

Much Wenlock Town Council Archival Collection :

The Much Wenlock Archives originated as a collection of documents relating to the administration of the Borough of Wenlock. Over the years the collection has become more diverse and now encompasses a variety of material relating to the locality.

Among the key elements comprising additions to the collection are

- The Library of the Wenlock Agricultural Reading Society
- The Library of the Wenlock Working Men's Reading Society
- The Herbarium of William Penny Brookes
- Records relating to the Wenlock Olympian Society
- Burial Records for Much Wenlock
- Scrapbooks about Much Wenlock compiled by TH Thompson
- Scrapbooks about Much Wenlock compiled by William Grainger
- Scrapbooks about Much Wenlock compiled by the Hollinshead family
- Documents relating to community activities in Much Wenlock

Most of the material listed above is helpfully retained in Much Wenlock. However the Town Council has long approved a policy of the transfer of many irreplaceable historic documents to the Shropshire Archives. There they can be properly catalogued, conserved, stored and made available for research purposes. These documents still remain in the ownership of the Much Wenlock Town Council.

Present activities, policies and practices:

There is a need to update any archive with contemporary material which will in due course be of interest to the historian. The lack of adequate storage space in the archives room in Much Wenlock currently places a significant constraint on the acquisition of new local archival material. It also gives rise to a need to reappraise existing material and to consider whether it should all remain in Much Wenlock.

Work is currently being undertaken to evaluate those existing local records which might be better lodged with the Shropshire Archives. These materials are currently being filtered to identify and discard elements which are not of archival value or do not relate to specifically local events. The material is then being allocated to folders and provided with a basic catalogue description, prior to transfer. A copy of the list of folders due for transfer is accessible to individual councillors through the Town Clerk. The list of descriptions aims simply to aid appropriate cataloguing and storage within the Shropshire Archives. All material lodged in the Shropshire Archives by Much Wenlock Town Council remains in the ownership of the Town Council.

Recommendation: That the Much Wenlock Town Council formally approves the practice of evaluating, filtering and describing appropriate archival material and its transfer to the Shropshire Archives for safekeeping.

Howard Horsley, Volunteer Archivist. August 2017