

Customer Survey 2016

Between 26 September and 28 October 2016, Derbyshire Record Office participated in the national survey of archive users. Derbyshire's results show that some interesting changes have taken place since the last survey in 2011.

Customer profile

- The ages of customers ranged from 21 to 88, with an average age of 61.6.
- 90% of customers were white, 3% mixed and 1% Asian. 6% preferred not to say.
- 79% of customers did not have a disability, 14% had impairment to motor functions, 9% to hearing, 6% to mental health, 5% to memory and 3% to vision.
- There appears to have been a significant change to the gender profile in the last five years. 36% were female, 59% were male and 6% chose not to say. In 2011, 52% of users were female and 48% were male.

Reason for visit

Five years ago, 81% of visitors were researching family history. The reason for visiting the Record Office has now changed significantly:

Local history research	43%
Family history research	41%
Academic research	17%
Architectural / building / site research	14%
To gather information for talk / publication	9%
To find information related to their work	7%
Military research	4%
Accompanying someone else	4%
To find information for a volunteer organisation	4%
General browsing / familiarisation	3%

The reasons for this change are most likely to be a result of the online resources available to family historians on websites such as Ancestry and Find My Past, which have become available since 2011. These websites mean that people can now do a lot of family history research online, rather than through visiting a record office.

Satisfaction

Overall satisfaction scores (marked out of 10) were high:

Attitude of staff	9.8
Quality of staff advice	9.6
Service overall	9.7

Detailed satisfaction scores

Facilities

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neutral	Not very satisfied	Not at all satisfied	Don't know / Not applicable
Opening hours	85%	11%	2%	0%	0%	1%
Ease of finding building	72%	17%	2%	3%	1%	5%
Appearance / upkeep of building	85%	10%	3%	0%	0%	0%
Physical access to and in building	79%	11%	5%	1%	1%	1%
Lockers / toilets / rest and refreshment areas	72%	15%	2%	1%	0%	0%
Welcome / reception	87%	10%	1%	0%	0%	0%

Online Facilities

Availability of computers	50%	5%	0%	0%	0%	35%
Speed of computers	32%	13%	2%	0%	0%	40%
Usability of online catalogue	29%	21%	8%	1%	0%	28%
Quality of online catalogue	26%	25%	7%	1%	0%	26%
Quality of other online resources	19%	13%	3%	2%	0%	46%
Access to other online resources	22%	11%	2%	1%	0%	44%

Analogue Facilities

Availability of seating	87%	11%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Quality of paper catalogues	32%	12%	1%	1%	0%	43%
Quality of other paper resources	26%	10%	3%	0%	0%	44%
Document ordering system	57%	15%	5%	1%	1%	14%
Document delivery system	58%	10%	4%	4%	0%	14%
Microform facilities	32%	17%	1%	0%	0%	42%
Copy services	26%	6%	3%	2%	0%	50%
Self service photography	33%	5%	3%	1%	0%	45%

Why people visited the Record Office

Special topics

History of library provision in Brimington for article on ... library facilities for the village 1870-1970.
Researching lives of 3 SE London siblings who came to Brimington in 1880's and whose effect is still felt today.
Post-doctoral research on workhouse suppliers before the new poor law
Part of my last 12 years investigation into Roman Derbyshire ... This trip possible connection between the Turnpike Road at Brassington and 'The Street'
Looking at Henry Colvile's diary who fought in late 19th century in Uganda
PhD student at NTU looking at the social history of pre-NHS hospitals in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire
To find people in unmarked graves and those who died during the world wars
Researching monastic granges in Derbyshire

Local History projects

Litton First World War History Project
Researching Great War Medal Group
Information on former RAF site at Harper Hill Buxton
Researching Second World War period in Calver, Curbar, Froggatt
A large project on the history of lead mining in the liberty of Taddington and Priestcliffe
History of a former N derbyshire parish and surrounding locality

Family history

Visiting for family research from Australia as some records not yet digitised/online or needed authentication
Ancestors seemed to be in Derbyshire for centuries. Their work is connected with millstone making and stone cutters. There is little information on the internet and having exhausted what I could find, wished to further my work with local history knowledge

Buildings

Research into the school buildings built by the county council and Derby Borough council 1900-1950
To research two buildings in Belper (Grade II Listed) that have a long history as residence and surgery for doctors in the town
Researching the history of my house and the immediate area
Buying new property would like to find out more about oldest part of house
Buildings in the town of Glossop that were built in 1887 (130th anniversary in 2017)
Commercial research for planning applications
Changes over years to church windows

Archaeology

To research 2 sites within Derbyshire with a view to understanding past land use in order to inform their archaeological potential
Research for archaeological assessment as part of an HLF funded project

Positive Comments

It is an important facility and the only council service I use
The staff are always helpful, knowledgeable and friendly - no task too small
It was a very pleasant and productive experience. Lovely staff
Always a good experience to visit here, sometimes not so for other Archives
A much needed county facility
Wonderful library, staff are very knowledgeable and always willing to help. A real asset to Derbyshire. Many records are not available in Derby.
Derbyshire Archives and Local Studies and its staff are truly excellent. Small changes would make it even better. Tragedy if hours are cut.
Very helpful and at all times professional staff
New facilities are excellent, break room especially welcome
Overwhelmed by the help given by staff and the level of their knowledge
Not having been for a few years, very impressed with everything
Excellent. Cannot fault staff.
The archive is one of the best I have been to - out of about 10 that I have experienced. The staff are exceptional and the working environment second to none.
I have visited many Archives over the years and this is the best one I have ever visited.
The staff were the most helpful of any of the archives previously visited. I was VERY impressed
Fantastic: staff are friendly, documents well cared for and environment pleasant
Very informative and helpful staff. Made very welcome
Exceptionally helpful staff, both by email and in person
Derbyshire Record Office is one of the best archives which I have attended across the country. The building and facilities are well maintained. The staff are excellent
The service at Derbyshire RO is one of the best I have encountered. The staff are friendly and informative and I always look forward to visiting. I am a frequent user of many different RO's for work

Other comments

Comment:

To calendar and place online the huge backlog of uncatalogued material. Make users more aware of the vast amount of archives which are thus unavailable. Knowledge of this uncatalogued resource would be very useful both here and elsewhere.

Our response:

Like most Record Offices, we have a large backlog of uncatalogued material. As a first step towards making this accessible, we make sure that our uncatalogued collections are shown on our online catalogue so that researchers can get an idea of what we hold. We also use volunteers to prepare basic box lists of uncatalogued collections.

Cataloguing our backlog requires funding, and we have a good track record at getting external funding to catalogue some of our larger collections; recent examples are the Harpur Crewe archive and the National Union of Mineworkers archive. We are currently developing a fundraising strategy to help us prioritise and raise funds for more cataloguing to reduce our backlog.

Comment:

Derbyshire list of parishes and date of starting - many intervening years missing.

Our response:

There can be gaps in parish registers; registers for the civil war years, for instance, are often missing. The parish register guide tells you whether we hold records of a parish, and should lead you to the parish register list, or the catalogue, both of which will show whether there are any gaps.

We are working to put all our parish records onto our online catalogue, and replace the existing guide with new web pages that link straight to the particular parish records in the catalogue. This will mean that the gaps should be obvious straight away.

Comment:

Paper catalogues where available are very good but not all the collections have a paper catalogue and they must have.

Our response:

We removed quite a lot of our smaller paper catalogues when we refurbished our building, in order to make space. Our online catalogue is now our primary catalogue, but we know that paper catalogues can be useful too. If there's a catalogue you'd like to use that isn't printed, let us know and we'll print it out and added it to the paper catalogues in our searchroom.

Comment:

Only rated 9 because the papers I most wanted had not (it seems) been deposited here.

Our response:

We can't always control what has or hasn't been deposited here, but there are some situations where we can ask an organisation to deposit their records if there is a demand, so do speak to the staff in case there is anything we can do to bring records in.

Comment:

A bigger car park would be nice.

Our response:

This is something that many customers want, but unfortunately, there is no space on our site to add more car parking.

Comment:

Layout of building is very poor. Modernise!!!

Our response:

Our building was modernised in 2013. We're always keen to improve things, so if you have an idea for how we could lay things out better, please let us know. Unfortunately, the only way we could modernise further is to build a completely new Record Office, which would cost many millions of pounds.

Comment:

When telephoning to book the services I said it was my first visit but was not informed on the location of the building.

Our response:

I'm sorry we didn't give you more guidance about how to find us when you rang. We'll remind staff to do this in future.

Comment:

Some microfilm machines were older and difficult to use or jamming up when re-winding

Our response:

We do have an aging stock of microfilm and fiche machines, which are now obsolete technology and hence difficult and expensive to repair or replace. We're planning to provide digital access to our collections, rather than film and fiche, so that we can dispose of these old machines.