

## **REPORT TO BILDESTON PARISH COUNCIL**

### **HENRY MORPHEW ARCHIVE**

Henry Morphey Archive is a collection of 1,716 items in 15 boxes. The papers contain details of Henry family and his service to nation and community: for example, his years in the army and as a parish councillor. The collection also shows his interest in Bildeston's past to be paramount while forming a corpus of material that has been gathered to aid future writing concerning Bildeston's history.

#### **Condition**

As Henry smoked a pipe, everything originally reeked of tobacco smoke. Consequently, items and documents had to be aired but a collection of part-work magazines has been disposed of because the smell could not be removed. All other items and documents now do not have any lingering smell.

#### **Storage**

Henry Morphey Archive is currently stored at No.18 Manor Road in Bildeston. Each acid-free archival box contains items and documents on similar subjects and its own catalogue. Each subject is in its own acid-free archival-card folder secured with archive-approved cotton tape except Box 13. This contains post cards and photographs in archive-approved see-through pockets.

#### **Access**

To allow easy access, items and documents have been given their own unique reference number, which indicate to which box an item belongs, which folder in that box and its position within that folder: for example, 05/G/13 is the 13th document in folder G in Box 05. These reference numbers are in pencil on the upper right corner of every sheet.

Some documents have multiple sheets, which are also individually numbered: for example,

1 of 4, 2 of 4, etc, which is in pencil on the lower left corner of every sheet. The number of sheets per document is also entered in the catalogue.

#### **Catalogue**

The searchable catalogue covers 113½ pages. It is stored on my computer and on my computer's external hard drive. A printout and a memory stick holding the catalogue can be made available.

Where documents are on similar subjects but for some relevant reason are stored in different folders or boxes, they have been cross-referenced in the catalogue.

#### **Documents**

There are a few original documents: for example, 09/B/01-26 is a collection of 1930s papers from Copt Hall – but the majority are either photocopies of original material or Henry's typed transcripts of such., which he deposited at Suffolk Archives.

#### **Subjects**

See handout.

## **Comments**

[1] When I became Honorary Archivist at Hadleigh Archive, my predecessor stated very firmly “This is not a lending library!” I’ll never know how Henry managed to borrow Bildeston parish registers [02/A-C] and Bildeston manorial records [03/A-H] from Suffolk Record Office – now called Suffolk Archives. In order to understand these documents, Henry taught himself to read 16th and 17th century handwriting and forms of Latin used during those times. From the manorial records, he was able to construct histories of ownership and sometimes occupancy of most properties in Bildeston from 1650 to 1900 [Box 7].

[2] It is a shame that Henry did not keep copies of his replies to requests for information from people researching their family histories. Nevertheless, these requests do contain valuable information and therefore have been retained [Box 8].

[3] For a while, Henry was Bildeston’s Local History Recorder for Suffolk Local History Council whereby he kept items concerning village events that would be local history of the future. There was no system to Henry’s collecting: it would seem that every flyer that came to his home – this was the time before Bildeston Bugle – went into a box in no particular order. Most of the flyers are dated by day and month only: there are no years and I got fed up trying to sort them out therefore Box 12 is unfinished.

[4] The older Morpew family photographs and a collection of old postcards were in disintegrating albums and have been removed. The family photographs are now stored in Box 1 while items in Box 13 are in archival-approved pockets, which may be better placed into A4 ring binders.

I have used some of the pictures for an article ‘Tales from our neighbours: Postcards to Ringshall from the Front’ in Bildeston History Quarterly (Winter 2014-2015) about items sent to Alice Francis (Henry’s mother) by her older brother Walter while he was serving in the Royal Field Artillery during the First World War (1914-1918).

## **Talk**

In order to publicise Henry Morpew Archive, I would be happy to give a power-point presentation about what it tells us about Henry and about Bildeston. As I do not have the relevant equipment myself, it would be necessary to hire or borrow a power-point projector and coordinating laptop for the memory stick that would hold the images.

## **Future storage**

Bildeston Parish Council will need to give some thought as to where and how Henry Morpew Archive is to be stored in the future and how access to it will be gained by researchers.

**Sue Andrews**

**11 April 2023**