

LADIA Report

The LADIA (Lowestoft And District Independent Archives) group was formed some months before SCC began the transfer of the Lowestoft Record Office archive material to "The Hold" in Ipswich. The group now considers itself to be a worthy independent repository for any archive material or ephemera relating to the Waveney or SE Norfolk areas.

Since November 2024 the group has been leasing office/shop frontage premises at St Peters Street. This office and its contents have been the major 2025-26 projects for LADIA's small but extremely hard-working volunteer work force.

As a direct result of a grant and sponsorship funding from LTC, the group has been able to consolidate a great deal of archive material, including maps, charts, local postcards, programmes and assorted documents. These had formerly been located at two small offices at "The Grit" Arts and Heritage Centre.

The heart of the St Peters Street office is LADIA's impressive local studies library of books and publications. The current list has over 800 books covering a wide array of subjects but principally relating to local history and culture. Cataloguing and indexing these volumes on their own on a database is a major task in itself and a great deal of time and effort is being spent on an ongoing updating of the list of items available.

The group will very shortly be moving to formalise the lease covering the rolling archives room at the Old Courts Buildings in Old Nelson Street. This is intended for use as a strongroom for vulnerable or important archive materials, or those not deemed suitable for open storage at the office site. Part of the initial LTC grant was used to purchase dedicated archives boxes, folders etc for use at this site

Allied with this, the group is also transitioning from their current status as a Charitable Trust to a fully registered Charity group, a challenging process but one which we sincerely hope will be to our advantage in the long-term.

During the course of the past year, LADIA has been coordinating efforts with the council's LTH project and several of the group trustees have played a role in formulating the content of the "Heritage Gallery" as members of the LTH Heritage focus Group. LADIA has also staged exhibitions, talks and guided walks in direct support of LTC, i.e. Suffolk Day, HODs, VE/VJ events etc,. The group has undertaken to support and remain open for the duration of any or all LTC-organised Triangle Market events.

Also partly as a result of LTC funding, the group has office internet access and a phone, enabling internet research and eMail inquiries to be dealt with. All such inquiries are logged and a response normally ensues. Several of the trustees are published authors and acknowledged experts in their own right on different elements of local heritage and as such have a wealth of knowledge which they can draw upon

It is the stated intention of LADIA to provide a clean, safe, friendly and welcoming environment for local communities and anyone with a genuine interest in local history and heritage who wishes to undertake research or further their knowledge of the history of the area.

Staffing has occasionally been difficult but it is a fact that over the past few months several of our volunteers have been either hospitalised or faced with challenging domestic situations which have made their attendance problematic. However, we remain hopeful that we will be able to attract a few new volunteers as a result of events like the 28 Feb History Day at Lowestoft Library and we are committed to keeping our public-facing office open for a minimum of 10 hours per week.

