

NEWS & EVENTS



WEST MIDLANDS
HISTORY
PEOPLE OF IDEAS, INNOVATION AND ENTERPRISE

ANNE BOULTON'S WRITING TABLE COMES HOME



© Birmingham Museums Trust

'A Ladys Satten Wood Writing table of very fine wood Banded with Rose and Tulip wood', commissioned by Matthew Boulton for his daughter Anne (1768-1829) has been acquired and returned to Soho House by Birmingham Museums Trust.

The table is a fine example of the work of fashionable Regency furniture-maker James Newton (1760-1829) whose customers were mainly members of the aristocracy.

Anne was the eldest of Matthew's two children and was close to her father, corresponding with him regularly when he was away on business. You can find out more about her life from Shena Mason's highly readable book *The Hardware Man's Daughter: Matthew Boulton and His Dear Girl*, published by Phillimore.

The table will be on display in Anne's sitting room at Soho House, which is open to the public. For details see Places to Visit.

ARE YOU MAKING THE MOST OF ARCHIVES?

A new campaign to raise awareness of the role of archives and their impact on people, places and communities is being launched later this year. It will aim to inspire those who already know, those who partly know and those who know nothing about archives to make more use of them.

The initiative will replace The Archives Awareness Campaign, which ran for about a decade. 2013 will be the first year of a longer and sustained campaign to ensure archives are better known and supported.

Everyone has a history and we've got a bit of yours!

<http://www.archiveawareness.com>

There are currently around 2,000 accessible archives in the UK generated by individuals, families, businesses or institutions, which offer a fascinating insight into everyday life as it has evolved over the centuries. Delving into these can help us to understand how we came to be what we are as individuals, communities and nations – and, of course, it can be very entertaining.

There are numerous archives around the West Midlands. Here is some news from three of them:



Courtesy The Hive

Worcester Archive and Archaeology Service

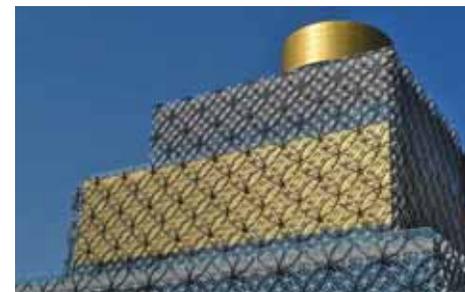
The newly-formed Worcester Archive and Archaeology Service is now open for business at The Hive in Worcester.

Created from a merger and relocation of the Worcestershire Record Office and the Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service, the new service has a wide range of resources available for researchers. For further information see <http://www.thehiveworcester.org>.

Herefordshire Archives

Herefordshire's archive records are to be re-housed into a purpose-built new facility near Rotherwas in Hereford. The new location will allow the archive, the county's Archaeology Unit, the sites and monuments record and the biological records centre to be brought together under one roof. The new centre will offer a range of social and community outreach programmes, a dedicated educational room and improved facilities and access for the public.

Details of the plans can be seen on the planning section of the council's website at <http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk>.



Courtesy Library of Birmingham

Birmingham Archives & Heritage

Birmingham's new Library, due to open in September 2013, will house over 6,000 archive collections, two million photographic stills, and the Library's Early & Fine Printing collection. This includes 8,000 books printed before 1700; a Shakespeare First Folio; a copy of Audubon's 'Birds of America' – one of the world's largest books – and a copy of Caxton's 'Cordiale, or the Four Last Things', printed in 1479. The new building will include two floors of state-of-the-art archive storage, research facilities and an exhibition gallery. See <http://www.libraryofbirmingham.com> for more information.

If you have any information about an archive you think would be of interest to *History West Midlands* readers, do let us know by emailing info@historywm.com

DELVE INTO YOUR LOCAL AREA THROUGH THE VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY

Founded in 1899 and originally dedicated to Queen Victoria, the Victoria County History (VCH) offers an encyclopaedic record of England's places and people from earliest times to the present day. It is not only a good place to start delving into the history of an area, it also provides opportunities to get involved as a volunteer helping to research or add to the resource.

Since 1933, it has been based at the Institute of Historical Research in the University of London, but it has representatives in most counties, including those of the historic West Midlands. For details go to <http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk> and click on your area on the map. You will find details of projects, activities and events in which you can get involved as well as how to access the VCH.

A large number of volumes have been digitised and can be consulted in full and free of charge at British History Online in the Local History section. See <http://www.british-history.ac.uk>.

Courtesy Roger Bruto



BECOME A FRIEND OF LOCAL HISTORY

The Centre for West Midlands History, based at the University of Birmingham, and The Centre for English Local History, based at the University of Leicester, both have Friends Groups, which provide an opportunity to get actively involved in local history.

The Centre for West Midlands History creates a forum for the study of the history of Birmingham and the Midlands. It manages an MA course in West Midlands History, runs a series of Day Schools, provides support for local projects and works with a variety of heritage professionals and independent scholars in the wider community. Its Friends Group sponsors visits, lectures and research seminars, providing an interesting and stimulating programme of events each year. For further information see <http://www.cbamh.bham.ac.uk>.

FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES: CENTRE FOR WEST MIDLANDS HISTORY

Tuesday 21 May	6.30pm – 8.30pm – Launch of Barrie Trinder's book <i>Britain's Industrial Revolution: the Making of a Manufacturing People, 1700-1870</i>
Saturday 15 June	10.00am - 4.00pm – Jewellery Quarter Day School (Joint event with Birmingham Assay Office)
Saturday 19 October	10.00am – 4.00pm – Black Country History Day (Joint event with Black Country Society)
Saturday 23 November	10.00am – 4.30pm – Birmingham History Day

To find out more about these events contact Malcolm Dick with your e-mail, telephone number and address at mmdick@bham.ac.uk.

The Friends of the Centre for English Local History at the University of Leicester is a registered charity, which supports the Centre and its students through the provision of library donations, student bursaries and practical help. It offers Friends a programme of events, which include study days and weekends, outings, lectures and conferences, a small publication programme and an annual second-hand book sale. For more information see <http://www.fcelhtrial.acwager.co.uk>.

FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES: CENTRE FOR ENGLISH LOCAL HISTORY

Saturday 6 July	Hoskins Lecture – Dr Richard Gaunt, Nottingham University, 'Patrician Landscapes in Nottinghamshire in the Georgian Era'
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Birmingham Museum's new galleries offer a fascinating insight into the history of Birmingham

Courtesy Birmingham Museums Trust



Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (BMAG) opened the doors to a new permanent suite of galleries 'Birmingham: its people, its history' in October 2012. Comprising five distinct display areas through which you can trace the evolution of the city from its origins to the present day, each gallery takes a different interpretative approach. The period 1700 to 1830, for example, is presented in the form of a travel guide offering practical tips for first-time visitors to eighteenth-century Birmingham. Among the objects on display is the remarkable collection of

pearl and metal buttons collected by Birmingham button-maker James Luckcock. They represent some of the best craftsmanship in button-making in the late eighteenth century, a time when Birmingham was the pre-eminent manufacturer and exporter of buttons throughout Europe.

There are also interactive displays, including one relating to Birmingham's involvement in the transatlantic slave trade, and many features developed through community engagement projects, such as films about modern Birmingham metalworkers, which demonstrate how manufacturing processes have changed since the eighteenth century.

To mark the launch of this important new exhibition, we have included a supplement devoted entirely to these local history galleries with this edition of *History West Midlands*. It can also be downloaded free from our website at www.historywm.com



© Birmingham Museums Trust

APPEAL FOR JOSEPH WRIGHT'S PORTRAIT OF ERASMUS DARWIN

Birmingham Museums Trust has launched an appeal to raise £275,000 to enable it to buy Joseph Wright's 1770 portrait of Erasmus Darwin. Darwin was 40 years old when the portrait was painted and it brilliantly captures the essence of this gifted physician, botanist, author, poet and inventor. There are two copies of this particular portrait, and nine of a later portrait also by Wright, so this one has great rarity value. The other copy is on loan to Darwin College Cambridge. If you would like to make a donation to the Darwin appeal contact chris.rice@birminghammuseums.org.uk.



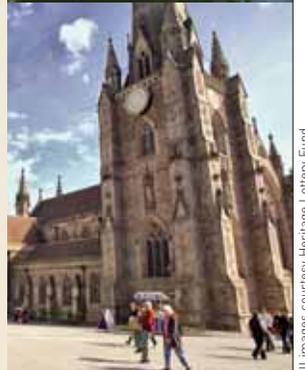
SHARING HERITAGE DO YOU HAVE A PROJECT THAT WOULD QUALIFY?

'Sharing Heritage' is a new funding programme from the Heritage Lottery Fund offering grants of between £3,000 and £10,000 to not-for-profit groups wanting to discover their local heritage. If you have a project related to exploring, conserving or sharing any aspect of the history and character of your local area you can apply at any time and your application will be assessed within eight weeks. Projects are expected to cover a wide range of subjects and could include exploring local archaeology or a community's culture and traditions, identifying and recording local wildlife and protecting the surrounding environment, collecting and digitising

old photographs, producing local history publications, conserving sites or items of local significance, managing and training volunteers, or holding festivals and events to commemorate the past.

Projects already being funded in the West Midlands, of the kind this programme is designed to support, include The Potteries Tile Trail organised by the Tile and Architectural Ceramics Society, and Digbeth Speaks organised by Friends of Birmingham Archives & Heritage.

You can download an application pack from <http://www.hlf.org.uk> or call 020 7591 6042.



All images courtesy Heritage Lottery Fund