

TYNE & WEAR ARCHIVES SERVICE

ANNUAL REVIEW 2008/9

1 Introduction

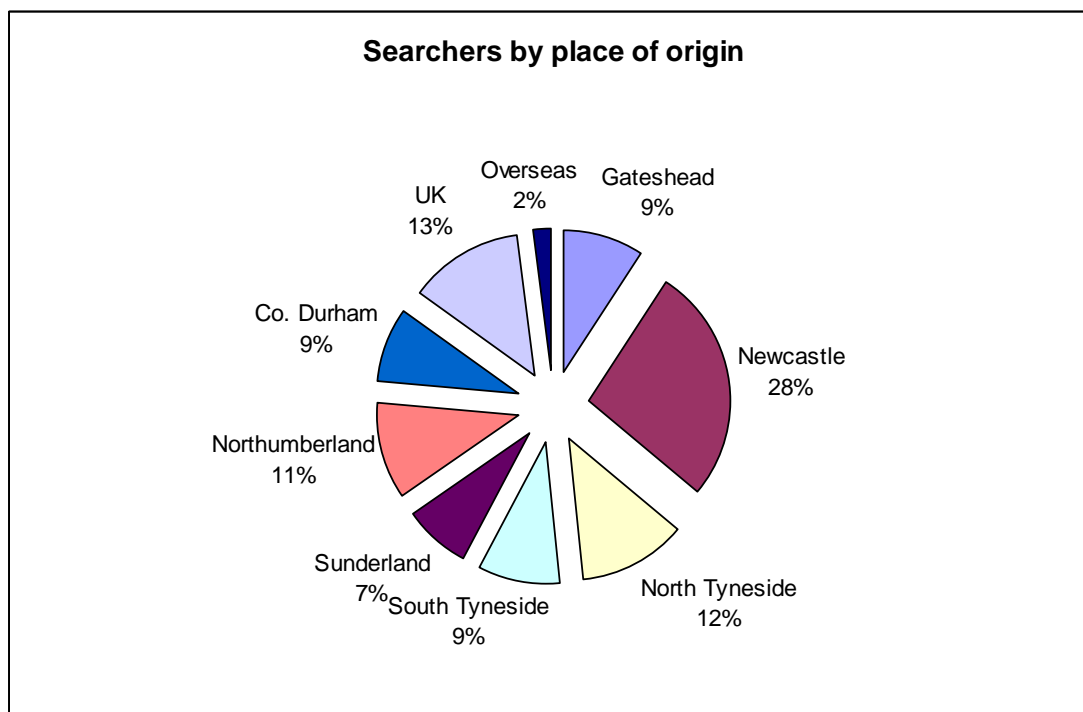
As Tyne & Wear Archives Service merged with Tyne & Wear Museums on 1 April 2009, this will be the last review of the independent archives service.

The period leading up to the merger, following a decision by the leaders of the five Tyne & Wear Councils in October 2008, was a hectic one with a great many practical details to be worked out. Nevertheless the service continued with its day to day work and a large number of activities.

2 Searchroom and other public services

There was a 3.5% increase in direct usage of the searchroom this year from 7790 to 8064, and although this did not reach the previous year's record figure, the upturn appears to be against the national trend.

The following chart shows the home address of service users in 2008/9. 65% of users came from within Tyne & Wear.



Users from Tyne & Wear (including groups) are broken down in the Appendix in line with the Best Value performance targets.

Increase in use of the archives website slowed slightly in 2008/9 but still showed a 17% increase over the previous year.

During the year we answered 2,140 enquiries received by post or e-mail, continuing the upward trend of previous years. Almost all enquiries now come in by e-mail. We also received 222 paid research orders, varying from one to three hours each compared to 149 the previous year.

3 Collections

The percentage of all catalogues (including those not to current standard) available online showed a small increase from 73% to just over 74% in full or as collection summaries. This was below the target of 83%. However, the number of entries for individual items increased greatly as described below.

166 catalogues were newly completed or updated in the course of the year. Some of the largest of these have been new catalogues for the British Ship Research Association, papers of Sir James Melville MP and Lady Sarah Melville, papers of Joseph Cowen MP, Wallsend Borough Building Control records, and records of NOMAD Housing Group. Summary catalogues were also completed for a number of shipbuilding companies as well as the River Wear Watch and the Labour Party.

Work started in May 2008 on cataloguing the Swan Hunter shipbuilding archive, funded by the National Archives Cataloguing Grants Programme. The cataloguing uncovered numerous important items in the course of the year and was due to be completed in May 2009.

A bid to a further round of the same programme to catalogue the records of the River Wear Commission was unfortunately not successful.

The number of individual catalogue records created, measured against the target, was 18,657 against a target of 9000, but more than half of these were thanks to the externally funded Swan Hunter project.

A larger than average quantity of new accessions was received during the year and keeping abreast of these also contributed to the shortfall in new catalogues created. We have received 99 separate deposits, transfers or donations of records in the past year.

Among the more significant acquisitions have been:-

- Tyne Pilotage Authority minutes 1957-1986
- Additional photographs of Jimmy Forsyth, photographer (who moved into a nursing home in the course of the year, and subsequently died)
- Photographs of locomotives, colliery buildings and miners' housing at Eccles Colliery, Backworth 1940s-2003

- Papers of Miroslav Sigmund, engineer, entrepreneur and inventor (1907-2004)
- St Mary's Roman Catholic Cathedral, Newcastle, baptism register 1863-1869 (previously missing)
- Ross's Pickles, Newcastle, records 1961-2007
- Spence family of North Shields photographs 19th century (purchased at auction)
- Gladstone Adams, photographer (1880-1966) records and photographs (partial archive purchased at auction – many other photographs sold separately)
- Northern IT Research Ltd records 1980-2000
- William Mathwin and Son, coal exporters, Newcastle records 1867-1985
- Rutherford Schools, Newcastle upon Tyne additional records 1888-1980
- St Columba's United Reformed Church, North Shields and predecessors records 1874-1994
- Sunderland Schools records of various closed schools including Usworth and Pennywell Comprehensives
- RMS Mauretania photograph album 1907
- Bridge and Tunnel Productions multi-media archive relating to "Last of the Dictionary Men" project with South Tyneside Yemeni community 2006-2008
- Newcastle General Hospital; St Nicholas Hospital, Gosforth additional records 1917-2005
- Harold and Edmund Atkinson, amateur photographers albums, negatives, slides and postcards 20th century
- Plans of Dunston Staiths 1890-1929
- Lambretta Club records 1950s-2002
- Heslop family, Newcastle upon Tyne family letters, photographs and other papers, including material relating to Arthur Heslop, landscape and marine artist (1881-1955).
- Scottish & Newcastle Breweries plans of the brewery site
- Gateshead public art programme records, including commissioning of the Angel of the North
- St Mary's CE Primary School, Tyne Dock records 1896-2008
- Trinity United Reformed Church, Whitley Bay and predecessor churches records 1896-2008
- Kepier Grammar School, Houghton le Spring papers 1859-1898
- Newcastle special and other schools records 1931-2007
- MLA North East records 2001-2009
- Information North records 1929-2002
- Thomas Salkeld, tailor, Newcastle, accounts 1692-1695 (purchased)
- Ponteland Cottage Homes Admission and discharge register, 1955 – 1960
- Houghton-le-Spring Labour Party Women's Section records 1919-1975

4 Conservation

The conservation staff returned to full strength and have continued with their packaging programme as well as hands-on conservation of new acquisitions and items required for searchroom use or copying.

5 Education, Learning & Outreach

Statistics for learning and outreach events are given in the following table. Figures in brackets are the comparable figures for 2007/8,

| Type of event | Number of events | Number attending |
|-----------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Schools | 28 (30) | 872 (577) |
| Universities/colleges | 11 (8) | 332 (204) |
| Teacher training | 11 (5) | 356 (35) |
| Family history groups | 4 (8) | 36 (147) |
| Local history groups | 8 (4) | 118 (98) |
| Workshops | 5 (11) | 57 (146) |
| Other talks | 19 (33) | 488 (636) |
| Total | 86 (99) | 2259 (1843) |

The Primary Sources website (<http://www.primarysources.org.uk/>) was launched in January 2009. This features the work of six archives in the north east with ten local schools. TWAS worked with Stocksfield Avenue Primary, Newcastle and Richardson Dees Primary, Wallsend. Stocksfield Avenue chose Britain Since 1948 as a topic, notably the 1950s and 1960s. Richardson Dees staff worked on their locality and Swan Hunters records, especially newly found material on the SS Baikal, a ferry on the Trans-Siberian railway. For the guidance of other schools teachers have presented medium term plans and lesson plans supported by archive images on this innovative site. The project was funded by MLA North East and HLF.

Crazy Talk was a small fun project working with Y6 pupils from Ivy Road Primary School, North Tyneside to animate drawings of Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth I. The monarchs passed royal judgement on the state of the Tudor Chamberlain's accounts for Newcastle and were not amused.

TWAS prepared a small exhibition for the launch of the North Tyneside Obesity Strategy in June 2008, followed in October by a CPD session for teachers featuring archives focused on the themes of Citizenship and Personal Health and Social Education for Key stage 2

Working in partnership with the Robinson Library Special Collections, TWAS ran practical sessions showing the potential for archives in the classroom for Primary BEd and PGCE students at Northumbria University and Secondary PGCE students on History and Geography courses at Newcastle University. In all over 400 students participated and gave very positive feedback. The project was also assisted by funding from MLA North East.

TWAS made a major contribution to a creative project *Past into Present*, focusing on the West End of Newcastle in transition. Teachers from nine schools, largely in Scotswood and Benwell attended two CPD sessions at TWAS. In addition to training in the use of primary sources in the classroom, a range of freelance providers gave sessions on drama, oral history, planning and redevelopment issues and creative writing. In school, the students explored the past through archive based web resources, use of the built environment and interaction with older residents. Four schools made supporting research visits to the archives. Bearing the dynamic past of west Newcastle firmly in mind, the children finished the project with a series of presentations to City councillors expressing their views on what they would like to happen in future.

For the fifth year running TWAS contributed to the Childhood Studies Degree at Northumbria University. In the module, 'Where the Hobgoblins Are', students write an assessed essay based on primary source material related to children and young people. Similar inputs are being discussed with courses at Newcastle University.

TWAS participated in the national BBC Campaign *Remembrance 90* to mark 90 years since the end of World War I. Two staff ran a stall at the regional event held at County Hall, Durham on 8 November 2008. The public were given digital access to a range of resources including rolls of honour held in the archives. The outreach manager worked with Sunderland City Libraries and two schools in a range of activities including sending a field postcard home from the front.

As usual the archives service exhibited at the National Family History Fair at Gateshead Stadium in September, receiving several hundred enquiries. Further afield TWAS co-ordinated a regional stand at the *Who do you think you are?* family history show at Olympia in London in May 2008. Although the event itself was hugely successful the impact of the regional stand probably did not justify the costs involved, and it was decided not to repeat the experience at the 2009 show in February. Attendance in 2008 was funded by MLA North East, the North East Regional Archives Council (NERAC), and staff time contributed by participating archives.

In May 2008 the archives service participated in *the Late Shows*, a Saturday evening opening of a number of cultural venues in Newcastle. We showed a selection of archive films, including a new selection relating to coal mining in Co. Durham and over 100 people visited in the course of the evening, some no doubt attracted by the free ice cream that was on offer, accompanied by 1960s cinema adverts for Tyneside's Eldorado Ice Cream.

6 Volunteering

The fourth year of the volunteer programme was another busy and successful one. Data inputting projects enabled the existing catalogue of the Joseph

Cowen papers to be made available online for the first time, several church register indexes were completed as well as indexes to the earliest fatal accidents registers of the Northumberland and Durham Miners Permanent Relief Fund Friendly Society. A long term project to improve access to the Turners of Newcastle photograph collection continued and resulted in a small exhibition in the Archives corridor.

8 Records Management

The records management service has continued to prosper, although economic stringency has meant that the income is increasingly used to bolster core budgets, rather than for special projects as previously.

Work was begun on updating the software that manages the service, but this had not yet been completed at the end of the year.

9 Northern Region Film & Television Archive

The archives service remains a major partner, alongside Teesside University, and is represented on the board by the chairman of the joint committee and the chief archivist.

It was another difficult year for the film archive, with the new national funding not yet released. The board, however, appointed a consulting manager to develop a sustainable business plan for the future, and at the end of the year it was hoped that the archive would be able to move forward into a new phase.

10 Conclusion

The archives service enters into partnership with Tyne & Wear Museums, following another challenging but successful year.