

PASTURES NEW: UNLOCKING THE HERITAGE COLLECTIONS AT THE ALFRED GILLETT TRUST (C & J CLARK LTD)

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Introduction

This article outlines the history of the heritage collections of the Alfred Gillett Trust, which is responsible for the collection management of family and business heritage collections relating to Quaker shoemakers C & J Clark Ltd, based in Street, Somerset.

A brief history of the family and their role in developing Street as a company village will be given, followed by an outline of the history, provenance and collection strengths of the heritage collections and company Shoe Museum. The remainder of the article will concentrate on the professionalisation of the collections and how the Trust's heritage collections support the work of the business and the wider community. Finally, the current new build and Trust HQ projects will be briefly detailed, along with plans for the future.

The Clark family and Street, Somerset

The Clarks are a well-established Somerset Quaker family. Originally hailing from the nearby hamlet of Greinton, John Clark III was the first to move to Street in 1723, marrying Ann Coaxley and into three farms within the immediate area. The family quickly established itself locally, becoming actively involved with the local Friends' Meeting House, built in 1717.

Cyrus Clark (1801-1866), the middle of the three sons of Joseph Clark (1762-1831), had to look outside the family farm for work, going into a brief partnership as a tanner and rugmaker from 1821 with his cousin, Arthur Clothier. The partnership was dissolved in 1825, with Clothier keeping the cow-hide tanning side of the business, and Cyrus taking over the sheepskin rug elements to create the business which was to become C & J Clark Ltd. Youngest brother James Clark (1811-1906) became apprenticed to Cyrus in 1828, and the two brothers went into partnership in 1833. James emerged as the driving force, developing the business from rugmaking to shoemaking through the manufacture of 'Brown Petersburg'

slippers. Boots, welted shoes and lambswool socks followed, with footwear accounting for one third of total sales by 1833.

Quaker contacts enabled a rapid expansion of the business, which included attracting shoemakers to Street from other parts of the southwest. During this period, Street's population more than doubled as the village expanded around the shoemaking hub on the High Street. The factory site came to occupy approximately 25 acres around the original building constructed in 1829. Mechanised techniques were gradually introduced and operated alongside the outworker system of shoemakers working from home.

Two threats of bankruptcy were negotiated with the help of Quaker loans. The second and most serious of these in the early 1860s resulted in the removal of Cyrus and his family from the business, with James' eldest son William Stephens Clark (1839-1925) brought in at the age of 24 to manage the business in partnership with James. William increased mechanization apace, enabling the Quaker loans to be repaid, and also developing the factory system. In 1870, the sheepskin side of the business was moved to Northover, Glastonbury, under James' son-in-law John Morland as Clark, Son and Morland.

Now free of company debts, William pursued his interests in philanthropy and developed Street as a company village. In 1850 the current Friends' Meeting House was built immediately adjacent to the rapidly expanding factory. The population explosion was followed by new civic amenities in the shape of a Working Men's Club and Institute (Crispin Hall, 1885), the Vestry Room (1887), Strode Technical School (1899) and Strode School (1913). The women of the family developed prominent national profiles in educational, slavery and social reform, supporting suffrage, temperance, pacifist and refugee causes, partly through Bright, McLaren and Priestman relations. William's sister Annie E. Clark (1844-1924) became one of the first female doctors in the UK.

William remained as company chairman until his death in 1925. The next generation came to the fore in 1903 when C & J Clark Ltd became a private limited liability company, with directors William, younger brother Francis (1853-1938), sons John Bright (1867-1933) and Roger (1871-1961) and, significantly, daughter Alice Clark (1874-1934). The younger generation were active in the emerging local and county councils, continuing the family's philanthropic interests, with the introduction of Street Library (1924), Hindhayes Infant School (1928) and Greenbank open-air swimming pool (1937). As competitor companies embraced retail,

Clarks purchased part of the Abbott chain in 1937 (operating it under the name of Peter Lord) and branding was vigorously developed during the 1930s. The appointment of Bancroft Clark (1902-1993) as managing director and company chairman instigated further change within production through the development of new non-local factories during the post-war period.

These factories established outside of Street enabled the company to pursue the commercialisation of post-war technological developments in manufacture. For example, the CEMA process (producing a durable school shoe by moulding the sole directly to the upper) and California slip-lasting were used to create affordable, comfortable and lightweight women's footwear. Increased manufacturing capacity also assisted in extending Clarks core offering of Children's and Women's shoes to include a Men's range during the 1950s. Following successful collaboration in the 1930s with John Halliday and Sons (Dundalk, Ireland), manufacturing agreements were sought abroad, particularly in the colonies. These were prompted by protectionist policies, increased local competition and a desire to raise brand profile internationally, resulting in arrangements for Australia, Canada and South Africa during the 1940s and 1950s.

Domestically, C & J Clark continued to extend its retail interests during the 1960s by acquiring independent retailers and small multiples as they became available, pursuing an ongoing strategy as a manufacturer and retailer of footwear. Managerial tenure of the fourth generation culminated with the retirement of Bancroft's cousins, J. Anthony Clark in 1974 and Peter Clothier in 1973. Of the fifth generation that had predominantly joined the business during the 1960s, the most identifiable was Bancroft's eldest son Daniel Clark (1931-2004) who was later elevated to the positions of chairman and managing director. For this generation of the family, the commercial landscape was considerably different from the one that had met their predecessors thirty years earlier.

Foreign imports of cheap footwear into the UK empowered wholesalers and retailers, forcing C & J Clark to begin a painful restructuring of the business that saw domestic manufacturing reduced from 1978 until closure of the final UK Clarks factory at Ilminster, Somerset, in 2005. During this process, the business entered a sustained period of lower profitability, with the resulting unrest prompting protracted family shareholder debate relating to continued family management and ownership of the business. This culminated with the failed takeover attempt by Berisford in 1993. Restructuring thereafter was executed by the appointment of professional

management, transfer of manufacturing to third party Portuguese, Brazilian and Far Eastern suppliers and the creation of a family shareholder council designed to provide a focal point for shareholder debate and family shareholder interface for company management. C & J Clark consequently remains majority family owned, employing 15,000 staff worldwide and selling 50 million pairs of shoes a year. The Originals range includes some of the company's iconic designs, including the Desert Boot and the Wallabee.

History and provenance of the heritage collections

Preserving memory, heritage and kinship connections has always been of central interest for Quakers. The heritage collections at Clarks are consequently extremely well-preserved and even predate the company's foundation.

The archives include extensive personal collections relating to the family, as well as company collections encompassing the full range of business functions for C & J Clark Ltd and for associated companies (including those relating to K Shoes, Kendal, which merged with Clarks in 1980). Shoe catalogues dating back to 1848 are extensively used by Brand and Design for authenticating brand histories and inspiring shoe designs, alongside a substantial historic shoe collection of 20,000 items (some of which are on display in the company's Shoe Museum). 500 shoemaking machines and associated tools are also held, along with extensive point of sale (advertising) items, maps and plans of factories and housing in Street, a large photographic (business) collection dating back to the 1860s, sound and film collections, a significant collection of ichthyosaur and plesiosaur fossils, Quaker domestic costume and family furniture/artworks. The Trust also has a well-equipped Reading Room reference library covering shoemaking, history of costume, Quaker history and local history, as well as family book collections covering a range of subjects and dating back to the seventeenth century. Collections are stored at three sites (including a 1970s purpose built archive), prior to their forthcoming relocation to a new archive and museum store (see below).

Documents and artefacts held by the Trust represent the different civic, commercial, economic, familial, gender, local, political, religious and social connections, interests and responsibilities held by the Clark family. These originate from the family and commercial collections primarily accumulated on the initiation of William Stephens Clark up to 1925. William kept commercial and family papers, stored both at the factory and his home Millfield, built in 1890. Quaker principles and his interests in

history ensured their retention, a trait imbued into his son Roger (1871-1961) and Roger's three sons Bancroft (1902-1993), Stephen (1913-2011) and Nathan (1916-2011).

Millfield was vacated by the family in 1935 and turned into a school, with the family's personal papers split between Greenbank House (residence of William and his wife Helen prior to Millfield) and Whitenights (home of Roger and Sarah Clark). Business collections remained at the factory with Laurence H Barber beginning to create a Factory Museum and Archives Library in 1950, whilst accumulating information for the production of a company history. The 'archive' reportedly constituted 'a broken wooden cupboard with its contents... mixed with soot and broken egg shells', and miscellaneous additional papers originated from the Advertising Department, alongside an assortment of shoes. With no permanent place of residence and only a rudimentary 'catalogue' system, the company archive grew during Barber's tenure, which ended abruptly with his death in 1966.

Existing in a private capacity, company and family collections grew organically during successive generations. Quantifiable output included the company history in 1950 (written by Barber) and contributions to the monthly in-house company journal *The Courier* (1957 onwards). Historical family papers were relegated to tin trunks and stored in a shed within the grounds of Whitenights following the deaths of Roger Clark in 1961 and his widow Sarah Bancroft Clark in 1973. Sons Bancroft and Stephen Clark oversaw construction in 1973 of a purpose-built two-storey archive on the site of the old stable of Greenbank House. Designed to consolidate business and family collections, it overlapped with attempts to produce an academic history of the shoe industry that had started in conjunction with Professor Peter Mathias in 1963.

The new archive and planned business history also coincided with the appointment of Clarks employee Patrick Keith as Records Manager in 1975. The history failed to materialise, but intervening discussions concluded that a better organised 'archival system' incorporating modern records was desirable, enabling a company history to be written in the future, and the Alfred Gillett Trust was set up. Unfortunately, the intentions to appoint a new qualified archivist failed to transpire at this time.

As a result, potential archives were assessed on sentimental criteria, rather than according to any legislative or professional basis. Following advice in 1977 which recommended 'that it was dangerous to change from an untidy 'hugger-mugger' system to a formal archive system unless the job

was done properly', the archive remained closed to external users, with a skeleton archive service existing up to the mid 1990s.

Shoe Museum

The existing Shoe Museum was set up to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Clarks in 1975, and was a vast improvement on the previous set up. A small family-based museum had been located in the Mechanics' Institute (Crispin Hall) from 1885, including the fossil collection of Alfred Gillett (1814-1904), but this closed in 1948 with the latter transferred into family storage and the remainder dispersed. Barber set up an in-house museum in the old Counting House in the original 1829 factory building, but this was limited in size and scope.

The newly revamped museum comprised three large galleries, containing nineteenth century shoe making machinery, Clarks shoes dating back to the late nineteenth century, and non-Clarks shoes dating back to the Roman period. Professional staff were employed, and great inroads were made into cataloguing and using the collections. However, as time went on, company investment in the museum declined radically and one gallery was taken over by other functions of the firm in 1996. At present, there is no museum curator in post, and the museum is staffed by a part-time museum administrator and casual reception cover only. As a result, the archives staff have since the 1990s become more heavily involved in the administration of the museum, albeit on an unofficial basis.

Professionalisation of the collections

A former company insurance manager was appointed as archivist/collections manager in the late 1990s to coincide with the deposit of Bancroft Clark's large collection of business papers. During Bancroft's tenure as a director of the company (1928-1968), the business expanded from a small regional manufacturer of footwear into a multinational company. Pro-archive and pro-business history, Bancroft Clark influenced other managers and directors from manufacturing and marketing disciplines to deposit their papers as well.

Whereas the immediate physical requirements of the collection had been met by a serviceable building, systems to ensure suitable storage and easy retrieval did not exist. The archives were arranged into collections, catalogued and subsequently inputted onto an Access database by a newly appointed archives assistant. Acid-free boxes and racking were introduced. Initial responsibilities of archives and records were extended to include

disparate collections of machinery, consolidating Barber's collection of shoes and point of sale material extant in unsuitable premises offsite. At present, the archive collections are catalogued to box-level only. Finding aids for the shoe collections vary enormously in quality and format, ranging from handwritten lists to typed index cards. No single point of access exists by which the collections can be searched comprehensively, although the introduction of new cataloguing software is planned.

Formalising existing family arrangements, the Alfred Gillett Trust was officially set up in 2002 to safeguard the heritage collections associated with the company and family, a reflection of the family's longstanding interests in the history of the firm and its people. A local Clarks ex-shoe factory was purchased to store part of the heritage collections on a temporary basis, improving conditions from previous accommodation, and The Grange in Street was also purchased. It was intended that The Grange would eventually become the new home of the archive and museum, making the collections accessible to both company and members of the public (see below).

A post-doctoral researcher from the University of Liverpool was appointed by the Trust in 2004 to research the history of the business. Using the museum and archive extensively in his work, this role of company historian was combined with that of collections manager in 2009. In 2010, the Trust appointed a professional archivist to take over responsibility for the heritage collections. Focus has been given initially to setting up a reading room, managing access and introducing professional collections management. Accessioning procedures have been introduced, as well as the creation of collection level descriptions for the principal family collections. An enquiry service is available, and the reading room is fully open to external researchers for the first time. Academics have recently been given access to the collections with the result that use of the archive has made contributions to the disciplines of business, political, social, Quaker and feminist history. In spring 2012, a part-time archives assistant was appointed alongside a temporary heritage graduate trainee in order to help prepare collections for their planned relocation.

Supporting the work of the business

Formalisation of links between the family, company and community has been a priority over the last two years. Heritage is increasingly recognised by the firm as a key asset, differentiating the Clarks brand from competitors within global markets. The heritage collections support the work of the

business in a wide range of business functions and company services.

Heritage sources have reinforced the Clarks historical background of ethical international trade to support its globalised view of doing business, with archive materials on the family's longstanding interests in promoting good working and living conditions used in a recent company Code of Ethics. The firm's history and the family business status of the company have been emphasised to assist entry into new markets in China and India during the current period of globalisation. Company secretarial services have used advertising, marketing and point of sale material (as well as shoes) to support contested trade mark and intellectual property claims. Human resources have drawn upon historical files relating to the conception of their department in the 1940s and the involvement of the company in graduate recruitment to entice prospective new employees, alongside using archive sources to improve corporate identity amongst existing staff and the wider community.

The shoe, advertising and point of sale collections are used on a regular basis. Designers, marketers and range managers have been referencing these in order to recreate dedicated 'Originals' and 'Iconic' lines of footwear, as well as more recently in the main men's, women's, sport and children's ranges. Items from the collections are now regularly used in in-house and external Product and Brand presentations, in in-house and external publications and in major promotional events such as the twice-yearly product conference and the current Eley-Kishimoto London Fashion Week exhibition at Covent Garden in advance of a collaboration during Spring-Summer 2013.

The forthcoming new company history *Clarks: Built to Last* and an innovative history of the Desert Boot *Clarks in Jamaica* by DJ Al Fingers (published November 2012) both draw heavily on the heritage resources of the Trust. These publications will help to promote the collections to a wider audience as well as becoming indispensable company and Trust resources.

Collection strengths and significance

Business papers

The business archive can be separated into company collections and those created by individual managers. Early business papers comprise part of the CJC company collection and include letter books from the nineteenth century, providing insights into early banking, capital markets and the state of local and national commerce. The collection also includes Annual Report and Accounts for the post-war period, business/strategic plans for

the CJC Group, associated companies, departments and territories. Documents on predominantly twentieth century overseas development are located in the COS collection, which primarily relates to the setting up and expansion of Clarks Overseas Shoes from 1952, but also incorporates its predecessor agencies in respective territories. Papers comprise of directors and managers minutes, agency agreements and general correspondence. Factory publications from 1924 such as *Clarks Newsheet*, *Clarks Comments* and *Clarks Courier* give a comprehensive overview of the company and its development within the industry, economy and locality of Street for most of the twentieth century.

Individual senior managers' papers within family and employee collections cover financial, general, manufacturing and marketing management. These reflect post-war company growth through factory, financial and retail organisation and planning, general mergers and acquisitions. Technical reports, international visits and competitor/industrial intelligence are complemented by material concerning internal processes; Factory Council, Home Sales/Travellers Conference, Managers Meeting, Style Centre, Stock Committees etc. Collections also reflect the vertical integration of C & J Clark and give good representation of its constituent companies, namely Avalon Chemical; Avalon Industries; Avalon Leatherboard; Avalon Shoe Supplies; CIC Engineering/Ralphs Unified; Europolymer; Larkhill Rubber; Milward Bayley and Strode Components.

Records of acquired and associate manufacturing businesses reflect Clarks' predominant status as a manufacturer and wholesaler of footwear with papers for A & F Shoes; Clark, Son & Morland; J.T. Butlin & Co. Ltd.; K Shoes and London Lane Ltd whilst the collection also incorporates information on overseas manufacturing businesses; Alma Shoes (Adelaide) Ltd and G.T. Harrison in Australia; Blachford Shoe Manufacturing Co Ltd, Canada; John Halliday & Sons Ltd, Ireland; Fidelity Shoes (Pty) Ltd South Africa. Retail planning is also incorporated within the collection and features information on shop acquisitions, sites and locations both domestically and overseas. Details of independent retailers (e.g. Milwards, Randalls, John Mills & Sons), Clarks company retail under the Peter Lord fascia, and incursions into unbranded retailing via acquisition of companies like Ravel are consolidated by photographs, in addition to shop floor design and planning, point of sale material and related product.

The company's point of sale (POS) collection is particularly rich,

dating back to the 1840s. The two earliest signed examples are a 1840s company showcard by John Aubrey Clark (1826-1890) and a 1905 'Dainty Shoes' showcard by American artist Hamilton King (1871-1952). The main series of POS dates from the 1920s when in-shop advertising was developed on a more consistent basis, demonstrating the high quality of artists used by the firm. London Underground graphic artist Edward McKnight-Kauffer (1890-1954) and Austrian-Swede and Wiener Werkstatte fashion and theatre designer Mela Koehler (1885-1960) were both recommended by Roger Clark who had keen interests in the arts. Many works by Freda Beard [dates unknown], D.M. [Dora] Batty (1900-1966) and Lilian Hocknell (1891-1977) also survive, along with many others by artists yet to be identified. Family member and renowned photographer John Hinde (1916-1997) collaborated with the firm on a long and pioneering series of POS and advertising featuring around 40 actress and dancer endorsements (1943-1951), including household names such as Moira Lister, Moira Shearer, Sally Gray, Greta Gynt, Wendy Hiller, Ann Todd, Bebe Daniels and Margaret Lockwood. These were suggested by the Board of Trade in order to promote wartime wooden soled shoes. A small collection of original POS and shoe catalogue artwork is available, mainly consisting of sketches from the mid 1960s by French haute-couture fashion illustrator Jean Demarchy (son of pictorialist artist and photographer Robert Demarchy (1859-1936)) who created the popular 'Skyline woman' in the late 1940s to accompany the 'high and tailored fashion' Skyline range of women's shoes using American lasts and fittings. Point of sale material from the prominent mid 1960s Clarks' advertising campaign involving a collaboration between Hardy Amies, David Bailey and Jean Shrimpton also survive.

The shoe catalogues are by far the most heavily used part of the business collection. The earliest catalogue for C & J Clark dates from 1848, with catalogues produced on an annual basis from 1916. These include many striking examples of catalogue cover illustration artwork, including a long-running pen and ink sketch of the High Street factory entrance and distant Glastonbury Tor by Quaker family friend and 'Birmingham Group' member Edmund Hort New (1871-1931) who was better known for his drawings of Oxford colleges and his work for William Morris's Kelmscott Press.

Family archives

Family archives relating to the Clarks and related Quaker families are

numerous in their scope, reflecting their wide and extensive kinship across the UK and beyond. Many of the collections contain merely personal correspondence, extensive duplicate family photograph collections, visitors' books and other ephemera, but other collections are of a more diverse and interesting nature, demonstrating the extensive nature of Clark connections. For example, small family collections relate to Dr Hilda Clark (1881-1955), doctor and humanitarian aid worker, Joyce Hinde Green (1910-1993), ballet dancer and artist and to the Pease family of Bristol (including papers relating to Quaker philanthropist Thomas Pease (1816-1884) and to his Leeds family business Aldam, Pease, Heaton and Co).

The three most sizable family collections held by the Trust are that of Millfield (home of William Stephens and Helen Bright Clark, now Millfield School), Whitenights (home of Roger and Sarah Bancroft Clark) and that of Helen Sophia Horne Clark, daughter-in-law of James Edmund Clark. These substantial collections document in detail the earlier history of the Clark family.

The Clarks family of Street became closely connected with Quaker families of the Newcastle and Rochdale areas as a result of the marriage of William Stephens Clark (1839-1925) to Helen Priestman Bright (1840-1927). Helen's grandmother Rachel Priestman (1791-1854) was a Quaker minister who made several trips to the USA as a result of her vocation. Notable campaigners for women's rights amongst Helen Bright's maternal relations are Priscilla Bright McLaren (1815-1906), Anna Maria Priestman (1828-1914) and Margaret Priestman (later Wheeler, later Tanner) (1817-1905). There is good representation of McLaren and Priestman correspondence within the collection, as well as family papers relating to the Priestmans, Braggs, Wilsons, Wheelers and Tanners dating from the early eighteenth century, which include Ladies Temperance Committee notebooks and Friends' minute books. Papers relating to Women's Liberal Associations, the Union of Practical Suffragists to the Contagious Diseases' Acts, anti-vivisection and temperance are also included. Papers relating to the history of Street comprise *Avalonian Budgets*, 1814-1845, records relating to civic buildings of Street, Street Co-operative Society and local temperance activities. Family papers include diaries and letters of the parents of Cyrus and James Clark and multiple pedigrees and genealogies.

Roger and Sarah Clark continued the philanthropic interests of William and Helen Clark, as is reflected in their personal papers from

Whitenights. The family papers include the diaries of ancestor Thomas Clark, dating from 1817, as well as other early nineteenth century items relating to Metford, Bragg and Gillett relations and a full collection of correspondence and other items relating to the Clarks of Street from the late nineteenth century and onwards. Items of interest include papers relating to Glastonbury Festival, 1913-1926 (including posters by artist and protégée Christina Walshe, 1888-1959), and to the couple's collaboration in 1969 with composer Rutland Boughton (1878-1960) and in the 1920s with Austrian-Swedish artist Mela Koehler (1885-1960). As Sarah Clark was a keen advocate of the temperance movement and was active in this area throughout her life, the collection contains the papers of the Western Temperance League from 1930-1979. Records relating to the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene (later the Josephine Butler Society) are held from 1870, along with those of the British and Foreign Bible Society from 1850 and for Street Library Trustees from 1924. Family photographs are extensive and relate to the American and English branches of the family. Multiple artefacts of family sentimental and historical value are also dispersed throughout the archive.

The extensive collection of Helen Sophia Horne Clark (1900-1997) relates both to the Clarks in England as well as her own connections in India and the US. The Clark items were inherited from her father-in-law James Edmund Clark (1850-1944), who was the youngest surviving son of James and Eleanor Clark and who was the last surviving child of his many siblings. He therefore inherited many items from his parents, including their love letters from the 1830s and letters to other parts of the family. James Edmund was a science teacher at Bootham School in York, and the collection contains his scientific papers dating from 1897, as well as a fascinating Life Album compiled for his newly born and only son Roderic (1884-1937), which was entered into the Galton Family Faculties Competition run by Francis Galton in 1884. This portfolio on the subject of eugenics uniquely documents the attributes and characteristics of 70 of his forerunners from eight families. Papers also relate to his American wife Lucretia Kendall Clark (1853-1937), as well as to Helen herself and to her own American and Indian relations (including a letter book of the *Bombay Guardian*, 1904-1907). Business papers relating to family business Brangwin Clark and Co Ltd survive for 1897-1950, as well as the minutes of Lambeth Christian Social Council, 1925. Roderic Kendall Clark's prison sentence for conscientious objection during the First World War and his strong beliefs in pacifism are well represented in letters to his

parents and in papers relating to his tribunal, 1914-1919.

Through the Clark family's close connection with Helen Bright Clark, the earliest parts of the family archive collection mainly relate to her father John Bright (1811-1889), Liberal politician and reformer. The Trust holds significant sequences of letters from the members of his own family, his eldest daughter and also other Clark relations. Letters from figures such as Richard Cobden, Gladstone, Joseph Sturge, G.A. Trevelyan and the Duke of Argyll are included, as well as Bright's personal diaries, 1834-1884 and some handwritten speech notes. As well as a named John Bright collection, his papers appear elsewhere in the Trust's family collections, as well as those of the Priestmans and McLarens. Another large family collection is that of the Bancroft family, who originally had Lancashire roots but who emigrated to Delaware in the 1820s. Through the marriage of Roger Clark (1871-1961) and Sarah Bancroft (1877-1973) in 1900, the two parts of the family became reconnected. The earliest items relating to the Bancroft family are correspondence dating from 1735 and a 1715 account of a voyage to America by Ann Tatnall. Links with the Gillett family of Oxfordshire were also established through the marriage of Sarah's sister Lucy (1880-1969) to the later mayor of Oxford, Henry Tregelles Gillett (1870-1955): the couple were both founders of Oxfam. Further links with Oxford were made through the marriage of Roger's sister Margaret (1878-1962) to Henry's cousin Arthur Bevington Gillett (1875-1954). Margaret Clark Gillett's collection relates particularly to the Gilletts of Oxford, the Clarks of Street and the Rowntrees of York, and includes a few letters from family friend E.M. Forster as well as twentieth century papers relating to Oxford City Council and Barclays Bank (of which Arthur Gillett was a director).

'Village Album' collection

The 'Village Albums' form a fascinating and eclectic collection, namely that documenting the activities of the family's literary and essay society which continued a tradition begun in Glastonbury in the early nineteenth century. Regular Street meetings began in 1857 following the popular trend for essay societies and book meetings amongst the Quaker community. Album pieces covering poetry, stories, history, comedy, natural, family and local history, travel writing, philology and satire were compiled, and later bound into volumes which were distributed into the ownership of members of the extended family. With the exception of two volumes which have become lost, the Trust holds a complete set up to the modern period, with

the tradition still continued in Street today by the current generation of Clarks.

Shoe collection

The historic shoe collection is both significant and substantial, numbering approximately 20,000 single items. Only a small number of these are on display in the Shoe Museum, with the Trust responsible for the collection management of the remainder of the collection. The earliest items date back to leather fragments (found locally) from the Roman period, with a similarly small number of medieval artefacts also held. The majority of the collection dates from the 1800s, and includes shoes manufactured by Clarks, K Shoes and others from elsewhere in the Europe and America. Of particular interest are the Second World War shoes by Clarks and other companies, which experimented with wooden hinged soles with rubber grips, designed to reduce leather use during wartime restrictions. An ethnographical collection of shoes from around the world is also held, including examples from Alaska to Zanzibar. Although many items are held on loan, items also continue to be donated by members of the public via the Shoe Museum, and new accessions of selected styles from the latest Clarks seasons (men's, women's, kids, sport and Originals) are taken on a regular basis. Existing duplication within the collection is being weeded out as part of the relocation project (along with an initial condition survey, rearrangement and reclassification). Similarly, new collecting criteria are being applied to all current and future Clarks accessions, whereby only shoes of significant sales' levels, construction, design or material will be accepted into the permanent collection.

Costume collection

The Trust also holds two family costume collections thought to be of national significance, namely those of William Stephens Clark's daughter Margaret Clark Gillett (1878-1962) and his niece-in-law Helen Horne Clark (1900-1997). These mainly contain nineteenth century items of female domestic costume (Quaker dress). The collection was appraised and provisionally catalogued in spring 2010 by Anna Vaughan Kett of the University of Bristol, who has used the collection in her PhD research 'Quaker Women and the Material Culture of Abolition in Britain: the Wedgwood Slave Medallion and Free Produce Cotton, 1780s-1830s'.

Fossil collection

The extensive collection of fossils in the care of the Trust has not been seen

on public display since the closure of the museum at the Crispin Hall in 1948, although occasional private viewings have been held. The collection will form the centre piece of the Trust's new home at The Grange (see below) and will be available on display on a rotational basis due to space constraints. Many of the specimens were collected by Alfred Gillett (1814-1904), an ironmonger from nearby Langport who was related to the Clarks through his maternal grandmother Elizabeth Clark Isaac, aunt of Cyrus and James Clark. The specimens collected both resemble and rival those of nearby Lyme Regis, and, with other specimens from other members of the Clark family and also the British Museum, formed the nucleus of the museum in the newly opened Crispin Hall in 1887. The collection has been little used in research terms although recently there has been academic interest from the University of Cambridge, and two study days were held in 2009 and 2010 by the UK's Geological Curators' Group. The current expert on the collection is Dr Michael Taylor, who until 2009 was Principal Curator of Vertebrate Palaeontology at National Museums Scotland.

New build and Trust HQ project

The wide scope and variety of the collections provide some challenges in preservation and collection management. These will be partly addressed in the recent new-build project, which has resulted in a newly constructed passive archive building to hold the archive and museum collections. Funded entirely by the Trust, the new building will contain four large strongrooms with approx. 3,300 metres of mobile shelving to contain the historic shoes, point of sales, pictures and plans, and family and business archives. The adjacent Grade Two listed building The Grange, purchased by C & J Clark in the late nineteenth century in order to expand the neighbouring factory site, will accommodate the public and staff facilities of the Trust within nearly 1,000 square metres of space. These will include two permanent exhibition rooms (primarily for the fossil collection), a staffed reading-room, seminar and meeting rooms, staff offices and cataloguing/accessioning areas. It is hoped that the shoe museum may in the future relocate to a new site in the adjacent Tithe Barn, which is also owned by the Trust. A second phase of new-build storage would also follow.

Into the future

Once the long-term preservation of the collections has been secured

following the current collection relocations into the Trust's new premises, further attention will be given to increasing the profile of the collections both within the immediate locality and also nationally and internationally. Academics and schools are key target groups, as well as company pensioners throughout the Southwest. The Trust is collaborating with Somerset Voices (the county oral history project based at nearby Glastonbury Rural Life Museum) in a small-scale oral history project to interview former company employees, and it is hoped that this will be extended by the Trust in subsequent years. Family members will also be targeted and it is anticipated that additional family archives will be added to the collections in the future. Conservation work on shoe and archive collections will be undertaken, as well as the purchasing of new items to plug known gaps in the collections.

A second priority is to continue to build up positive links with the company, both within Street and further field on global scale. A major three year digitisation project is planned for the near future, encompassing the shoe collection, the shoe catalogues, point of sale, company newspapers and the film and sound collections. These will be accessed through a new collection management software to be made available through a company intranet, making the Trust's resources available at low resolution in the US and Asia, as well as Europe. Public access of some description may follow at a later point, with new Archives Hub and National Register of Archives' entries increasing the profile of the archive collections. With such rich and diverse collections made more readily exploitable and accessible, the company, family and local community will be in a very strong position to begin to celebrate the 200th anniversary of C & J Clark Ltd in 2025.

Further reading

C & J Clark Ltd, *Clarks of Street, 1825-1950* (Street, Somerset, 1950).

S. Crookenden, *K Shoes – the first 150 years 1842-1992* (Kendal, 1992).

A. Fingers, *Clarks in Jamaica* (London, 2012).

S. Holton, *Quaker women: personal life, memory and radicalism in the lives of women friends, 1780-1930* (London, 2007).

B. Lehane, *C and J Clark 1825-1975* (Street, Somerset, 1975).

M. McGarvie, *The book of Street: a history from the earliest times to 1925* (Buckingham, 1987).

E. H. Milligan, *Biographical dictionary of Quakers in commerce and industry 1775-1920* (York, 2007).

M. Palmer, *Clarks: Made to last: the story of Britain's best-known shoe firm* (London, 2013, forthcoming).

D. Urquhart and C. Hubbock, *The Clarks Desert Boot – 50 years of style* (Street, Somerset, 2000).

Owners of The Heritage Collection are passionate collectors of fine art & antiques. Their aim had been to restore the splendor of historical estates. The Heritage Collection commissioned French interior designer, Jacques Garcia to restore all its properties both in Italy and France. Antiquities aficionado, especially of 17th and 18th centuries, his passion for precious materials, the trademark blend of styles and elegance of his designs all made Garcia a perfect choice whom to entrust the delicate historical estates. For interior design enthusiasts, Monsieur Garcia requires no introduction. In the course of his long and outstanding career, he has left his mark on the finest hotels and private residences. The Alfred Gillett Trust based in Street, Somerset was established in 2002 to care for the heritage collections of C&J Clark Ltd and the Clark family which established the globally-recognised shoe company. The collections are varied and include family and business archives, shoe catalogues, point of sale materials, fossils, artwork and furniture, costume, film and sound archives, and a large collection of historic shoes and shoe making machinery. Our Mission is to share the rich history of Street's shoe industry, demonstrating the principles of stewardship, integrity and community-mindedness.