

Archives Access Plan 2016: Q3 update

Welcome to this third quarterly update on our 2016 Access Plan. In this update you will find more information about how we have been progressing with the actions outlined in the Access Plan, as well as details of some new projects and activities which have arisen since the second update in early July. As with our previous update, numbers in brackets in this document refer back to the relevant strategic objectives on our [Access Plan](#).

One thing to note is that we are moving our reporting timeframe from calendar years to financial years, to bring us into line with the rest of Explore. As a result, our 2016 Access Plan will now run for 15 months (through to March 2017). We have added in a number of additional objectives to take account of this.

Archives and Local History Public Service update

Headline numbers

- 20,824 visitors to Archives and Local History in Q3
- 474 onsite archives encounters, including 115 archive researchers.
- 635 offsite encounters, including talks and presentations held outside of Explore.
- We retrieved 413 documents in Q3 2016 – our numbers continue to hold strongly.
- Numbers of enquiries have dropped from 272 in Q3 last year to 191 over the same period this year. Again, this seems to be due to the success of the new website and online catalogue.

Creation of surrogate copies of our collections

Work is continuing to microfilm the 16,000 fragile newspaper pages and scan and print 400 map copies to help us vastly improve our open access service. We are still awaiting confirmation of when the materials will be back on-site, and will make an announcement about that as soon as possible.

In addition, over the next few months we will be looking to catalogue our remaining Ordnance Survey maps, making them available to view in the Archives Reading Room.

Staffing changes

As we mentioned in our quarter 2 Access Plan update Justine Winstanley-Brown, our Archivist for Civic and Public Records, left us in May to pursue a legal career. We are pleased to announce that Catriona Cannon joined us in early August as our new Archivist. Catriona has relocated from London, where she spent three years with the Royal Opera House Archives and has previously worked in archives in Europe too.

On 26th September we also welcomed Dr Julie-Ann Vickers to the team. Julie-Ann has joined us as our Past Caring? Project Archivist funded by Wellcome and will be with us for the next two years working on our Poor Law, Union Workhouse and Department of Health records. (3)

On 30th September we said goodbye to David Burton, our Project Delivery Manager on the *York: Gateway to History* project. David has been instrumental in getting the project delivered on time and on budget, and we thank him for all his contributions.

Volunteer update

Headline numbers for July – September 2016

- **33** Archives Support volunteers and one Family History Buddy supporting the front-line ALH service, offering us **613** hours of their time this quarter (9).
- **5** student placements from York St John's University, University of York and University of Leeds (**294** hours). (1, 9 and 11)
- **Seven** days of work experience offered to school children (**32** hours).
- **One** digitisation volunteer and **eight** volunteers from the Civic Trust working on the Hugh Murray collection (**97** hours).
- As a result, we have had a total of **51** people offering their time to the Archives and Local History service in the last three months. This equates to a total of **1004** hours. (9)

Volunteer projects

Work will be progressing on the card catalogue project over the coming few months, as we start to import batches of information from the cards into our online catalogue.

Over the last three months our front-line volunteers have finished cataloguing all our Special Collections books (11). Details of all our Special Collections book stock can now be found on the online library catalogue. The books are marked as 'Local History Reserve.'



Work has now begun on cataloguing one of our recent accessions from the photographer Frank Pick. The c.15,000 envelopes of original negatives contained in the collection were created as part of Pick's role as a news photographer in the later 20th century. We expect this work to be a longer-term project for our volunteers, but one which will most likely be released in sections.

We have also begun work to physically re-label the Civil Defence records in preparation for making the files available to the public in the Archives Reading Room. Our September Archives Blitz-It day began this work, and saw around 300 files (approximately one quarter of the overall collection) re-labelled and re-boxed.

Project news

Past Caring?

As reported above, our Past Caring? project began at the end of September 2016. Julie-Ann is still in the process of getting acquainted with our records, but over the next quarter she will be focussing on researching and cataloguing the Poor Law Union and Workhouse records. She will be giving a Mint Yard Lecture about the project at beginning of December – tickets are now on sale from our libraries so please do join us to find out more.

In order to facilitate Julie-Ann's research, the Poor Law Union and Workhouse records were temporarily taken off public access on Monday 10th October. We anticipate the records being unavailable for around 18 months to allow time for both cataloguing and some much-needed conservation work, but watch this space for announcements. (3)

Find My Past digitisation

The digitisation of our records by FamilySearch was completed in July, ahead of schedule. The digital files have now been sent to Find My Past for indexing, and once that work has been completed we will set a date to launch our records on their system, most likely in the first half of 2017. More information about how that work is progressing will be issued in future Access Plan updates. (10 and 22).

Hugh Murray Project First anniversary

In early September we marked an important milestone in our volunteering project with the York Civic Trust to catalogue the archive of local historian Hugh Murray. The project has now been running for a year, and the volunteers are approximately two-thirds of the way through box-listing the collection, which includes some 200,000 negatives and slides of York and the surrounding area.

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We celebrated the milestone with a tea-party in the cafe at York Explore with some of the volunteers. We really admire their hard work and dedication when faced with quite so many images!!



Cataloguing update (9)

Making our collections accessible – the Headlines

- 33 community collections catalogued in Q3
- Includes three newly-acquired collections and further deposits to another two.
- Work has continued on the c.1,200 civil defence entries, and back-end processing is currently taking place on our Streets and Buildings files for release in Q4.
- Full list of newly-catalogued collections available as appendix 1

Pamphlet collection

In our Q2 update we mentioned we would be moving on to look at our pamphlet collections after work had finished on the Special Collections material. Whilst work has already begun, the pamphlets, amounting to some 500 boxes, require specialist appraisal by archivists before they can be catalogued (see our Access Plan Q2 update for more details). Due to other commitments this specialist appraisal has been slightly delayed, but a project will be scoped in Q4 to allow work to begin on cataloguing the pamphlets as soon as possible.

Partnership working

Over the course of this quarter we have:

- hosted the Archives and Records Association Northern Region day-conference, entitled 'Never work with Children and Animals.' The conference acts as CPD for the local archive profession.
- continued to support York High School with their exhibition 'More than just the Somme' in the community exhibition space at the Castle Museum by lending them our World War One Touring banners. The exhibition has been extended and is now due to finish in October 2016. (11)
- attended the York Cultural Learning partnership at York Explore, where we were introduced to a number of potential future partners for interactive children's projects.
- supported a three day children's animation workshop hosted by colleagues in Explore and animators Glass Cannon. (10, 11 and 16).
- provided images from our newspaper collections to the York Press for their commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the death of Norma Dale in Tang Hall. (11)
- began a partnership with the York Press Features editor, providing him with images for his ongoing 'Yesterday once more' features (11).
- supported the Serious Crime Team of North Yorkshire Police with a number of ongoing historic cases.
- completed our offering as part of the Big City Read programme 2016, working with colleagues from across Explore and external partners. Big City Read will officially launch on 5th October 2016. (11)

Coroner's files

As part of our public records remit we hold coroners files for the City of York area. Many of these files have previously been indexed, however work is underway to catalogue the gap in our records (from c.1970 onwards).

A new coroner has recently been appointed for York, and Catriona has been working with him to establish a process for handling enquiries relating to the records. She is also working to establish a formal process of payment for storage with the coroners office, and a process of providing access to records less than 30 years old. More announcements will be made about that in due course.

With the departure of the previous coroner, we have also taken in the records from 2010-2015, which we will be cataloguing as part of our ongoing work.

New Archives Advisory Group (21)

As reported in our Q2 update, our new Archives Advisory Group has been formed, primarily to support us with fundraising activities and to provide us with help and expertise in taking forward some of our proposed project work.

The Group met in September and at the meeting members were presented with proposals for a number of different projects. Of these, the Group has selected four to pursue over the coming months:

- Cataloguing and preservation of our c.150,000 engineers plans
- Matched funding for the Past Caring? conservation grant
- The conservation of our medieval B/Y memoranda book
- The funding of a two-year graduate trainee post

Members of the Advisory Group will be working with the archives team over the coming months to work-up these proposals into more detailed plans, and to investigate potential funding streams to allow the work to take place.

The other proposals not selected at this time will be kept in reserve, and it is the Group's intention to revisit these plans in the future.

In addition, a further proposal made at the meeting, regarding the conservation of the records of York Gas Company, will be taken forward separately, with a view to submitting a funding bid to the National Manuscripts Conservation Fund in early 2017.

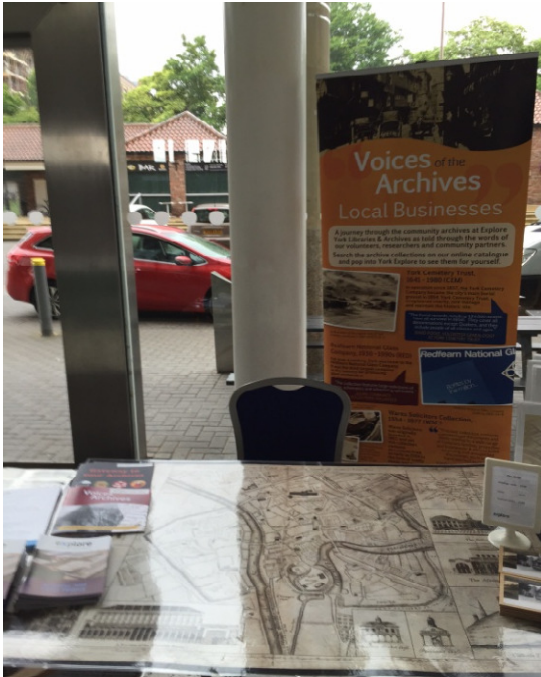
Outreach

Establishment of a Friends' Group (21)

On Tuesday 27th September we held an Open Evening in the Archives for Explore's community members, volunteers and the existing Friends of York City Archives. John Carlill, Chairman of the Archives Advisory Group, gave a presentation about our ambitions as a service over the coming years and introduced the idea of establishing a new Friends of Explore York Archives. The new Friends' Group is to have a focus on fundraising and advocacy, and anyone interested in participating in the group, or being a committee member, can note their interest by emailing archives@exploreYork.org.uk.

Over the course of this quarter we have also:

- attended the Yorkshire Family History Fair at York Racecourse, where we talked to 139 people about our collections. (23)
- installed a temporary exhibition about the Hunt collection of autographed artefacts in the York Explore display case.
- begun using some of our collections with the York Explore dementia reading group, in partnership with the Alzheimers Society (8).
- run nine Local History story boxes sessions for children over the summer in our branch libraries, with a total of 163 attendees (5).
- hosted a corporate Archives Blitz-It for staff of the Hull, York and Newcastle Lombard teams, who helped us catalogue some of our Streets and Buildings files from the civic archive (9 and 11).
- attended the York Food Festival Children's workshops, with an activity based on our collection of Chocolate Letters from 1915. The workshops were attended by eleven schools, who between them brought 491 children (11).
- hosted an Archives Blitz-It session for the York 50+ Festival around our civil defence records, which was attended by 11 people (9 and 11).
- given a tour and archives display for the Friends of York Mansion House, as a volunteer training opportunity (11).
- been interviewed by Radio York about our services as part of their day in the archives (to coincide with the launch of the York Explore online reading group).
- appeared on BBC Look North showcasing our historic newspapers as part of the Norma Dale 70th anniversary commemorations. (11)
- given a talk at National Railway Museum on 'Researching Your First World War ancestors', as part of their series of talks for the Ambulance Trains exhibition (11).
- supported City of York Council by confirming York gave financial assistance to London after the Great Fire of 1666. (11)



left: We had a great spot at the Yorkshire Family History Fair on the Knavesmire!

below left: Our children's animation workshop based on the Hunt Collection proved really popular.

below right: Access Archivist Laura Yeoman is interviewed by BBC Look North's Nicola Rees.



What's to come in Q4....

- Look out for our events in the Big City Read programme, including our First World War themed Archives Blitz-It!
- Keep an eye out for our Explore Your Archives brochure arriving in libraries.
- We will be releasing details of our new Mint Yard Lectures programme for 2017.

Appendix 1: Collections made accessible in Q3

Community Collections

- Acomb Parish Council minutes
- Arnett's Butchers
- Association of Voluntary Guides
- Bleasdale's Chemists
- Ben Johnson's Printers
- Brunswick Hostel
- Castle Area Campaign (new accession)
- Cattley, Ernest, Wood Merchants
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Fulford (Water) Parish Council
- Gray Dodsworth and Cobb Solicitors (part)
- Hodgson's Charitable Trust
- Huntington Local History Group
- Iris Lemare
- John Marriott papers
- Jumiper Communities Ltd Charity
- Kexby Parish Council papers
- Legion of Frontiersmen York
- Liberal Democrats, York (new accession)
- Philip Leeman (new accession)
- Raimes Chemists
- Scout Association (additional deposit)
- Scouts - Poppleton
- Soroptomists International
- The Ramblers Association (new accession)
- Treasurer's House deeds
- York 2000 pressure group
- York Charity Cricket Cups
- York Choral Society
- York Labour Party (additional deposit)
- York Musical Society
- York Railway Lecture and Debating Society
- York Red Cross and St John Penny-a-week fund

Civic collections:

- Y/CUL/1/1-20: Festivals papers, additional materials
- Y/EDU/1/1/10: Appointment of Trustees under the Tithe Act 1936 for Beswick, East Riding
- Y/EDU/5/3: York Public Library additional materials
- Y/PPT/2/2/1/1-411: Streets and buildings files
- Y/PPT/2/5/1-181: Town planning files