Big Draw"

We enjoyed an enlightening and rewarding visit to the Ironbridge Gorge Museums, and I think it is safe to say that all of us came away with ideas for future projects at our own placements. The people we met were very accommodating and we are quite sure we will collaborate with many of them again over the course of our traineeship. We would certainly recommend a visit to Ironbridge to those working in the heritage sector.

Date for your diary!

Worcester Literary Festival
Discover Enchanting stories through Porcelain
Sat 11 Feb - Sun 19 Feb

Shakespeare
Service,
1853



Be inspired by magic tales from the Far East, Alice in Wonderland and Shakespeare in the museum galleries and enter your own short story based on the collections in a prize winning competition.

SARAH STRETTON - The Hurd Library & The University of Worcester's Research Collections

Combining two different host sites and a distance learning post-grad certificate in Heritage and Identity I feel like I've hit the ground running with my traineeship in historic and rare book collection archival management. My time is equally shared between the Hartlebury Castle's 18th century Hurd Library, and the University of Worcester's Research Collections of 19th century children's literature, local authors and the Kays' Archive.

Cataloguing in the Castle

I have begun cataloguing the 22 volumes of Bishop Hurd's correspondence, which bring to life the politics and personalities in 18th century society. I have also been studying the collection of WW1 Visitor Books from when Hartlebury Castle was a VAD Convalescence home. These books are packed with photographs of the soldiers, along with their personal messages, drawings, paintings and postcards to the nursing staff.

Let's have a Party with the Research Collections!

My first display has gone up in the Peirson library entitled "Let's have a party!" the display features Kay's catalogues from the 1960s and 1970s. Inspired by the festive party season there are pages on party frocks, Christmas drinks and decoration, and music sets. The Kay's catalogues are an important part of our collections and the display ties in nicely to the World of Kay's project. In the coming months I will begin to catalogue the Kay's business archives.

I have also organized and finished listing the recently acquired Local Authors Collection. I also studied the collection to see how the authors made use of the locality in their work. For the Beeline Children's Storytelling Festival I prepared the written content for the website and published publicity material, and I helped out at the festival. Finally I have also been designing and producing this newsletter for you all!



Putting the Hurd Online

My second project is the webpage: <http://thehurdlibrary.tumblr.com>. It was inspired by the fascinating details I was discovering daily, which I wanted to share with more people and record for future reference. As a result, I created this site as an online exhibit space for this information. Following on from this I have also launched a Facebook site and a Twitter account for the library to promote the library and my work to a wider audience.

TAMSIN ROWE - Worcester Cathedral Library & Archive

'Monk Students' Exhibition

Time to dust off those Latin and palaeography skills! During the first two months of my placement I designed, researched and staged my first mini exhibition. 'Monk Students', which ran until the beginning of December in the south nave aisle, provided a window onto the lives of Worcester monks at Oxford in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It used images from medieval university text books and lecture notes (including some charming marginal drawings of elephants and dragons!), supported by extracts from letters and accounts relating to the Cathedral Priory. The exhibition was intended to show off the range of manuscripts held in the Library and also to bring the characters of the monks to life.



A 'drollery' from the Monk Students exhibition



Victoria & Katerina conserving manuscripts

Life in the Cathedral Library

Four months into my placement and I have already had the opportunity to get involved with a whole range of activities relating to the day-to-day running of the Cathedral Library, as well as to work on my exhibitions and Postgraduate Certificate. Under David Morrison's tutelage I have learnt about care of collections, met conservators, photographed books and manuscripts, written articles and news bulletins, answered enquiries, managed volunteers, conducted tours and supervised a scholar. The experience has been invaluable thus far, and I look forward to doing more of the same in the coming months.

LAURA BUTLAND - George Marshall Medical Museum & Infirmary Project, University Of Worcester

Halloween Open Day, Saturday 29th October 2011



The Jenny Lind Chapel at the UOW City Campus, lit for our Halloween Open Day

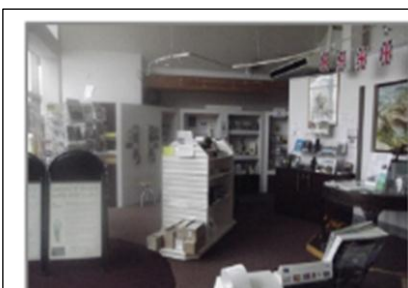
After weeks of planning, the Infirmary Project had its first Open Day. We had family activities including face painting and making skeleton hands during the day, and object handling sessions run by the GMMM Curator, Louise Price. By night, local re-enactors from Discover History put on a Victorian amputation scene in one of the former operating theatres on the first floor of the hospital, with the patient's screams echoing through the corridors!

First Funding Bid

The first few weeks of October were very busy with putting the finishing touches on my first funding bid. Writing to the Gannett Foundation, I worked on researching outreach projects both local and further afield. The idea was to develop a new loans box service to be used across both sites at the GMMM and Infirmary. I recently found out that the bid was unsuccessful; however writing the bid was invaluable experience for future projects.

SARAH BAKER - Elgar Birthplace Museum

As I slow down to write this I can finally take a breath and reflect on what a busy first few months I have had here at the Elgar Birthplace Museum. I have been involved in many things, but the most recent (and most major) thing has to be the building works that have been taking place.



Before



After

Elgar Redevelopment Plan

Following grants from HLF and the Foundation for Sport and the Arts (FSA), the visitor center at the birthplace museum has been receiving a face lift. We packed up the exhibition material and the shop in early November ready for improvements to be made to the shop, reception and exhibition areas. This has included the addition of a new café bar area, alterations to the layout of the shop and reception and the removal and addition of exhibition display cases.

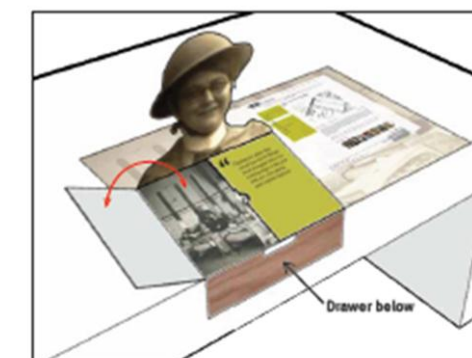
We have invested in new interactive displays which will allow visitors to see more of the collection and learn more about the social history of Elgar's lifetime. Divided into the different periods of Elgar's life and then further broken down into Travel, Leisure and Health and Wellbeing, the touch screen displays will show relevant items from our collections and will have interesting facts to read through. There are also now small screens next to each main exhibition case playing old film footage chronologically in relevance to the display materials, again offering a better understanding of events that Elgar's life would have been touched by.

The redevelopments are now complete and the museum will be re-opening to the public on February 1st. I would whole heartedly recommend a visit to truly appreciate the changes that have taken place. Please check the website for admission prices and opening times.

Designing a New Museum

Thanks to a successful HLF bid part of the GMMM collection is coming out of storage and will be displayed at a new site right in the heart of Worcester. Formerly the site of the Worcester Infirmary building, the University of Worcester's City Campus will house a new exhibition space, focusing on the lives of the people who worked in the hospital, and will showcase the development of healthcare throughout Worcestershire over the past 250 years.

With a background working in science, my role in the Infirmary Project is to help design the Science and Technology area of the new exhibition, as well as giving input on other areas of the design process. At the moment I'm thinking about ways to get interactive sounds, smells and activities into the exhibition space.



Drawing from exhibition designer, Simon Fenn, of how the exhibits could look in the new Museum

SHABEENA ANAIT – Worcester Porcelain Museum

What an exciting first 3 months my traineeship at The Worcester Porcelain Museum has been!

In September I went to my first Philip Serrell auction whilst BBC Bargain Hunt were filming. I have since met Royal Worcester porcelain expert Henry Sandon, his pleasant wife Barbara, and the Duke of Kent during his tour of Worcester in October.

Workers' Story Project

In the run-up to Christmas I have been busy preparing my first funding bid to Awards for All. Having established a budget for the project I hope to submit the bid before Christmas whilst identifying additional funding streams.

The Museum requires funding to develop an audio-visual (AV) production for the enjoyment of visitors. A selection from the 100 hours of oral history recordings will be merged with photographs and film from our archives, to create a short AV presentation to be experienced in a special 'cinema' area in the twentieth century gallery. The Museum wants to recall what was at the heart of the Porcelain factory for 255 years - its people and their extraordinary skills.

Shabeena Anait, Worcester Porcelain Museum

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Prince Shri Ranjitsinhji was the first foreigner to play Test cricket for England in 1896

Royal Worcester Loans Project

In August, I hit the ground running and began documenting and accessioning Royal Worcester loan items into the Museum's Collection. When Royal Worcester went into administration in 2008, ownership of certain loan items was transferred to the Museum Trust's governing body a year later.

With the guidance of the Museum's curator, Wendy Cook, I have so far accessioned 150 of these loan items; these include sample plates, cups and saucers, vases and a vast miscellany of porcelain-ware. The high standard of artistry is apparent in every piece, especially those that are hand-painted and richly gilded. The sample plate above with a garden scene design painted by Harry Davis was commissioned by Prince Shri Ranjitsinhji, prominent cricketer and prince of Gujarat.

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Research Collections:

<http://www.worcester.ac.uk/ils/635>