

Archives Plan 2017-20

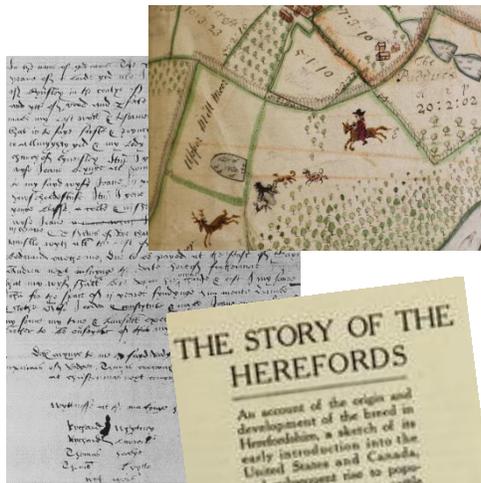
Introduction

The Archive Service based at HARC (Herefordshire Archive and Records Centre) holds in the region of 7,800 archive collections occupying over two miles of shelving, with archives dating back as far as the twelfth century. This provides an incredibly valuable resource and a rich source of historic records used for research, study, education and recreational family and social history. The creation of a dedicated passivhaus building at HARC in 2015 means Herefordshire has one of the country's leading centres for archives in terms of visitor experience and storage of the collections.



This document outlines Herefordshire Council's plans for the archive services during the next few years recognising the value to individuals and communities balanced with continued pressure of public sector expenditure which will have impact on how services will be delivered in the future.

Outline of the service



Herefordshire Council took the step to create a purpose built centre for archives, which has been recognised for its innovation and quality through numerous awards. The core purpose in creating the building was to improve the visitor experience when researching the collections along with providing the right environment for the longevity of archives. This allows the archives owned by the council and in the council's guardianship to be enjoyed now and for future generations.

The service has an important role in conservation of the archives and records, repairing damage created in the past and preventing any further deterioration. The service also runs events to raise awareness of the archives using them as a source of education and learning. Increasingly the archives are being made available on-line to support people's access if unable to travel to HARC.



HARC itself was built to support local and community engagement hosting relevant local events, exhibitions and providing the learning room for hire.

Sample of archives held

Records held fall into the following categories:

Diocesan covers parishes in Herefordshire, South Shropshire, and parts of Worcestershire, Monmouthshire and Powys. These documents date from the thirteenth century onwards and cover a wide range of Hereford Diocese's functions through to the present day. Latin was the preferred language of many of these documents until 1732. Bishop's transcripts, court books, marriage bonds and allegations, tithe maps and apportionments, and wills are available on microfilm.

Parish - registers and records of Church of England parishes within the county of Herefordshire, as well as those of several parishes outside the county. Many churches have deposited their pre-1900 registers of baptisms, marriages, burials and banns, which are mainly made available to the public in microfilm format.

Local Government - the historic records of Herefordshire Council, and its predecessors; also Hereford City and Leominster Borough, as well as district and parish councils. Records of pre-1889 county government are within Herefordshire Quarter Sessions (part of the public records collection). School and Board of Guardians (workhouse) records, where they have survived, are also deposited as part of the local government collections.

Private – these form a large portion of the holdings and relate to all aspects of the history and development of the geographical county of Herefordshire, and its inhabitants. Collections include the archives of non-conformist ecclesiastical bodies, businesses, estates and manors, private individuals, and a wide range of societies.

Public - The National Archives has designated Herefordshire Archive Service as a Place of Deposit for public records. Generally, public records are created by a central government department or their predecessor. These include Church Commissioners records, coroners' records, constabulary records and magistrates' court records.

Purpose

The purpose of the service is to provide access to the archive collections and preserve them for future generations. This creates a research and resource base for understanding the individual and collective heritage of the county through the evidence of source documents.

There are four key principles influencing the delivery of the archive service:

- To comply with the requirements of all relevant legislation and local government acts regarding the safe-keeping and democratic accessibility of records.
- To enable the collections to be accessed and enjoyed as a source of inspiration and education without compromising the care of the archive.
- To sustain the operation of the service through maximising earned income, sponsorship and charging.
- To make the most of partnership with business, community, friends group and volunteers to promote, utilise and develop HARC and the archive collection.

Objectives

1. **Care:** preserve collections through an ongoing programme of conservation, to include prevention activity that addresses risk of further damage
2. **Engagement:** to support people's well-being, learning and enjoyment using the collections as a route to history through exhibition, talks and events including sessions specifically for children
3. **Multi-use:** to encourage the varied use of HARC to maximise the building and forge links to the community, council departments and the visitor market
4. **Digital:** to support digital access to the finding aids and collections, including cataloguing and indexing of the archives to enable world wide access
5. **Community involvement:** to work in collaboration with friends, other stakeholders and interest groups to shape the service going forward and improve the offer through funding and support; along with volunteers as a valued resource to assist the service
6. **Council needs:** to meet the local authority's statutory and service needs with the archives being a resource for planning, development, enforcement and education teams
7. **Finance:** use the resources available to best effect and generate income through a range of means, whilst creating savings in the operation of the services.

Links to the Council Priorities

As well as public access, the council itself will access the archives for planning, enforcement and development. This section looks at how the services deliver on Herefordshire Council corporate priorities.

Enable residents to live safe, healthy and independent lives

- Opportunities for research which keeps the mind active and engaged, including family and local history
- Network of volunteers engaged in a number of projects including preservation, cataloguing and digitisation
- Community events, workshops, activities and exhibitions for all ages
- Developing HARC as a Dementia Friendly venue.

Keep children and young people safe and give them a great start in life

- Formal education sessions available for schools to support understanding of many curriculum subjects, but especially history through the archive material
- Informal learning via community classes and workshops available for children to participate in
- Link with museums and library with joining promotion and projects for children
- Project work with community groups such as SHYPP.

Support the growth of our economy

- Attract visitor economy through reach of the unique archive and family history tourism
- Contribute to the regeneration of the Rotherwas enterprise zone
- Provide property and land information for developers.

Secure better services, quality of life and value for money

- Repository for the Council's own records as the "corporate memory" of the organisation which can be used within audits, litigation and inquests for example
- Itinerary of charging for services and use of HARC facilities
- Create efficiencies through shared site at HARC with other services of the local authority, including provision of meeting and event space
- Review the opportunity for management of the services through commissioning.

Major programmes

Acquire and develop electronic archive management system.

Develop volunteer programme for digitising Bustin photographic collection and uploading onto Herefordshire History website.

Submit application for service accreditation by The National Archives.

Support Rotherwas ROF Front Line Duty Heritage Lottery Funded project to engage with the community to commemorate the contribution of the munitions workers.

Support phase 2 of "Herefordshire Life Through a Lens" project (Derek Evans photograph collection) to engage with volunteers to catalogue and digitise elements of the collection.

Develop and promote programme of regular talks and workshops at HARC to raise awareness and generate an income.

Develop marketing strategy for commercial use of Learning Room.

Develop income generating archive conservation, preservation and consultancy.

Explore working with commercial web-based providers to supply access to digitised collections.

Assess the future governance arrangement of HARC.

Participate in projects with schools and community groups for children and young people.

Links to further information:

- www.herefordshire.gov.uk/HARC
- www.nationalarchives.gov.uk
- <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/projects-and-programmes/strategic-vision-for-archives/>



Purpose building archive centre opened in August 2015. The award winning building is energy efficient based on 'passivhaus design'.