

SHR.930.

## SHRIVENHAM & DISTRICT ARCHIVES GROUP

Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday 8 November 2006 at 7 Forrest Close

**Present:** Tony Jones (Acting Chairman), David Boobyer, Rachel Daniels, Vic Day, Yvonne Jones, Sue Lovell, Vivien Moss, Mervyn Penny, and Elaine Ware.  
Apologies were received from Anna Hanslip.

The meeting was convened to discuss the problems encountered as a result of the movement of the Village Archives, and the Heritage Centre items administered by Rachel Daniels, from the Library at Beckett House to the Stack Room in Building 70 of the DCMT.

**First of all deep gratitude was expressed for the work done and help given by Rachel Daniels to preserve the village archives and to finding (within her range of authority) the best available solution to the existing problems.**

The difficulties encountered in managing the archives were presented at the meeting and are attached hereto.

It was agreed that we should approach one or more of the following key people, within the Defence Academy, to ask for help in finding better accommodation and facilities for the Archives and Heritage Centre items.

### **Professor Hugh Griffiths (The new Principal of DCMT)**

Tony Jones reported that Phil Judkins<sup>1</sup> had recently received encouraging feedback from Professor Griffiths during a recent discussion with him on the topic of archives.

### **Commander Peter (Harry) Harrison.**

Vic Day stated that his neighbour, Commander Harrison, has become aware of our problems and is optimistic that solutions can be found. (Apparently: Commander Harrison is the General's right hand man and deals with the business issues of the DCMT. He is therefore a very influential man. It is understood that he works with the Air Commodore and Admiral)

### **The Defence Academy Project Manager at SERCO**

Yvonne noticed an article in the village magazine about SERCO giving money to the Shrivenham Primary school for a special project. She wondered if SERCO would be generous towards the needs of the village archives in providing accommodation for a Heritage Centre which would benefit the village. She suggested putting together a letter with a strong case suggesting they consider such a project.

Rachel suggested tapping into all three ideas to help solve the present problems.

Sue Lovell said we should bear in mind that there was no lack of interest by anyone involved in the archives, but it was simply a matter of waiting for the tremendous upheaval in the college to die down. She suggested that in our proposal to the authorities we should state that although we are grateful for the housing of our archives in the Stack Room, it is because we have been moved out of Beckett House that we have lost the space and the impact of what we have already done that has put us in the present situation. We should put this into perspective.

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<sup>1</sup> Phil Judkins is Chairman and Archivist of the DEHS (Defence Electronics History Society) which is based at the Defence Academy but has a highly distinguished membership spread throughout the UK. He is reading for a PhD in the History of Radar. The DEHS has many archives which it wants to store at Shrivenham when our archive resources are ready to take them.

Tony commented that if we moved the Archives and Heritage Centre items out of the Stack Room it would free up space for the DCMT's own needs. The Supervisor of the Stack Room would then be better able to control the security in there.

#### **Suggestions put forward for suitable accommodation:**

Rachel suggested the **Lodge House**, which has lighting, heating, toilets and such necessary amenities as room for storage and display. One of the problems was insurance.

Vivien suggested either of the following buildings in Watchfield: **The Jubilee Centre** - one of the rooms to have a lockable door and other, more general rooms, for study and for photocopying. The onetime **Thrift Shop** by what used to be the Catholic Church.

Tony commented that there is a lot of building going on within the Academy and he conjectured that what is currently stored in the Lodge and some other buildings might soon be moved out thereby **freeing up new space which we should attempt to claim** before it is too late.

David Boobyer asked if Sue Currie (Head Teacher) had been approached regarding the **Barn in the school**. She was interested in getting a grant for the refurbishment and eventual use of the Barn. Tony replied that he had had discussions with Sue Currie but it was evident that the structure is very damp and is insecure structurally and in a secure sense. David said that big grants would be needed to make the barn habitable but it was feasible that the School would get one.

Vivien suggested getting **CPRE**<sup>2</sup> involved. Elaine said that she has a contact there. We should stimulate their interest in what we are doing

Tony said that one of our objectives, to be put in any communications to the authorities, is that we want to **get all the Village Archives, the Heritage Centre items and the DEHS Archives into the same Study Centre but separately identifiable and controlled**. Ultimately the School Archives should be added but on the condition that children shall have appropriate access - at least of photocopies. For the Study Centre to be viable it is important to have weekend and evening accessibility. In this respect the Jubilee Centre is attractive and it has parking nearby.

Sue Lovell, thinking long-term, commented that if we had the majority of things photocopied, and then the originals locked away safely, part of the problem is eliminated. She observed that more and more Archives Centres are not allowing people access to originals. These places impose viewing by appointment only, after you have been frisked, but in contrast, we have too few things to make that necessary.

Tony replied that our immediate problems were storage, cataloguing and then scanning before we could consider **Virtual Storage**. Once that is done we can put some images on the internet but not the contents of large books, journals and the text-books of the Heritage Centre. David asked for a Set of minimum standards for storage and archiving - including no risks of damp or vandalism.

Elaine said that if we had an appropriate place for the archives they would be **better displayed**. This would be a plus for the Defence Academy and for the villages. It would encourage the arts and social activities of the College, encourage visitors and the people to actively find out a bit about Shrivenham when they arrive.

Elaine agreed to draft a letter to SERCO with copies to Professor Griffiths and Commander Harrison. This was agreed.

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<sup>2</sup> CPRE - Campaign to Protect Rural England

### **Statement of the Current Situation**

1. Village Archives & the Heritage Centre collections of the Barrington Family, of Beckett House, of RMCS (including the Senior Common Room), of Woolwich Arsenal and the American Forces University at Shrivenham – are now in “The Stack Room” of Building 70.
2. The Stack Room is now only accessible by being let through locked by the Supervisor of Building 70 who, in turn, needs to know that specific permission has been granted by Rachel Daniels.
3. Building 70 and the Stack Room is totally closed at weekends and in the evenings.
4. There is now absolutely nowhere to sit down at a table or desk within easy reach of the Stack Room. There is no possibility to display any of the items.
5. Access to our 4-drawer filing cabinet is now almost impossible because of the volume of University items blocking the way.
6. The long-term plan was that members the Shrivenham Local History Society would voluntarily help Rachel Daniels with the cataloguing and sorting of the Heritage Collection. This is still very far off as a dream.
7. Currently no other place for storage of all the items has been found.

### **Definition of our needs**

8. Clean, Dry and well-lit premises for the storage of and study of archives.
9. Accessibility – Every day and without undue restrictions to authorised persons.
10. Security – Minimum risk of unauthorised access and of attack by vandals or damage by fire or adverse weather conditions.
11. Workability with table/desk spaces for Archivists and for visiting researchers.
12. Power for light, dehumidifiers, computers, printers. Perhaps telephone points for www access.

Tony Jones Thursday 26-10-06

Trying to get a <sup>strong</sup> body of  
people to Campaign ~~to~~  
Why we need Somewhere

Village Archives  
+ Barrington family/Becket  
Woodward Journal  
+ 3 years military  
history.

Will be  
Countrywide Centre

Please Phone Tony  
Jones 783277

PS has seen correspondence.

## SHRIVENHAM & DISTRICT ARCHIVES GROUP

Telephone: 01793-783277  
Email: tonyvon\_j@yahoo.co.uk

7 Forrest Close, Shrivenham  
Swindon. SN6 8AP

4<sup>th</sup> November 2006

Dear *Parish Councilors/Barrington Trustees*

### STRATEGY REVIEW MEETING

Many thanks for expressing an interest in the safekeeping and accessibility of the Village Archives and of the collections held by the DCMT of the Barrington/Beckett/Woolwich Heritage Centre. I have now made contact with most of the people on my list and I have selected this coming Wednesday as the "least-worst" day for our meeting. Please try to attend as scheduled below but, if you can not, then please let me have a note with your views on the subject so that your comments can be taken into account.

DATE/TIME: 1:45 pm Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November.

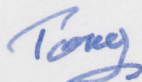
VENUE: 7 Forrest Close (off Damson Trees which is the continuation of Martens Road, off Highworth Road), Shrivenham.

#### AGENDA:

1. Introduction and Statement of the Current Situation
2. Discussion of the Definition of our Needs
3. Options & Initiatives for Improvements
4. Formulation of Submissions to the relevant Authorities
5. AOB

It would be helpful if you could phone or email me to state whether you can or can not attend or that you will be slightly delayed. Some of our Members have a tight schedule such that we will have to keep the meeting short.

Yours sincerely,



Tony (and Yvonne) Jones  
☎ 01793-783277



**Date:** Tue, 24 Oct 2006 11:25:14 +0100 (BST)  
**From:** "Tony Jones" <tonyvon\_j@yahoo.co.uk>  
**Subject:** Shrivenham & District Archives Group  
**To:** "Rachel Daniels" <r.j.daniels@cranfield.ac.uk>

From: Tony Jones (Shrivenham & District Archives Group)  
7 Forrest Close, Shrivenham. SN6 8AP  
01793-783277

Rachel Daniels  
DCMT Library, Shrivenham.

24<sup>th</sup> October 2006

Dear Rachel,

In continuation of our conversations during the Shrivenham Fete I would appreciate a meeting with you and other members of our Archives Group to discuss future strategies.

On Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> October I met Phil Judkins during the AGM of the Defence Electronics History Society (of which he is Archivist and Chairman). He told me that he had recently had a very productive meeting with Professor Hugh Griffiths (the new Principal of DCMT) who expressed much enthusiasm for future support of there being archives in the College related to all Defence History issues. I hope that that positiveness can be extended to include the histories of Shrivenham and district villages because the College and the rural areas are so closely interlinked.

With that sign of encouragement in mind I hope that collectively we can solve the current problem as regards the archives in Building 70.

Since July it has been necessary for me and other members of the Archives Group to be let into the stack room so as to work on the archives. (We are not allowed to know the security number.) There is now nowhere to sit down and work on, or study with, the documents. The large maps, pictures and photographs can not be displayed. We have no control over who gains access to the village (and old RMCS) archives – in fact it appears that some vital items have already disappeared. Our original objectives were, and currently are, to protect the archives and yet make them accessible, with appropriate controls, for any serious researcher. That access would not generally allow removal of the items from site but for them to be viewed and studied in a room near to the depository. Whereas the move from Beckett House to Building 70 appeared to be to our distinct advantage it now appears to be a serious disadvantage which we need to put right.

It is hoped that the positive attitudes of Professor Hugh Griffiths will give us new opportunities and more manageable accommodation facilities.

If you agree that a meeting, during early November would be productive, then I would appreciate your suggestions as to when and where this could take place.

[Phil Judkins suggested that I meet him, and others, early in 2007 to discuss the DEHS archives and exhibits.]

Many thanks and best regards,

Tony Jones.

Copied to: Tony Belk, David Boobyer, Sue Currie, Vic Day, Anna Hanslip, Yvonne Jones, Sue Lovell, Vivien Moss, Mervyn Penny, David Pratt (SPC), Roy Selwood, Elaine Ware.

tonyvon\_j@yahoo.co.uk

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