

Development of the Local History Collection at Headstone Manor & Museum

The Local History Collection currently held at Headstone Manor and Museum has had significant underinvestment over several years. This has led to the collection being insufficiently catalogued and preserved which, in turn, has led to frustration with the inadequacy of public access to this important resource. Harrow Council and the team at Headstone Manor & Museum are committed to investing resources in bringing the collection into line with the current national guidelines for archives. This will enable those who are interested in Harrow's history to have the greatest possible access to this knowledge, whilst still preserving these often fragile documents for the future.

In order to improve standards and following consultation with two external archivists (one who developed and ran the Mycenae Excavation and Publication Archive at the University of Cambridge and the current archivist for both Brent and Hillingdon Archives), the Council will be closing public access to the Local History Collection for up to 12 months. During this period the Collection will undergo a complete audit and extensive physical restructure, with the goals of improving public access, care of the collection and future preservation.

During this process, records and documents will be moved and re-housed in several stages and we will develop our digital catalogue. This catalogue will be available to the public online in a searchable digital format. Through this catalogue, there will still be an opportunity for information to be accessed digitally as it is uploaded. Information included on the catalogue will give details of the records held by the Collection, in some cases also incorporating photographs and scans of the documents.

At the end of the 12 month period our aims for the Local History Collection include providing access to a 'reading room' where local history books will be available for browsing and study, facilitating public access to fragile materials via our curatorial team, and making as much of the collection available online as possible.

By taking the time now to care for and organise the ever growing collection, we are making a commitment to future generations to preserve the history of Harrow and ensure that it is accessible at the highest standards.