

## Teesside Archives – Background/Update

1. Established in 1974 when Cleveland County was created and based in Middlesbrough Reference Library to serve the 4 boroughs. Archives were either stored in North Yorkshire or Durham County Record Offices or in various locations around Teesside. The archive service briefly moved to premises in Borough Road before moving to its current location in the mid-1980s. At that point the collections were brought together and continued to grow from there. By the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the service was not keeping up with developments within the profession but in 2008 it secured a partnership with the University to carry out a HLF funded project to catalogue the British Steel Collection.
2. This caused a change to the service with new staff, the introduction of computers and a modernising agenda began. The old paper catalogues have been put onto computer and are now being updated and moved online. Policies for managing the service have all been published and last summer we were awarded Accreditation which is granted to a small percentage of UK archive services. The award was provisional on the basis that problems with our accommodation were addressed, which has been ongoing issue since the building was deemed unsuitable in 2008. The other area where the service is currently weak is in managing born digital records – hence the business case that went to last September's JAC meeting.
3. The service has approximately 30 active volunteers working on collections care, digitising and listing records and we have an active social media presence.
4. Projects we have been involved with include Rememorial WWI, a project to look at the aftermath of WWI with a touring exhibition and talks across Teesside. We sat on the steering committee for Steel Stories in Kirkleatham Museum and provided content for the exhibition which has been well received. The ICI archives were catalogued with the help of volunteers and we attended a community day in Billingham that was very well attended followed by visits to the archives by 3 groups arriving by minibus. Our Conservator is working with Stockton Library service to assist with their project to digitise Head Wrightson negatives. The service engages with Discover Middlesbrough twice a year and has worked with the Town Hall. We have worked with River Tees Rediscovered and engaged with promotional/marketing of Albert Road North and the Ironmasters district. We give an annual talk at Hartlepool Library and have provided them with digital copies of photographs and building plans.

5. Our users are varied, we do have the local and family historians as well as academics, students and schools groups that you would expect. Other users include the Police, Coroner's Office and those using Inquests for research into prevention work (drugs and suicide), Courts, planning departments, rights of way and conservation officers, licencing records, various departments looking for old reports of information on subjects like children's homes etc.
  
6. Recently catalogued collections include all of the Hartlepool Council records including the planning applications and engineering plans which was a major project. Haverton Hill Shipyard Records, ICI which had previously been inaccessible and the records of Cleveland Police. We have also box listed most of our unlisted accessions in order to make the contents discoverable for the first time. Some of our key documents have been digitised including building plans, photographs and negatives as well as parish registers which do now bring in some income.

Ruth Hobbins

Archives Manager

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