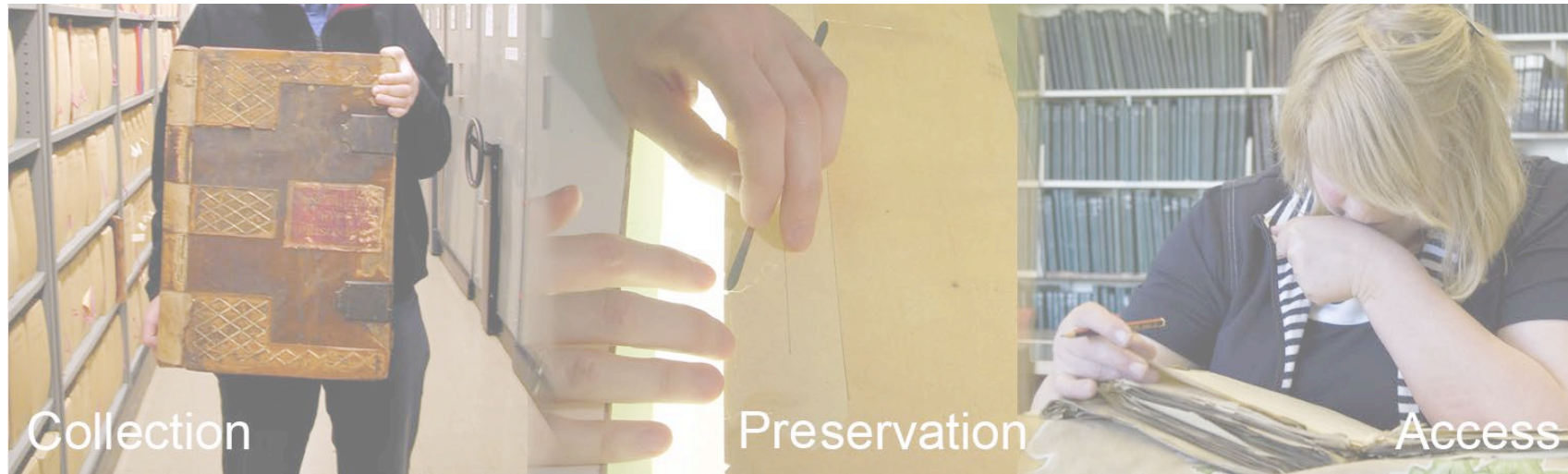


Bedfordshire & Luton Archives & Records Service



Annual Report 2012/2013

Bedfordshire & Luton
Archives & Records Service
established 1913

Bedfordshire & Luton Archives & Records Service Annual Report, 2012/13

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1. Introduction

Bedfordshire & Luton Archives Service was the first County Record Office in England. The planning for our centenary celebrations in 2013 were a feature of 2012 and the first of these celebrations came to fruition in the early months of 2013. However, in other ways the year continued our regular work. This annual report for the year 2012/13 will show what we achieved last year and how that is forming our policy for the future.

Bedfordshire & Luton Archives & Records Service began in 1913 as Bedfordshire Record Office under Bedfordshire County Council. When Luton Borough Council became a unitary authority in 1997 a joint arrangement was entered into for the Service to continue to provide archives and records management for the entire county. The name of the service was changed to reflect this. In 2009, when Bedfordshire County Council was abolished, a joint arrangement between Bedford Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council again ensured that the service could continue to serve the whole county.

The service is hosted by Bedford Borough Council and sits within the Registration and Records section of the Chief Executive's directorate. As well as a public archives service it provides corporate records management for semi-current files for all three authorities and a deeds registry for Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire councils.

2. Finance

As a shared service our funding is drawn from all three unitary authorities of Bedfordshire based on population. Like all local authority services, we are under pressure to achieve more with a smaller budget, while increasing income where possible.

Account (T)	2008/9 Outturn	2009/10 Outturn	2010/11 Outturn	2011/12 Outturn	2012/13 Outturn	2013/14 Initial forecast
Employees	£528,645	£441,573	£444,294	£460,089	£433,885	£450,000
Transport Related Expenditure	-	-	£65	£124	£324	£400
Supplies and Services	£29,946	£29,811	£31,302	£44,382	£20,719	£30,000
Records Management	£44,001	£55,105	£75,448	£60,232	£75,855	£80,000
National Non Domestic Rate (NNDR)	-	£17,622	-	-	-	-
Total Expenditure	£602,592	£544,111	£551,109	£564,827	£528,000	£560,400
Customer and Client Receipts	£32,640	£24,546	£30,694	£24,494	£25,167	£31,000
NNDR Refund	-	-	£13,216	-	-	-
National Cataloguing Grant	-	-	-	£19,500	-	-
High Sheriff's Appeal re above	-	-	-	£3,000	-	-
Lucas Collection Grant	-	-	-	£2,960	-	-
Total Income	£32,640	£24,546	£43,910	£49,954	£25,167	£31,000
Net expenditure	£569,952	£519,565	£507,199	£514,873	£505,616	£529,400
<u>Grants and Contributions</u>						
Luton Borough Council	£72,743	£49,254	£47,292	£45,096	£47,143	£49,340
Luton Cultural Services Trust	£187,054	£126,654	£121,606	£116,030	£121,228	£126,950
Central Bedfordshire Council	-	£206,729	£202,981	£193,643	£202,347	£211,866
Bedford Borough Council	-	£136,927	£135,320	£135,339	£134,897	£141,244
Total contributions	£259,797	£519,565	£507,199	£490,108	£505,616	£529,400
<u>Accommodation contributions</u>						
Luton Borough Council	Not available	£15,574	£16,041	£16,201	£16,363	£16,854
Luton Cultural Services Trust	Not available	£40,016	£41,216	£41,628	£42,044	£43,305

3. Staff

We were fortunate in 2012/13 to be able to take advantage of continuity planning in staff changes. This enabled a hand over period between outgoing and incoming staff, which was extremely beneficial.

- On the 2nd April 2012 Patricia Lenehan transferred from elsewhere in the Registration and Records department to become the new deeds registry officer. In June 2012 we said goodbye to Ruth Gill, who retired.
- In April 2012 Kathryn Faulkner was appointed as a part time archivist. On 6th September we said farewell to James Collett-White who retired after 37 years as one of our archivists.
- May 2012 saw the beginning of the Bedfordshire Manorial Documents Register project. This project is entirely funded by The National Archives, and project officer, Sarah Charlton, is employed through the auspices of Royal Holloway College. The Archives Service provides on site managerial support.
- Sadly this year also saw the deaths of two former and one current member of staff. Miss Patricia Bell, who joined the service in 1956 was County Archivist from 1969 until her retirement in 1986. She died in September. Alan Cirket, our first Repairer appointed in 1936, remained with the service until he retired as Senior Records Clerk in 1983. He died in January. David Hartley, a part time data inputter since April 2007, passed away unexpectedly on 20th March 2013.



Work experience

Four people have used work experience to explore archives as a career choice. One placement began as a two-week full time placement and continued a one day a week placement as part of gaining the necessary experience before applying for a post-graduate course.

Volunteers

Over the year 14 volunteers worked on a variety of projects for us, including:

- Cataloguing sections of the Chrystal postcard collection (Z1306) and material from Bedfordshire Federation of Women's Institutes (X939)
- Cataloguing of Hayward Tyler of Luton (SP), London Brick (Z41), Brown & Merry Bedford (BMB) and Quarter Sessions Rolls (QSR)
- Various conservation tasks
- Data entry into our online database of Bedford Gaol registers. 2,196 entries having been added during the year.
- Indexing apprenticeship records

A further 4 volunteers worked on the *Paths to Crime* project, and were nominated for the Archives & Records Association Volunteering Award in June. Thanks are due to all our volunteers and placements for their work during the year giving us a total of 2,800 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. In 2010/11 we expanded into those parts of the 2nd floor of Riverside Building previously occupied by other departments. We invited The National Archives to review the expansion. This resulted in Nick Kingsley of TNA reporting in December 2012 'although the central issue of providing replacement accommodation for the archives service that meets the environmental standards set out in PD5454:2012 remains to be addressed, there has been substantial progress with the provision of additional storage and working space and changes to the configuration of work areas that make the public spaces seem less cramped. In light of these changes and the continuing efforts that the council is making to address the wider accommodation issues, I am prepared to continue TNA Approval status for the time being.'

However, by January 2013 storage was again essentially full. Medium term solutions have been discussed with Bedford Borough Council's property department and it is hoped that mobile racking and new lighting will be introduced in 2013/14.

We continue to consider possible long-term solutions and this has been raised with our funding partners. At the suggestion of The National Archives, we have considered collaborative solutions with neighbouring authorities also looking for new accommodation for their archive services.

A new drinks and snacks machine was introduced on the first floor and efforts made to make this lobby area a more inviting place for customers to sit for a break.

We continue to appraise our collections to see if there is anything we don't need to keep. We took the decision to weed the Luton Girls' High School pupil files before sending them to off site storage. Although time consuming, this made a significant reduction in the bulk and had the added benefit of staff becoming familiar with the material and its potential for future research.

5. Collections

New Accessions

109 new accessions were received this year (approx. 450 large boxes, 11m³). This year by far the largest single consignment received was that from Luton Cultural Services Trust following the closure of their Barton Road outstore. Deposits were received from across the county and included a large number of Church of England parish records from Central Bedfordshire as well as records from schools, non-conformist chapels and private individuals. Significant deposits include:

- Bedfordshire Federation of Women's Institutes (10389, X939)
- Bedfordshire Police note books (10361, Z824)
- Bedfordshire County Cricket Club (10432, X188)
- Bedfordshire Scouts (10362, 10381, X619)
- Bedfordshire Magazine (10417, X354)

- Farming diaries and sale catalogue of David Stanton, Church Farm, Keysoe (10423, Z1517)
- Silver Jubilee school photograph albums (10358, Z1497)
- Maywood Nursery School, Milton Ernest 1966-1992 (10411, Z1511)
- John Bunyan School records 1999-2011 (10424, SDBedfordJB)
- Deeds of St Cuthbert and Newnham Street, Bedford (10457, Z1530)

- Dunstable deeds for properties owned by Vauxhall Motors 20th C (10420, Z1362)
- Dunstable Fire Service (10387, FSD)
- Additional deposits relating to Sir Albert Richardson and Eric Houfe, architects (10413, RGH)
- Digital deposit of photographs by Lister Sunderland of Eggington (10450, Z1528)

- George Kent Limited, meter manufacturers, c1906-1999 – LCST transfer (10446, GKL)
- Franklin, Briars, Deacon, architects and surveyors – LCST transfer (10447, FBD)
- Stanbridge farming diaries 1907-1926 – LCST transfer (10445, X978)
- Luton Borough Council rating records – LCST transfer (10448, BorL)
- Hayward Tyler pump manufacturers – LCST transfer (10364, SP)
- Len Holden's Vauxhall research – LCST transfer (10460, X819)
- T & E Neville additional deposit (10385, 10462, X843)
- Verdcourt papers (10400, Z549)
- G Farr business records (10416, 10459, Z1515)



10 January 2103 - Archival material arrives from Luton Cultural Services Trust's Barton Road Store.

It was all hands on deck to unload the vans and then rebox and sort material so that by the end of the day it was safely stored on shelves and the searchroom was returned to a fit state to receive the public in the morning.



10.30 am Searchroom buried under incoming boxes, about half way through the unloading of the vans.



Bundles of files from Franklin waiting to be re-boxed



Fortunately we were able to sort, clean and weed some of the volumes of Franklin as they came in.



11.30 am Starting to fill the empty shelves - by 5.00 pm we had filled 15 bays of shelving

5.30 pm Searchroom returned to order ready for opening to the public the following morning





Cataloguing

Staff and volunteers catalogued 13,223 documents in 105 different collections. Appraising collections and sorting them ready for cataloguing can be a time consuming process and this year appraisal of the Luton Girls' High School pupil files took many days of staff time but ultimately reduced the bulk of the collection by more than a third. We continue to catalogue and index material to the highest international standard so researchers can decide whether they need to see the original; in many cases the catalogue contains all the information they need. Catalogues appear immediately on our online public access catalogue.

Paths to Crime, the National Cataloguing Grant Programme for Archives funded project to catalogue the Bedfordshire Quarter Session Rolls, 1831-1900, created 12,445 catalogue entries during the year. There is more information on our project work on our website www.bedford.gov.uk/archive.



Conservation

Paths to Crime volunteers sorted and packaged another 22 years from the Quarter Sessions rolls. This included carefully removing documents from the volumes into which they had unfortunately been bound in the early 20th century and making packaging to suit the irregular shapes and sizes of the documents. Again, we wish to thank everyone involved with this project.

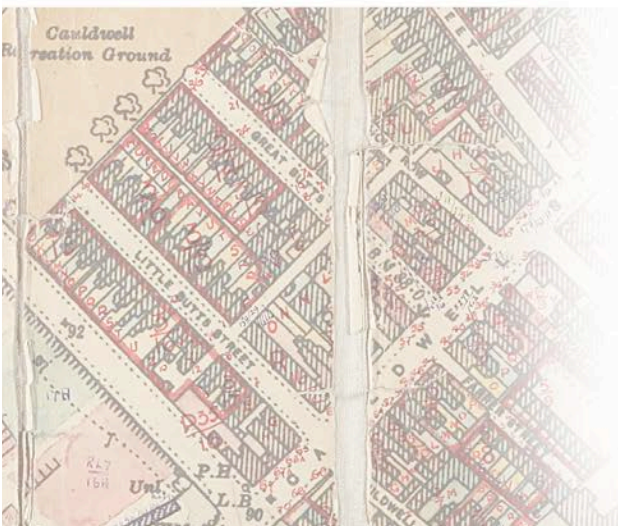
We have been very fortunate to have the services of a volunteer who is training to become a conservator. This enabled a range of small conservation jobs to be undertaken while the conservator was involved in project work, such as digitisation and planning and mounting the *One For The Record* exhibition.

Digitisation

The digitisation of our 1925 rating valuation reference maps (DV2) has enabled us to provide access to the information from these maps without subjecting them to any more wear. The files are currently only available in the searchroom. We are investigating making them available via the internet in 2013/14.

During 2012/13 we continued investigating options for making material available digitally and had discussions with companies specialising with making archives available via their internet sites.

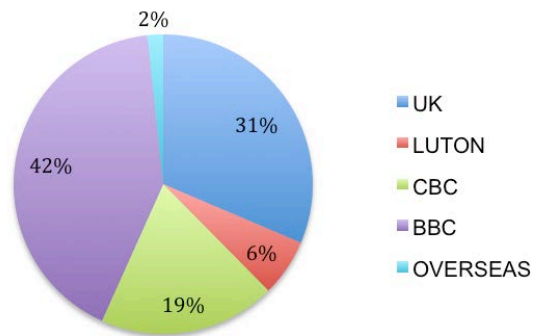
We have continued to digitise material on demand where copyright permits and to attach images to our on-line catalogue.



6. Public Access

In common with other record offices we are experiencing new trends in public access. However, this year visitor numbers were nearly stable on the previous year – 2,620 visitors in 2012/13, against 2,637 in 2011/12. We continue to find that our visitors have often carried out the easy part of their research online then come to see us with more complex enquiries, which require more staff time in assisting them. The number of documents retrieved from the stacks for consultation was 15,033.

Where visitors came from

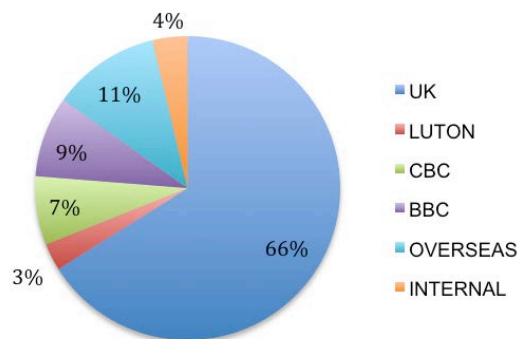


Where visitors came from has shown no significant change from previous years. The small proportion of visitors from the Luton area is possibly indicative of a number of factors: the diversity of background of residents making our family history sources less attractive, the access to local heritage information via the Luton Cultural Services Trust museums and local studies, and our lack of major Luton planning records. We do hold some uncatalogued South Bedfordshire and Luton Rural District plans and cataloguing these has been given a high priority in order to ensure that access can be given if needed.

We have put a lot of Luton material on our Community Archives web pages and have catalogued (and where possible digitised) 372 postcards of Luton, mainly dating from 1900-1940, part of the Chrystal postcard collection (Z1306). However, as both these are online resources, this will not increase the need to visit the service. We hope that our major centenary exhibition at Wardown Park museum in 2013 will raise awareness of our service and how it can be used.

Staff answered 1,828 enquiries that required some degree of detailed advice or research. We receive many enquiries by e-mail and it is not always easy to establish the location of the sender.

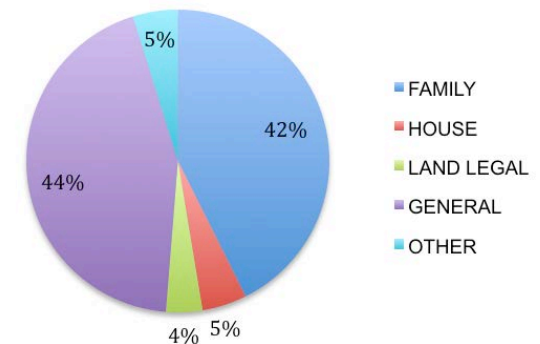
Remote enquires came from



Family history research, remains the most popular topic of research. However, in line with the increased availability of on-line sources mentioned above, the proportion has again decreased.

The 2012 National Survey of Visitors to British archives, organised by the Public Service Quality Group, showed that across all categories 92.5% rated our services good or very good.

Subject of research



Home > Community and being > Archives and records service > Community archives > Flitton > Flitton School

Flitton School



The Church Hall October 2010

A directory of 1864 mentions that Mrs. Ann Wheeler was school mistress in the village and it seems likely that this is the first reference to a daily infants' school which must, therefore, have commenced between 1847 (as no such school is mentioned in the national church school survey) and 1864. It probably met in

On-line presence

The decrease in physical visits to the service is counter balanced by the use of our service on-line. The number of page views of our website alone totalled over 573,231 with an average dwell time of 1 minute 15 seconds, demonstrating the popularity of the more than 4000 pages we now have on the web.

We have:

- Our website, of general information, guides to sources, on-line newsletters, *Paths to Crime* documents of the month, exhibitions and our community archives pages. The site continues to grow and adapt and efforts made to make it more user friendly.
- Continued our programme of adding detailed local material Each year we aim to add material for areas in each authority and totals for the year were: Bedford 340, Central 422 and Luton 32 pages respectively. There is anecdotal evidence, through emails and other feedback, of the value of these pages, which with 12,987 page visits, are the most viewed feature of our website after the front page.
- Our online public access catalogue. All new catalogues are added to this database and we continue to put our old catalogues on too. At the start of the year we had 70% of catalogues online, which had risen to 76% by the end of the year.
- Database of 19th century gaol registers. This has continued to grow and continues to be very popular. There were 41,583 entries at the year-end. The schools website, which also uses this data, also received very favourable feedback.
- Twitter @BedsArchives. This is used to highlight events and developments and has enabled informal first contact, which we have then been able to build on more formally.
- *Paths to Crime* blog – this is run by the project cataloguers as a quick, easy and permanent way to record some of the many stories and information they discover. As an externally funded project this also helps to meet the requirements for publicity of the funding body.
- YouTube Channel BedfordshireArchives. We launched this channel to enable people to interact with our centenary exhibitions and have also used it for our 2003 introductory videos, which are still relevant for people thinking of visiting the service.

Record 6 of 31

Reference	Z1308/75/10/10/4
Title	View of Chapel Street taken from an upper floor on the west side looking south. The chapel is to the left of the picture. In the centre of the picture is Tram no 7 on its inaugural run in Chapel Street (see Bedfordshire Magazine Vol 26 p 204.)
Date Free Text	21 February 1908
Date From	1908
Date To	1908
Scope and Content	The card is postmarked 7 March 1908 and was sent to Master Ernie Hopps, Woodhall Spa. Message reads: "Dear Ernie, did you say you wanted a ride too, well hurry up I want to go too, we had a ride inside the other night & it was nice but so cold on top from Auntie Lizzie."

Bedfordshire & Luton Archives and Records Service

Bedfordshire Gaol Register

This database contains entries from gaol registers held by the Bedfordshire & Luton Archives and Records Service (BLARS). Level of detail varies between registers but each entry gives some of the following details of the criminal: name, age, hair colour, height, crime, dates of committal and sentence and means of disposal e.g. release, death, transportation etc. The database presently covers the period between 1801 and 1875 (with gaps) and is updated on a weekly basis. Our aim is to add the details from all the surviving County Gaol and House of Correction registers held at BLARS for the period 1801 - 1901, an approximate total of 35,000+ entries.

Beds & Luton Archive

@BedsArchives
 Bedfordshire & Luton Archives Service - the archives service for the historic county of Bedfordshire. Enquires archive@bedford.gov.uk
 Bedfordshire, England http://www.bedford.gov.uk/archive

Paths to Crime

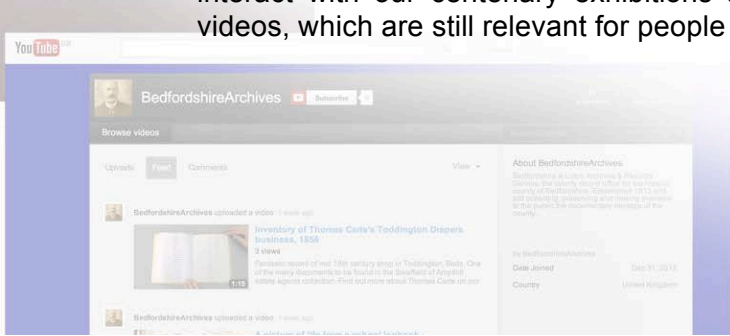
Cataloguing the Bedfordshire Quarter Sessions Rolls 1831-1900

THURSDAY, 23 AUGUST 2012

"I'll be damned if I have not shot your daughter"

We don't often come across gun crime in the Quarter Sessions so the shooting of 16 year old Emma Hills of Beeston instantly caught our attention.

Emma Hills retold how she had been going home along with her friend Emma Ilsley when they were overtaken by Edmund Huckle and William Jeeves on Beeston Green. Huckle was carrying a gun which he had acquired from his master. She asked if his gun was loaded and he said no. He asked her to walk by his side and she said she would not and ran forward. She heard the gun almost immediately. As



Outreach

Display work included:

- a three-banner display produced in collaboration with Bedfordshire Historical Record Society to celebrate the centenaries of the BHRS in 2012 and our own in 2013. The display has been used at events but is also touring libraries until the end of 2013.
- a new five-panel display and hand-out to tie in with the Summer Olympics. Production was supported by funding from Bedford Borough Council's recognition under the Inspire mark. Called *Bedfordshire Sporting Greats* the panels were displayed as part of Bedford Olympic Live site, the Bedford Bamberg Sportsfest and Leighton Linnsdale's history day.
- a new three-panel display was produced for Bedford Beer & Cider festival at The Corn Exchange.
- loans of displays to Lidlington Local History Group, Woburn Heritage Trust, Carlton & Chellington Local History Group, Manshead Archaeological Society



We also had manned stands at Stotfold Mill Family History day, Heritage Open Day at the Bedford Council Chamber and the Pumpkin and Apple Gala at Luton Hoo.

Talks by staff totalled 25 with a total attendance of 735.

Visits: there were 14 group visits to the service, with a total attendance of 192. These included providing training to: Bedford Borough library staff, students from Bedford College, Wrest Park volunteers and the Luton Irish Forum's Archive Group (right).

Involvement with the media included supplying pictures to several television companies, for example Channel 4's *Restoration Man*. We also supplied a range of pictures to publishers and authors. The Bedfordshire Historical Record Society's 2012 publication was based on a document from our collections – the Luton Guild accounts Z486/1.



Our quarterly newsletter has a print run of 700. It is also delivered via e-mail and made available via the internet. Since December we have also contributed monthly articles about our service to the Bedford Borough Council Staff e-magazine, *Connect*

In 2011/12 one of our identified weaknesses was our lack of engagement with children in education. We are delighted to announce that at the end of 2012/13 we were awarded a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to enable us to employ a Learning Officer for three years from the summer of 2013. The post-holder will work with schools in each of the local authority areas to form relationships and produce materials to enhance learning and increase engagement with our service.

Centenary 2013

During 2012 we introduced new branding to highlight our approaching centenary. Staff discussed ways in which the centenary could be celebrated and a range of events chosen to be developed into a programme to last throughout 2013. The first edition of the centenary events programme was ready to be issued with our Winter newsletter in early January and the programme was also made available via the newly introduced events page on our website.

Centenary coverage began in January with a live BBC 3 Counties radio interview, and a slideshow on local BBC News Online. A local television broadcast on BBC Look East then sparked interest in one of our documents (QGV10/4) leading to a broadcast on Anglia TV and newspaper coverage in The Daily Mail, Mail on Sunday, The Times, The Metro, The Sun, Bedfordshire on Sunday and in America



Paths to Crime volunteers contributed greatly to the evening's success.

On the 24th January we held a formal launch event for our Centenary year. Staff, members of the User Panel and volunteers introduced major depositors, parish councillors and others to the work of the office.

“A most enjoyable and informative occasion for all your guests.”

Tim Sills deputy Lord Lieutenant



The conservator explains water damage to parchment.

On 22nd March our *One For the Record* exhibition opened at Wardown Park Museum, Luton.

The exhibition sought to record the history of the service and highlight some of many types of records that it holds. The exhibition included: interactives, video and audio material and a range of talks and activities.

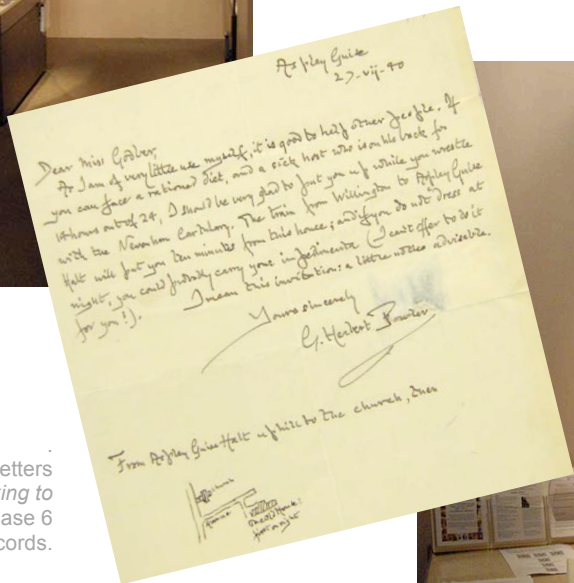
“I found the exhibition most fascinating and am delighted to know that I have such a wealth of information to draw on as Lord Lieutenant.”

Helen Nellis.



Above - Case 3 – Parish Records looking towards Case 4 – Manorial Records

Left-right, One of Dr Fowler's last letters to Miss Godber, final panel, *Looking to the future*, visitors studying Case 6 Business Records.



Tom the technician installing the power feed to the audio during set up.




We couldn't have done it without the support of Luton Museum staff and our sponsors.

FOR THE RECORD







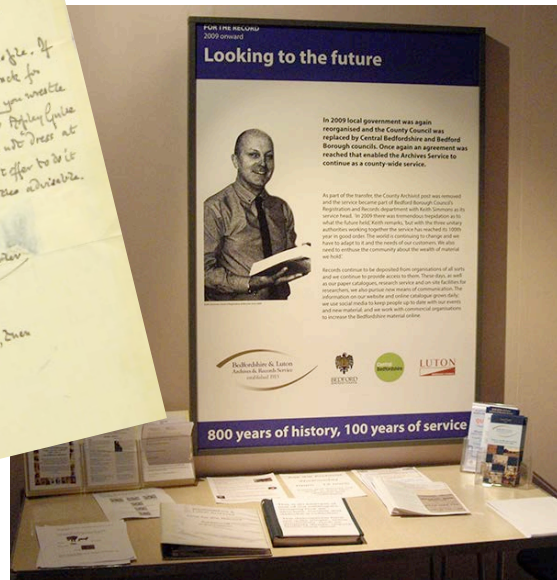
Acknowledgments

Bedfordshire & Luton Archives & Records Service would like to thank the following for sponsoring this exhibition:



At the centre of the Bedford Estates is Woburn Abbey, the ancestral home of the Dukes of Bedford since the 17th century. By the 19th century the Russell family was one of the largest landowners in Bedfordshire and across the country. The traditional estate activities of farming, forestry and deer keeping are reflected in the pre-1910 archives deposited with Bedfordshire & Luton Archives Service since 1964.

The Bedford Estates today comprises not only Woburn Abbey and Gardens, but an award-winning Safari Park, Woburn Golf Club with three European Tour hosting courses, and the Inn at Woburn. The Bloomsbury Estate, with properties centred on Bedford and Russell Square in London, has been an integral part of the estate since 1669.

7. Records Management & Deeds Registry

The Records Management team have continued their vital work in receiving consignments, managing the storage, retrieval, and when appropriate the transfer or destruction of semi-current internal records of the three funding authorities, including shared ex-Bedfordshire County Council consignments. The team can be contacted by telephone on 01234 228923 or by e-mail at records.management@bedford.gov.uk or see their webpage www.bedford.gov.uk/records

The number of boxes received totalled 9,997 and is broken down as follows: Bedford Borough Council: 3,219 (32%); Central Beds Council: 4,162 (42%); Luton Borough Council: 1,940 (19%) and shared/ex-Bedfordshire County Council: 676 (7%)

The number of files withdrawn totalled 2,116, with 982 relating to Bedford Borough Council holdings, 906 to Central Beds Council, 93 to Luton Borough Council and 135 to 'shared' files.

The service runs records management for all three Bedfordshire unitary authorities but only runs a deeds registry of title deeds, agreements, leases etc. relating to Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Councils. Luton Borough Council operates its own deeds registry.

During 2012/13 1,972 items were accessioned to the deeds registry, over 90% of which related to Central Bedfordshire Council. 8,157 items were transferred to the new deeds database, 70% related to Central Bedfordshire, 29% to Bedford Borough and 1% for administrative purposes.

Of the 863 deed packets consulted during the year 689 (80%) related to Central Bedfordshire Council holdings. 1,122 deed packets were returned. A large proportion of returns being due to the relocation of Bedford Borough Legal and Property services moving back to Borough Hall, but also improved efficiency in the tracking database.

8. For more information

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