

Peterborough Local Studies and Archives Service



Annual Report 2009-2010

Contents

	Page
1. Summary	3
2. Service Growth	3
3. Customer Service	4
4. Outreach and events	4
5. Special Projects	7
6. Archive Accessions	9
7. Archive Cataloguing	11
8. Microfilming	12
9. Local Studies Book Stock	12
10. Self Assessment	12
11. Staffing	13
12. Volunteers	13
13. Work Experience Students	13
14. Conclusion	14

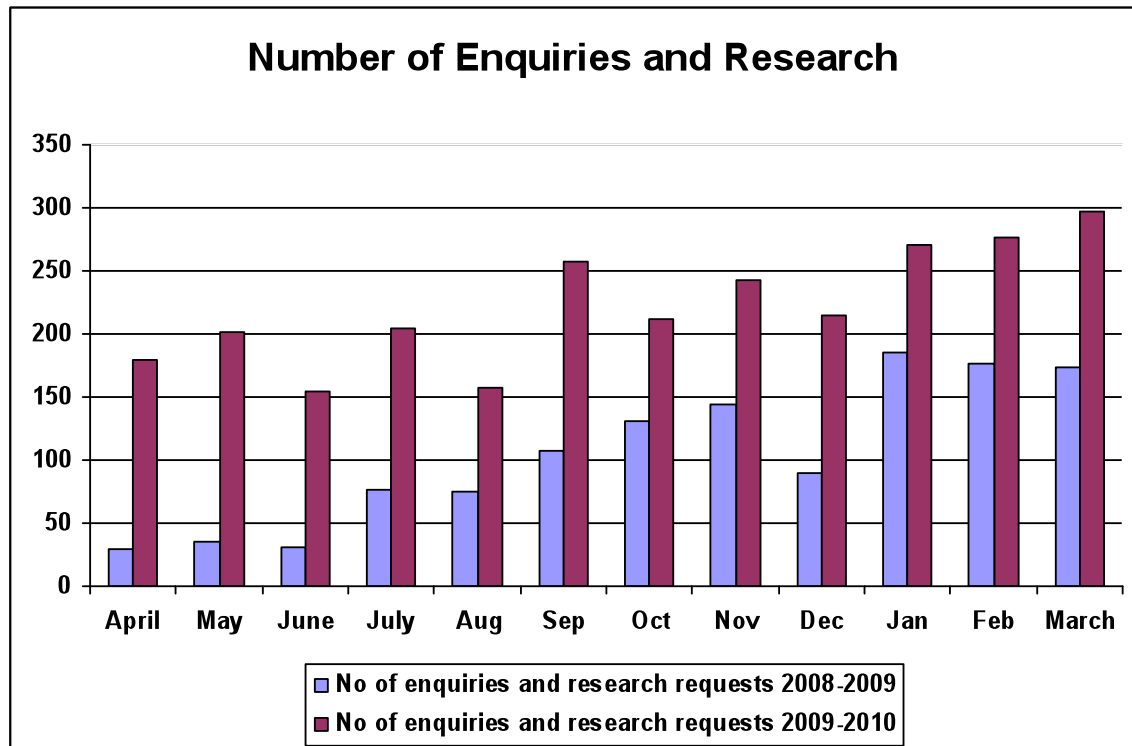
1. Summary

It has been a busy year for the Local Studies and Archives Service. We are now well established in our new area of the Central Library and have therefore focused on raising the profile of the service through our outreach and events programme. This has been successful and uptake of our services has risen dramatically as a result. The highlights of our programme have undoubtedly been our popular local studies lecture programme and our Young Cultural Creators Project through which we have been able to engage with hard to reach 16-19 year olds, using our archive collections to improve literacy, inspire creativity and encourage learning through local history.

The Local Studies and Archives Service has become a busy, vibrant and growing part of the Central Library. This would not be possible without the hard work of the staff, depositors and volunteers. It is my pleasure to record my thanks to them and I look forward to continuing to work with them.

2. Service Growth

2.1 Enquires and Research Services



Growth of the service continues at a swift pace, which is illustrated through an analysis of our enquiries and research service (above). A comparison of March 2010 with the previous year shows a 71% increase in total numbers.

This growth is due to the refurbishment of the ground floor of the Central Library which was completed in June 2008. This brought together the archives service with local studies and family history into a dedicated research space. This enabled us to consolidate and offer a solid and rounded user experience.

The growth is also due to our widening programme of events, activities and outreach that has successfully raised the profile of the service and widened the customer base.

2.2 Onsite use of the local studies and archives room

The Local Studies and Archives Room is currently manned by a member of staff from 9-5 on weekdays and on alternate Saturdays. Outside of these times when the library is open, access is to self-service local and family history materials. Appointments for archives are still encouraged to ensure the materials are continuously supervised during access.

Detailed statistics on usage of the local studies and archives room have been kept from June 2009 following the introduction of a visitor's book which all users are asked to sign. The visitor's book also reflects a very similar growth pattern in the service where in July 2009 we averaged 6 customers per day, 7 months later in February 2010 we averaged 10 customers per day showing a growth of 66%. Most of these customers are with us for a lengthy stay involving in depth research support from our staff.

3. Customer Service

We continue to provide a high standard of customer service which is illustrated through an analysis of some of our key performance indicators:

- 99% of research and enquiries are actioned within 2 working days of receipt
- 98% of archive appointments are accommodated within 5 working days of request
- 100% of original documents are produced to customers within 15 minutes of order

4. Outreach and events

4.1 Adults

Informal Adult Learning continues to be at the core of our service provision. The local studies resources and archives that we hold are open to everyone to come and use for any research purpose. Interestingly, 85% of our current users are motivated to access the archive collections out of a personal interest, 10% use the archives to support their formal education and 5% use them in connection with their business or work. It is worth highlighting that those that come out of personal interest are motivated to use our resources for the sheer enjoyment of

doing so. They use the archives for personal gain, ultimately for the sense of well-being that perusing their topic of interest gives to them.

To support this informal learning process we have launched a series of complimentary activities for adults which aim to:

- Encourage our existing user base to diversify their local and family history interests
- Encourage new take up of our services
- Promote learning using local history, family history and archives
- Interpret our collections and make them relevant to people
- Foster a sense of pride in Peterborough
- Contribute to the health and well being agendas

Local History Talks

These have been developed by one of our volunteers Stephen Perry who has delivered 10 superb local history talks over the year. The topics have covered some familiar favourites including the histories of four well known Peterborough streets, but have also broken new ground in uncovering some hidden histories, including that of Peterborough's hospitals. Audience numbers average at 80 per talk and peaked in December 2009, when 120 people listened to Stephen's research on Peterborough's workhouses. The talks have also raised the service's profile in the media with seven double page spreads on the local history covered by the talks. We remain extremely grateful to Stephen for his hard work, enthusiasm and commitment to presenting Peterborough's heritage as something to be enjoyed and celebrated.

We are also grateful to Stuart Orme, who tied in with our Crime and Punishment theme in November 2009 by delivering his excellent Crime and Punishment Talk.

Street history workshops

Leading from Stephen's talks the service has run a series of street history workshops to encourage people who attended the talks to come and have a go themselves. These were well received and will be run again.

Preservation Workshops

One of the key aspects of the archives service is providing an environment in which Peterborough's precious written heritage is preserved for present and future generations. We have sought to share our expertise in preservation techniques to learners through our newly developed preservation workshops in which participants learn how to take care of their own family memorabilia (family photographs, letters, diaries, newspaper cuttings) in an archive friendly way. As an added bonus, participants also learn the importance of caring for recent family photographs in a way that ensure they will last through a practical session with a Creative Memories Consultant. The success of these preservation workshops means we are now running the sessions four times per year.

Family History Courses

Family history continues to be the most popular research and leisure pursuit of our users. The local studies and archives room seeks to be a centre of excellence for encouraging and supporting family history researchers. To this end we have developed a Family History Basics Course and a Family History Next Steps Course which have run over 8 weeks on Monday evenings. These have been developed and delivered in partnership with the Peterborough and District Family History Society and we are indebted to Michael Kennelly and Ewan Cappitt for sharing their knowledge and experience by delivering 6 out of the 8 sessions. Due to their popularity these courses are due to run again in the Autumn of 2010.

Educational visits

We have also put on bespoke events for interested community groups and groups in formal education settings.

These have included two visits from the University of the Third Age (U3A)'s Family History Group and an annual induction for students enrolled on Peterborough Regional College's Landscape and Archaeology Degree Students.

Exhibitions

We have recently developed a small exhibitions area in our local studies and archives room to promote and interpret our collections. Over the year, we have had exhibitions on Peterborough's women's history; 1930s school records; World War Two; crime and punishment and the Peterborough Feoffees.

We are very grateful to Peterborough Museum for the loan of some boards for the World War Two exhibition and for the loan of their Crime and Punishment exhibition.

We are also very grateful to our volunteer Kathryn Gilbert who put together the Peterborough Feoffees exhibition.

In 2010 we intend to use the exhibition space as an area where community groups interested in Peterborough's heritage can produce displays and promote their activities as a means of strengthening our links within Peterborough's neighbourhoods.

4.2 Children

Over this year we have run children's holiday activities on medieval manuscripts which were well attended and we are grateful to Peterborough Museum for the loan of their medieval 'Book of Hours' to compliment examples from our holdings. Our most popular children's event was our Harry Potter inspired potions sessions

which we had maximum uptake for over the Summer holidays. This was a joint event run in partnership with the Central Library events team and Flag Fen. Our contribution was a session based on the Victorian prescription books of a local chemist.

4.3 Family Learning

Over the Summer we also ran our family learning 'Family History Detective' trail where parents or grandparents support their children in working through clues using our sources. From this every participant goes away having learnt basic skills in family history research. Over 30 families participated in these activities.

We also had a one-off World War Two day in September 2009 where over 100 attendees came to enjoy our interactive displays. They also learnt about rationing, and got to taste war time foods and have a go at toy making. Special practical family sessions were held on 'Dig for Victory' and 'Make Do and Mend'.

5. Special Projects

5.1 Harry Potter Inspired Event for Vulnerable Children

In the Summer 2009, we used our Harry Potter inspired children's activities as a basis for bidding for funds from Children's Services to run joint library/archive learning sessions for vulnerable children. Our bid was successful and we had 20 children referred to us to take part in the event. Outcomes were that a number of the participants became library members and joined the library's summer reading challenge. The children were introduced to archives for the first time, and saw how local history can be fun and relevant.

5.2 Young Cultural Creators

Following a successful library/archive funding bid to the Museum's Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), we received just over £1000 to deliver a project to students aged 16-19 year olds from the Mansfield Skills Centre. The students were on the Centre's E2E (Entry to Employment) programme. The majority of the students have been out of mainstream education for a while or have not had a good experience when they were at school. Our Young Cultural Creators Project can be summarized as:

- A creative literacy initiative to encourage children and young people who are not in mainstream education to find out more about libraries and archive collections, in the company of a published poet.
- Use of First World War (WW1) archives as inspiration for the production of poetry, lyrics and drama.
- Publication of poetry in *The Trenches, 1914-1918*, alongside images from the archive collections.
- A celebration event to recognize the achievements of the participants.
- A performance by Peterborough's Poet Laureate Michael Ricardi (Mixy) at the celebration to inspire the students to build on their achievements. With

- original hip hop lyrics including a rendition of his own work inspired by the First World War.
- A certificate and copy of *The Trenches* given to the students at the celebration, plus 125 copies to give away.
 - A poetry performance from eight of the students at the celebration event.

The outcomes of the project were:

- Students with no pre-interest in libraries and archives found that they are enjoyable and you can learn from them.
- Students with no knowledge of the First World War connected to the subject and learnt about its history in a creative way.
I have enjoyed learning more about the town where I live, I saw pictures of old times that now are totally different.
- Hip-hop based on history was found to be an effective tool to inspire the participants.
- Students with low literacy levels learnt how to write poetry and were able to produce their own work.
Best thing about today was learning how to build on a poem.
- Students with low self esteem had their confidence boosted through the publication of their poetry and having their achievements recognised through the celebration event.
- Students with low confidence and communication difficulties found they were able to perform to an audience of over 50 people in a formal theatre setting.
There is talent in us youngsters. My mum told me she was proud and that I should carry it out as a career. My step-dad brought a card for me with my mum saying that they were all proud. I am proud of myself, I achieved confidence through performing and I would suggest these events happen more often. It really does bring out the best in people.

5.3 Forty Years On – Heritage Lottery Bid

Our Archive Strategy sets out our clear commitment to working on projects that will strengthen community cohesion and target hard to reach groups. To this end we are developing a project called 'Forty Years On' in partnership with the theatre company [Eastern Angles](#).

A phase one application to the Heritage Lottery Fund has been successful and we now have development money which enables us to work with the consultancy firm [Creative Cultures](#) to develop our action plan. We are looking to secure a full grant of £150,000 to run a two and a half year project.

The Forty Years On Project is grounded in the Peterborough Development Corporation Archive. This fascinating collection charts the major changes that took place in the City in the 1970s and 1980s. We will be training volunteers to

assist in preserving this collection and making it accessible using the innovative 'Re-visiting Collections' cataloguing methodology.

We will also be looking for a team of volunteers to undertake oral history interviews. Initially we will focus on three areas in Peterborough that were impacted by the Development Corporation – Werrington, Bretton and the Ortons. We will be looking to capture the views of long standing residents, people who moved in during the 1970s and 1980s, and recent new comers.

We will then extend the oral history element to reach a wider range of communities that have made Peterborough their home from the 1970s onwards. The oral history transcripts will then be used to create community plays, developed by Eastern Angles, to tell the story of modern Peterborough as spoken by its own residents.

5.4 Online access to catalogues

Following our recent purchase of the internet module for our archive management system, we are aiming to get our archive catalogues online for September 2010.

5.5 Kitchin 2010

We have recently undertaken a partnership project with the Peterborough Photographic Society and the University of the Third Age's (U3A)'s photographic group to re-trace Kitchin's steps and re-create modern equivalents of his most loved 1960s photographs. Initial then and now comparisons are coming in and they provide a fascinating snapshot of how Peterborough has changed over the last 40 to 50 years.

6. Archives Accessions

We have taken in 31 new accessions since April 2009. The following accessions are particularly worth highlighting:

6.1 Peterborough Police Records

These records have been transferred to us from Cambridgeshire Archives Service as part of our ongoing programme to transfer appropriate Peterborough material to us. I would like to thank Cambridgeshire Archives and in particular, Lesley Akeroyd and Philip Saunders, for their support and for sharing their expertise with us. The records transferred over the last year consist of:

- City of Peterborough Police Force (1874-1947)
- Liberty of Peterborough Police Force (1874-1947)
- Peterborough Combined Police Force (1947-1965)

The City of Peterborough Police material includes a wonderful 'Register of Pervious Convictions 1889-1922' which contains mug shots of criminals

alongside personal descriptions and details of crimes. We have already made extensive use of extracts from this in our exhibitions, local history lecture programme, our visit from the U3A, our family history courses and our work with hard to reach young people.

6.2 *Park Road Baptist Church*

Another transfer from Cambridgeshire, this substantial collection charts the history of this important non-conformist Church from 1856-1993. Stephen Perry has already used the collection as part of his talk on World War One to tell the story of Arthur Streuli, a Reverend of the church with German connections.

6.3 *Peterborough School Records*

Also from Cambridgeshire, we have received a range of school records. These are mostly made up of log books and admission registers and cover the following local schools:

Bainton School
Brook Street Infants School
Cobden Street British School
Cromwell Road Council Girls/Senior Girls School
Cromwell Road School
Eastholm County Schools
Girls' Central National School
Helpston School Board
John Mansfield Girls Secondary School
Lincoln Road School, Junior Boys, Senior Boys School
Lincoln Road Girls School
Lincoln Road/St Pauls School
London Road Nursery School
Longthorpe CE School
Marholm School
Maxey School Board
Maxey CP School
Millfield British School
New England Infants School
New England Walpole Street School
Newark CE School, (including St Mary's Evening School)
Northborough School Board
Orchard Street (Woodston) Council School
St John the Baptist CE Girls' School
St John's Infants' School
St Mark's Infants' School
St Peter's College Practising School
Thornhaugh School

Material from Dogsthorpe School has also been donated separately.

6.4 Peterborough Dance Bands Material

Godfrey Faux was a part of the Peterborough 'dance band' circuit. This small collection gives a wonderful impression of the dance band scene in the 1940s and 1950s and includes his diary for 1945 with full details of venues where he played. The collection also includes photographs and postcards of dance band members.

7. Archive Cataloguing

Due to the need to invest in raising our profile and establishing a co-ordinated outreach and events programme, it has been a quiet year for cataloguing. Thanks to the hard work of staff and highly trained volunteers we have completed the following:

Bainton School – PAS/BAI

Admission Registers and Log Books, 1877-1935

Cobden Street British School – PAS/CSBS

Log Books, 1880-1908

Cromwell Road School – PAS/CROM

Log books, Register of summaries, Admission registers, 1908-1948

Godfrey Faux (Dance Bands) – PAS/FDB

This collection contains correspondence, photographs, newspaper articles, memories and other personal items relating to Godfrey Faux's involvement with Dance Bands in Peterborough, 1940-1991

Helpston School Board - PAS/HEL

Minute Book, 1892-1903

John Mansfield School – PAS/JMS

Summary Registers and Admission Registers, 1957-1962

Lincoln Road School – PAS/LRS

Admission Registers, Summary Registers, Log Books, School Record Book, Loose papers, 1911-1974

Longthorpe Church of England School – PAS/LONG

Log Books and Admission Registers, 1888-1955

Maxey School Board – PAS/MAX

Minutes books and administration documents, 1876-1969

Millfield School – PAS/MILL

Log Book, 1897-1908

Northborough School Board – PAS/NOR
Minute Books, 1875-1903

Orchard Street School – PAS/ORC
Log books, correspondence, reports, minute book, 1907-1986

Peterborough British School – PAS/PBS
Brook Street Council School Log Book, Eastholm County School Minute Book,
1890-1972

Peterborough National School – PAS/PNS
Peterborough Girls Central National School Log Books, 1891-1916

World War Two Nursery Schools – PAS/NURS
Admission Register and School record book, 1946-1955

8. Microfilming

We continue to film the *Peterborough Evening Telegraph* and *Peterborough Citizen* through 'Store-a-file' of Leicester; the most recent filming being for the twelve months April 2008-Mar 2009. We continue to monitor the professional position on digitisation versus microfilming, and receive the Minutes of the eastern area NEWSPLAN Committee.

9. Local Studies Book Stock

We have arranged, as usual, the purchase of appropriate books for Local Studies lending and reference stock, mostly through our contracted suppliers (Bertrams). Two notable books published in time for Christmas were both reproductions of old photographs of Peterborough, and contained acknowledgements to us. There have also been several new academic works on John Clare.

We also monitor the publication of general books on family history, and purchase (for lending and/or reference) any that seem most appropriate, especially those with a comprehensive coverage of sources or records more relevant to us, such as the revised edition of Hawkings' "*Railway ancestors*".

About 35 books were sent for binding and or repair. 'Scenic' binding is more frequently used for lending stock, which preserves their covers within the binding, thus making them more attractive to a reader. Binding is intended to prolong the life of a book, and strengthens them against excessive pressure often exerted by the public when photocopying or scanning.

10. Self Assessment

The Archive Service is committed to taking part in the National Archives' Self Assessment Programme and we are currently rated as a three star service

(maximum four stars). This forms the benchmark for our service and informs all our planning including our improvement plans and archives strategy as well as our annual business plans. The next exercise is due to take place in September 2010.

11. Staffing

Staffing has remained stable during this financial year. The Archives Officer currently works 22 hours a week in a job-share post. The remaining 15 hour post has remained frozen.

Richard Hillier continues to work as Local Studies Librarian, also on a part-time basis, doing 35 hours a week.

The full-time Archives Assistant post continues to be a job share between Elisabeth Kingston and Gail Richardson who each do 18.5 hours.

12. Volunteers

The service is indebted to the work of its volunteers who give up their time, enthusiasm, and expertise to support our service. This year our volunteers have been:

Ongoing:

Stephen Perry	Local History research and talks	(2 days per week)
Jo Harrison	Cataloguing	(half day per week)
Marion Brassington	Cataloguing	(1 day a month)

Special project volunteers:

Sinead Stringwell	John Thompson Archive	(1 year/1 day per week)
Kathryn Gilbert	Feoffees exhibition	(3 months/1 day per week)
Michael Kennelly	Family History Course	(4 months/1 day per week)
Ewan Cappitt	Family History Course	(4 months/1 day per week)
Gill Parsons	WW2 Day	(2 weeks prep/1 day)
Denise Jeffery	WW2 Day	(2 weeks prep/1 day)
Samantha Poole	WW2 Day	(1 day)
Trevor Sexton	WW2 Day	(2 weeks prep/1 day)

13. Work experience students

We have welcomed Hannah Moody from Stanground College for one week's work experience and Oliver Leighton from King's School for two weeks.

We have also supported Ben Henderson on his Duke of Edinburgh award scheme.

14. Conclusion

This has been a substantial year of growth for the Local Studies and Archives Service and we have made inroads in developing our outreach and events programme. We look forward to the year ahead where our move into the Cultural Trust will bring new opportunities, partnerships and progress.

Anna Sexton
April 2010