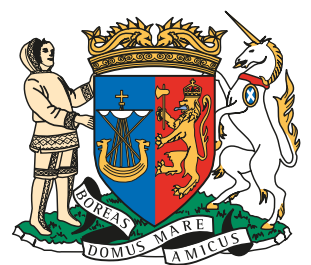


2023



ORKNEY
ISLANDS COUNCIL

Leisure and Culture Service Orkney Libraries & Archive Annual Impact Report





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Manager's Statement

Vikki Kerr, Team Manager (Libraries & Archive)

Over the course of 2023 the library and the archive service has seen an increase in people physically visiting the buildings again after the COVID-19 pandemic, with both services being involved in very exciting, innovative, and rewarding projects.

People no longer think about libraries as just being a place to borrow books. Libraries are at the heart of community life; and for those who cannot make it into a branch library at Kirkwall or Stromness, there are the vital services of the home library and mobile library van, as well as sending book boxes to our Isles customers and to our schools.

2023 proved to be a year of big achievements for the library and archive teams. The archive team worked incredibly hard to make sure everything was ready for reapplying for Accredited status. Archive Accreditation is the UK quality standard that recognises good performance in all areas of archive service delivery. A two-day inspection of the archive took place in October and the panel reported that the archive had retained its Accredited status in November. Achieving Accredited status demonstrates that Orkney Archive has met clearly defined national standards relating to management and resourcing, collections care and meeting the needs of all stakeholders. There are only eight other archival repositories in Scotland that have achieved Accredited status so far, so this accomplishment for Orkney Archive is very impressive.

There was also recognition of the hard work put in by all the library staff when in October the service was shortlisted for the Scottish Library and Information Council's Project Excellence Award. The awards recognise the outstanding levels of commitment, creativity and value libraries offer people and the communities they serve. Orkney Library was one of just six of Scotland's library service providers shortlisted. The service was recognised for its Digital and Sensory Experiences for All project, and showcased how sympathetic and imaginative use of technology can bring benefits to everyone within a local library community. While the service was not an overall winner, being shortlisted was a great achievement for a library service as small as Orkney's and highlighted nationally the range of services on offer within the library.

The library and archive team have also been selected as OIC VIP Award finalists under the Creativity category. This again reflects the amazing hard work that the teams put into their work each and every day and acknowledges the different ways in which everyone is working to deliver services to our communities at a time when resources are stretched.

In an effort to increase income, contactless donation stations were introduced into the library and archive in April of 2023, and a total of £220 was donated by the end of the year. This income adds to the cash donations that the library and archive receive.

Libraries and archives play a key role in contributing to peoples' mental health and well-being. I would like to thank all the staff for their incredible hard work, and I look forward to seeing all that is achieved over the next twelve months.

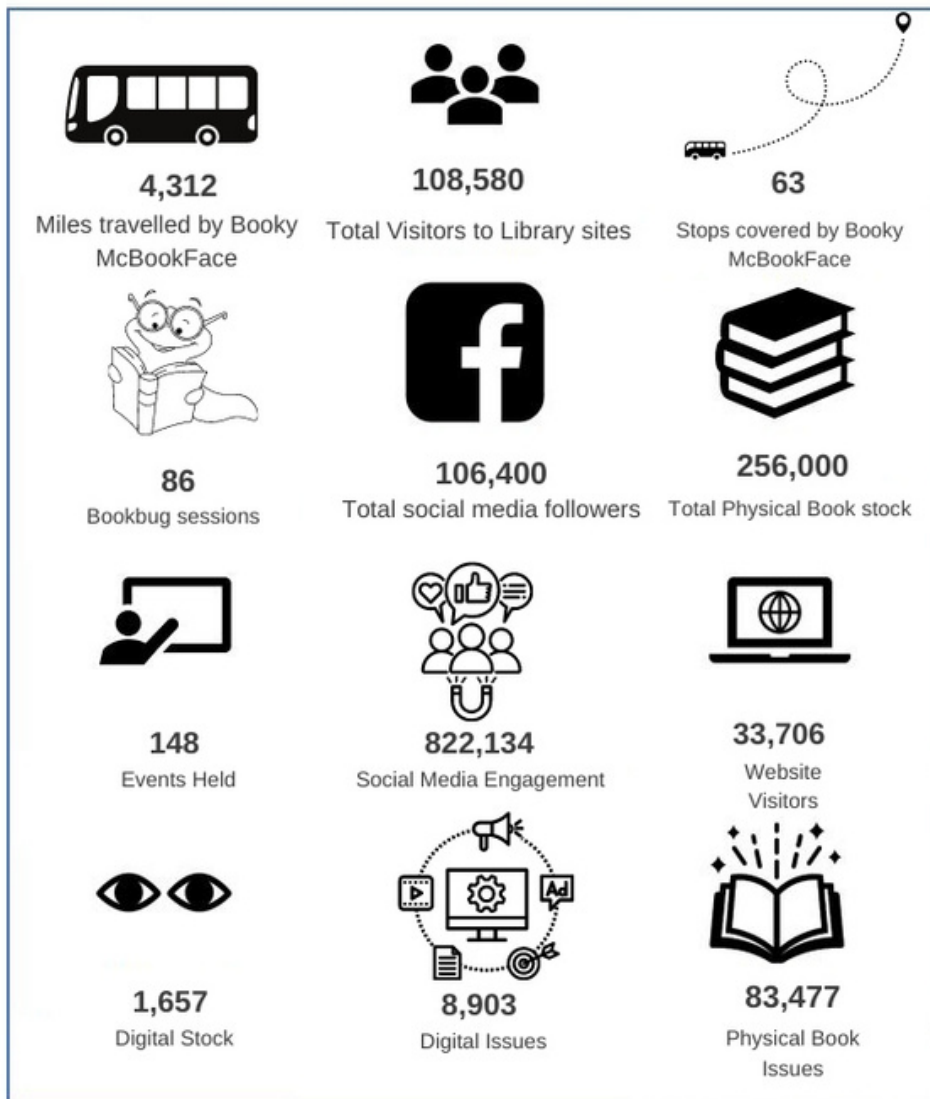


Library Facts and Figures



Statistics are gathered from the Orkney Library in Kirkwall, Stromness Library in the Warehouse Buildings, the Mobile and Home Library services.

There are over 256,000 resources available for library members to borrow, and the total number of items issued from the library service includes a vast range of books (with large print options available), audio books, CDs and DVDs, as well as puzzles, games, project resources and activity kits.



Breakdown of totals

	Kirkwall	Stromness	Mobile/Home Library
Members	4,717	619	644
Issues	64,785	7,933	10,759
Visitors	73,845	31,635	3,100

Library Survey 2023



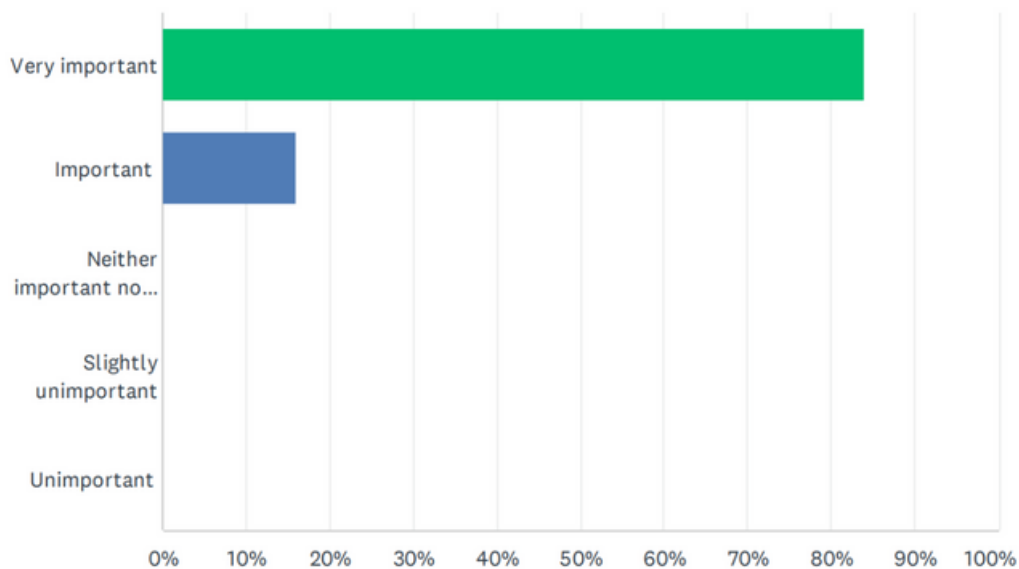
2023 was the first year running the new Scottish Public Library Survey, with the intention of measuring the impact of local library service provision across Scotland.

The survey ran for three weeks during October and gave people across Orkney the opportunity to have their say on how they feel their library services are performing and what impact the services have on them.

There was a total of 136 responses, which was above the 75-response rate target set by the Scottish Library and Information Council. Some of the key findings were:

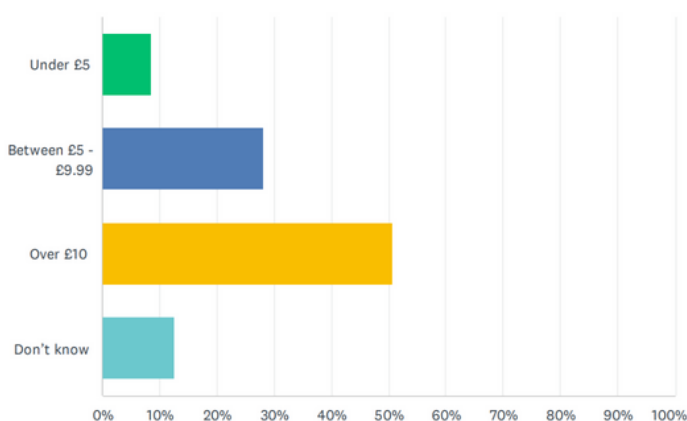
How important would you say the library is to you?

Answered: 132 Skipped: 4



When asked how much money their trip to the library had saved them that day:

Answered: 128 Skipped: 8

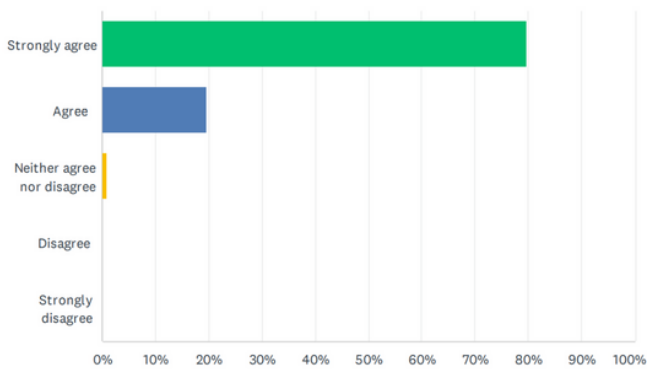


“The library van comes to our island and brings me books I have reserved online and the staff that come are wonderful...would be lost with out this service”

Library Survey 2023

To what extent do you agree with the following sentence? Using the library service improves my quality of life.

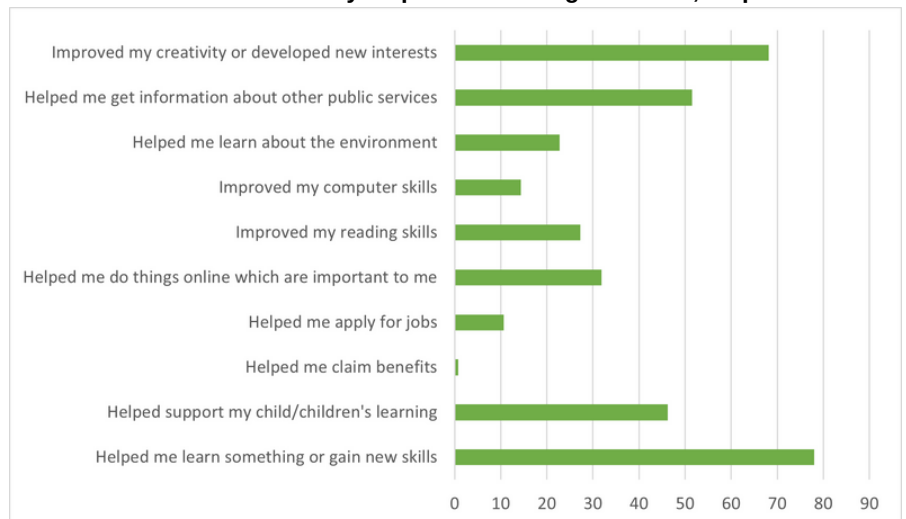
Answered: 133 Skipped: 3



Great in person, great on social media, great online /audio books too - Orkney Library is part of our community every day, not just on one occasion "

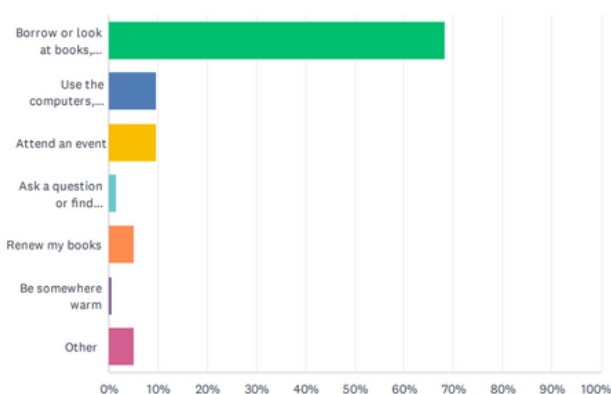
Having moved to this area a few years ago, I was finding it difficult getting to know folk. Joining a knitting group organised by the library helped in this respect as everyone was very friendly

When asked what the library helped with during their visit, responses were:



Why did you use the library service today (or, the last time you used it)?

Answered: 135 Skipped: 1



The results of the survey show how highly valued the library services in Orkney are by our local communities, and 85 respondents added individual comments at the end of the survey outlining specific examples of how the library has had a positive impact on their life. This drives the library staff to continue providing the best customer service possible and provides inspiration to continue to grow and develop services further within the library.

Library Events 2023

There has been a total of 148 events held in Orkney Library over the course of 2023. Events have ranged from author visits, crafting and sewing sessions, sensory and VR headsets sessions, book clubs, and partnership events with council and external colleagues across Orkney.



Bookbug Stromness

BOOKBUG

Over the course of 2023 there were a total of 86 Bookbug sessions held in Kirkwall and Stromness Libraries, as well as two intergenerational sessions out in the community. These fun, interactive classes are held mid-week as well as on alternate Saturdays, with 2410 children with accompanying adults attending.

YAP AND YARN

In 2023 we held 12 Yap & Yarn sessions, with 164 people coming along to work on individual and group knitting/crafting projects. These sessions take place fortnightly on a Monday afternoon during the winter months and is a great way for people to get together. Anyone is free to join in.



Dungeons and dragons poster

DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS

4 Dungeons and Dragons gaming sessions were held in the latter half of 2023 and are always booked up very quickly. These gaming sessions are always very lively, bringing together a mix of ages and gaming abilities. The volunteers who run these events are very enthusiastic and the library is filled with the sounds of mythical story-telling in action.

Library Events 2023



Lego Challenge

LEND AND MEND

Our Lend and Mend Hub sewing classes and mending events have proved very popular since they were introduced in June 2023. Between June and December, there have been 24 sewing sessions, with 133 attendees. More are planned in 2024 with waiting lists ready to go.



Lend and mend hub

AUTHOR VISITS

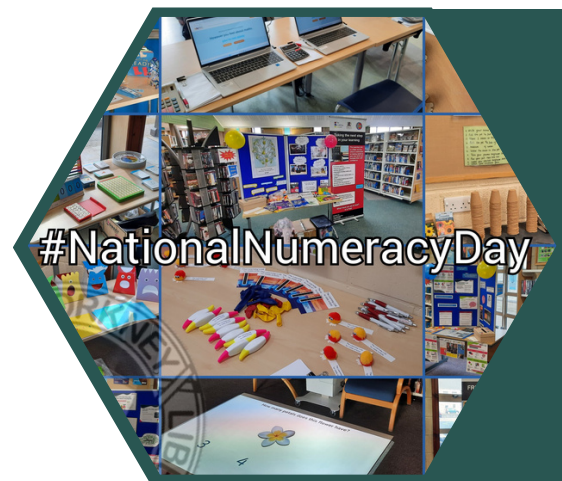
2023 also saw the return of many more in-person author visits and events. In May the UK's Children's Laureate, Joseph Coelho, came to the Kirkwall Library to give a dynamic poetry and illustrative event to children from Shapinsay and Stenness primary schools. Philip Paris, Lynn Johnson, Victoria Bennet, Britt Marcus, and Sean Gardner also gave their time to host events in the library which many enjoyed coming along to during the likes of Libraries Week and Book Week Scotland.



Joseph Coelho, Children's laureate Visit

PARTNER EVENTS

2023 was also a successful year for the library working in partnership with colleagues from the Learning Link, hosting a session in the library for National Numeracy Day in May, as well drop-in sessions in Kirkwall and Stromness for Get Online Week during October. This joined-up working allowed the library to reach new audiences, and to ensure resources are being used effectively and efficiently to meet the needs of our communities.



National Numeracy day

Library Projects 2023

While there are always projects going on across the library service (such as displays, home library and book boxes, crafting and event planning, and taking part in national campaigns and ensuring stock management is kept up to date etc), there have been two big projects taking place throughout 2023 which have taken considerable effort to get up and running by library staff, especially our Senior Library Assistants who have taken the lead on both projects.

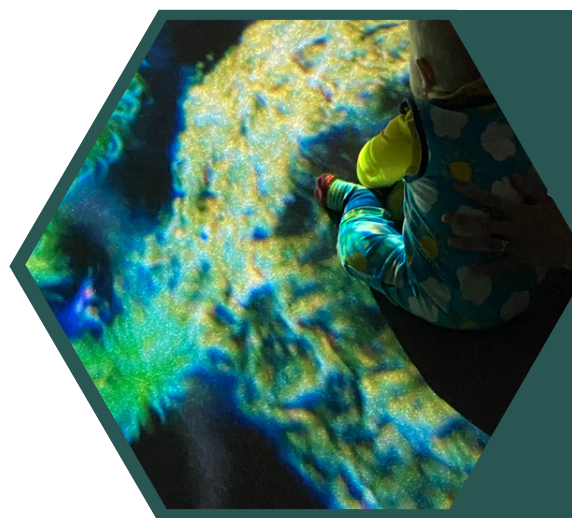
INTERACTIVE FLOOR DISPLAY

With the success of the VR headsets sessions working with partnership organisation across Orkney, the library decided to apply to the Public Library Improvement Fund late in 2022 to allow the purchase of an interactive digital floor projector, as well as sensory light tubes and tactile toys under a project title of Sensory Exploration in Orkney. The vision was to be able to create a dedicated sensory space within the library that would improve the health and well-being of our community members, of all ages, whereby the library could become a safe and welcoming calm space for everyone.



Interactive floor display

The funding was granted, and the digital floor projector and sensory room has been up and running since April 2023 with amazing results. There have been weekly dedicated sessions for use by Glaitness Primary School who have brought along children with additional support needs. The room is also generally open to anybody who wishes to make use of it through the week and has proved very popular with families on a Saturday. The main users have so far been children, but it is hoped that in the near future focus sessions can include older members of our communities. It has also shown that there is a place for partnership working to provide resources that help during times when budgets are coming under increasing pressure.



Interactive floor display

Library Projects 2023

LEND AND MEND

The other large-scale project that kicked off in the summer of 2023 was the Lend and Mend Hub. The library in Kirkwall was one of only 9 libraries throughout Scotland to be selected to be involved in this Scottish Library and Information Council funded initiative. The money to set up the Hubs came from the John Lewis Circular Future Fund, and it provides free access to equipment and opportunities to learn new skills to repair, re-use and recycle everyday items.

The Lend and Mend hub has 8 sewing machines, a digital embroidery machine and an overlocker that people can access for free. There is also a range of other equipment and working spaces to allow people to work on projects within the Hub.

There has been a lot to organise to make sure health and safety needs are being met within the space, staff learning how to use the equipment safely, and creating an induction programme for customers to attend before they can work in the Hub.

Thanks to excellent organisation and communication of staff, local tutors, and volunteers, there has been 24 Lend and Mend sessions taking place in the Hub since it opened, with 133 people enjoying learning how to sew, demonstrations of how the embroidery machine works, as well as drop-in mending sessions and Christmas sewing classes.

The next ventures for the Lend and Mend Hub are to expand on the non-traditional lending collections so that people can borrow equipment and supplies from the library that they might not be able to access any other way or have the need to purchase if only using occasionally. There will be more development on this during 2024.



Lend and mend hub



Lend and mend hub

Chamber and committees

Submitted by: Liam McArthur, Orkney Islands, Scottish Liberal Democrats.
Date lodged: Wednesday, 15 March 2023
Motion reference: S6M-08246

That the Parliament congratulates Orkney Library & Archive on being selected as one of the first sites in Scotland to host a Lend and Mend Hub, as part of a pilot project helping to tackle the cost of living crisis; understands that the initiative is funded by the John Lewis Partnership's Circular Future Fund and seeks to establish a network of circular community hubs across the country, which provide free access to repair, reuse, rent and upcycle everyday items; further understands that the initiative will provide the introduction of training sessions and educational workshops to allow people to gain skills and develop knowledge to help promote the environmental benefits of a circular economy; acknowledges what it sees as the many brilliant circular economy initiatives already taking place in Orkney, including by ReStart Orkney, Kirsteen Stewart and Orkney ZeroWaste; commends the award-winning and internationally-acclaimed Orkney Library & Archive for its ongoing innovative efforts to raise awareness of what local libraries and archives have to offer and to open up new ways of accessing these services, and wishes everyone involved all the very best in launching their Lend and Mend Hub later in 2023.

Supported by: Karen Adam, Clare Adamson, Jeremy Balfour, Colin Beattie, Miles Briggs, Stephanie Callaghan, Donald Cameron, Maggie Chapman, Alex Cole-Hamilton, Sharon Dowey, Annabelle Ewing, Meghan Gallacher, Pam Gosal, Stephen Kerr, Bill Kidd, Douglas Lumsden, Ruth Maguire, Gillian Martin, Stuart McMillan, Edward Mountain, Audrey Nicoll, Paul O'Kane, Emma Roddick, Douglas Ross, Paul Sweeney

Liam McArthur motion in Holyrood, congratulating Orkney Library And Archive for being one of the first sites to host a Lend&Mend hub

Archive Facts and Figures



Statistics are gathered monthly from researchers visiting the archive search room, what collections have been accessed and any copying/digitisation services utilised. There are also figures collated from the remote enquiries that the service receives every day, as well as the information being recorded from new deposits and cataloguing entries.



Archive Survey 2023



In June to July 2023 the Archive conducted a user consultation to establish how well the service was meeting to user and customer expectations.

There were 40 respondents from researchers who had been in visiting the archive searchroom during this period and the results will be used to help determine future objectives and goals for the service over the coming few years when the Archive Management Scheme is updated later in 2024/25.

Respondents were asked questions on the purpose of their visit to the Archive, to rate the services on offer, how representative the archival collections are, what other services would they like to see, and offer any other comments on the archive service in general.

Why are you visiting this archive today? (Please select all options which apply)			
Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	School/Academic research	28.21%	11
2	Architectural/ building / site research	5.13%	2
3	Family History	30.77%	12
4	Military History	2.56%	1
5	Social History	33.33%	13
6	General Browsing/ familiarising myself with the archive	15.38%	6
7	To find evidence relating to rights and entitlements	0.00%	0
8	To find information or evidence relating to my work or for the organisation I volunteer for	12.82%	5
9	To gather information for a talk/ publication/ presentation	25.64%	10
10	To volunteer	17.95%	7
11	Other (please specify):	5.13%	2

Archive Survey 2023



How satisfied are you with the following:						
Answer Choices	Very Satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Not very satisfied	Not satisfied at all	Don't know/not applicable	Response Total
Opening hours	65.00% 26	30.00% 12	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	5.00% 2	40
Ease with which you found us	89.74% 35	5.13% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	5.13% 2	39
Appearance /upkeep of the building	87.50% 35	10.00% 4	2.50% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	40
Access to the building	92.50% 37	7.50% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	40
Ease of movement within building	92.50% 37	7.50% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	40
Lockers	40.00% 16	10.00% 4	2.50% 1	0.00% 0	47.50% 19	40
Toilets	70.00% 28	7.50% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	22.50% 9	40
Refreshment/rest areas	27.50% 11	22.50% 9	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	50.00% 20	40
Welcome/Reception	85.00% 34	7.50% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	7.50% 3	40
Booking system	47.50% 19	7.50% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	45.00% 18	40

I value the archive as a really important local resource. In future I intend to interrogate it regarding the history of my particular property and the surrounding locale...

Please rate how satisfied you are with the following services.						
Answer Choices	Very Satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Not very satisfied	Not at all satisfied	Don't know/Not applicable	Response Total
Availability of seating	80.00% 32	12.50% 5	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	7.50% 3	40
Quality of our paper catalogues	42.50% 17	22.50% 9	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	35.00% 14	40
Quality of our other paper resources	59.46% 22	18.92% 7	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	21.62% 8	37
Document ordering system	62.50% 25	7.50% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	30.00% 12	40
Microfilm and microfiche facilities	40.00% 16	7.50% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	52.50% 21	40
Our copy services	43.59% 17	10.26% 4	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	46.15% 18	39

This is a brilliant archive service. So much information and really helpful staff.

Archive Survey 2023



Overall, how would you rate this archive out of 10, with 10 being the highest score and 1 being the lowest?			
Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	1	0.00%	0
2	2	0.00%	0
3	3	0.00%	0
4	4	0.00%	0
5	5	0.00%	0
6	6	0.00%	0
7	7	5.00%	2
8	8	5.00%	2
9	9	20.00%	8
10	10	70.00%	28

The staff go above and beyond to help all archive users and their genuine enthusiasm is infectious!

Do you feel that the archive collections are representative of our local communities?			
Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Agree	87.18%	34
2	Disagree	0.00%	0
3	Don't Know	12.82%	5

I am a freelance design consultant specialising in heritage interpretation. The Orkney Library and Archive are an invaluable source of information and images for my business.

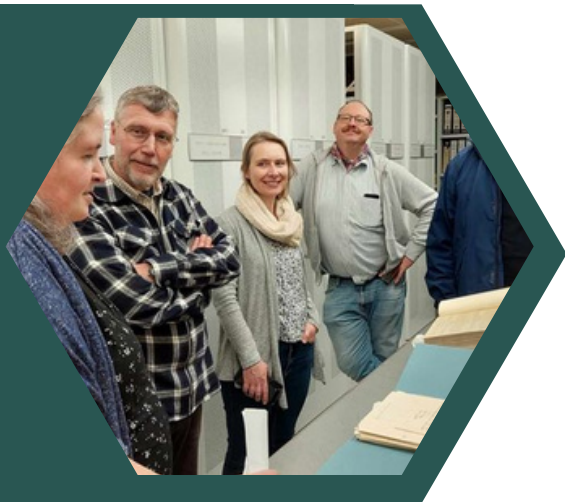
The responses were very encouraging and show a positive response to the archive service as a whole. There is a broad range of researcher types accessing the collections who feel that the collections are representative. The most requested improvement was to provide an online catalogue to the archival collections, which is something that is currently being worked on, and should be available within the first half of 2024.

Archive Events 2023



There was a total of 32 events involving the Archive during 2023, with over 300 people attending talks, workshops, exhibitions, palaeography sessions and tours of the archive.

Learning events - Internal



PALAEOGRAPHY GROUP SESSIONS

The Palaeography group meets fortnightly on a Monday night from 5.45pm – 6.45pm in the Archive searchroom with, members from other islands, who can attend online. Each week a piece of writing is selected for the group to transcribe, trying to decipher it word by word or even letter by letter depending on how difficult it is. Participants all learn from each other and improve their skills while also creating useful new transcriptions from old documents in the Archive.

Swedish Defence University Visit

EARLY MODERN ARCHIVE WORKSHOP

The Archivist took part in a workshop entitled 'The Orkney and Shetland Islands During the Early Modern Period: New Research Perspectives at UHI' and provided a presentation and a tour of the archive to the 13 people attending. The workshop was hosted by Kathrin Zickermann, who is a Lecturer for the Centre for History at UHI. The workshop strengthened the partnership working between the archive and UHI, highlighting relevant archival collections to ongoing research.



Kathrin Zickermann



ORKNEY BLIDE TRUST PHOTOGRAPHIC GROUP

Rebecca Marr who runs the BTPG used the Gunnie Moberg Archive of photos to curate an exhibition of photos in collaboration with the Pier Arts Centre. The group chose their favourite images from existing prints and then created their own photos using the inspiration gained from Gunnie's photos.

The Archivist and archive staff helped with advice on the collection, the selection of prints and framed images and the loan of the items to the Pier Arts Centre. None of the group had been to the Archive before.

Gunnie Moberg Archive/BTPG Display at Pier Arts Centre



Learning events - External



Royal Visits display by Orkney Archive

ORKNEY VINTAGE CLUB RALLY

The Archive staff attend this event every year and provides a display of old photos relative to the theme set for the event each year. The theme for 2023 was Royalty as it was a coronation year and therefore the display was of Royal visits to Orkney. Archive staff also took along unidentified photographs to ask people if they recognised anyone in them, resulting in information being provided for 167 photographs which is fantastic.

ST MAGNUS FRIENDSHIP GROUP

For the second year running the Archivist gave a talk on a specific collection or interesting document in the Archive. The talk entitled "Mystery Iron Box of Jewels" told the story of the Palaeography Group and its transcription and investigation of a document dated 1654 in which a box of jewellery consisting of diamonds, pearls, gold, and blood beads was opened and listed by some of Oliver Cromwell's men in Kirkwall. The event was well attended by 33 members of the group, and the archivist received good feedback on the talk, with an invitation to return in 2024.



Talk to friendship group -Iron Box of Jewels poster



Orkney Vintage Club Rally

EXHIBITIONS - INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL

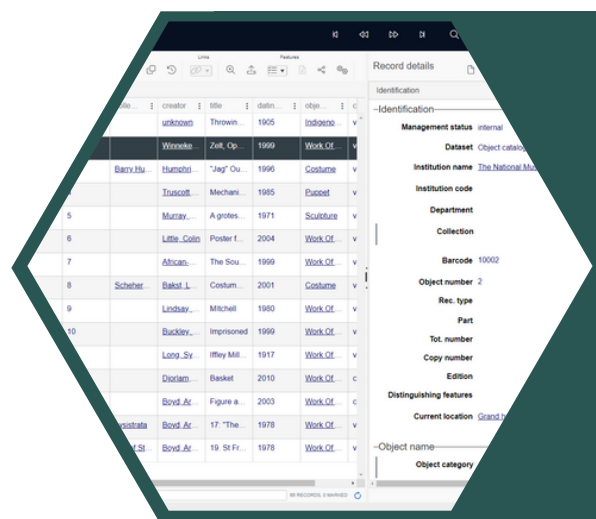
- A selection of Nature Archive and books to coincide with the Orkney Nature Festival
- Archival Sources of Medical History
- Display of Royal Visit Photographs
- Display of Christmas Cards from the Archive
- Display of Royal Visit Photographs, Orkney Vintage Rally
- Gunnie Moberg Archive prints in Things I want to look at a little longer
- Stromness Museum Winter Exhibition: Looking in from the Edge (LIFTE)

Archive Projects 2023

The archive team have been busy working on various projects throughout 2023, including cataloguing, storage, and preservation work, as well as research for social media posts and outreach work. This project work is in addition to running the public searchroom and assisting with researchers' queries and answering all the remote enquiries that come in every day. There are some projects which have taken a lot of time and effort to achieve and so are worth highlighting in their own right.

AXIELL COLLECTIONS

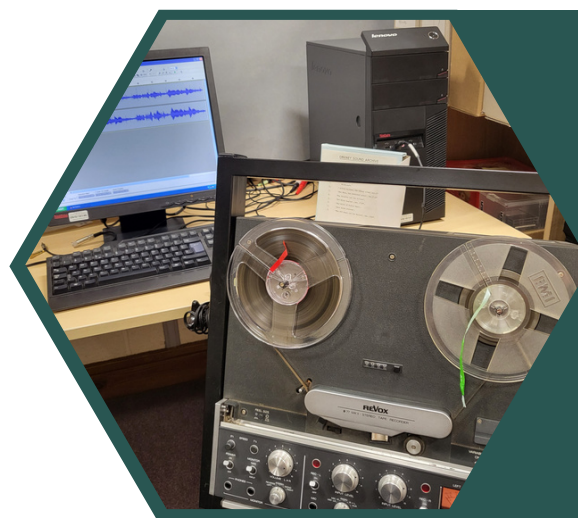
The archive is currently in the process of migrating all of its catalogued data, alongside Museums, into a new system called Axiell Collections, which will allow for the better management of collections going forward, as well as being able to offer an online catalogue to customers for the first time. There has been a lot of preparation work involved in making sure the data was ready for the migration process and working with colleagues in Museums to ensure that the new system will be fit for purpose. This work should be completed by the summer of 2024.



Screenshot of Axiell test environment

DIGITISATION AND DIGITAL PRESERVATION

The new Digital Archivist Trainee has also been hard at work ensuring the archive is moving forward with digital preservation and that our digital collections are appropriately stored and backed up to make sure we are compliant with how we manage these collections in the future. This has involved liaising with IT and Information Governance colleagues, as well as being part of a country-wide archive professional digital preservation group looking at consistent approaches to this area. There has also been a lot of ongoing work to continue digitising the archive's extensive sound and photographic collections to ensure they remain accessible to researchers over the coming years.



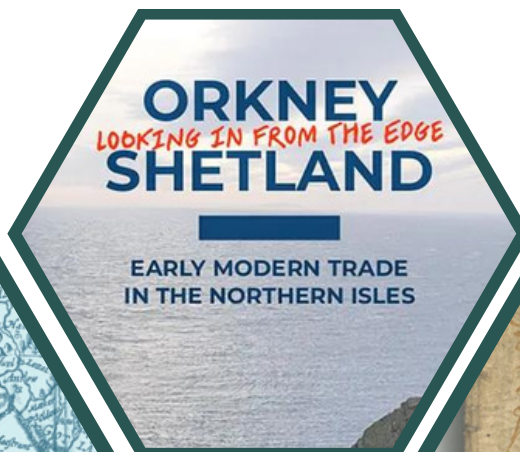
Sounds digitisation

LIFTE (LOOKING IN THE FROM THE EDGE) PROJECT:

The contribution by the archive to the LIFTE project has been ongoing throughout 2023. The Palaeography Group has taken part in the LIFTE Project by transcribing documents which relate to Orkney's trade with other countries around the North Sea and also Ireland. LIFTE is a three-year programme involving the University of the Highlands and Islands Archaeology Institute, the University of Lincoln and the German Maritime Museum, in Bremerhaven. The archive connection with the LIFTE project has raised the profile of the Early Modern 17th century records held in the archive, and this has generated a lot of interest in collections that are largely unstudied as of yet.



Palaeography- Obligation PW from William Middleton 1677



LIFTE booklet cover. Available to download online.



LIFTE Stromness Museum exhibition poster



Palaeography- Baikie books

Library and Archive Volunteers



Without the dedication and commitment from those in our communities who volunteer in the library and archive, there would be a big gap in the project work and events that take place within the service.

The Library and Archive volunteers, young and old, dedicate their time each week to producing valuable research resources, as well as generally helping us keep the library tidy, producing displays, helping run events and activities and giving us ideas for future projects.

All of the volunteers are recruited via Voluntary Action Orkney, and this partnership is invaluable. Not only do we help some of our volunteers achieve credits towards the likes of the Saltire Aware, we also know that our volunteers find it beneficial to their health and mental wellbeing when they are spending time here in the library and archive.

We held a special thank you party for them all during Volunteers Week in June 2023 as a small way of showing our appreciation to all those who come in to help, and we look forward to seeing what projects our volunteers get up to in 2024.

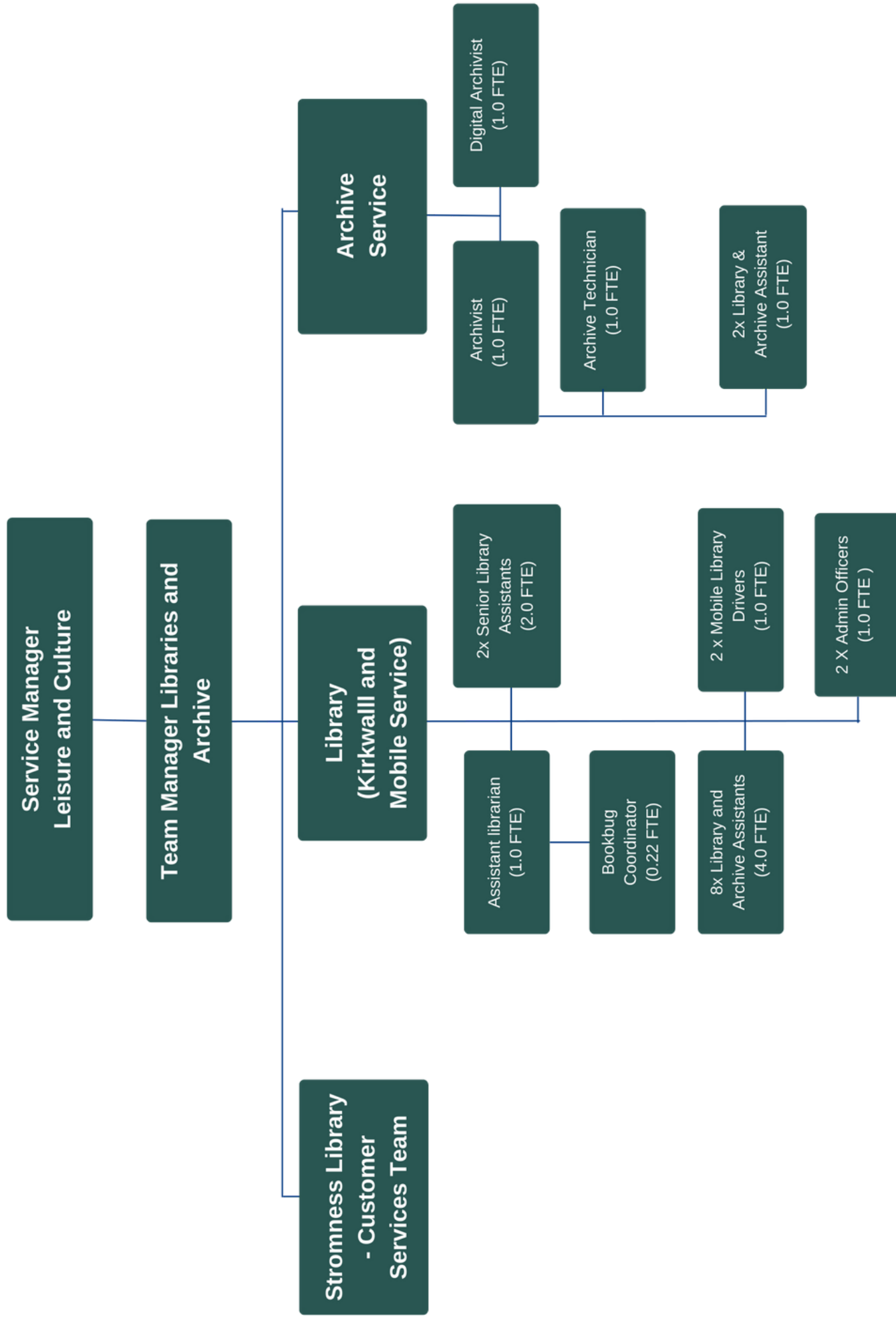


Photographic archive



Volunteers at work

Libraries and Archive Staffing Structure 2023





Contact Us



library@orkney.gov.uk



Archives@orkney.gov.uk



<https://orkneylibrary.org.uk/>



01856 873166



<https://www.facebook.com/orkneylibraryandarchive>



[@OrkneyLibrary](https://twitter.com/OrkneyLibrary)

Orkney Library and Archive , 44 Junction Road ,Kirkwall ,KW15 1AG

