

Appendix 12: Archives

Manchester Libraries manages the Greater Manchester County Record Office function on behalf of GMCA, holding records from across the city region. We manage two partnerships – The Archives+ partnership with colleagues at Manchester Central Library and the Greater Manchester Archives and Local Studies Partnership with the nine other GM Local Authorities.

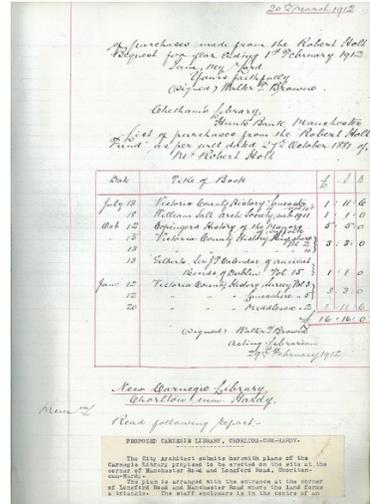
Archives tell the story of Manchester and its people. We are increasingly collecting contemporary archives that relate to Manchester's current community, and are very relevant to the Pride in Place agenda and social cohesion.

This has been a particularly rich year for Archives+ exhibitions, Highlights have included Piccadilly Radio archives exhibition, the George House Trust exhibition, the LGBT Foundation archives exhibition, Remembering Oxford Mills, Architecture for the People, Manchester City Architect's Department 1902-2003 and [Libraries 175: Celebrating 175 years of the Public Libraries Act 1850](#) which was produced by Manchester Archives. The most recent exhibition is the acclaimed Manchester-based Lipservice Theatre company. Founder Sue Ryding has been busy with her group of volunteers digitising and cataloguing this 40 year collection of theatre scripts, photographs and props including a life-sized sheep and a comic Victorian murder victim called the Major. These and other materials from this fascinating archive will form part of the Funny Stuff exhibition launching in early January 2026. Volunteers are currently hard at work creating Ken and Barbie-style Action dolls featuring characters from the 23 Lipservice shows which toured across the UK. Various exhibitions were also held in the Manchester Histories Hub.

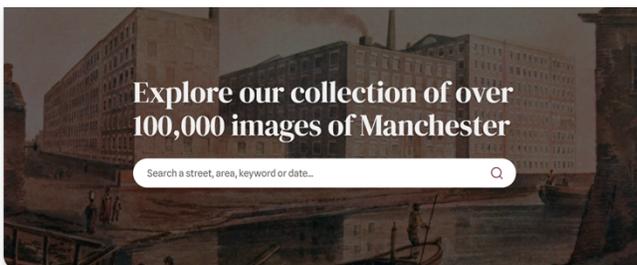


The Titanic Manchester Exhibition was held in Manchester Central in August. It was a major tourist attraction with over 35,000 people visiting. Manchester Archives and the

North West Film Archive showcased our own Titanic stories alongside this outstanding exhibition. Our mini-exhibition, located at the entrance to the main exhibition displayed a collection of archives that we hold including family photographs, film and documents related to the stories around the Titanic. This includes correspondence relating to Chorlton Library whose plans were lost because of the sinking of the Titanic.



We were awarded £100k in 2023 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to develop a new website for the Manchester Local Image Collection and digitise 10,000 more images by over 20 local volunteers. The website went live in 2025 and has brought together online for the first time all the library's digitised local photographs. <https://images.manchester.gov.uk/>. It has been used to create exhibitions at Central Library featuring articles created by the volunteers and workshops which have generated new stories to share. in a streamlined service which will allow improved and wider access to the collections and income generation. More images have continued to be put on the website, which is used increasingly during engagement events.

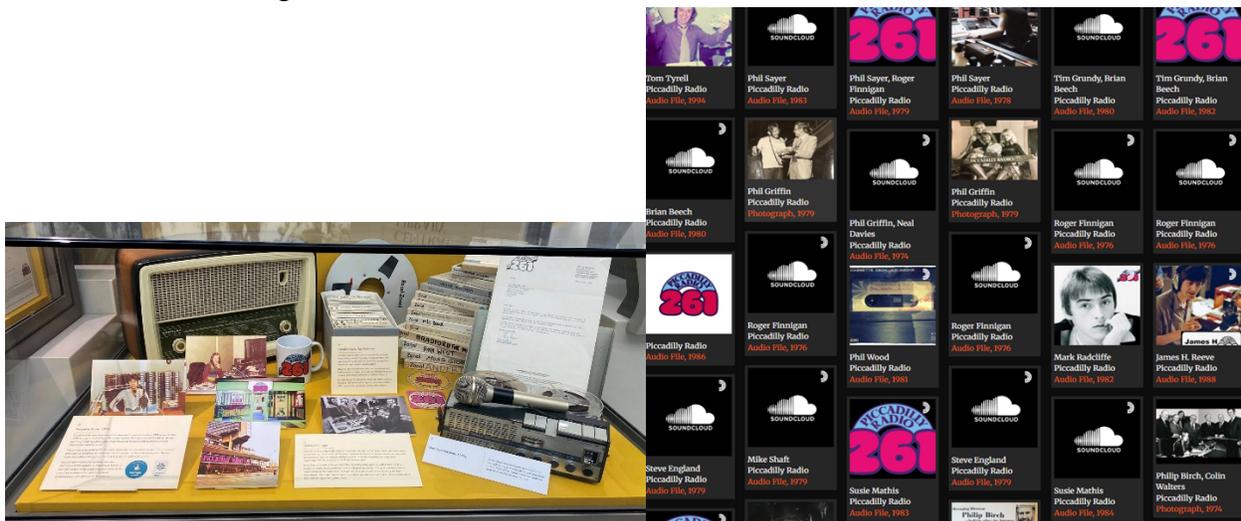


A unique photographic snapshot of Manchester's history

The Manchester Local Image Collection is a rich photographic record of Manchester, its people, streets and buildings. We have over 100,000 images of Manchester and Greater



Throughout 2025 we ran a 12-month £103k project to digitise and transform access to the Piccadilly Radio Archive thanks to support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Manchester Libraries Trust. The project made over 1,800 independent radio shows (the equivalent of over five weeks of non-stop audio) available at Manchester Central Library. The shows feature content from across Manchester. Project partners including the Greater Manchester Hip Hop Archive, ALL FM and the Manchester Digital Music Archive. The project involved workshops and skilled up 53 volunteers to spend over 800 hours help digitising, indexing and curating the archive. Over 1,000 archive tapes were saved from 25 attics around the country and added to the Manchester Central Library strong rooms, 10 oral history interviews with Piccadilly Radio staff were conducted and 15 new radio and podcast pieces have been created to introduce the collection to a new generation.



In 2023, we raised £100k to purchase the Assheton of Middleton manorial document collection and to run engagement sessions using the material. We have run a range of activities through the year aimed at widening public knowledge and understanding of this outstanding archive collection now secured permanently for Greater Manchester. Events included collaborating with local community archery clubs to deliver hands-on history and archery sessions for schools, local history talks and public events, displays of original archives, field visits to historic Middleton buildings, palaeography and conservation workshops for volunteers to help us widen our knowledge of reading, researching and preserving this historic collection of documents. Feedback from schools and volunteers has been excellent – one teacher commented that "the children haven't stopped talking about the archery!". We have produced a video describing the collection and its importance: <https://youtu.be/IVLrYIF5SY4>.



We received £20,000 from Arts Council England Digital Libraries programme to develop a free educational resource for schools and the public on the Marcus Rashford archive. This collection of messages of support and anti-racism was created mostly by children following the Rashford mural in Withington being defaced with racist graffiti after the Euros in 2021. The collection highlights local lad Marcus Rashford as a role model due to his campaigning work relates to children and food poverty. The website launched in January 2026 and offers a free and engaging interactive resource which will be accessible to everyone <https://www.marcusrashfordmural.co.uk/>. Featuring themes that can be explored by the collection include empathy, anti-racist action, using your voice, contemporary history, preserving community heritage, its mixed media style includes film and audio recordings along with lesson resources which promote diverse voices. The resource includes a video introduction from Carl Anka who co-writes Marcus Rashford's children's books. This will enable us to continue engagement with the collection which has already happened with many schools including Beaver Road.



The busy Archives and Local Studies events programme has included displaying original archives at the popular Manchester Town Hall Restoration lecture series. The talks have been complemented by the exhibitions relating to Manchester Town Hall in Central Library. There have been numerous tours, talks and engagement events with Manchester Town Hall former staff members and local heritage societies.

Archives is a key partner in a range of projects including the George House Trust which was successfully awarded £150k to catalogue and preserve the archive with help from local volunteers and celebrate 40 years of HIV activism in Manchester with a range of events including the major exhibition at Central Library. We are also partnering with Manchester Histories Festival in facilitating Queer Up North's successful £250k award to preserve and celebrate the rich LGBTQ+ heritage of Manchester, focusing on the Queer Up North (QUN) festivals held between 1992 and 2002. This will feature digitisation, sound archive creation and a programme of events and activities, bringing one of the most significant LGBTQIA+ collections in the UK to life and out into the city for a wider audience.



The Manchester Histories Hub, in the lower ground floor of Manchester Central Library, has been developing as a centre for heritage & wellbeing, and also to promote the Hidden Network. This complements Manchester Histories work around the Histories Festival which takes place every two years, including a Histories and Heritage Marketplace event at Central Library.

The Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People were successful in their bid to the, Wellcome Trust in 2021, in partnership with Archives+, to catalogue, digitise and make accessible their Disabled People's Archive. The cataloguing of the collection is now complete. with highlights available at: <https://disabledpeoplesarchive.com/in-the-archive/>. GMCDP were successful in two bids in 2025, both of which are being run in partnership with Archives+. The first, from the National Heritage Lottery Fund, will support a 20-month project entitled "Accessing Our Hidden History-The Disabled People's Archive". This project aims to connect disabled people to their heritage, as well

as to promote the existence of the Disabled People's Archive. The second, from The National Archives' Cataloguing Grant, will fund the 'Choice and Control' project. This project provides an opportunity to open up and catalogue previously restricted parts of the Disabled People's Archive, and is a chance to develop our understanding of the history of the Independent Living Movement and its influence on the Disabled People's Movement.



Photograph of a GMCDDP staff member wearing a badge that says 'Rights not Charity'.

1980 to 2000



Poor quality photograph of two members of GMCDDP. They are looking at each other and smiling.

1980 to 2000



Photograph of several young disabled people taking part in a music activity. They are all gathered around a bongo drum. On the wall in the background are four large sheets of paper listing the various rights to which disabled people are entitled.

1993 to 1995



Photograph of two young disabled people smiling and showing off their art work.

1993 to 1995



Photograph of a young wheelchair user showing off their artwork.

1990 to 2000



Photograph of a group of eight young people, three of whom are wheelchair users, sat and stood around two drums. Two of those standing each hold one drum stick.

1990 to 2000



Photograph of a young wheelchair user showing off their artwork.

1990 to 2000

The Manchester and Lancashire Family History run a Monday-Friday family history helpdesk at Manchester Central Library. During the last year the Helpdesk welcomed 2,140 visitors in total. This included 839 short enquiries, and 1,301 longer enquiries, where visitors were given extended assistance, often including computer access and supported research time. In August, when Central Library was closed, the society offered support at 8 other libraries.

The Ahmed Iqbal Ullah RACE Centre and Education Trust's work is more important than ever with the need to fight racism and promote community cohesion. The Trust receives funding from Manchester City Council, and is an important Archives+ partner.

Last year, they worked with 1,220 young people across 16 schools and youth organisations, training 19 PGCE History trainees, and producing 10 collection-based resources.

Throughout 2025, the 80th anniversary of the 5th Pan-African Congress in Manchester provided the focus for much of their public engagement work, collaborating with cultural

partners throughout the year on numerous events, engagement sessions and exhibitions, and the programme culminated with an event on Black histories and the 1945 Pan-African Congress, featuring Gary Younge, exploring how this history informs contemporary anti-racism and anti-fascism work.

Work continues on the National Lottery Heritage Fund project (Community-Led Collecting: Fit for the Future) to improve digital resilience and collection accessibility, which concludes in March 2026.

The Education Trust (AIUET) became a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, strengthening governance and legal compliance, and welcomed new Trustees.