

Important archive of the Somerset family, Barons Raglan accepted for the nation

The family archive has been accepted for the nation by the Welsh Ministers in lieu of inheritance tax.

The archive includes the military and personal correspondence of FitzRoy Somerset, 1st Baron Raglan (1788 -1855) who died near Sevastopol in the Crimea. FitzRoy Somerset was one of the most distinguished British military commanders of the 19th Century. He served for over four decades as the aide-de-camp and military secretary to the 1st Duke of Wellington.

The archive provides very significant detail as to Somerset's relationship with Wellington immediately after Waterloo. The collection also contains extensive family correspondence and papers illustrating the influence and interests of a prominent family during the 19th and 20th centuries.

Welcoming the news, Ken Skates said:

"I am delighted that this collection will be permanently housed at Gwent Archives. It is a superb addition to their collections, providing a wonderfully rich resource for the study of an enormously significant period in British military history. It also provide fascinating insights into the life of the Somerset family over several generations."

Tony Hopkins, County Archivist at Gwent Archives said:

"This is an outstanding collection and we are privileged to be entrusted with it. The Raglan archive is without doubt a collection of national and international importance and a huge boost to the cultural resources of the area. The people of Gwent can take great pride in it."

The Acceptance in Lieu (AIL) scheme enables taxpayers to transfer works of art and important heritage items, such as the Raglan Archive, into public ownership in full or part payment of their inheritance tax. In Wales, these items must be approved by the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure, who is advised by the Acceptance in Lieu UK Panel.

The panel consists of independent experts, who seek specialist advice on the object offered. The Panel operates on behalf of the Welsh Government in Wales and often co-ordinates with the Museums, Archives and Libraries Division.

The AIL Panel Chairman, Edward Harley said:

“The Acceptance in Lieu scheme continues to secure exceptional art and cultural objects for the nation. I’m delighted that this fascinating archive, which documents the military careers and achievements of the first Lord Raglan and the first Duke of Wellington in connection with the Peninsular War, the Napoleonic Wars and the Crimean War, will be permanently retained at Gwent Archives.”