

Appendix 9: Archives

Manchester Libraries manages the Greater Manchester County Record Office function on behalf of GMCA, holding records from across the city region. We manage two partnerships – The Archives+ partnership with colleagues at Manchester Central Library and the Greater Manchester Archives and Local Studies Partnership with the nine other GM Local Authorities.

In 2023 we Manchester Libraries and Archives successfully reaccredited as a Place of Deposit with The National Archives. The assessors described the archives service, based at Central Library, as ‘unparalleled’ throughout the country.



Councillor Hacking, Executive Member for Skills, Employment and Leisure and Alison Gill, Manchester Libraries and Archives, receiving the Accreditation certificate from Jeff James, Chief Executive Officer and Keeper of UK National Archives.

Using Manchester City Council capital funds, the Archives+ exhibition area was overhauled this year to ensure it is sustainable for the next seven years. The film pods have been transformed into Sound and Vision pods which feature sound archives for the first time alongside the North West Film Archives films for the first time. This includes Unlocking Our Sound Heritage archives and Manchester Voices material – a Manchester Metropolitan University project that explored the accents of Greater Manchester.

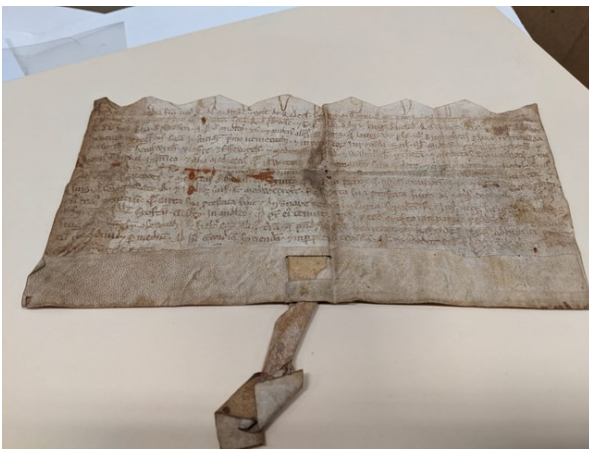


This has been a particularly rich year for Archives+ exhibitions, including Manchester Voices (analyzing Greater Manchester's accents), various exhibitions in the Manchester Histories Hub, the Manchester Hip Hop Archive displayed in Spinningfields and the Manchester Ship Canal exhibition. Curated by Martin Dodge from the University of Manchester, the exhibition contains visually striking adverts created by commercial artists in the twentieth century to promote the Manchester Ship Canal and the Port of Manchester around the world.

The Manchester Histories Hub, in the lower ground floor of Manchester Central Library, has been developing as a centre for heritage & wellbeing. It has hosted several Come & Chat workshops giving people the opportunity to come together and learn from one another about Greater Manchester's history and heritage using archives & collections. Workshop feedback from those taking part suggests the sessions have had a positive impact on their mental health, and new friendships have been formed combating social isolation and loneliness. The hub has also hosted several small exhibitions & events over the past year. This has included the Manchester Histories Salon, archives from the HiDDEN network, Rooms of Our Own, which celebrated the story of the women who saved the Pankhurst Centre and Manchester City of Literature, International Mother Language Day Exhibition, showcasing their international connection to the other UNESCO Cities of Literature and celebrating Manchester's creative work.

The Manchester & Lancashire Family History Society Helpdesk has been extremely busy throughout 2023, assisting 3500 customers - the same level as pre-pandemic.

Archives+ has been awarded £100k from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to develop a new website for the Manchester Local Image Collection and digitise 10,000 more images using local volunteers. The two-year project began in January 2024 and will bring together online for the first time all the library's digitised local photographs.



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In 2023, the Greater Manchester County Record Office purchased the Assheton collection. This collection is Greater Manchester's oldest surviving archive collection and has long been deposited with us. We managed to raise £100k to purchase it and to engage customers with it. The funding has been secured from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, V&A Purchase Fund, Friends of National Libraries and the Manchester Central Library Development Trust. It includes material from the 12th Century and relates to the Assheton family of Middleton.

Archives+ is the digitisation partner on the Royal Northern College of Music's Throwing Open The Concert Doors project, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The project is digitising over 1300 important and at-risk concert recordings held on obsolete open tape reels going back 50 years, transforming access to them while engaging the local community with the College's musical heritage. As part of the project Archives+ receives £55k to cover an Audio Preservation Engineer and conservation costs for 15 months. At January 2024 digitisation is ahead of schedule and is projected to reach as many as 2,000 tapes. Many of the concerts online can be listened online at <https://on.soundcloud.com/qdp51>.

Manchester City of Literature secured a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant to deliver the Re:Sound project to allow young people in Manchester to connect with heritage through audio creativity. Manchester City of Literature and Unlocking Our Sound Heritage (part of Archives+) brought together six Manchester-based sound artists with six Manchester community groups to bring audio heritage and local history to life through dynamic soundscaping, collaging and music. The community groups were Afrocats, KYSO Talent Group, Pendleton Sixth Form College, The Sebene Project, Young Identity and 42nd Street.

This year saw the official launch of the British Film Institute's BFI Replay product that gives access nationally via every library computer and library Wi-Fi to a fascinating collection of video clips and films. One of the Archives+ partners the North West Film Archive (Manchester Metropolitan University) provided material for this website and has created toolkits to help customers make the most of BFI Replay.

The Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People were successful in their bid to the Wellcome Trust in 2021, in partnership with Archives+, to catalogue, digitise and make accessible their Disabled People's Archive. The project continues and highlights of the collection are now available at: <https://disabledpeoplesarchive.com/in-the-archive/>.

Beswick Library was pleased to host a fascinating exhibition for the National Grid Gasholders from the Bradford Road gasworks. These historic structures, some dating back to the 1890s, are being demolished and will vanish from the East Manchester skyline. Beswick Library partnered with National Grid to hold a celebration of these local icons, showing films about their history and the demolition process. Actual sections of steelwork from the Saxon Street gasholder, have been donated by National Grid and were displayed at Beswick Library and Miles Platting Library, alongside an exhibition of contemporary and historic photographs. Visitors said: "I had no idea it was going to be so fascinating! I'm so glad I stayed to hear this." and "Seeing the steelwork pieces was amazing – they really gave you a sense of the scale of the gasholders and how gigantic they were!"

A launch of the Greater Manchester rate books and electoral registers project with Findmypast happened during May's Local and Community History Month. This new resource makes thousands of indexed family history archives accessible online for free at Greater Manchester archives and libraries for the first time.