



SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

Summer Term 2004

Welcome to the summer term edition of the schools newsletter from the Worcestershire Record Office. In this issue we look at probate inventories; what they are, where to find them and how they can be used in the classroom.

FOCUS ON INVENTORIES

WHAT?

In 1529 it became law that, when a person died, a detailed list of all their belongings be produced in order to avoid disputes and prevent fraud. The inventories usually list the furniture and personal belongings of the deceased, sometimes specifying which rooms items were found in. They were produced from Tudor to Victorian times, although most date from between 1550 – 1750.

WHERE?

Microfilm copies of Worcestershire Inventories are available to view at the Worcestershire Library and History Centre, and printouts can be made for 60 pence each. Where necessary, original documents can be viewed at the Record Office. We are also able to offer a scanning service producing high quality digital images, available as print-outs or on CD-ROM. Prices are available on request.

WHY?

Inventories are an invaluable source for local, social and economic history. They can provide information on living conditions, housing, local industries, agriculture and wealth. For educational purposes, they are particularly useful for teaching children about the Tudors at Key Stage 2 and can be used alongside Unit 8 of the DFES Schemes of Work 'What were the differences between the lives of rich and poor people in Tudor times?' They are also useful for finding out about what your local area was like in the past (History KS 1+2 Scheme of Work Unit 18) or what homes were like long ago (History KS1+2 Scheme of Work Unit 2).

TIPS FOR READING THE TRANSCRIPT AND GLOSSARY

There was no designated way of spelling during the Tudor period so some of the words can look very strange to modern eyes. It helps to read the words aloud as they were usually spelt phonetically.

Sithsmith	-	Scythesmith
Praysed / Presed / Prysed	-	Priced
Raparrell	-	Clothing
Aprye	-	Household Linen
Treene	-	Oil or fat (similar to tallow)
Couperye Ware	-	Wooden vessels (such as barrels, tubs and looms)
Yron	-	Iron
Redye	-	Ready
Kine	-	Cow
Swyne	-	Swine (pig)

FINDING OUT MORE

West, J. 1997. *Village Records*. Pg 138 –182
Griffin, J and David Eddershaw. 1994. *Using Local History Sources: A Teacher's Guide for the National Curriculum*. Pg 54 – 59.
Worcestershire Historical Society New Series Volume 16
 Inventories of Worcestershire Landed Gentry 1537 – 1786
The British Library Living and Working in Seventeenth Century England: An Encyclopedia of Drawings and Descriptions from the Academy of Armory (1688) **CD-ROM**

Transcript of the Inventory of Richard Prynn, 1605.

A true Inventorie of all the Goods and Cattel of one Rych- arde Prin Late of the parishe of Belbroughton in the countie of Worcester Sithsmith decessed Taken and Indifferentye praysed by Nicolas Baddger Thomas Cox Thomas Badger and John Coxe the 7th. Day of Maye anno Domini 1605 in ye thirde yere of the Raigne of our Sovereigne Lorde James by the grace of God of Englande Franncce and Irelande Kyng Defender of the fayth &c. and of Scotlande ye 38th.

Imprimis his purse Girdle dagger and all other Raparrell – pressed at	£3 6s. 8d
Item one table board one fourme two chaires one cupboard and benches &c.	10s. 0d.
Item foure bedsteads one feather flockebeds Bolsters and other furniture to them belonging – Pressed at	£10 0s. 0d.
Item sheets and all manner of aprye ware –pressed at	£3 6s. 8d.
Item one presse and coffers – pressed at	20s. 0d.
Item all manner of Brasse and pewter &c.	£3 6s. 8d.
Item all manner of treene and couperye ware –pressed at	13s. 4d.
Item cobberds broches potthooches linckes hatchett Axe and other yron implements of husbandry	8s. 0d.
Item two anvills bellows and all other working Tooles – pressed at	£5 0s. 0d.
Item all yron and steele unwrought – prysed at	£9 0s. 0d.
Item all sithes redye wroughte – price	£100 0s. 0d.
Item come and malt within the house and corne Unthressed(h)ed	£5 0s. 0d.
Item corne on the grounde – prised	£7 0s. 0d.
Item 7 kine and one weaning calf – price	£14 0s. 0d.
Item sheepe – pressed at	£12 0s. 0d.
Item one mare and a colte – pressed at	£3 6s. 8d.
Item store swyne	20s. 0d.
Item poltrye – prised at	18d.
Item one carte and one paire of harrowes with all Things prysed and unnamed &c.	40s. 0d.
Summa: £180 19s. 6d.	

Ideas for Classroom Activities using Inventories

Aimed at KS1 and KS2

1. Making an inventory

To demonstrate what an inventory is and how they were made, ask the children to compile an inventory of a room in their house or divide into groups and ask each group to list an area of the classroom.

Going Further: Compare with Tudor inventories to demonstrate how the amount and type of items people own has changed over time.

2. Comparing the inventories of rich and poor people.

Take two inventories, one of a wealthy person such as a gentleman or yeoman and one of a poor person such as a labourer or shepherd. Ask the children to guess which was the wealthier person and why. Ask them to compare the homes, occupations and property of the two people.

Going Further: Ask the children to write a short account of 'a day in the life' of one of the people. Ask them to include words from the inventory such as: table, sheep, axe, tools, cart etc.

3. Finding out what house interiors were like long ago.

Using an inventory that is listed by room, draw a simple plan of the house on a large piece of paper, labelling the different rooms (i.e hall, chambers and smithy). Ask the children to draw pictures of certain items from the inventory and then attach them to the house plan, placing in the room they think each item would have belonged in. The children's guesses can then be compared to the inventory.

Going Further: Create a classroom display based on the activity.

Are you interested in family history?

Worcestershire Record Office is holding a **Family History Fair** in St Helen's Church, Fish Street, Worcester on Saturday 25th September 2004 10am-4pm. Stands will include local family history societies, local history groups, Record Office, Workers Educational Association, Archaeology Services and the BBC.

Admission is free.

The Family History Fair will also launch a joint initiative with the BBC People's War, volunteer agencies and the Libraries to collect peoples reminiscences of the war years in Worcestershire and add them to the BBC People's War website. The Worcestershire Library and History Centre will be one of several venues where people can come in and dictate their stories to add to the collection. The initiative will culminate in an event to mark Remembrance Day in November. Children may be interested in including their grandparents' memories or in listening to the stories that have already been included.

FEEDBACK: HELP US TO HELP YOU

We are keen to tailor our services to your needs. Please let us know of any forthcoming project areas so we can advise you on potential sources and the educational resources we have available. If you would like to arrange a class visit to either branch please contact Rebecca Orme, Lisa Snook, Angela Downton or Su Vale at the Record Office or Teresa Nixon at the Worcestershire Library and History Centre.

Worcestershire Library & History Centre,
Trinity Street,
Worcester
WR1 2PW

(01905) 765922
WLHC@worcestershire.gov.uk

Record Office,
County Hall,
Spetchley Road,
Worcester, WR5 2NP

Tel: (01905) 766351
recordoffice@worcestershire.gov.uk

Name: _____

School: _____

Address/telephone number: _____

Topic of Research: _____