

The Royal Grammar School Archive



The School Archive holds a wide range of material documenting all aspects of School life. As well as paper records and photographs about LRGS, its pupils and Old Lancastrians, the Archive holds School memorabilia and artefacts. Its contents include:

- Photographs of sports teams, dating back to c.1870; House groups, dating back to 1896; whole-School, dating back to 1896; and many others.
- *The Lancastrian*, 1886-2018.
- *Old Lancastrian Club Newsletter*, 1941 onwards, and papers of the Old Lancastrian Club.
- Artefacts and memorabilia, including items of School and OLC uniform, dating back to the Victorian era.
- Governors' Minutes.
- Admission records.
- Blue Books, 1940 onwards.
- Pupil magazines.
- Records of sports teams, clubs and societies.
- OTC, JTC and CCF material.
- Administrative and financial records.
- Estate papers and building plans.
- Works of art and antiquarian maps.
- Trophies.
- Exercise books and textbooks.
- Collections of personal papers given by Old Lancastrians and others.
- Secondary sources: books and printed articles on the history of the School and its members; the *Biographical Register* (directories of known former pupils C13th-1872 and 1895-1946).

The Archive was first established in the late-1990s. A suggestion to create one had been made by Mr Paul Andrew (OL, 1969-76) to Mr Peter Mawby (Headmaster, 1983-2001) in the mid-1980s; the former had been collecting material since the 1970s, and in 1990-93 he wrote to all known pre-1939 OLs, resulting in the acquisition through purchase or gift of many items

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dating as far back as 1885, though mainly post-1915.

Following the appointment of Mr Nick Chambers as Development Director, the Archive was formally established in 1998 in a room in one of the former School boarding houses in East Road. Significant impetus from the late Mr Alan Petford (Head of History, 1997-2001) and a Pupil Archivist, Oscar Van Nooijen, ensured that the Archive became an impressive reality. Existing material from within the School was transferred to it, most notably: a large collection of de-framed 1st XI and 1st XV Team photographs, and School and House photographs, dating back to the 1870s; various architects' plans for School buildings dating back to 1851; assorted papers from School House; sets of *The Lancastrians* from 1886 onwards; trophies, etc.

The Reverend Thomas Faulkner Lee's Tower Room Study, situated in Old Side, together with the room above it, were then allocated to the Archive; they were thoroughly decorated and equipped with shelving. Mr Alec Mackie, the father of an OL, acted as Archivist for a short period until his untimely death.

Subsequently, Mr Clive Holden, (OL, 1945-54, and Assistant Master, 1960-61), took up the role; he has done significant work over many years in arranging the identification of boys and masters on numerous School photographs, organising Founder's Day exhibitions, and responding to a steady stream of enquiries about OLs. The latter task is a time-consuming one, given that the 1886-2018 volumes of *The Lancastrian* have not yet been digitised.

The Upper Room in the Tower suffered from damaging water ingress about five years ago, and the Archive Room below it was allocated to Business Studies after the gutting and renovation of the School House dormitories for teaching use.

The current Archive Room is located in a room on the first floor of Old School House. There are also display cabinets elsewhere: a large one in the Rigg Room and a small



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11 th 1862	5 Oct	Mr. William Millar	23 Nov 1812
		Mr. James Moore	June 1814
		Mr. Francis Simpson	June 1813
		Mr. John Langhorne	June 1814
		Mr. Bernard Moore	Decr. 1814
		Mr. Edmund Perry	June 1813
		Mr. Nicholas Herbert	Decr. 1812
		Mr. William Shuttle	1 Nov. 1812
		Mr. Frederick Parson	Decr. 1813
		Mr. John Pitt	Decr. 1813
		Mr. Richard Owen	Nov. 1819
		Mr. Henry Gregson	June 1815
		Mr. John Lither	Decr. 1813



one near Big School, both containing badges, caps and blazers, etc; two in the Miller Room, one of which contains various trophies and a quarter-bound-in-leather set of *The Lancastrian*, and the other which houses various photographs, books and medals, etc. Another cabinet is situated in the Memorial Library.

Further material is held in the Armoury and elsewhere. The Lancashire Records Office also has various items, most of which are on 'loan deposit' and which their archivists say can be repatriated to the School; it is hoped to bring back to the Archive Room all such items, most notably a full set of bound volumes of Governors' Minutes from c.1920-77.

In 2017, a part-time professional archivist, Mrs Hazel Gafford, was appointed for a few months, following a bequest and a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. These monies enabled us to begin cataloguing the Archive as part of a project, *The Changing Face of Lancaster*, which invited local people to discover how three influential Victorian philanthropists, all Old Lancastrians, invested in the infrastructure of the town and provided buildings and schemes for the local community. The Gregson Centre was founded in memory of Henry Gregson; James Williamson, Lord Ashton, created Williamson Park, and Herbert Storey funded the Storey Institute and assisted with the development of the Westfield War Memorial Village.

Using Excel, Mrs Gafford established an appropriate classification and cataloguing system for the Archive, with help from a couple of pupils, Sam McLoughlin and Edward Eastham. Work was also done earlier, in 2015-16, by a Pupil Archivist, Al-Yasa Khan.

One of the current Volunteer Archivists, Mr Stephen Clarke (OL, 1966-73), has recently spent many hours electronically scanning some of the whole-School photographs in high resolution, editing them to improve their quality. Significant progress has been made in digitising the Archive's collection of photographs.

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Also assisting as the main Volunteer Archivist is Mr Paul Andrew, a recently retired schoolmaster; he is a member of the School Archivists' Group, a 250-strong body of professional and volunteer archivists working mainly in British public schools.

The archivists work on an entirely voluntary basis, never claiming expenses from any of the School's funds.

Over the past few years, the following work has been undertaken: the re-arrangement of the Archive Room to make more efficient use of space, enabling the remaining contents of the Upper Room in the Tower to be transferred to it, and to give much greater surface work space; the re-hanging of the doors on the bookcases; the hanging of framed photographs on its walls; the transfer of archive material from the Lee House attics; the sorting of large boxes of papers into archive boxes; the purchase and assembling of shelving racks; the removal of a wash-basin, pipes and stand; the detailed cataloguing of photographs; the photographing of existing material; a search of the School's safes and cellars to locate hitherto missing items and to find further suitable material for placing in the Archive; cleaning the mould-damaged Royal photographs/prints, which used to hang in the Assembly Hall; establishing an Accession Register in Excel format; and attending training days organised by the School Archivists' Group. The Archivists, assisted by pupils, have recently assisted with projects undertaken by academics from Lancaster University, and collaborated with Lancaster Museum in providing artefacts for exhibitions of local interest.

Over the coming months and years the following tasks need to be completed: sorting recently acquired documents into the relevant archive boxes; checking that the existing sorting of documents has been correctly done; registering new accessions and cataloguing them; cataloguing the rest of the Archive, the vast majority of which is currently uncatalogued; digitally photographing the rest of the photographs,

starting with the earliest ones, so that we have copies of them on computer; photographing/scanning the more important papers and objects so that we have a safe record of them; arranging changing displays; placing some duplicate records in the Lancashire Records Office; continuing to answer queries from the Development Office, School departments, external people, etc; involving pupils in the work of the Archive through the newly-formed Archive Club; and providing articles for the *OLC Newsletter*. If possible, we would like to digitise the entire set of *The Lancastrian* so that it is searchable on computer; it currently often takes hours of research to look for relevant material, but if digitised it could be found in seconds.

Although the School's history is already well covered, an interesting task would be to publish all the existing pre-1945 photographs in one volume, together with relevant description and commentary.

