

Story of the Trinity archive

Origins and start of a saga

The Trinity Old Scholars Association (TOSA) was established in 1994, partly as a result of an initiative by Don Grammer (Trinity 1937) following an informal reunion of school friends. There had been an earlier Old Scholars Association that had ceased to function in the 1950s. TOSA was active up until 2016 by which time it had accumulated quite a large collection of Trinity documents and other material from the early days of the school, through to its closure in 1962. The chair and driving force for TOSA over many years was Beryl Skinner (Hayter) (Trinity 1942), and earlier custodians of what became known as the archive were Don Grammer and Vic Manning (Trinity 1949). When TOSA itself was discontinued, shortly after 2016, its archive of Trinity material was entrusted to Jackie Goodwin (Coulson) (Trinity 1956). Then, in early 2018, when the late Peter Turner (Trinity 1954) was working on re-establishing the Trinity/TOSA website, it fell to me to retrieve the archive from Jackie, from her house in Finsbury Park, for its onward journey to Peter in Stoke on Trent. The ultimate destination was intended to be back to Haringey, to the Bruce Castle Museum Archive, but Peter was intent on cataloguing the contents before deposition and hopefully, finding new material for the new website. At that time the archive was contained in three substantial boxes.

Peter Turner launched the new Trinity website (www.trinitygrammarschoolwoodgreen.com) in 2019 and was still involved with the archive up until his illness in 2020 and untimely death early in 2021. Further delays due to the Covid pandemic meant that it wasn't possible until later in 2021, with help from Peter's former wife, Janet Turner (Creasy) (Trinity 1954) for me to collect the boxes from Stoke on Trent and to resume Peter's task of sorting and cataloguing the ex-TOSA archive and other material that Peter had collected to help him in his work.

Contents of the boxes

Delving into the boxes was a daunting start, although Janet had made a preliminary sort and tidy up, it was in a somewhat random and chaotic state. It was evident that the collection included a mixture of material from the TOSA archive and much other material that Peter must have collected independently.



The first task was to separate it into groups: Trinity magazines (with the familiar dark blue covers), other Trinity documents related to prizes, sports and dramas, TOSA documents, paperwork related to Peter's research and preparation for the website, some photographs and some hard-cover books. The bulk of the material, by weight and volume was the magazines, of which there were many duplicates.

Bearing in mind that the ultimate destination was to be the Bruce Castle Archive, which is part of the Haringey Local History Museum, I had talked with the archivist about their requirements before taking a deposition such as ours. They were quite prepared to take it on and archive it alongside the Trinity material already in their collection. Their only conditions were that they didn't want duplicates of anything (although they would accept duplicates of anything they already had) and they wanted a master list of contents of the deposition boxes.

Sorting out the magazines was straightforward if laborious, and it was easy to put them in year sequence, select the best condition copies and then separate out the duplicates. The final list for deposition with Bruce Castle shows an almost complete set of numbered magazines from 1924 up until the last one in 1962. Some of the early ones are missing but all are there from number 37 in 1931 to number 138 in July 1962, except number 113 from Spring 1950. For some of the early years, sets of magazines were bound with hard-back covers, including a set from the early 1940s when the school was partly evacuated to Hatfield Peverel in Essex.



In addition to the magazines, the bulk of the documentation was associated with Peter Turner's extensive work in tracing former pupils, and in researching and compiling material for the new website. It was evident that he had put in a huge amount of effort on this. There was relatively little material related to TOSA itself and presumably minutes of committee meetings and accounts were not part of the archive. There were some documents relating to the earlier Old Scholars Association, including the country club/ walking group, which I mention later.

First fruits

Although the blue cover magazines are important historical documents and rightly form the bulk of the deposition to Bruce Castle, individually they do not tell much of a story and it is not easy to find gems to reproduce here or on the website. However, the final magazine from 1962 was scanned and reproduced in full on the website, where the period career recruiting advertisements are also of interest. Consideration was given to bulk scanning the whole collection of magazines, but this was unrealistic in terms of cost and effort. Nevertheless, there were some good finds and these first fruits have been scanned and are on the website. These include the prospectus for the first Trinity in 1924, the story of the two headmasters (Swinden and Dalrymple), Trinity Christmas cards, the school inspector's report from 1955 and the extraordinary hand-produced magazines from the early 1940s. And there are more stories still to be written, including one about the OSA country/ walking group.

Decisions

Having sorted through all the material, it was a matter of deciding what to do with what. Clearly, the blue cover magazines were essential for the deposition to Bruce Castle, as were other historical documents and photographs. These are all identified and included in the content lists for each of two boxes, which were marked Box 1 and Box 2. For Box 1, which was mostly the magazines

and related documents, the list covers some five pages and details about 160 separate items. Importantly, the lists also show the number of duplicate items (about 150 in total), which were not required by Bruce Castle and were made available to others in the wider Trinity community.

Both Box 1 and Box 2, with their contents lists were duly delivered to the Bruce Castle archivist, Julie Melrose on 26 November, a deposition that was acknowledged and receipted by her.

The uncertainty then was what to do with the remaining documents. Although it represented a huge amount of effort, it was decided that Peter Turner's working papers had to go to recycling, as did the remaining TOSA material. This was less painful a decision than it might have been, as the fruits of Peter's labour are the website itself and all the TOSA Newsletters are available on it. For a final validation of this decision, the whole collection of all the archive material, including that to be disposed of was taken to Amersham for Laurie Pate to see before any recycling. Ironically, the recycling was then done at the Western Road, Wood Green facility, close to Trinity.

Since the Trinity website has now grown in size, mostly due to the diligent efforts of Laurie Pate, it can now be seen as an essential resource for anyone researching, or simply taking an interest in Trinity affairs. As such, the website contains stories and images that are complementary to the material held in the archive at Bruce Castle. It was decided that an electronic copy of all the website material would be made (possibly on a USB memory device) also to be deposited at Bruce Castle.

Bruce Castle

Haringey's local history museum and archive at Bruce Castle is the natural reference and public resource for Wood Green history and is the appropriate depository for Trinity's historic material. Bruce Castle itself is a remarkable historic 16th Century Grade I listed manor house with an amazing collection of artefacts from historic Tottenham and Wood Green.



The archive at Bruce Castle already had a sizeable collection of Trinity material to which our new deposition has now been added. In this way, the collection will now be retained and available publicly for research, and for the foreseeable future. Although the archive is not accessible online, it is possible, by appointment to visit and access it in person. For any enquiries and to make an appointment to access any of the records please contact 020 8489 4250 (Option 2) or museum.services@haringey.gov.uk. I was encouraged to learn that people researching family history do visit and take advantage of this facility. I am convinced the Trinity archive is in the right place at Bruce Castle and in safe hands.

Footnote

Throughout my involvement with this project, in the interests of transparency and good sense, I was in communication with Peter Hamblin (Trinity 1951) in Switzerland and with Laurie Pate (Trinity 1956), who also processed various items for inclusion on the Trinity website, and I am pleased to acknowledge their help.

Essential additional information:

Bruce Castle deposition Box 1 – Contents, Trinity magazines etc, November 2021

Bruce Castle deposition Box 2 – Contents, Trinity books etc, November 2021

Colin Marr Muswell Hill, 14 January 2022