

## **History of Parliament**

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**HISTORICAL MANUSCRIPTS COMMISSION**

Report on

records of the

**HISTORY OF PARLIAMENT**  
*c1929-90*

Wedgwood House, 15 Woburn Square, London, WC1H 0NS

2002

## NOTE ON ACCESS

Access for *bona fide* researchers to papers held at 15 Woburn Square will be allowed to papers more than 30 years old, subject to permission being granted by the Editorial Board of the Trust, or by the Director acting on their behalf. Access to transcripts and research notes held by the Trust will normally be granted, irrespective of their age, but subject to any conditions set by the owners of the original papers on their use. Users should recognise that in all cases copyright rests with the owners of the original documents.

Access to the records of the Trustees of the History of Parliament will be additionally subject to permission being granted by the Trustees or the Chairman or Secretary acting on their behalf. Applications may be made to the Secretary of the History of Parliament, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

## INTRODUCTION

The History of Parliament is a major academic project to create a scholarly reference work to describe the members, constituencies and activities of the Parliament of England and the United Kingdom.

The History of Parliament was originally conceived by Josiah Clement Wedgwood (1872-1943), 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Wedgwood, MP for Newcastle-under-Lyme in Staffordshire from 1906. From 1928 he tried to persuade the government to fund a national dictionary of parliamentary biography, to record and identify the 75,000 members who had sat in every Parliament to 1918. A Committee on the records of the House of Commons was set up in 1929 and reported in 1932, but no funding was forthcoming from the government. However Wedgwood started the project himself and produced two volumes in 1936 and 1938, supported by a Committee on the history of Parliament.

In 1940 the History of Parliament Trust was founded to take the work forward on a more professional footing. However it was not until 1951 that the Treasury finally agreed to fund the project. An Editorial Board was established, a general editor and staff were taken on and eminent historians were invited to edit a number of sections. Sir Lewis Namier sat on the Board and acted as senior editor from 1951. A friend of Wedgwood, he had been associated with the project from the start in 1929. The project was initially based at the Institute of Historical Research in the University of London, before moving to its present location in Woburn Square.

Since 1993, the History of Parliament has been principally funded by an annual grant-in-aid from the House of Commons. From 1998, the House of Lords has contributed a fifth of this annual amount because of the opening of a Section on the history of the House of Lords (1660-1832).

The records described in this report consist principally of the administrative records and working papers of the project since 1951. In addition to correspondence of the Secretary to the Editorial Board (latterly the Director) with Trustees, Board members, section editors, custodians of records and publishers, there is a large accumulation of research papers for volumes in the published series, including indexes, transcripts of original documents and photocopies. Accounts and other administrative records are also present, but the minutes of the Editorial Board were not inspected. The papers seen include a substantial quantity of Sir Lewis Namier's correspondence connected with the *History*, mainly 1952-9.

The other major group of records in the custody of the Trust is the Wedgwood papers c1929-41. These relate almost entirely to Colonel Wedgwood's work on the *History*, and include correspondence and papers of the 1929-32 Committee as well as his own correspondence and working papers for the 1930s. Among the former are returns to a questionnaire to custodians of municipal and other records, and among the latter are returns to a biographical questionnaire sent to fellow MPs in 1937. Also with these papers are notebooks, etc of the Revd AB Beaven (d1924). A volume of original eighteenth-century papers relating to Newcastle-under-Lyme may also have been

acquired by Wedgwood. His papers appear to have come to the Trust c1951, probably from a family source. Other personal and family papers were deposited in Keele University Library (see NRA 28564; information from Keele website).

The records are stored in the History of Parliament building in Woburn Square. They were inspected on 11 November 2002, and the Commission is grateful to the Director for this opportunity to record their existence and scope.

The report does not cover the records of the Trust of the History of Parliament, which are held by the House of Lords Record Office, and which were not inspected.

RA SMITH  
RJ OLNEY  
13 November 2002

## SUMMARY

### Boxed material

#### **A Wedgwood (86 boxes)**

1-8, 44-6, 50. Correspondence 1929-41, mainly relating to the Committee on House of Commons Records 1929-32 (letters to LA Abraham (Joint Secretary), questionnaires to custodians of records, etc) but including correspondence of JC Wedgwood as Hon Secretary to the Committee on the History of Parliament 1935-8, etc.

9-30. Index cards.

31-43, 47-9, 51-2, 54-81. Research papers, mainly for the medieval House of Commons but including some 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century biographical material for MPs. Biographical notes, lists of members, etc. (NB. 16<sup>th</sup> century material abstracted 1952 - see box file N27).

53. Correspondence and papers of Eric Robson 1953-4.

82. Papers relating to a questionnaire sent to fellow MPs 1937. (And see also box files 59, 75). Includes returns from George Lansbury, Sir George Sitwell and others.

83-4. Albums of newspaper cuttings, etc, including a volume of letters and cuttings relating to the publication of his *Members of the House of Commons 1439-1509* (1936), and an album of letters, cuttings, etc late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century collected by the Revd AB Beaven (d1924).

85. Miscellaneous papers.

86. Notebooks of AB Beaven (7 vols).

#### **B 1386-1421 volumes (13 boxes)**

Editorial correspondence, index cards, research notes, transcripts and photocopies.

#### **D 1509-1558 volumes (26 boxes)**

Editorial correspondence, index cards, research notes, transcripts and photocopies.

14-22. Papers of ST Bindoff (1509-58 section editor).

24. Papers on Sir Thomas Seymour, bequeathed by Julianna Marker (Sandy Lake, Mercer Co, Pennsylvania) to ST Bindoff 1979.

#### **E 1558-1603 volumes (11 boxes)**

Research notes, index cards, transcripts and photocopies.

#### **G 1640-1660 volumes (2 boxes)**

Research notes and index cards.

**H 1660-1690 volumes** (84 boxes)

Research notes on biographies and constituencies , index cards, photocopies.  
37-8. Correspondence of Basil Henning (1660-90 section editor) 1960s.

**I 1690-1715 volumes** (4 boxes)

Research notes, index cards, transcripts and photocopies.

**J 1715-1754 volumes** (25 boxes)

Research notes, index cards, transcripts and photocopies.  
1. Material covering years 1715-90.

**K 1754-1790 volumes** (102 boxes)

Research notes, etc by LB Namier and John Brooke. (For Namier's correspondence see section N).

**L 1790-1820 volumes** (75 boxes)

Research notes, computer printout and microfilms.

**N General office papers and correspondence, 1951-c1990** (81 boxes)

1-7. General office correspondence pre-1980.

8-14. Financial records 1955-91, including correspondence relating to fees.

15-17. Correspondence with Barlas 1951-80.

18, 72. Correspondence with publishers and printers 1956-82.

19. Correspondence with Sir Goronwy Edwards 1952-76, including copies of Trust meeting agendas and minutes.

20. Correspondence with Sir John Neale (editorial board member, 1951-71) 1951-78.

21-24. Correspondence of Editorial Board members, including some with section editors 1952-82.

25, 30. Trustee correspondence and reports 1949-75.

26-27. Administrative papers, including Trust minutes 1957-64.

28. Correspondence with Alan Sandall, HOP Journal Office, 1980-89. Papers relating to funding 1979-90.

29. Papers related to the Committee on the records of the House of Commons, including the Scottish Committee 1929-32.

31. Correspondence with collections in the United States 1952-63.

32, 35-40. Research correspondence and papers, including index cards 1955-61.

33. Basil Henning correspondence 1953-84 (see also H37-8).

34, 76-7. Section Reports 1958-68.

41-49. Papers relating to poll books, including correspondence with record offices.

50-71. Namier correspondence as 1765-90 section editor and member of the Editorial Board 1952-9. (Box 70 contains Namier correspondence relating to the Sandwich MSS, including transcripts 1932-59).

**V Theses**

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Records additional to TS box list

Documents relating to Newcastle-under-Lyme early 18<sup>th</sup> cent: poll books 1708, 1714; account of John Fenton and Sons 1731; subscription list for the bells of St. Giles

church. Volume bound in the nineteenth century with bookplate of Robert Fenton, Newcastle-under-Lyme 1865. (The Fenton family were attorneys in Newcastle and held the office of town clerk).

Theses, photocopy of Narcissus Luttrell diary, etc.

Section reports, papers relating to the IHR parliamentary seminars 1997-9, etc.