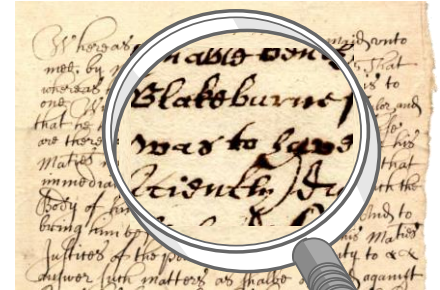


News from the Archives

Newsletter of Lancashire Archives



**Archive Service
Update**

Closed

...until further notice

12 months ago, when I wrote, 'We have a lot to look forward to in 2020', I had no idea what I was predicting. The events and activities within our control took place. We celebrated our 80th birthday, introduced the new Archive Card and retained our status as an accredited archive service, but COVID-19 waged war on the rest of our plans.

On the positive side we have all greatly improved our IT knowledge and skills. Who had heard of Zoom a year ago? Now we are using it very effectively for meetings and talks, as well as with schools, and we're looking forward to learning how to use Microsoft 365, including Teams, in the next few weeks. Some of our handlists, and the essays from earlier annual reports which you enjoyed reading last year, will also soon

be available on Lancashire Libraries' eBook platform –Borrowbox - another way of providing access to information about Lancashire Archives and our wonderful collections.

As I write this, between Christmas and New Year, I have no idea whether or not we will be able to open on 5 January. If Lancashire remains in Tier 3 we will be open and ready to welcome you again. If Lancashire's - or even just Preston's - restrictions are upgraded to Tier 4, we will have to close to visitors and volunteers.

The swift, but necessary move this week from Tier 4 to national lockdown restrictions confirms that we must remain closed to the public.

But we will continue to answer the phone, respond to letters and emails, and post out copying orders; and, of course, send you News from the Archives each month

With hopes and best wishes for a 2021 which can only get better.

Jacquie Crosby

Archives Service Manager

Zoooooom !

Time used to fly by. To me, over the last eight or nine months, during the ebb and flow of the pandemic and the associated restrictions, it seems to have slowed down. As well as giving space to reflect on aspects of life outside work, this slowdown has also provided room to try new ways of working.

In recent times, lots of us have used – willingly or otherwise – video-conferencing tools such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams to keep in touch with friends and family. They have also transformed many aspects of our working lives, some of these, arguably, for the better.

Staff at Lancashire Archives have used these technologies to keep in touch with each other, and whilst this kind of "virtual team" is never as good as the "real" thing, it's certainly better than total lone-, and sometimes lonely, working.

Thanks to an account paid for by our Friends association, we have also been able to use Zoom to give talks and hold creative writing sessions. We have even "zoomed" whole primary school classes.



That's a year 5 class at Broughton Church of England Primary School waving goodbye after a chat with me about World War One and what made men join the forces in the early stages of the conflict. I was able to show them some original government recruitment posters from our collections and talk to them about "propaganda" and how this was no doubt just one of many factors in the decision-making of some those who joined up.

Over the next few month we have the following to offer:

Lancashire Archives Online Talks, 2021

Last orders please! - researching pubs and publican ancestors – Keri Nicholson
Friday 22 January 12.30-13.30

Going underground – our Lancashire coal mining ancestors – David Tilsley
Friday 19 February 12.30-13.30

Memories Public and Private – scrapbooks and commonplace books – Kathryn Newman
Friday 19 March 12.30-13.30

To book a place and receive a link please email archives@lancashire.gov.uk

Again, as with communicating with work colleagues, screen time is not always a good substitute for face to face contact. But, for the time being it's all we have, and, what is becoming increasingly clear is that Zoom and similar applications do massively widen the potential audience for what we do. There will be lots of people who would like to attend onsite talks but live too far away, including many overseas. Closer to home, I know there are Lancashire primary schools

that would like to arrange a visit but prohibitive transport costs prevent them.

I'm sure that we will continue to explore how to better connect with people digitally long after the pandemic is finally behind us and we'll bring Lancashire's archives into many more homes and classrooms.

David Tilsley

Archivist

Keep Calm and Carry on Collecting

When in April we first launched the appeal for the fine folk of Lancashire to share their impressions of Lockdown with us, we had no idea what the response would be. Nor did anyone have any notion of what future would hold. Eight months later, we still don't.

The response was fantastic. We now have a collection of writing, images, film, sound recordings and other items which reflect the fears, frustrations, triumphs and unexpected pleasures of this period of upheaval. We received videos, songs, community projects, posters, practical things such as test kits, notifications of test results (negative thankfully) and official literature. And of course, as the historical record keeping service for Lancashire County Council, we are working with all kinds of services to capture the decisions and responses that kept and keep our county going.

"History is always happening", and this year it seems that we have witnessed more than most. With so many mixed messages, fake news stories, and radical opinions thrown around, what do we trust, what is the "truth"? As an archive, in many ways, we

have to suspend judgement and reflect as wide a body of evidence as we can. We do not judge, we are custodians, not critics.

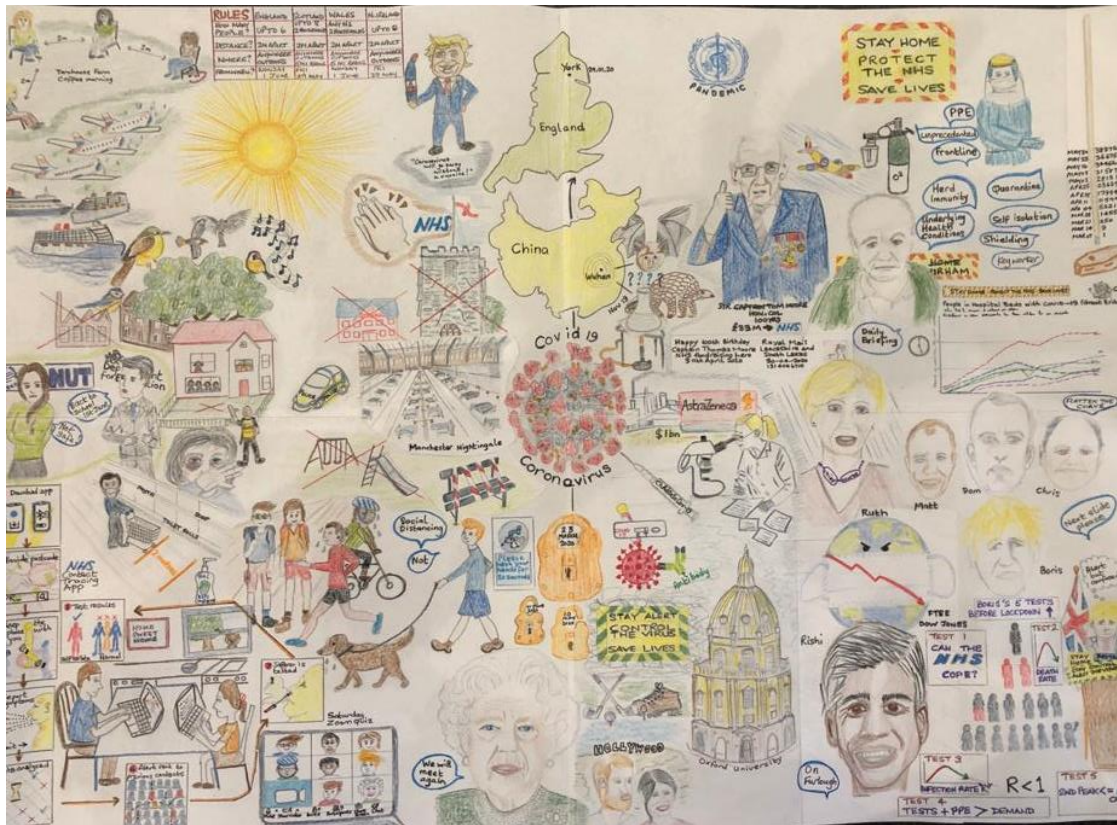
Some of our most treasured items reflect opinions later proved to be fundamentally wrong. No, you can't sail to the Far East via America as our 1602 Letter from Elizabeth I to the Emperor of Cathay suggests. No, women are not incapable of rational thought, as several responses to the suffrage movement maintain. No, the War would not be over by Christmas 1914...

Untold numbers of items fill our shelves, reflecting difference of opinions during elections, disputes over land or property, and records of personal, local and international conflicts show that there will always be someone else's truth out there. But we still value this evidence of difference, of error and of the choices made. Difference is history and we are fortunate that we are able to express it, share it and preserve it.

We need to keep collecting, and we need your help. Those of you who have already contributed, thank you, can we have more? Those who maybe think they have nothing to share; you do, and it is all welcome. Although Covid has dominated 2020, there are so many other areas that we would love to hear your thoughts on.

I hope you enjoy these examples of recent submissions, perhaps they will inspire you. Please keep sharing, you are making our history, and we need to reflect as much as we can. For information about sharing you can visit our website

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/libraries-and-archives/archives-and-record-office/our-collections/lancashire-and-the-covid-19-pandemic-archive-collection/>



An anonymous artist who has been adding to this since April. She promised to send the completed article when Covid-19 was just a memory. I suspect our artist will have had to turn this into a triptych by now.



A wonderful image of hope and resilience sent in by Emma Walker

For sheer fortitude and talent I direct your attention to the work of poet Joyce Bond who has been recording her thoughts since the beginning of Lockdown. I nominate her for Covid Laureate.

<https://spotonlancashire.co.uk/covid-ode-by-joyce-bond/>

Jane who is a frontline library assistant in West Lancashire has shared her thoughts at different times during this year, and her latest musings highlight some of the changes we are all experiencing.

The rules are constantly changing which is extremely confusing and impossible for people like my elderly mother who does not look things up on the government website, but relies on the television news.

Wearing face masks has become entirely normal and I have stopped noticing them when I look at people's faces. However, while most people are very good about wearing them, others are not, and customers in the library do sometimes have to be reminded about keeping them over the nose and mouth at all times. We also spend a lot of time supervising people sanitising their hands and taking contact details for Test and Trace at the library door. This job can be very cold as doors and windows need to be kept open to provide ventilation. The council is providing fleeces for us to wear as well as council-issued face masks.

The standard of hygiene in the library is very high – we swap positions every half hour and clean computers, phones etc. after every change of personnel. We also clean customer computers after every use. Returned library books are left on a trolley in the entrance porch and quarantined for 72 hours before staff discharge them. The library is possibly the safest place to visit in Lancashire! [no that's Lancashire Archives – ed]

I am leading my normal life now, just in a different way. My Book Club and Knit and Natter group are both on Zoom (and it is a great incentive to improve computer skills – even my elderly mother now zooms). Instead of meeting friends for coffee, we go for a walk.

Kathryn Newman

Archivist

**ANY
COMMENTS?**

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