



in Lancashire

**Life in Lancashire
Wave 20
Lancashire Record Office**

Fieldwork 21 November – 14 December 2007

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Contents

1	Executive Summary	3
1.1	Awareness of the service.....	3
1.2	Developing the service.....	3
1.3	Volunteering	3
2	Introduction	5
3	Research Objectives	5
4	Methodology	6
4.1	Limitations	6
5	Main Research Findings	7
5.1	Awareness of the service.....	7
5.2	Developing the service.....	9
5.3	Volunteering	11
6	Appendix	13
6.1	Socio-Economic-Group Definitions.....	13

Table of Figures

Chart 1 - Where would be the first place you'd look to find out more about:	
a) the history of your community; and	7
b) your family history	7
Chart 2 - Before you received this questionnaire, had you ever heard of the Lancashire Record Office?	8
Chart 3 - Before you received this questionnaire, did you know you could deposit records free of charge with the Lancashire Record Office?	8
Chart 4 - People have told us that the name "Lancashire Record Office" does not tell them what we do. Do you think the name "Lancashire Archives" better describes the services we offer?	9
Chart 5 - The record office would like to develop the online services they offer. Which, if any, of the following online services would you or your family use?	10
Chart 6 - How likely are you, or another member of your family, to be involved in collecting and preserving the archives of your community for people to use in the future?	11
Chart 7 - We would like to get an idea of what types of volunteering people are interested in. Would you or a member of your family be interested in volunteering? (We will not use this information to contact you.)	11
Chart 8 - Which, if any, of the following volunteering opportunities are likely to interest you or your family?	12

1 Executive Summary

This wave of the Life in Lancashire panel dealt with awareness of the Lancashire Record Office and interest in its volunteering opportunities. All 1742 members of the panel were sent a single mailing of the survey. In total 1172 questionnaires were returned, giving an overall response rate of 67%.

1.1 Awareness of the service

- Half of respondents knew of the Lancashire Record Office (49%), and another one in ten had heard of it but didn't know what it was called (11%).
- Only one in twelve respondents knew they could deposit records at the office (8%), and only half of these knew that this was free (4%).
- About half of respondents would first visit a library to find out about the history of their community (52%), while a third would use the internet (36%). Only about one in seven says they would use the record office first (14%).
- The most likely place for panel members to turn to investigate their family history to would be the internet (50%), followed by the record office (35%).

1.2 Developing the service

- There was broad support to change the name of the Lancashire Record Office to **Lancashire Archives**, with two in three agreeing that it better described the service (66%). Three-quarters of those who had not previously heard of the office thought this would be an improvement (73%).
- The most popular online services to develop for the office were **guides to tracing family history in Lancashire** (65%) and **exhibitions of archives** (59%).

1.3 Volunteering

- A quarter of the panel would personally be interested in volunteering (24%); while 6% answer that a family member would be interested.
- Of those who would be interested in volunteering, either personally or a family member, the most popular options would be to work in the local community or at home rather than in the record office itself.

- About three in five of those interested in volunteering would be interested in **working in a group where they live, with documents relating to their community (58%)**, while half would be interested in **working at home on an indexing project (52%)**.
- Around a third would be interested in **working with documents as a group at the record office (36%)**, and a quarter interested in **working on their own in the office (26%)**.

2 Introduction

Lancashire County Council has used Life in Lancashire regularly since August 2001. A panel of willing participants is recruited and is approached on a regular basis to seek their views on a range of topics and themes. Panel members are voluntary participants in the research they complete and no incentives are given for completion.

The panel has been designed to be a representative cross-section of the county's population. The results for each survey are weighted in order to reflect the demographic profile of the county's population.

The panel provides access to a sufficiently large sample of the population so that reliable results can be reported at a county wide level. It also provides data at a number of sub-area and sub-group levels.

Each Life in Lancashire wave is themed. Firstly, it enables sufficient coverage on a particular topic to be able to provide insight into that topic. And secondly, it comes across better to the residents completing the questionnaires if there is a clear theme (or 2-3 clear themes) within each survey.

The panel is refreshed periodically. New members are recruited to the panel and some current members are retired on a random basis. This means that the panel remains fresh and is not subject to conditioning i.e. the views of panel members become too informed with county council services to be unrepresentative of the population as a whole.

3 Research Objectives

The objectives of this consultation are:

- to understand awareness of the Lancashire Record Office and interest in volunteering there.

4 Methodology

This wave of Life in Lancashire was sent to 1749 members of the panel on 21 November. No reminder was sent, and the fieldwork ended on 14 December 2007.

In total 1172 questionnaires were returned, giving an overall response rate of 67%.

All data are weighted by age, ethnicity and district to reflect the Lancashire overall population, and figures are based on all respondents unless otherwise stated. The weighted responses have been scaled down to match the effective response of 969, which is the equivalent size of the data if it had not been weighted and was a perfect random sample.

4.1 Limitations

The table below shows the sample tolerances that apply to the results in this survey. Sampling tolerances vary with the size of the sample as well as the percentage results.

Number of respondents	50/50 + / -	30/70 + / -	10/90 + / -
50	14%	13%	8%
100	10%	9%	6%
200	7%	6%	4%
500	4%	4%	3%
1000	3%	3%	2%
2000	2%	2%	1%

On a question where 50% of the people in a sample of 1000 respond with a particular answer, the chance are 95 out of 100 that the answer would be between 47% and 53% (ie +/- 3%), versus a complete coverage of the entire Lancashire population using the same procedure.

In charts or tables where responses do not add up to 100%, this is due to multiple responses or computer rounding.

5 Main Research Findings

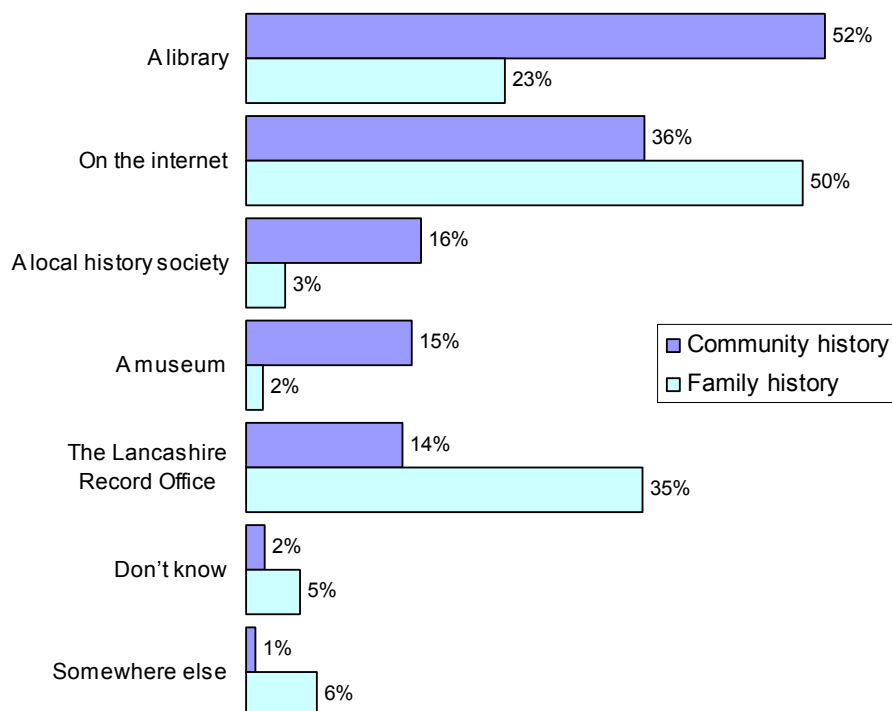
5.1 Awareness of the service

The first questions on the Lancashire Record Office dealt with the awareness of the service. The first of these asked where members of the panel would visit to find out more about the history of their community and their families. There is a marked difference between the two types. About half of respondents would first visit a library to find out about their community (52%), while a third would use the internet (36%). Only about one in seven says they would use the record office first (14%), a similar proportion to a local history society (16%) and a museum (15%).

For their family history, the most likely place to turn to would be the internet (50%), followed by the record office (35%). Only a quarter would use a library (23%).

As fewer people name the Lancashire Record Office as the first place to find out community history than family history, this may be an area worth communicating more in the future. It might also be worth investigating the reasons for this difference further. It could be for example that the record office is not thought to have many local records.

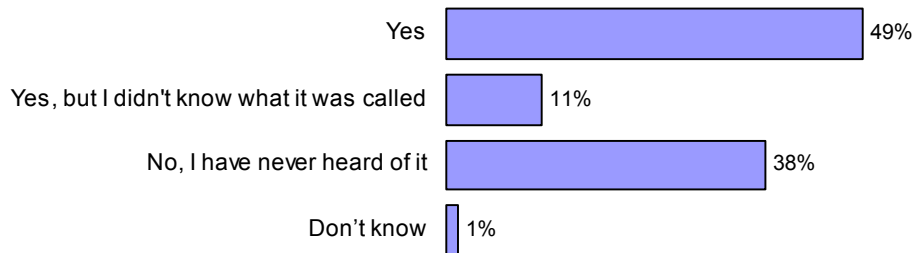
Chart 1 - Where would be the first place you'd look to find out more about: a) the history of your community; and b) your family history



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1172, Weighted 969)

Half of respondents knew of the Lancashire Record Office (49%), and another one in ten had heard of it but didn't know what it was called (11%). Two in five panel members had not heard of it (38%). The awareness was significantly higher in the districts of Preston (74%) and South Ribble (62%), as might be expected due to the office's location.

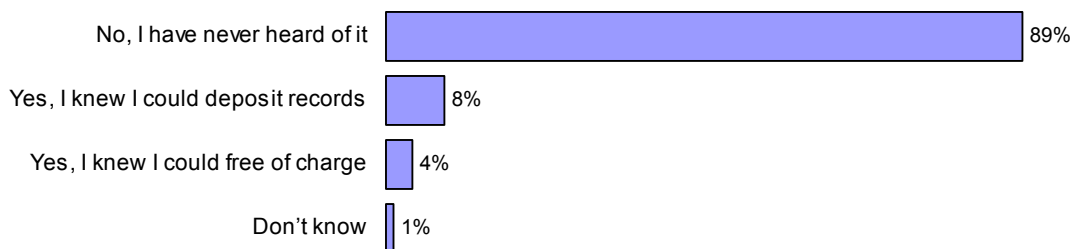
Chart 2 - Before you received this questionnaire, had you ever heard of the Lancashire Record Office?



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1172, Weighted 969)

Awareness of the record depositing facility at the office is low; with only one in twelve respondents answering they knew they could (8%). Only a small proportion knew that this was free (4%). Panel members aged over 60 were more likely to know they could deposit records than any other group (12%).

Chart 3 - Before you received this questionnaire, did you know you could deposit records free of charge with the Lancashire Record Office?

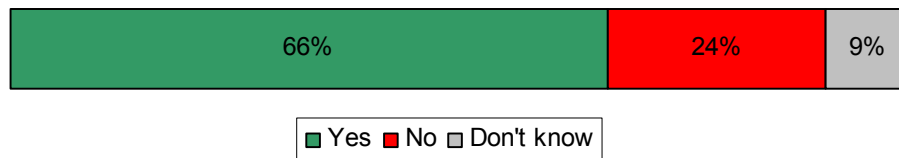


Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1172, Weighted 969)

5.2 Developing the service

The first possible change to the service was to change the name of the Lancashire Record Office to Lancashire Archives. There was broad support for this, with two in three agreeing that it better described the service (66%). Interestingly, support for a name change is highest amongst those who know least about the service. Three-quarters of those who had not previously heard of the office (73%) thought this would be an improvement, (though of course these people will know least about what the services are). Women were also slightly more likely to agree than men (68% versus 62%).

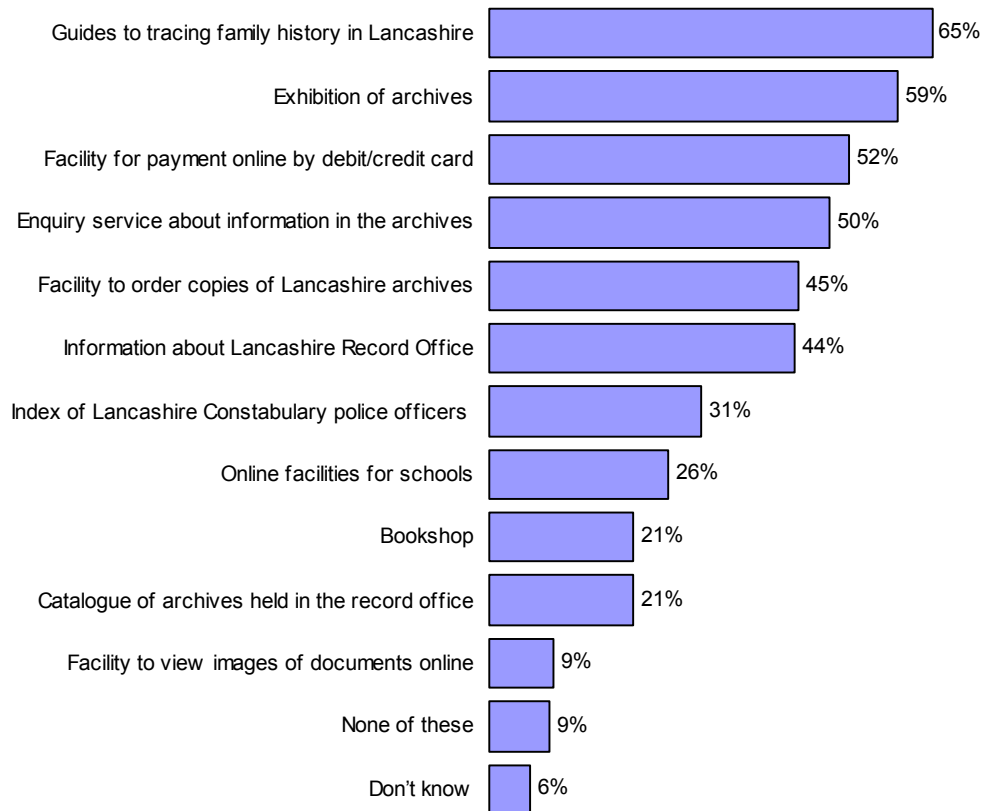
Chart 4 - People have told us that the name “Lancashire Record Office” does not tell them what we do. Do you think the name “Lancashire Archives” better describes the services we offer?



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1172, Weighted 969)

For the next question a variety of possible online options were highlighted, and panel members asked to name those that they or their families were most likely to use. The most popular answers were **guides to tracing family history in Lancashire** (65%) and **exhibitions of archives** (59%). These are shown in chart 5 on the next page.

Chart 5 - The record office would like to develop the online services they offer. Which, if any, of the following online services would you or your family use?



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1172, Weighted 969)

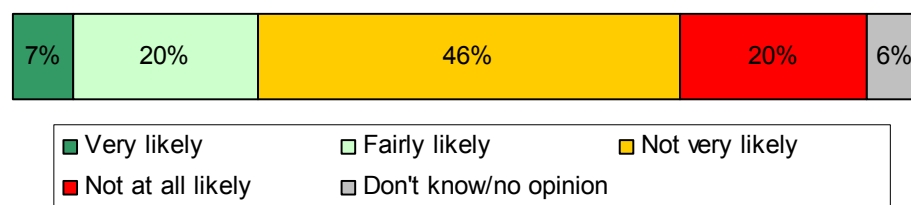
Demographically, those in the oldest age group of 60 years and over are less likely to use any of the options compared to all other age groups. This perhaps reflects lower internet use among this group generally. Panel members from an ethnic minority are also less likely to use each service. There are also significant differences between panel members from higher and lower socio-economic grades¹. For example, those from groups AB and C1 are significantly more likely to use an online **exhibition of archives** (72% and 66%), than those from groups C2 and DE (both 44%).

¹ See Appendix 6.1 for socio-economic group definitions

5.3 Volunteering

The final set of questions in the section looked into potential take up of volunteering opportunities. The first of these asked how likely panel members and their families would be to get involved in archiving. About a quarter thought either themselves or their families likely to be involved (27%), with 7% saying very likely. Demographically, only respondents classified as high service users, (those using ten or more public services in the last year), were significantly more likely to say they were likely to get involved than low or medium level users (10% very likely against 4% and 5% respectively).

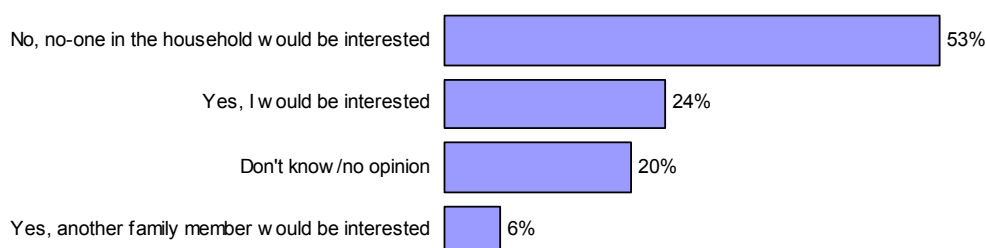
Chart 6 - How likely are you, or another member of your family, to be involved in collecting and preserving the archives of your community for people to use in the future?



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1172, Weighted 969)

Similarly, a quarter of the panel would **personally be interested** in volunteering (24%); while 6% answer that a **family member would be interested**. Demographically, panel members from the oldest age group (60 years and over) were least likely to be interested, with 61% answering that **no-one in the household would be interested**.

Chart 7 - We would like to get an idea of what types of volunteering people are interested in. Would you or a member of your family be interested in volunteering? (We will not use this information to contact you.)



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1172, Weighted 969)

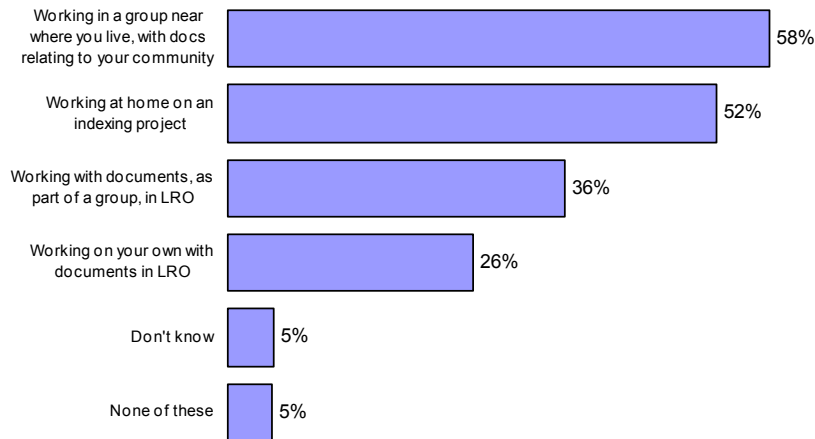
(It should be noted here that the proportions here only name an interest rather than a commitment. The response to the question may well have been different, if the question asked for respondents to actually volunteer.

However, the fact that one in four panel members declare an interest does seem a very positive result.)

Finally, of those who were interested, either personally or thought a family member would be, the most popular opportunities would be to work in the local community or at home, rather than in the Lancashire Record Office itself.

About three in five of those interested in volunteering would be interested in **working in a group where they live, with documents relating to their community** (58%), while half would be interested in **working at home on an indexing project** (52%). Around a third would be interested in **working with documents as a group at the record office** (36%), and a quarter interested in **working on their own in the office** (26%).

Chart 8 - Which, if any, of the following volunteering opportunities are likely to interest you or your family?



Base: All respondents interested in volunteering or answering a family member would be interested (Unweighted 282, Weighted 251)

The preference for volunteering in the local area or at home may be in part due to the size of the county: respondents in Preston, South Ribble and Fylde were slightly more likely to be interested in working in the office than other districts. Respondents from east Lancashire were significantly more likely to prefer **working in a group where they live, with documents relating to their community** than those in west Lancashire (66% versus 49%).

6 Appendix

6.1 Socio-Economic-Group Definitions

These groups are based on Market Research Society definitions and on the respondent. They are graded as A, B, C1, C2, D and E.

Group A

- Professional people, very senior managers in business or commerce or top-level civil servants.
- Retired people, previously grade A, and their widows

Group B

- Middle management executives in large organisations, with appropriate qualifications
- Principle officers in local government and civil service
- Top management or owners of small business concerns, educational and service establishments
- Retired people previously grade B, and their widows

Group C1

- Junior management, owners of small establishments, and all others in non-manual positions
- Jobs in this group have very varied responsibilities and educational requirements
- Retired people, previously grade C1, and their widows

Group C2

- All skilled manual workers, and those manual workers for responsibility for other people
- Retired people, previously grade C2, with pensions from their job
- Widows, if receiving pensions from their late partner's job

Group D

- All semi skilled and unskilled manual workers, and apprentices and trainees to skilled workers
- Retired people, previously grade D, with pensions from their late job
- Widows, if receiving pensions from their late partner's job

Group E

- All those entirely dependant on the state long term, through sickness, unemployment, old age or other reasons
- Those unemployed for a period exceeding six months (otherwise classified on previous occupation)
- Casual workers and those without a regular income