

JOINT ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Joint Archives Committee was held on 11 September 2008.

PRESENT:

Councillor P Thompson (Middlesbrough Council), Councillor Mrs M Womphrey (Stockton – on – Tees Borough Council) Councillor V Tumilty (Hartlepool Borough Council) Councillor S Clarke (Redcar & Cleveland)

OFFICIALS:

G Jarret (Hartlepool Borough Council), T Moody, J Tweedy, J Heggie, J Richardson and D Tyrell.

PRESENT AS AN OBSERVER

J Nicholson (Friends of Teesside Archives Group)

****DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest made at this point of the meeting.

****MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Joint Archives Committee held on 24 April 2008 were taken as read and approved as a correct record.

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

Nominations were sought for the appointment of a Chair for the Municipal Year 2008/2009. In accordance with the agreed protocol for the appointment of a Chair on a rota basis the chairmanship transferred to the Member representative from Stockton Borough Council.

Councillor Womphrey in the Chair

BRITISH STEEL ARCHIVES PROJECT

Joan Heggie Project Manager presented a report on the British Steel Archives Project. It was reported that the Project started on 01/04/2008 and had received heritage lottery funding of £250,000.

The Project was a £1.6m initiative that would take three years to complete. The Project started in April 2008 and would finish in December 2010. There were three main objectives:

- Cataloguing – list and identify using bespoke software
- Conservation – restore, repair, protect and digitise the original documents
- Community Engagement – develop educational workshops, projects, exhibitions and other resources.

Iron and steel making had been central to the history and heritage of the Teesside area for 175 years. Teesside companies were involved in some of the world's most prominent civil engineering projects, including the Sydney Harbour Bridge, the Forth Road Bridge and the Tyne Bridge. Many Companies from the area were involved in the development of the industry over the years, including Skinningrove Mines, Bolckow and Vaughan, Bell Brothers, South Durham/Cargo Fleet and the steel giant Dorman Long. Dorman Long acquired many of these other companies, and the enlarged business formed the core of British Steel Teesside. As a result, a huge archive of material was amassed from numerous plants and works across the region.

The collection comprised of:

- Business records
- Minute books
- Photographs
- Engineering drawings
- Maps and plans
- Employee records
- Films
- Artwork and objects

It was noted that with the Councils' help the Collection had been brought together. The Collection was one of the largest in the UK.

The team comprised of full time professionals as well as voluntary workers. The Project had been publicised by issuing leaflets, pens and CDs, all of which included details of the Project to educate as well as gain additional funds through donations and volunteers.

It was noted that the Project was to appear on a forthcoming Inside Out Programme on BBC 1. The exact date was yet to be finalised.

A point was raised in discussion of the possibility that the four authorities could apply for joint funding to aid the Project. A future meeting would investigate the issue further.

The Committee gave thanks for an informative presentation and noted the potential it had to develop the area.

ORDERED

That the information provided be noted.

PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR APRIL - JULY 2008

The Senior Librarian for Middlesbrough Council presented a report to inform the Committee of the Performance report update from April to July 2008, and an update on the 2007 to 2010 Action Plan.

The last inspection of Teesside Archives by the National Archives (TNA) was held in 2002. The next had been arranged for October 2008. In 2006 the inspection regime was supplemented by an annual self-assessment, scored by the TNA. The current year was completed and sent to the TNA at the end of July.

There were currently no statutory indicators or standards relating to archives services. A C.I.P.F.A return was required on an annual basis. Local indicators had been agreed by the Joint Archives Committee on 24 April 2008. The range of work undertaken by Teesside Archives was varied and included conservation and outreach work.

The projected outturn for the 2008 to 2009 revenue budget was neutral. Concerns raised over the allocated budget were being addressed and the Committee would be updated as this progressed.

A three-year action plan from 2007 to 2010 was approved on the 7 February 2008. A total of 21 actions had now been completed or were in progress. Details of these were given in Appendix B.

The most significant of these were:

- Provision of additional storage
- Adaptation of a room previously used for storage as an education room, which enabled much larger groups to be accommodated and was leading to a rise in the number of users of the service
- The start of the British Steel Project, which was launched in June, of which all staff had now been appointed

- Installation of CALM cataloguing system

The number of visitors to Teesside Archives during the period was 1972 compared to 1890 for the same period last year. There were a total of 36 accessions of archive material during the period.

There had been a total of 39 events/talks/visits/displays over the period. A number of local shows and fairs had been attended including the Normanby Local History Fair, the East Middlesbrough Family Event and the Cleveland Show.

Conservation had been carried out on a variety of archives in the last four months in order to make them available to the public for research. In total 582 items were repaired, cleaned and repackaged; 275 of these were specifically from one of the four boroughs.

It was noted that a further meeting would be scheduled to consider the financial implications of the Report. Details would be distributed shortly.

ORDERED

- 1. That the performance report for April – July 2008 be noted.**
- 2. That the development of the Action Plan 2007 – 2010 be noted.**

DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

It was noted that arrangements had been made for future meetings of the Joint Archives Committee to be held on the following dates in the Spencer Room, Town Hall, Middlesbrough in respect of the remainder of the Municipal Year: -

Thursday 5 February 2009
Thursday 23 April 2009

NOTED AND APPROVED