

Teesside Archives: Executive Report to JAC

1. Collections

This has been a quieter period with regard to receiving new deposits, which can be viewed on the attached spreadsheet (**Appendix A**). Staff and volunteers continue to work on new material to ensure we do not develop a backlog, and work on other collections. The archivists are working on the records of the Cleveland Child Sex Abuse crisis, a collection of great importance and sensitivity. The closure of the Dorman Museum for maintenance works in January 2024 will allow the team to work on a larger collection, and the plan is to catalogue the records of Redcar & Cleveland Brough Council as they are the largest of our core collections that remain unlisted. The Electoral Registers held by the service, as well as some of those transferred from Middlesbrough Reference Library, are in the process of being digitised. This will ensure the originals are preserved and a fee has been paid by Ancestry to include them in their online resources.

2. Public Access & Outreach

The service has continued to be very busy, and to develop sessions that are covering a wider area, but this does remain a work in progress. **Appendix B** shows the outreach sessions held so far this calendar year, as well as those planned. The Community Engagement Officer has been successful in securing some small grants to help cover costs including as part of a project run by Tees Archaeology on the protected wreck on the beach at Seaton Carew. This has helped with the development of better links in Hartlepool and developed sessions that can be rolled out in other venues going forward. Funding for the development of sessions based on the River Tees has been received from Historic England via Heritage Schools and resources and sessions (including online) are under development. A joint project with Navigator North in Middlesbrough is underway and will result in an exhibition in a central building that focuses on public houses and will include a talk, walk and collection of oral accounts.

3. Conservation & Preservation

The Conservator continues to work to safeguard the collections and has been working on a new Disaster Plan for both the Archives and Dorman Museum, as collections are now in a shared building. Maps and plans have been conserved to enable them to be digitised to support projects such as the preparation of River Tees resources. The Conservator has been able to make a start on the backlog of repair work, as her focus had been on packaging to facilitate the move from Exchange House and dealing with matters arising from that, as well as new material.

4. Digital Preservation

Having reviewed what is currently happening in each Local Authority with regard to born-digital records, it was agreed by the Lead Officers group that there is more work to do before a long-term plan can be proposed. The agreed next step is to revisit the basis on

which records are transferred to the archives in all formats, as they are not being deposited as they should. A meeting with Information & Governance Managers is being arranged so that we can ensure that all appropriate records are transferred going forward to fulfil the duties of partner authorities under the Public Records Act. This work will ensure that all appropriate digital records are identified and a proper mechanism for preservation can be proposed. It is important to ensure that duplicates are not stored in multiple locations as there is a financial and environment cost to this.

5. Marketing & Communications

The current Marketing & Communications Strategy is included as **Appendix C**. The work the service carried out on the Teesworks archives will feature as a Case Study in the campaign ‘A Year in Archives’, which is run by the National Archives and publicised nationally. There are currently plans to mark the 50th anniversary of the founding of the service in 2024 with an exhibition at the Dorman Museum as well as online, and a 50th birthday logo competition which has been picked up by Teesside University with the Graphic Design Students working on it as part of their assessment, as well it being open to the public. The service has been accepted for membership of the Queer Heritage and Collections Network run by the University of Leicester. In addition, there has been Radio and TV coverage for the Sisterwood and Teesworks projects as well as newspaper coverage of the upcoming ‘Les Bulman’ exhibition on public houses.

6. KPIs

In Person Visits to the Archives by Local Authority from April – September 2023:

Local Authority	No. of Visitors	% of total
Hartlepool	38	5.3
Middlesbrough	431	59.9
Redcar & Cleveland	66	9.2
Stockton	103	14.3
Other UK	65	9.1
Rest of the world	16	2.2
TOTAL	719	100%

Total number of document issues (April – September 2023): 924

Total number of enquiries (April – September 2023): 1,166

Engagement Activity delivered by Local Authority from January 2023 – to date:

Local Authority	No. of People	% of total people
Hartlepool	301	8.2
Middlesbrough	2,401	65
Other	99	2.7
Redcar & Cleveland	380	10.3

Stockton	328	8.9
Tees Valley	176	4.9
TOTAL	3,685	100%

Please note that the above figures for Middlesbrough include three major public events in which the Archives participated alongside other partners: Curious Arts Takeover of the Dorman, Hi! Street Fest and Make it More Middlesbrough. The three events reached a combined total of 1,086 people.

7. Future Development of the Service

The Lead Officers have been working with Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) to incorporate feasibility work for the future Archives service into a wider Tees Valley Heritage brief, funded by TVCA. The draft brief has been shared with the Lead Officers for comments / amends and is now awaiting approval from Chief Executives before going out to tender (expected end of November).

The feasibility will focus on exploring and developing robust and sustainable business plans that will help the heritage sector thrive over the next 10 years and beyond. Within this, it will consider the role and accommodation of the Teesside Archives within the area's heritage offering.

We have asked that the feasibility also considers opportunities arising from The National Archives' new strategy (Archives for Everyone 2023-2027). At a recent briefing, TNA advised of their commitment to expanding a greater regional presence to extend the reach of their collections – including the possibility of having a regional hubs.

Bearing in mind that we won't have the outcomes from this work before the 24/25 budget process, the Lead Officers recommend to JAC that we seek a further one-year funding agreement from the four Local Authorities, on the understanding that a longer-term plan for the service is in development.

8. Service Level Agreement & Terms of Reference

The Lead Officers propose to JAC that the SLA & Terms of Reference are not reviewed or changed until we have clarity over our plan for the future development of the Archives as this will likely change the nature of the agreement required. As the current SLA has expired, the Lead Officers propose that this is rolled forward as is until 31 March 2025

9. Funding Agreement

The Lead Officers were asked by the JAC to look at other viable options for funding the Archives service. It proved very difficult to find examples of a joint Local Authority consortium like Teesside Archives, but we did find one similar example between Dorset, Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole. Having been asked a similar question, they had explored alternatives to the population-based approach, but could find nothing else that worked as well and continue to use population as the basis for their funding agreement.

Having discussed this, the Lead Officers accept that there isn't a better/viable way of apportioning the costs of the Archives and recommend that we continue with the existing funding agreement, based on population. However, the Lead Officers recommend attaching some targets for engagement which, whilst not conditions of funding, would be set to reflect the per capita contribution and can be monitored.

As discussed at the last JAC, we are also exploring whether the TVCA would consider making a regular contribution to the Archives as a fifth partner to support their own statutory responsibilities with regard to managing, preserving and making accessible public records. This has been discussed with Charlie Kemp from TVCA, who has requested that a business case be produced so that she can take it through the appropriate channels internally. The Archives Manger is in the process of producing this.

Ends