

News from the Archives

Newsletter of Lancashire Archives



Archive Service update

We are planning to re-open on Tuesday 13 April provided that the Government's roadmap is still on track. For further information please look at our website from Easter Tuesday onwards. When we know we can re-open, the booking form will be live. As before, visits will be by appointment only, and documents, microfilms etc must be ordered in advance. We will continue to close for an hour at lunchtime to enable staff to clean between sessions. Please remember to use the door at the bottom of the staircase and that we have a one-way system through the searchroom. In May we

will also be re-introducing Saturday opening. Watch out for details in next month's newsletter.

Jacque Crosby

Archive Service Manager

Discovering the Union Workhouse with Alan Crosby

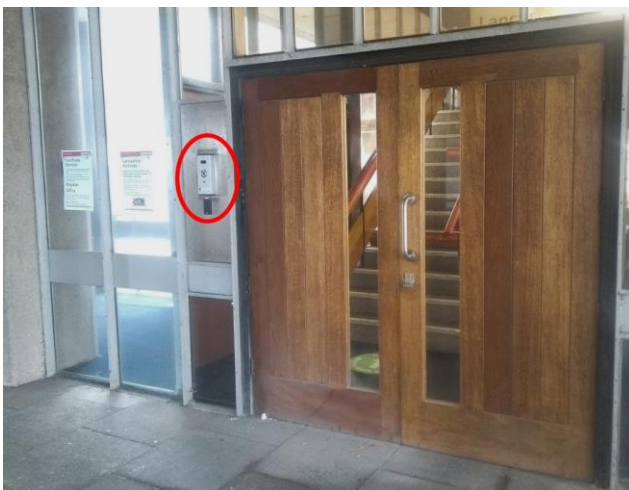


(Image from Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council Cotton Town digitisation project: www.cottontown.org)

Session 1- Exploring the system Session 2 - Revealing the documents

These two talks, given online to a large and appreciative audience last month, were recorded, and can be watched at:

<https://www.flarchives.co.uk/events.html>



Last Orders Please!

Researching pubs and publican ancestors



On Friday 9th April I'll be giving a talk offering advice about how to research the history of local pubs and the licensed publicans who ran them. Pubs have always been at the centre of British communities, and the licensing laws which govern them mean that they are particularly well documented. I'll be dipping into court and police collections, brewery records and maps, plans and photographs to help tell their story.

The talk is free of charge and will take place on Zoom at 12.30. To book your place email archives@lancashire.gov.uk.

Keri Nicholson

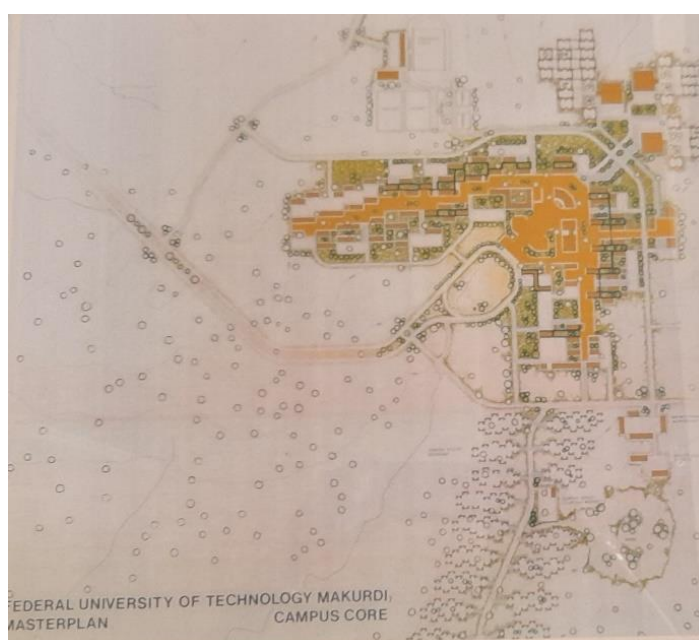
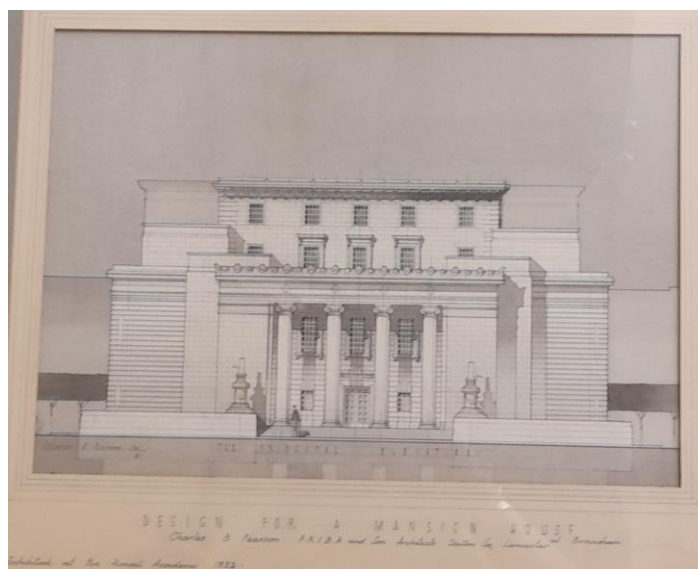
Archivist

Best Laid Plans

An archivist, a conservator and a conservation technician walk into a garage... no, not the introduction to an obscure joke, but a description of Lancashire Archives staff adventures one weekend in early March.

Late in 2020 we were contacted by the family of Mr Michael Pearson, a retired architect from Lancaster. Mr Pearson had

spent over 50 years creating innovative buildings, and had a large collection of plans, drawings and photographs which needed a new home. What made the collection extra special was the fact that Mr Pearson had followed the family calling, as his grandfather, Charles Bulman Pearson had first opened an architectural practice in 1904. In 1931, his son, Charles Edward Pearson, joined the practice and, in 1958 Michael Pearson joined his father and grandfather in business.



So, we have records of architectural innovation and design spanning over a century, and including examples of domestic properties, civic and municipal buildings, and extensive modern business premises. The Pearson family practice created buildings in Lancaster, the rest of England, and even as far afield as South America and the Middle East, so the significance of this collection is truly regional, national, and international.

After talking to family members and an initial survey, we realised that this collection needed to come to the safety of the Archives as soon as possible, but the amount of material, ongoing storage challenges as well as Covid restrictions made this a particularly tricky exercise. We were not sure how swiftly we would be able to respond and started discussions about the best way forward.

At this point we became aware of a fund being administered by the National Archives to support archive activities where collections were at risk directly or indirectly because of the pandemic. The only problem was a very tight deadline, as the fund needed to be distributed as soon as possible. We felt that the Pearson collection fitted the bill, and so, thanks to some heroic planning by conservator Mark O'Neill, we managed to pull together a funding bid in record time. We asked for funding to collect, package, and transfer the collection to the Archives; to clean it, carry out any necessary conservation treatment, and create bespoke long-term packaging. This would mean that the collection was safe, accessible, and no longer in danger from water damage or other threats. We also saw the opportunity to spend time carefully cataloguing the material and had all sorts of ideas about how to make the most of this unique resource by working with local university departments and online media. Now the wait.

At the end of February, Good News! We had been successful and had been awarded just under half of the amount we had bid for. Considering that in total the fund had a total of £500,000 to share, and that it was asked for over £2,000,000, We think we did pretty well! The award was made for the collection, conservation, and storage of the collection, but we hope we might have other opportunities to fund the next part of the plan later in the year.

Which is why, over two days in early March, Mark O'Neill, Liam McLaughlin, our conservation technician, and I found ourselves moving box after box, and frame after frame. All wrapped in acres of bubble wrap to safeguard them during the journey, and all carried by hand to a Lancashire County Council van.

Lancaster natives may recognise the precipitous hill we had to negotiate, as (despite skillful driving), we had to park some distance from the site, and archive trolleys do not do well over cobblestones.





Now the collection is safely at the Archives, the next stage is underway, cleaning items, removing documents from frames (so that they can be checked for damage and stored more appropriately) and making lots and lots of folders. The conservation team are going to be busy for a while, but this is a great example of what can happen in a short space of time when depositors, archive staff, and a little bit of fortune come together.

Kathryn Newman

Archivist

A Little Help From...



Thanks to the Friends of Lancashire Archives (FLA), last month we welcomed Roz Williamson to the Lancashire Archives team. A grant of just over £62,000 from the FLA means that Roz will be spending the next two years producing catalogue entries for thousands of boxes of archives in our strongrooms that currently have no available description.

This project will make important collections more accessible and Roz will be sharing news of her progress here from next month, along with details of any unearthed treasures! FLA are always looking for new members. For just £10 (individual annual subscription) you can join them and support important projects like this one, as well help to purchase significant documents so they can be available to everyone.



Detail from a map of lands in Witton surveyed by Robert Lang in 1738. It was purchased at auction by FLA for £1260 and is now available at Lancashire Archives (DP 543)

Join FLA now, online at

<https://www.flarchives.co.uk/join-fla.html>

**ANY
COMMENTS?**

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