

REPORT OF THE ARCHIVE TEAM 2020-2021

We were very sorry to lose a long-time member of the Archive Team when Jane Mitchell died suddenly in January this year. She was a very hard-working member of the team and she is much missed.

Archive Manager: On 22 October 2020, Tony Roberts announced his intention to stand down and stood down on 28 February 2021. He continues in a limited, caretaker role, while the Society chooses a replacement.

Access to Archive Room: Throughout the year there have been short periods when Avenue House has been closed as a result of government COVID regulations. At all other times, the room has been open for one person with an interval of 3 days for disinfection. The Archive Manager has kept a register of visitors to the room.

Cataloguing: Cataloguing of boxes by the Archive Team, consisting of Derek and Barbara Warren, Carol Vielba and the late Jane Mitchell, has been drawing to a close. Since Avenue House re-opened after the first COVID19 lockdown of 16 March 2020, with the archive room open to one person at a time only, I have continued to complete the second level cataloguing. At the time of writing, there are three lists left to complete, but Avenue House is closed again.

A strategy for the next phase of the archives was requested from the Trustees in July. This was discussed in their August meeting. However, further review has been delayed by plans to apply to the lottery fund for a grant. See below. Meanwhile I notified the Trustees on 22 October of my intention to stand down once the current phase is complete. The current phase came to an end in February 2021.

Acquisitions: It has been another interesting year for acquisitions, which have included legal and other documents associated with three properties, an architectural drawing of a fine house on Hendon Avenue (no longer in existence), the diary of a pupil at Marie Auxiliatrice of a visit between the wars in Italy. The group visited the pope, and Mussolini. The latter was considered important enough to make the Italian press, and the acquisition includes a copy of the newspaper. We received from France a copy of a Pathé newsreel of the unveiling of La Délivrance featuring David Lloyd George, the former Prime Minister.

Enquiries: Visits have been suspended because of lockdown but we have been able to service a slow trickle of enquiries throughout the year, primarily by people interested in their own or family history.

Finchley Society Cloud: The online storage space directly accessible to key members of the Society from their homes, has been expanded to include digital acquisitions, in addition to the minutes, lists and documents already being stored there. Take-up of this service has been minimal.

Computer equipment: Sadly, the computer/internet failure of December 2019 has not been rectified. During the year, the printer/ scanner failed, and the Chairman has notified the team that replacement of any of these items will not occur until a lottery grant has been applied for and been accepted or rejected.

Digitisation and Internet: At a Trustees meeting in October, at which the future of the archives was reviewed, the decision was made to apply to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a grant to digitise the archives. A working group will be set up to develop details, and this group will include the new Archive Manager. The post was advertised in the March issue of the newsletter.

Tony Roberts
Archive Manager