

# Bedfordshire Archives & Records Service



## Annual Report 2018/2019



## Bedfordshire Archives & Records Service Annual Report, 2018/19

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### 1. Introduction

Bedfordshire Archives & Records Service began in 1913 under Bedfordshire County Council. Since 1913 it has provided a public archives service and corporate records management for semi-current files for the county council and its successors - Luton Borough Council, Bedford Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council.

The service is hosted by Bedford Borough Council but serves the other two Bedfordshire unitary authorities under service level agreements.

The service couldn't have reached its 105<sup>th</sup> birthday without withstanding many ups, downs and transformations of local government and 2018/19 was a year of 'Keep Calm and Carry On' as we underwent transformation under the Bedford Borough Council Bedford Borough 2020 programme.



## 2. Finance

As a shared service our funding is drawn from all three unitary authorities of Bedfordshire based on population. Use of reserve capital funds for map storage (see 4. below) are not included in 2016/17 or 2018/19. 2018/19 was a standstill budget but we were required to make in year savings; the Bedford Borough 2020 transformation programme requires us to make a 25% saving for 2019/20.

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Account (T)	Outturn	Outturn	Outturn	Outturn	Initial forecast
Employees	£362,046	£346,546	£342,784	£312,406	£262,500
Supplies and Services	£14,790	£13,560	£15,489	£21,540	£11,000
Records Management	£76,303	£84,928	£84,964	£81,550	£82,000
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£453,744</b>	<b>£445,034</b>	<b>£443,697</b>	<b>£415,496</b>	<b>£355,500</b>
Customer and Client Receipts	£20,436	£29,997	£20,659	£19,370	£15,000
Donations for cataloguing projects			£15,000		
Grants				£820	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£20,436</b>	<b>£29,997</b>	<b>£35,659</b>	<b>£20,190</b>	<b>£15,000</b>
<b>Net expenditure</b>	<b>£433,308</b>	<b>£415,037</b>	<b>£408,038</b>	<b>£395,306</b>	<b>£340,500</b>
<u>Contributions</u>					
Luton Borough Council	£41,925	£38,835	41,716	£40,247	
Luton Cultural Services Trust	£107,809	£98,546	105,447	£102,061	
Central Bedfordshire Council	£182,405	£166,732	134,117	£131,013	
Bedford Borough Council	£101,169	£110,923	126,758	£121,985	
<b>Total contributions</b>	<b>£433,308</b>	<b>£415,037</b>	<b>£408,038</b>	<b>£395,306</b>	
<u>Accommodation contributions</u>					
Luton Borough Council	£16,854	£16,854	£16,854	£16,854	
Luton Cultural Services Trust	£43,305	£43,305	£43,305	£43,305	

### 3. Staff

We said goodbye to:

- Archivists Martin Deacon, Rachel Bates and Esther Bellamy,
- Customer liaison officer Lyn Scadding,
- Learning officer Clare Davison,
- Record officer John Gurney, and
- Bedford Borough Freedom of information officer Tara Egan.

We welcomed:

- Archivists Carol Walden and Helen Bates,
- Conservator Alison Faden,
- Records support officer Oliver Walton.



Martin and John left us after each working for the service for 28 years; Lyn had only been with us for a mere 25 years!

The new staffing structure, which resulted from the Bedford2020 transformation process, came into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> November.

### Work Experience and Volunteers

Two year-ten students and two post-graduates gained short-term work experience in the service, exploring archives as a career choice. We also hosted an 8-week placement for a supported job seeker who, we are pleased to hear, has gone on to find full-time employment.

Over the year 21 volunteers worked on a variety of projects for us, including:

- Cataloguing the Chrystal postcard collection (Z1306), Luton Rural District plans (RDLP), Franklin, Deacon & Briars (FDB), Shuttleworth vouchers (SL), Bedford Borough archives (BorB)
- Creating a basic online catalogue for our wills collection, (ABP/W)
- Cleaning and repackaging the Archbishops Transcripts (ABT)
- Identifying and cataloguing photographs to be added to our Z50 series
- Data entry into our online database of Bedford Gaol registers
- Providing content for our community archive webpages on Carlton, Chellington, Cranfield, Little Staughton and Ravensden.

Thanks are due to all our volunteers and placements for their work during the year giving us approximately 2,500 hours of their free time.



#### 4. Accommodation

The Service occupies two floors of the Riverside Building Borough Hall, designed in the mid 1960s and our home since May 1969.

Accommodation remains our biggest challenge and this was recognised in the key findings and required actions of the Archive Service Accreditation panel.

‘Recent investment in the building has improved the storage conditions in the repository area, but storage capacity remains an issue for the archive service, particularly for ongoing collections development and satisfactory care of all collections held at Bedfordshire Archive Service.

Any redesign of the public facing and back office accommodation is limited by the nature of the building. Current accommodation is adequate in space but awkward in layout, which will pose challenges for the archive service in terms of ongoing development of on site services.

**Required/improvement?**

**Requirement number(s)  
to which it relates**

**Details**

1 Required action

1.4

Continue seeking solutions - short term, medium term and long term - to increase storage capacity in PD5454 compliant accommodation.’

Following changes to staffing we reorganised our back office accommodation to provide more storage space. This has meant the loss of our small meeting room but, with the aid of free shelving available from another department of the council and use of some reserve funds, we added 12.5 m<sup>3</sup> of shelving and 3 m<sup>3</sup> of plan storage.

We also made minor adjustments to our reception area to open it up and make it more welcoming.



## 5. Collections

### New Accessions

92 new accessions were received this year. None of the deposits was particularly large this year but they included some important additions to our collections filling known gaps in our collections. The highlight of the year was receipt of approximately 500 photographs of Luton in the 1970s and 1980s taken by Mr James George Rhind (1915-1995), Z1691, which we used as the focus of our *Explore Your Archives* day at Luton.

Deposits included:

Parish deposits from: Bedford All Saints, Biddenham, Bolnhurst, Carlton, Felmersham, Little Staughton, Pavenham, Roxton, Sutton, Wilden, Wymington, Blunham, St Augustine's Dunstable, Leighton Buzzard, and Shefford.

Parish Council deposits came from: Caddington, Kensworth, Stanbridge, Tilsworth. Streatley, Harlington, Steppingley and Flitton & Greenfield.

#### Bedfordshire

- Bedfordshire County Council social services files (SS)
- Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire Electricity Company (X64 add)

#### Bedford

- Hinwick House building ledger (OR2396)
- Cardington, Cople and Eastcotts Charity (Z1586)
- Bedford & District Gardeners Show Committee (Z1690)
- Dalton Family of Dean photograph albums (Z1669 add)

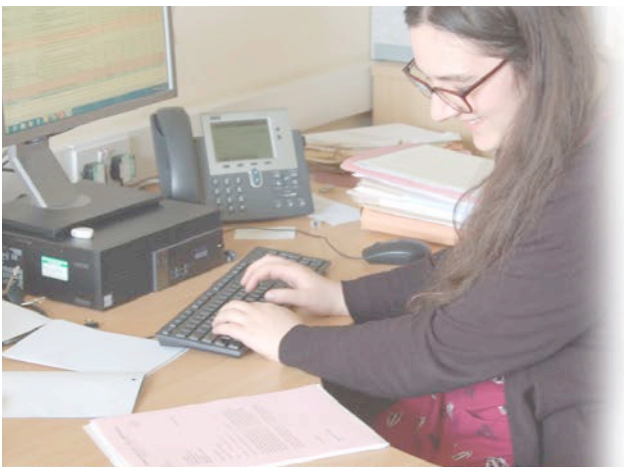
#### Central Bedfordshire

- Steppingley Hospital (HOS)
- Ampthill & District CND (Z1707)
- Leighton Buzzard Inner Wheel (Z1684)
- Cooper-Cooper family of Toddington (Z1692)

#### Luton

- Photographs by James 'John' Rhind (Z1691)
- Lansdowne Club (Z1703)
- Robert Hibbert Almshouses Trust (X1021)
- Luton Women's Action Group (Z1709)





## Cataloguing

Regular staff and volunteers catalogued 8,246 documents in 106 different collections. The archivists have focused on our backlog of Bedfordshire County Council Social Service department records. These show significant changes of approach and policy to caring for the vulnerable over a thirty year period but, partly because of this, they are difficult to organise and catalogue.

Funding for our project to begin creating a brief online catalogue of our wills collection (ABP/W) ended in August and we said goodbye to project cataloguer Beata Zyzanska. Volunteers have continued the work. Entries for 10,972 wills were added to the catalogue during the year.

We continue to catalogue and index material to international standard; catalogues appear immediately on our online public access catalogue <http://bedsarchivescat.bedford.gov.uk>

## Conservation

Recruitment for our new conservator was delayed by the restructure process and during this period we were once again thankful for the assistance of our two conservation volunteers who kept on top of the day-to-day need for custom made folders and boxes and helped with the mounting of our exhibitions. In August they began a new project of cleaning, flattening and packaging our Archbishops Transcripts collection and this project is making very good progress.

Our new conservator joined us at the beginning of November and since then 127 items have received her attention.

The repackaging programme continues to also uncover collections that need: conservation, better cataloguing or, in a few cases, review and de-accessioning.

## Digitisation

We have the following collections licenced to 3<sup>rd</sup> party suppliers of digital content: registers of electors 1832-1986, land tax, valuation, petty session records (available via Ancestry) and school admission and log books, 1860s-1914 (available via FindMyPast). The last of our currently licensed collections - poor law union records, is being indexed by volunteers via Ancestry's World Archive Project <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/community/awap> This has been undergoing an upgrade since the autumn and so progress has stalled, we hope these records will be made available in the new year.

Ancestry can be accessed for free at our office, as can other useful digital sites such as the British Newspaper Archive.

**SEARCH** ☐ Match all terms exactly

First & Middle Name(s)  Last Name

Lived In  Year  Location

Any Event

Keyword

e.g. teacher or "Tower of London"

Year

Residence Year

**SEARCH**

**Bedfordshire Archives & Records Service**  
Provided in association with Bedfordshire Archives

**Browse this collection**

To browse this image set, select from the options below.

Type

Choose...

Parliamentary Division or Parish

Year

**Source Information**

Ancestry.com, Bedfordshire, England, Electoral Registers, 1832-1986 [database on-line].  
Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2017.  
Original data: Electoral rolls for Bedfordshire 1832-1986, Bedfordshire Archives, Bedford, Bedfordshire, England.

**Related data collections**

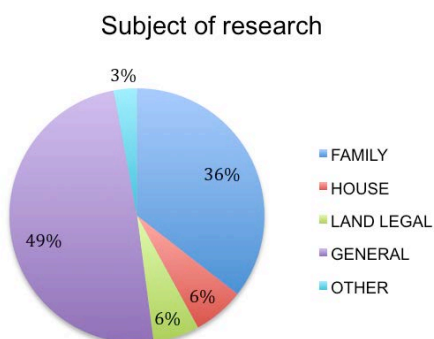
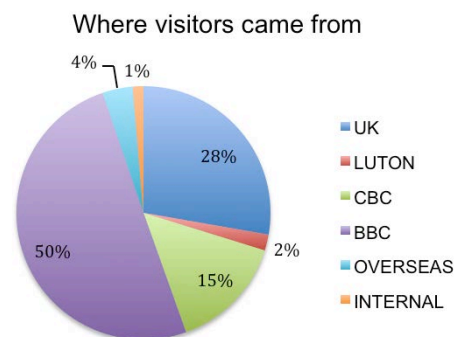
[Web: England, Bedfordshire Gaoil Index, 1770-1882](#)  
All data in this third-party database was obtained from the source's website.  
Ancestry.com does not support or make corrections or changes to the original.



## 6. Public Access

The number of visitors to the office was 1,322. This was slightly down on the year 2017-18 but in line with 2016-17. The number of documents retrieved from the stacks was 10,091.

Visitor booking enables us to manage our resources better, provide a personal and well prepared service for the visitor and keep visitors informed of any issues that may affect their visit or research. Unfortunately the introduction of online booking has been delayed.

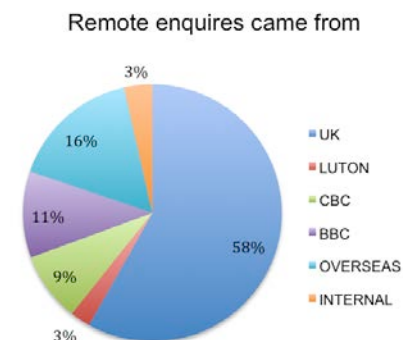


Staff answered 1,016 enquiries that required detailed advice or research. 97% were answered within two working days of receipt. Our target is 95% within 2 working days. Following changes to the staffing structure from November 2018 we ceased undertaking in-depth genealogical research as this is catered for by the private sector. We now recommend contacting the Bedfordshire Family History Society or commissioning a researcher registered with the Association of Genealogists and Researchers in Archives (AGRA). We continue to undertake simple family history enquiries and general and local history enquiries.

We seek and listen to people's views and monitor and respond to feedback. This year we received 3 pieces of negative feedback – two about parking, which became a particular problem in the autumn, and one about a problem with our online payment system.

We received many positive comments including:

- about our research and reprographics service - 'This was fee money very well spent', 'the service I have received from the Bedfordshire Archives Services over some years now is truly excellent and, in my opinion, sets a benchmark that many other County or National Archives Services do not come anywhere near'
- from a searchroom visitor - 'I am so happy & 2 amazing ladies made my whole world'
- from a depositor – 'I am enormously impressed by your sympathetic understanding and your efficiency'.



In the autumn we took part in a national survey of users. The national results have yet to be published at time of writing. The 50 surveys completed for our service show that when users were asked to rate the service overall on a scale of 1-10 (10 being the highest) the average score was 9.





# Bedfordshire Archives and Records Service

Welcome.

We are the County Record Office for Bedfordshire. Anyone may use our service and the archives we hold for research either in person or remotely. We are based in Riverside Building, Borough Hall, Bedford.

Bedfordshire Archives and Records Service
Community Archives
Online Index of Pages
Bedford Church Architecture
Bedford Church Repairs and alterations
Bedford Index of Pages
Bedford Manors
Bedford Rectory (Parsonage House)
Bedford Arms Beerhouse
Bedford
Bedford of Carlton Rectors

Home > Community archives > Carlton > The Fox Public House Carlton

## The Fox Public House Carlton

This page was written by Pamela Hider



The Fox c.1925. The sign on the wall reads: Archibald C. Wallinger Licensed Retailer for Beer Spirituous Liquors to be drunk on the premises Licensed dealer in tobacco [WLB800/2]

The Fox Public House: 35 High Street, Carlton



## Bedfordshire Archives Service Catalogue

Welcome to the on-line catalogue of Bedfordshire Archives Service. This enables you to search our archive catalogue or our searchroom library catalogue. We strongly advise you to read the help files available to ensure the best results. There are general help files on the left of each screen, or specific help by clicking a field.



Please note that this database does not yet include catalogues of all our holdings. Researchers should therefore [contact us](#) for further information.

Bedfordshire Archives and Records Service

Bedfordshire Gaol Register

Entries from gaol registers held by the Bedfordshire & Luton Archives and Records Service (BLARS). Level of detail in entry gives some of the following details of the criminal: name, age, hair colour, height, crime, dates of committal, disposal e.g. release, death, transportation etc. The database presently covers the period between 1801 and 1879 (by basis). Our aim is to add the details from all the surviving County Gaol and House of Correction registers held at an approximate total of 35,000+ entries.

Criteria. You must complete at least one field. Gaol records will be matched against the exact spelling of the criteria. Use [contact us](#).

Year From:	<input type="text"/>	Year To:	<input type="text"/>
First Name:	<input type="text"/>	Last Name:	<input type="text"/>
Age (earliest):	<input type="text"/>	Age (latest):	<input type="text"/>
Gender:	<input type="text"/>	Trade or Occupation:	<input type="text"/>
Birth Town:	<input type="text"/>	Birth Country:	<input type="text"/>
Residence Town:	<input type="text"/>	Residence County:	<input type="text"/>
Offence:	<input type="text"/>	Sentence:	<input type="text"/>
Trial Type:	<input type="text"/>	How Disposed:	<input type="text"/>
Type of Gaol:	<input type="text"/>	Document Ref:	<input type="text"/>

## Online presence

The number of page views of our website totalled 201,467. Our online catalogue had 314,025 views. Our resources on *Ancestry* had 1,282,495 views and the gaol database, which can be accessed via *Ancestry*, received 23,966 views.

We have:

- Our website, of general information, guides to sources, on-line newsletters, exhibitions and our community archives pages.
- Our programme of adding detailed local material to the website. This year volunteers have compiled information on: Little Staughton, Carlton, Chellington, Cranfield and Ravensden. We hope to recruit more volunteers in the coming year to help us continue adding to the information available on places throughout the county.
- Our online public access catalogue. At the end of the year 95% of our catalogues were available online.
- Twitter @BedsArchives. This is used to highlight events and developments and engage with national campaigns and archive promotion such as #conservationdiaries.
- YouTube Channel BedfordshireArchives. We launched this channel to enable people to interact with our centenary exhibitions and have added videos to help people understand our work and some relevant for people thinking of visiting the service.
- Facebook page. This is another way of highlighting events and developments within the service. It has been good to receive positive feedback on the service via our social media.
- Our database of Bedford gaol registers. Input has continued and at the end of the year contained the transcripts of 53,911 entries from c1760-1904.
- World War One commemorative blogs, which continued until November regarding the service front and December for the home front and are still available as a resource. Our thanks to archivists Martin Deacon and Kathryn Faulkner for their dedication to this project.

BEDFORDSHIRE AT WAR: News from the Front Line

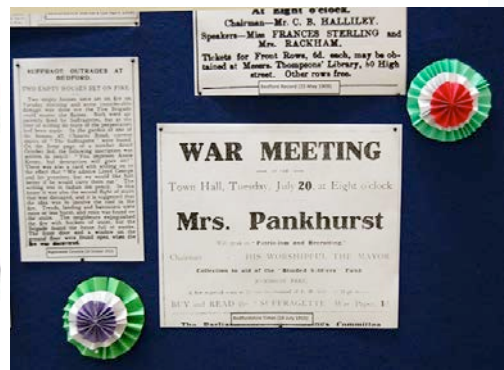
Home Roll of Honour The Bedfords: World War I The Bedfords: Brief History Links About Us

Business as Usual

Bedfordshire Archives & Records Service

Introduction



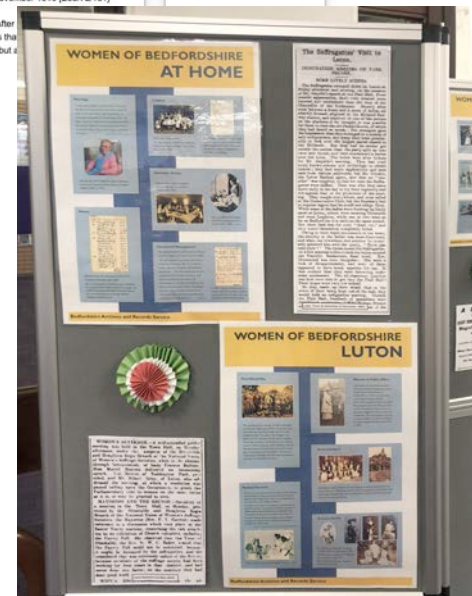
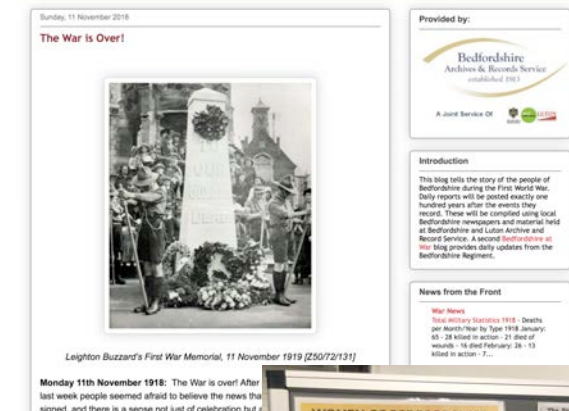


BEDFORDSHIRE AT WAR: News from the Home Front Image (c) artist Hugh Byrne, Shop33 and SNAP

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[Home](#) [Links](#) [About Us](#)

- June/July - Creating a new game for Bedford High Street showcase and the River Festival.
- July-September - Commemorating votes for women and 100 years since the passing of the Representation of the People Act, 1918.
- August - Teaching our work experience placement the skills needed to package archives and contributing to #ConservationDiaries.
- September - Pop-up archive at Luton for Heritage Open Day.
- October-December – visit of the Turvey website research group and cataloguing the Lounguet-Higgins of Turvey collection.
- November - Commemorating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War One and the end of our two World War One blogs.
- November - Explore Your Archive event at Luton.
- December - Heritage Bedford Christmas tree, St Paul's Bedford.
- February – Women of Bedfordshire event at Luton.





## Outreach

Staff gave 12 talks to external groups with a total attendance of 497.

1 group visited the office for a training session to help group members use the archive service for research projects.

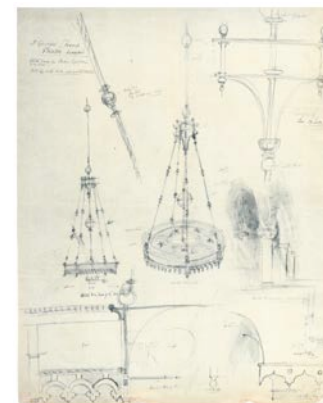
We mounted three exhibitions on our 2018 theme *Vote100*, celebrating the extension of the franchise by the Representation of the People Act, 1918. In April – June we looked at *Women of Bedfordshire*, this was followed by *Votes for Women*, and finally *Our Representatives*, which looked at the outcome of parliamentary elections since 1918. Our theme for 2019 is *Between the Wars*. The first exhibition from January to March *Remembering the Fallen*, looked at the different ways in which those who died in the First World War were commemorated in the years following the armistice.

Items from our collections were on loan to The Higgins, Bedford for their exhibition Celebrating Women of Bedfordshire (10th March – 23rd September 2018).

As part of the Heritage Bedford group we took part in the *Bedford High Street Showcase* day in June, the *River Festival* in July and St Paul's Church Christmas Tree Festival in December.

Our Heritage Lottery Fund learning officer project ended in June. Between April and June the learning officer: delivered four workshops at a school in Dunstable, hosted the visit of a small group of children from Shortstown Primary School discovering more about researching families, and a visit from subject leader for Humanities and CPD/Action Research Lead at Best Academies and two trainees. The Learning Officer also created a range of material for the archive service to use in the future.

At the beginning of the year the Bedfordshire Family History Society published the last in their volumes based on our wills collection for which the service manager provided the introduction. We also highlighted treasures revealed by the Richardson & Houfe cataloguing project by: giving at a talk at the Bedfordshire Local History Association's conference, contributing to the newsletter of the Archives & Records Association and contributing to the online exhibition A History of the North in 100 archives <https://www.100archivesnorth.co.uk/explore>



**Electric light fittings for St George's Church, Preston designed by Sir Albert Richardson**

Mid-Late 20th Century  
Preston

[View on map](#)

Outline showing sketch designs for electric light fittings in the nave of St George's Church, Preston, Lancashire. Dated August 1953. This document sits within a large collection from an architectural practice which ran from 1906 to 1980 in London and Ampleforth, Bedfordshire with Sir Albert Richardson as the lead partner. St George's Church was built in the 1220s and is considered to be a hidden gem of Preston. The renowned architect Sir Albert Richardson's alterations during the 1950s helped shape the church for the future. This document shows how he used his artistic talents to bring his design to life with perspective sketches enabling the client to visualise the finished project. It shows the detail of the electric light fitting as well as how it fits within the space of the church. Richardson combines functionality with creativity in a design that helps bring the church into the modern age.

Photography: Bedfordshire Archives on behalf of Simon Houfe (depositor)

Find it at: Bedfordshire Archives & Records Service  
[Visit website](#)

This year our events took place in Luton. In September we ran a Pop up Archive event as part of *Heritage Open Days*. Along with static displays based on our Luton collections we had games to introduce people to what the archives does in terms of collecting, preserving and making available the documentary heritage of the county. In November, as part of *Explore Your Archive*, we organised an exhibition of a selection of photographs by John Rhind from the collection received in August (Z1691). This was followed by an event where members of the public helped us to identify the photographs. In February we held the first of our series of bi-monthly Archives on the Road sessions at Luton Central Library. Prior to the day itself we sent a set of panels on the theme of the day - Women in Bedfordshire. On the day the archivist was available to answer questions on anything related to the archives, gave a formal talk and listed one of the Luton collections from our cataloguing backlog.

## 7. Records Management & Deeds Registry

The Records Management team work for the internal departments of the three funding authorities. They receive consignments of paper records no longer needed on a regular basis by the creating department then manage the storage, retrieval, and when appropriate the transfer or destruction of these internal records.

This year the team have made progress in securely destroying files that have reached the end of their retention period. Not keeping files longer than necessary is important good records management practice but is carefully controlled and is carried out in liaison with the creator department. 2,156 boxes were securely destroyed during year. Some records are transferred to the archives at the end of their retention period.

The number of boxes received totalled 1,174: Bedford Borough Council: 598; Central Beds Council: 207; Luton Borough Council: 264; shared: 96; other 9.

The number of files requested back by departments totalled 864; 496 relating to Bedford Borough Council holdings, 236 Central Beds Council, 116 Luton Borough Council, 15 Shared services.

The team has also worked hard in clearing storage areas of Borough Hall to ensure that all semi-current records are included in the records management system.

The service runs a deeds registry of title deeds, agreements, leases etc. for Bedford Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council. During 2018/19 453 items were accessioned for Bedford and 2,270 for Central. 1,073 deed packets and files were requested back by departments during the year (57% related to Bedford Borough).

## 8. For more information

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Tel: 01234 228833

[archive@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:archive@bedford.gov.uk)

[www.bedford.gov.uk/archive](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/archive)

[www.Twitter.com/BedsArchives](https://www.twitter.com/BedsArchives)

