

## Working on Our Archive in Loddon during Lockdowns

We were lucky?



Our Archive has for quite a number of years been housed in the Local Studies room in Loddon Library. As an open access collection of files, scrapbooks, photo albums, maps and library of Local History Books this was an ideal arrangement. The contents of the 8 XFiles (our cuttings etc collection) were listed in acquisition order, but it was quite difficult to find links between items. Over time as more research was done other files were filled with information on local people, property, businesses, census transcripts, graveyard surveys, war memorial information.

Some years ago, at the end of the Parish Study funding period, money became available to repackage our archive with new blue ring binders and box filed. A decision was made to relocate some of the items into subject files. The Red Cross Hospital, Heckingham Workhouse/Hales Hospital, Corbyn Family. There were also files containing the large numbers of enlarged images created for the many exhibitions and displays the group had mounted over the years. The contents of these were listed and most were typed up. Sadly this activity was curtailed when serious illness struck the group.

So inclusion in the current project was a welcome opportunity to resume the work on the catalogue. But the Library was closed with the archive inside it?

Robin & Laura sent out various missives and I started looking at how the previous work could be incorporated into the Cataloguing Sheets, and then developed. I realised I had to try to sort out a Catalogue structure to enable the creation of the reference codes. I opted for the simple Excel spreadsheet (sometimes I remembered to hide non-essential columns) which enabled batch population of Reference Numbers, Titles (copied from the earlier lists) and in some cases Genre and Extent ( still a *work in progress*). But how to progress further ?

Then an email arrived from the Library Manager, could we please remove some or all of the Archive as part of the preparations for the opening of the Library. Within a week the books, albums, box files and folders had been bagged and boxed and removed to my garage, my living room, my bedroom and Carol's conservatory. All within the risk assessment masks sanitiser and social distancing agreed with NCC. New shelving was quickly procured and some semblance of order was created. Some of the folders were immediately ready for cataloguing, others needed work.



Eight volunteers replied to the call for help (see appendix 1) to work on cataloguing the folders. The Subject and Genre lists I down loaded, the subject list in particular I slimmed

down. Both were printed and delivered to the volunteers with a folder or album as part of my daily exercise, on my walk around the village. The Excel sheets were sent digitally.

So far these wonderful people have completed the sheets for a large part of the Archive.

I have tentatively tried merging some of the Excel sheets, but more needs to be done on checking and editing before this is sensible.

Along side this one volunteer continues to work on transcribing Census sheets, another has been transcribing newspaper cuttings and nearly legible images of documents from the NRO, while another has continued to work on geo-referencing the Tithe Maps for Loddon and its neighbours to produce images that show land use and ownership. A display of the Loddon and Chedgrave maps was mounted in the church just before Lockdown 1, hopefully it can be seen again as restrictions are eased.

Just to add to the fun, 3 new (small) collections have been added to our Archive during the last year which we hope can soon be catalogued.

Elvie Herd