A SURVEY OF THE LIBRARY AND ENQUIRIES SERVICE AT THE ROYAL ARMOURIES MUSEUM, LEEDS.

A study submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Librarianship at THE UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

by

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Abstract.

Introduction. The Royal Armouries houses the national collection of arms and armour, including a world-renowned library and archive collection. The library is open to the public and administers a busy enquiries service.

Aims. The study aimed to determine the effectiveness of the library and enquiries service. No such survey has been made before, so the results were intended to form a benchmark from which future service levels can be determined. Due to restructures within the museum the service is currently undergoing some threats to its standards of provision, and it is hoped that the results of this survey will help to isolate these threats and help in arresting an erosion of services.

Methodology. A survey was developed to answer these basic questions:

- Who are the library and enquiry services users?
- What is the service used for?
- Are the services provided adequate?

The survey comprised 21 questions, which collected a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data that was interpreted to answer the above questions. It was distributed to 163 visitors and remote enquirers, between February and June 2008. In total 68 questionnaires were returned, giving a response rate of 41.7%.

Results. The service is well used by an international clientele from various backgrounds. Enquiries are diverse and range from detailed research, to simple questions. Enquiries are made for a range of purposes, encompassing education, business, and general interest. The library is seen as a good source of information and knowledge, and enquirers are generally satisfied by the range of services offered.

Conclusion. The results show that the library and enquiries service is a valuable asset to the Royal Armouries as a whole. However, some worries exist for future levels of service provision, if the staff and facilities of the library are eroded any further. Full support should be given in terms of manpower and resources by the museum if it wishes to maintain the service at its current high standard.
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Contents.

Chapter 1: Introduction. 4
Chapter 2: Literature Review. 8
Chapter 3: Methodology. 14
Chapter 4: Results – General Information. 21
Chapter 5: Results – Services. 31
Chapter 6: Results – Visitors. 39
Chapter 7: Results – Remote Enquiries. 44
Chapter 8: Results – Final Questions. 50
Chapter 9: Conclusion. 55
Appendix 1: Databases used in Literature Search. 62
Appendix 2: Sample Cover Sheet. 63
Appendix 3: The Questionnaire. 64
Appendix 4: Qualitative Question responses. 68
Bibliography. 79
Chapter 1: Introduction.

1.1: The Royal Armouries.

The Royal Armouries is the national Museum of arms and armour. It is Britain’s oldest national museum, and began life as the armoury of the monarchs of England, housed in the Tower of London. The armoury was first opened to paying visitors during the reign of Charles II (1660-1685), and has been open to the public ever since. Over the proceeding centuries the Tower gradually lost its status as a working arsenal, but was used as a storehouse, and the collection gradually increased as examples of current weapons, diplomatic gifts and the spoils of war were added to it (Royal Armouries, 2008).

By the early nineteenth century the focus of the collection shifted from the mass display of trophies and curiosities, to a more scholarly attempt to display the history and development of arms and armour in a logical and chronological manner. At this time items first began to be added to the collection by purchase or gift, and the whole collection took on more of the air of a true museum. This process continued throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, so that the collection at the Royal Armouries is one of the most comprehensive and important of its kind in the world today.

The collection continued to grow to the extent that by the end of the 20th century, it was no longer possible to store or display it all at the Tower of London. In 1988 the large ordnance and artillery collection was moved to Fort Nelson, a Victorian era fort guarding the landward approaches to Portsmouth. In 1996 the bulk of the remaining collection moved to a purpose built museum and storage facility in Leeds. The Leeds museum was designed to tell the story of the development of small arms, including armour from the earliest times to the present, and their impact upon human history. The collection is displayed in four themed galleries, based upon the use of arms and armour in war, tournament, hunting and self-defence. A fifth gallery houses the large Asian and Oriental collections. The main and reserve small-arms collections are now held in Leeds, and all that remains in the Tower of London are
those parts of the collection relating directly to the Tower’s history, and examples of royal arms and armours (Royal Armouries, 2008).

As well as the arms and armour, a major part of the Royal Armouries collections are its’ library and archive. These too are of world-class importance, and the bulk of the material was also moved up to Leeds. The library and archive in Leeds comprises over 40,000 works, including books, journals, catalogues, pamphlets and archive material. It relates to the history and development of arms and armour and other, related topics, such as general history, military history and military science. There are some early examples of military drill books, such as the works by Henry Hexham and Jacob De Gheyn, from the seventeenth century. Works on hunting and sporting activities, and the arts and crafts of the weapon smith are also included. In the archive there are such diverse materials as the oldest known European fencing manual, dating to the late thirteenth century, a fifteenth century explosives manual from Germany, and the correspondence of several of the earliest scholars of arms and armour, from the Victorian era. Several of these scholars were Masters or curators at the Tower of London, and their personal collections of books and manuscripts formed the earliest parts of the library collection. There is also a large collection of images, both print and digital, of collection items. These also form a part of the library material, and they too are available for study and public use (Bailey & Abbott 1996).

Since the move to Leeds, both the museum and library collections have continued to grow. The largest single acquisition came in 2005, when the museum took over the Ministry of Defence Pattern Room, a collection of over 10,000 examples of firearms from around the world, with a substantial library and archive attached. Whist the objects have been housed in a purpose built facility nearby, the library and archive is being gradually integrated into that of the museum. The influx of such a vast amount of material has created problems, as it has to be sorted and catalogued, which takes up a lot of staff time. It is a slow and ongoing process.

Today, the library in Leeds is the heart of a busy enquiries service. It is open to the public on Mondays to Fridays, and on most days there are several visitors. Some of them merely wish to browse the shelves whilst others have detailed research
queries and require the assistance of museum staff. Enquiries are also received by e-mail, letter and telephone, and the number of these remote enquiries is high. Some enquirers need the assistance of specialist members of staff, such as the museums’ curators or conservators. Frequently visitors will bring in items of their own for examination, and they are received in the library where the curators can give them information and also find relevant books and other sources of knowledge. The enquiries service is then operated by the whole of the museums’ academic staff, with the library as its hub.

1.2: Aims, objectives and scope.

The aim of the following study is to examine the library and enquiries service at the Royal Armouries in Leeds, to determine how effective it is in providing information to enquirers. No such research has been done before, and so the information gathered in this study will be the first of its kind. It is hoped that the results will form a basis for future research into the service, and also act as a benchmark from which future service levels can be determined. This will therefore be a practical survey intended to provide practical, usable data.

In order to discover the services’ effectiveness, three fundamental questions must be addressed:

- Who are the library and enquiry services users?
- What is the service used for?
- Are the services provided adequate?

The answers to these questions will provide the data necessary to determine service quality and effectiveness, and to gage whether there are any problems or holes in service provision.

Although small parts of the library collection are maintained at the Tower of London and Fort Nelson, they are not included within the scope of this survey. The focus of the museums’ enquiry service is the Leeds library, and most enquiries to or
from these satellite libraries are directed through the main library. Furthermore, both the libraries at the Tower of London and Fort Nelson are open by appointment only, so their visitor numbers are small. The current survey is therefore concerned with enquiries directed through the Leeds library, not of the enquiries service as a whole. Further research projects in the future could be developed to incorporate data from all three locations.

The library currently forms part of the museums’ Collections Department, which incorporates all academic staff concerned with the care of the collection (curators and conservators). The head of the department, Mr. Philip Abbott, is also the Librarian, and under him there are two other members of library staff; an Image Librarian and a Library Assistant. The post of Library Assistant is currently held by myself. Recent restructures within the museum have reduced the number of staff in the Collections Department, and therefore has had the effect of reducing the number available to deal with public enquiries. Restructures are ongoing, and the final structure of the staff within the library itself has not yet been fixed. The department is therefore in a state of flux, and there is scope for this to affect the standard of service provision the library provides. Furthermore, a reduction in space of the library in 2007 – to make way for more office accommodation - caused further service disruptions, as some of the library material had to be relocated elsewhere in the building, and is no longer directly accessible by visitors. There have therefore been some recent and ongoing threats to the standard of service provided by the library, and so the following survey is a timely one. In addition to the aims stated above, it is hoped that the results will show that the service is valuable to the museum as a whole, that it is worth maintaining, and will help to stop any further erosion of service quality.
Chapter 2: Literature Review.

To date, no survey of the user groups of the library at the Royal Armouries has been published. The only information currently available on the library and its services can be found on the museums’ website (Royal Armouries, 2008). There are also two articles by Bailey (1988), and Bailey & Abbott (1996). These articles briefly chart the history and development of the library at the Tower of London, and the process of moving the library collection to the new museum site in Leeds in 1996. This leaves a clear gap in the literature that should be filled by the results of the present study. In order to try and gain some form of context for the proposed work, a literature review was conducted. Information was sourced by searching through the library catalogues of the University of Sheffield, the Royal Armouries and the online catalogue of the British Library. A dissertation list from the Department of Information Studies (University of Sheffield) was also consulted, as were a number of arts, humanities and social sciences databases. A complete listing of the databases searched can be found in appendix 1. Finally, a search was also conducted of the Internet using the Google Scholar search engine.

The results of these searches showed that there is a considerable body of literature on the subject of museums and libraries. However, many of these works are simply reviews of given sites and histories of their collections, such as those on the British Museum Library by Esdaile (1946) and Harris (1998), and the article by Keller (1983) about the special collection of the Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore. One article that sounded promising (Simoni, 1970), described specialist museum libraries in the Netherlands, but again proved to be nothing more than a brief history of certain sites. Some of these articles proved to be useful in that they provided points of comparison between the Royal Armouries’ library and those of other specialist collections, and the articles on the Royal Armouries library itself were especially useful as they provided information on the recent development of the establishment currently under study. This gave me a good point of reference with which to compare the current library service; does it meet up to the expectations of 1996?
Alongside these general surveys, there is another body of work that focuses on cooperation between museums and libraries, and articles such as those by Hedegaard (2004), and Dilevko & Gottlieb (2003) have been valuable for setting the background. The article by Dilevko & Gottlieb (2003), for example, provided a useful short history of museum / library cooperation, and the theory behind it. They believe that such partnerships can have great value in providing education and knowledge to their users, both staff and museum patrons. The authors revisited the theme of museum education in a second work (2004). In it they advocate the creation of museum / library hybrids along the lines of a joint-use library, rather than a traditional library within a museum. Quoting Robert Martin, director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services in the US, the authors see museums and libraries as:

“Primary social agencies in support of education, providing resources and services that complement the structures of formal education and extend education into an enterprise that lasts the length of a lifetime.” (Dilevko & Gottlieb, 2004: 1)

Other authors offer less radical alternatives to the above model. Hedegaard’s article (2004) looks at the fostering of closer links between museums, libraries and archives in Denmark, creating joint catalogues between establishments to make it easier for users to source information. Stott (2003) gives us an example of a library service at the heart of museums activities, by describing the development of the National Art Library at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Here, the traditional museum library has been transformed into the information gateway for the museum as a whole. Stott says, “The new library now aims to provide an essential tool for lifelong learning and exploration at all levels” (Stott, 2003: 37).

Van der Waterens’ article (1999) is an extremely good introduction to the subject of museum libraries and their value. He sees museum libraries as encompassing three vital roles:
1. They provide documentation for museum objects.
2. They are an extension of the museum collection, for their books contain many more examples of specific objects that the collection could house.
3. Many of the books and manuscripts could be museum objects in their own right, and stand as examples of the printing and manuscript arts.
Museum libraries support the collection by supporting research into the context of the objects, and also in to their conservation and display. In doing so, museum libraries build up large collections of highly specialist works, which are unlikely to appear in other forms of library. Such works include catalogues of other similar museums, and of specialist exhibitions, as well as works of research into the field the museum is based. As well as helping museum staff, these unique collections have important roles in helping the public, as they contain specialist resources that are frequently not available in any other form of library. A museum library can be of great benefit to the public even if it is not itself open to the public, by answering enquiries about objects in the museum, or more generally about the subject areas that the museums’ collection encompasses. In this way the library helps to disseminate knowledge, and a library service with a good reputation can become a highly prized asset of the museum as a whole.

Despite the strong emphasis that we can see is placed on education in the above discussion, the role that museum libraries can have in education, research and lifelong learning is a topic that has traditionally been overlooked in the literature. For example, soon after the Second World War, Wittlin (1949) produced a large work on the subject of the role of museums in education, but he focussed upon how the utilise the resources within the museum galleries and did not refer to museum libraries once. More recently one of the principal aims of the UK governments’ steering report on the development of museums and galleries in the 21st century, Renaissance in the Regions, is for museums, “To be an important resource and champion for learning and education.” (Resource, 2001: 7). Yet despite the heavy focus on education, the report again makes no mention of museum libraries or the role that they could play in delivering this.

Fortunately, there are some notable exceptions to this oversight and current commentators, alongside Van der Wateren (1999) and Dilevko & Gottlieb (2004), do acknowledge the potential that museum libraries have for education. Writing about the Danish Museum of Decorative Art’s Library, Lollesgaard (1999: 235) states: “If the museum wants to keep up with research in its’ field, it is absolutely necessary to have a library, that can provide this information.”
Similarly, Timasheva (1999: 29) states: “No large museum could survive without an appropriate library collection.” These comments can be seen to be universally true for all large museums, not just those the authors were directly referring to.

Reviewing the literature available it is possible to note some common themes that appear in a number of the works. One emerging theme is the role of museum libraries in education, as we have seen. As we have also seen in the past this role has frequently been overlooked, and this lack of awareness of the value of museum libraries is itself another common factor in the literature. Reese (1986) is another commentator who notes the lack of awareness of museum library services, and considers the role they can have in educating museum staff, and therefore indirectly to improve the visitor experience. This approach highlights the potential value the library can offer its parent museum. Many of the authors already mentioned go to great lengths to highlight the value of museum libraries, as many of their services can be hard to quantify, and without vocal promotion and advocacy from within the profession, those outside it do not notice the value it brings to their organisation. Lack of awareness of services can in turn lead to difficulties in securing funding and a subsequent fall in service levels (Lollesgaard, 1999). Advocacy and raising of awareness of services from within museum libraries is therefore seen as vital for their survival. Another, related theme is the public perception of museums, archives and libraries as providers of information. This is the subject of two works by Usherwood et. al. (2005), and also a survey by Doyle (1995), who describes the process of creating a survey to gather information on user satisfaction at an academic library.

There are very few articles on the subject of conducting research into museum library services. In fact, only one was found that was of any relevance to the current study. This was a survey by McClure (1993), to establish users’ service requirements at the library of the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh. The users in question were museum staff rather than visitors, and the article describes how they were surveyed for their opinions and requirements. Interestingly, McClure also notes the lack of literature on the subject of user surveys of museum library services. A study of the use of periodicals by staff of the Natural History Department
at the British Museum by Downing (1988), proved to be too specific to be of any value in this instance.

Because of the dearth of information on museum library research, it was necessary to broaden the literature search into library and information services research in general, and a small body of relevant information on the subject was collated, including the study made by Doyle (1995) mentioned above. These have been of great value in helping to set the current study into context, and to highlight other areas of research in the library and information services field. Few are directly related to museum libraries, but the research techniques described in them are all relevant. One such work is that by Bellis (2003), who made a study of the public use of the specialist collections of the capitular libraries of the Church of England.

Another interesting survey was made by Davies & Kirkpatrick (1994), who examined library service quality at the University of Wales College of Cardiff in 1993. This was a very detailed survey that used a questionnaire distributed to a sample of users to gather the information. The results were used to indicate areas where service quality could be improved, and also to show key areas of service provision and their relative importance to users. This survey shows the value of collecting user opinions in formulating plans for future service developments. These few articles proved to be very encouraging, as they showed that surveys of users could be very effective in gathering information and helped to confirm plans on how to set up and manage the survey that is the focus of the current study.

Finally, in order to reinforce the information on survey techniques gained by studying the above literature, a review of general works on survey design and research in the library and information services field was conducted. A number of works were found to contain valuable and pertinent information. Busha & Harter (1980) provide a very detailed and concise introduction and practical guide into how to conduct research in the field. Although dated the work is very useful as it covers all areas from formulating hypotheses to data analysis and writing up results. Powell & Connaway (2004) provide good information on data collection, and a series of articles by Lee (2004) offer useful tips on how a survey can be structured, and how to ensure that the data collected is relevant and valid.
An excellent work on questionnaire design is the book by Hague (1994). It offers in-depth information on how to construct successful questionnaires, and looks at types of question and methods of processing the data collected. Examples of good and bad practice are also offered to assist the designer. Another very good work on questionnaire design is that by Slater (1990). The work is primarily concerned with qualitative research, and also contains information on the interpretation of data.

A study of the above literature on research techniques has been of obvious assistance in formulating the research methods for the current study. It suggested what techniques were likely to work and provided the information and knowledge required to determine the methodology and to ensure its success. One of the most interesting was by Strauss (1998). This work provided useful information on what qualitative research is and how to conduct it. The information was very useful in helping to plan the research strategy for the current study. In a discussion on types of qualitative research one comment proved to be particularly interesting:

“Some researchers believe that data should not be analysed, per se; but rather the researcher’s task is to gather the data and present them in such a manner that ‘the informants speak for themselves’.” (Strauss, 1998: 21)

It is thought that by taking this approach the results will remain free of any interpretative bias. This theory was particularly interesting because it was thought that the results of the current study were likely to be heavily anecdotal, and would therefore not take well to statistical analysis. Reluctance to impose such an analysis upon the results was given a theoretical grounding by Strauss’ argument.

A full bibliography of works read during the course of research is included at the end of this dissertation.
Chapter 3: Methodology.

The initial concept for conducting a survey of the library and enquiries service at the Royal Armouries was formulated in March 2007, with the approval of the museums’ then Head of Information and Research, Mr. Philip Abbott. The literature review has been conducted since then to gain factual and contextual evidence, and the primary research itself was conducted from February to June 2008.

4.1: Planning.

It was apparent at an early stage in the planning that the approach to the research would be inductive in nature, because no specific theory or hypothesis was being tested. What was envisaged was a survey to gain a general picture of user satisfaction of the library and enquiry service, and to provide the answers for the three primary research questions (see chapter 1.2). The resulting data could then be used by the museum to determine how to maintain and improve services in the long term. Philip Payne, writing in Slater (1990), states that:

“Libraries and information services carry out or commission user studies in order to generate information which will enable them to make more informed decisions about present or future services.”

This aim was considered to be particularly important by the author, in order to provide the museum library with some tangible evidence of the quality of the service it provided, in light of the recent restructures and changes mentioned in chapter 1. As no previous survey of the museum’s library service has been conducted, it was also intended that the current study would act as a baseline and springboard for future surveys. To these ends a list of basic questions was drawn up in conjunction with Mr. Abbott:

- Who is using the library? This refers directly to the first of the primary research questions referred to in chapter 1.2. Possibilities include museum visitors, academics, researchers, and students. It was particularly interesting to see if many students used the library, as Leeds is home to two universities. Leeds University in particular has a well-respected school of medieval
history, a Military Studies Department, and hosts an international medieval conference every summer. This ought to provide a large user group for the museum library.

Further questions were also considered to facilitate building a profile of the service users. These would include gathering some general demographic data, such as:

- Age of users, categorised into given age groups.
- Where the users live. This would determine the catchment area for visitors to the library, and also give a picture of where remote enquiries came from.

Other questions were devised to find the answers to the second and third of the primary research questions, to discover what the library was used for and whether our services were deemed adequate:

- What is the library used for? It would be interesting to know what the library’s users were using it for: recreation, business or research, etc.
- Is the physical space of the library sufficient? This question was particularly pertinent in the light of the recent reduction in size of the library area, and the relocation of some of the periodicals to a storeroom that is not accessible by the public.
- Are users satisfied with the service the library provides? This was the most important point, to see if the service provided met with user expectations.

In order to provide an opportunity for improvement, and to allow for future growth, a final point was also included:

- Do users want any other services provided? This was related to the previous question, to determine what other services users may require.

Having read some of the literature on research methods (e.g. Busha & Harter, 1980, and Slater, 1990) it was determined that the best method of data collection would be via a questionnaire. This method of data collection has a number of
advantages, such as they allow for a wide number of respondents to be reached easily and with economy of effort, and facilitate the gathering of large amounts of data in a short time. Questionnaires are a standardised document and therefore help to eliminate anomalous answers or errors due to interviewer technique (Busha & Harter, 1980). Although traditionally used to collect quantitative data, questionnaires can also be used to collect qualitative information. This made the questionnaire a particularly useful tool in this case, as it was envisaged that a combination of qualitative and quantitative data would be used. More consistent data can be gathered by using closed questions, where the respondent selects a response from a number of alternatives. Closed questions are easier to codify than open, but open questions, where the respondent is free to respond at will, gives the opportunity for freedom of expression, and it was thought that a mixture of open and closed questions would produce a fuller response.

The questionnaire contained a mixture of quantitative (closed) and qualitative (open) questions, and was developed in December 2007. Questions with specific, quantifiable answers were asked to establish the facts (i.e. the quantitative data), and in many cases these were followed up with a more subjective supplementary question that asked the respondent to further qualify the answer he or she had just given (i.e. the qualitative data). In this way both the facts of the matter and the beliefs or reasons surrounding these facts were both gathered, and a fuller overall picture was gained. Although there is therefore a considerable amount of quantitative data, it does not particularly lend itself to being analysed statistically, and it was determined that no such statistical analysis would be attempted. It was believed that forcing such analysis upon the data could be detrimental rather than helpful, and so it was decided that interpretation of the results would be carried out using primarily qualitative techniques (Slater, 1990).

4.2: Execution.

A major concern was to keep the questionnaire as short and simple to complete as possible, in order to maximise returns. The questionnaire was piloted to a small number of museum visitors in January 2008. Few changes needed to be made, mostly to the wording of some of the questions and to the formatting of the
The questionnaire was distributed by hand to library visitors, and by post or email to users who had sent in an enquiry. In this way the questionnaire was able to reach most users of the library and enquiry service within the survey period. All questionnaires included a cover sheet that detailed the aims of the survey, and invited the respondent to participate, but stressed that the reply was entirely voluntary. Those that were distributed by post also included a stamped addressed envelope so that the respondent did not have to bear the cost of returning them. This was considered to be a vital pre-requisite to ensure a reasonable response rate from the postal questionnaires. Indeed, it has been said that, “Any questionnaire which is not accompanied by a self-addressed envelope, post-paid where appropriate, does not deserve to be returned” (Slater, 1990: 58). Telephone surveys were discounted at an early stage in the planning process, as they were deemed to be too clumsy and time consuming. As telephone enquiries are routinely answered by post or email in any case, then enquirers who had contacted the library by telephone would still be included in the survey. In an attempt to ensure that respondents were as objective and truthful as possible in their answers, and to overcome any reservations they may have had about making critical remarks, the surveys were anonymous, and no details of respondents names were requested or collected. Visitors who were given a questionnaire by hand were also given a stamped, addressed envelope, so that they
were under no pressure to complete the survey there and then. It was also hoped that by conducting the survey anonymously, it would increase the response rate overall. As the surveys were conducted anonymously, the project was given a No Risk classification in relation to Sheffield University’s research ethics policy. The cover sheet stressed the anonymous nature of the survey, and also stated that the project had full ethical approval. A copy of the cover sheet can be found in appendix 2.

In order to get results that were as accurate as possible, it was intended to survey as many users as possible during the survey period. At the time the survey was conducted there were two members of staff in the library: Mr. Philip Abbot the Head of Information and Research, and myself, a full-time Library Assistant. All visitors and enquiries that were dealt with by us were supplied with a questionnaire. However, the museums’ curators and conservators are also part of the same department as the library (Information and Research) and also deal with public enquiries as part of their duties. It was therefore important that they were also included in the research. Fortunately many of their enquiries pass through the library, as visitors bring in items of their own for identification or advice on conservation, and so were easy to incorporate. Curators and conservators were asked to inform me of any remote enquiries they dealt with during the survey period so that they too could be incorporated into the survey. In this way the survey sample can be seen to have been opportunistic. An opportunistic sample is one that is readily available and easy to contact at any given time, and this can be seen to be true of the sampling method used here. By adopting this method the sample was as wide as possible, and most users of the library and enquiries service were included in the survey.

In total, 163 surveys were sent out, and 68 were returned. This gives a response rate of 41.7%. As completed surveys were returned, they were numbered and the replies to the questions were transferred onto a results sheet. The quantitative data was collated and converted into percentages. For ease of interpretation it is displayed graphically as pie charts in chapters 4-8. Responses to the qualitative questions were typed-up verbatim. They were then rearranged on the results sheet so that similar responses were grouped together, and in this way emerging themes were more easily recognised. As a result the mass of data collected became much easier to interpret, and any trends in respondents comments were readily noticeable.
Responses to the qualitative questions are referred to in chapters 4-8, and are reproduced in their entirety in appendix 4.

4.3: Limitations.

Before we go on to examine the results in the next chapter, it is important to note the limitations of the current study. As we have noted in the introduction, the Royal Armouries is based in three locations, Leeds, the Tower of London, and Fort Nelson, Portsmouth. One immediate point to note is that the survey was carried out exclusively from the principal museum site in Leeds. There are small libraries at both the Tower and Fort Nelson, and by ignoring them some enquiries will have been missed. However, the main enquiries telephone line and email address are both routed through the Leeds library, so that even if an enquiry was then directed to either the Tower or Fort Nelson, it will have passed through the Leeds library and could be incorporated into the survey. The only enquiries that would be completely missed are those that went directly to a member of staff at either the Tower or the Fort. As a result although some enquiries will have been missed, most should have been picked up. Similarly visitors to either the Tower or Fort libraries will also not have featured in the survey, but as both of the smaller libraries have restricted opening hours (Royal Armouries, 2008), these will not have been a large number. Any visitor comments from these locations would also have complicated the results of the survey, as they would have been commenting upon different facilities to those in Leeds. Although it would be necessary to include complete surveys of the Tower and Fort libraries in order to gain a full picture of the Royal Armouries library and enquiry service as a whole, neither the time or the resources were available to run the survey at all three sites on this occasion. This could of course be one way that the survey could be extended in the future.

Similarly, it will be noted that no Royal Armouries staff took part in the survey. As staff can also be frequent users of the library, this would seem to be a grave omission. However, some of the heaviest staff users are also the very members of staff who reply to visitor enquiries, i.e. the curators and conservators. It was felt, therefore, that a conflict of interests could arise if they were to respond to a survey that in part questioned their own work. Furthermore, it seemed that if some staff were excluded from answering then it was unfair to include the responses of others.
Thus the decision was taken to exclude all staff from the survey, and to focus solely upon visitors and remote enquirers, i.e. the general public. Again, the expansion of the study to include different groups of staff, such as service users, user-contributors, etc., could be one way to extend the survey in the future.

With these limitations in mind, then, we can see that the current survey is not a complete study of the library and enquiries service of the Royal Armouries, but rather a limited study of the service to the general public, dealing with enquiries that pass through the main library site in Leeds. In view of this, the final problem we need to address is that of the reliability of the results. It was noted above that the response rate was only 41.7% which, according to several commentators, is not high enough to be representative of the sample as a whole (Slater, 1990, Hague, 1994, Powell & Connaway, 2004). According to Paul Burton, any response rate lower than 50% will, “effectively render the results of little or no practical value.” (Slater, 1990: 63). However, the same commentators do acknowledge that low returns can still be used to highlight basic trends in the data. A low response rate was anticipated in this case, and that is one reason why the sample was as large as possible, as detailed above. Even if the results of the current study cannot be taken to be scientifically accurate, they are never the less important as they represent the first study of its kind undertaken at the Royal Armouries, and are currently the only figures available. The evidence could be strengthened in the future by extending the survey to cover a longer period of time and a broader base of users.
Chapter 4: Results – General Information.

The completed questionnaires were numbered and their results were collated onto a results sheet, as discussed in chapter 3. Quantitative data was converted into percentages and will be displayed graphically as pie charts for ease of reference. The total number of responses to a given question is denoted in the charts by the formula “n=x”, e.g. Q.1. Gender. (n=68). If the number is greater than the total number of survey respondents (68), it indicates that multiple responses were given. The qualitative data was typed up verbatim and is displayed, by question, complete in appendix 4. The qualitative data will be referred to throughout the following chapters.

The first section of the questionnaire comprised of six questions, which asked for general information about the respondents. These questions included gender, age, and occupation of the respondents, and also asked where they were from. This information enabled a profile of the respondents to be built up, and therefore to answer one of the three principal questions at the heart of the study (see chapter 1); who are the library and enquiry services users? Knowing whom the users are is important because it allows the museum, as service provider, to tailor and market their services accordingly. This section of the questionnaire also contained two questions, which asked for information on the type and purpose of the enquiries the respondents had made. Again, knowing this information is important because it allows the services offered to be tailored for maximum use and effectiveness. It also offers an answer to the second of the principal questions of the study; what is the service used for?

4.1: Q.1 - Gender.

The first question asked for the gender of the respondent, in order to begin constructing a picture of the users of the library and enquiries service. It was anticipated that there would be a larger percentage of male users to female, due to the nature of the museum and library collections. Arms, armour and military history are traditionally considered to be more of a male interest than female, and it was thought that this belief would be borne out by the results of the question.
Although it had been thought that the gender of the users would be primarily male, it was surprising to see that the ratio of male to female was so large, as shown in the chart above. Of the 68 respondents, 61 were male, and six were female. One respondent chose not to answer this question. There is no evidence to suggest why there were such a small percentage of female respondents, and it may well simply be due to traditional male bias in the subject area. Another possibility is that the number of female enquirers was artificially low during the survey period. The reason is not likely to come to light without further study, and at the moment we must conclude that this question confirms the suspicion that the majority of enquirers are male.

4.2: Q.2 - Age.

Question two asked for the age of the respondent. In order to facilitate collating the results, a series of age ranges was devised (0-19, 20-39, 40-59, 60-79, 80+), and respondents were required to tick the one in which their own age fell. The results are summarised in the following chart.
Of the 68 respondents there were none in the youngest (0-19) or oldest (80+) age brackets. Twelve respondents were from the 20-39 age group, whilst the vast majority were almost evenly spread between the 40-59 (28 respondents) and 60-79 (27 respondents) age groups. One respondent again chose not to answer the question. The evidence clearly shows that the bulk of enquiries originate from people of middle age and older. Although a relatively large 18% of enquiries come from younger (20-39) people including those of student age, there were none from those of school age. Although enquiries have been dealt with from school children in the past, we must conclude that as there were none during the fairly lengthy survey period of four months, they are not common.

4.3: Q.3 - Occupation / Profession.

The responses to question three were intended to give a further idea of who library users were, and whether their use of the service was related to their occupation. This was an open question, with a space provided for the respondent to write in. The results are summarised in the following chart.

The results show that over half of the respondents (39 out of 68) are in employment, and that the second largest group (21 out of 68) are retired. This tallies reasonably well with the information about the ages of the respondents shown in section 5.2, as the large percentage of retirees correlates to the high percentage of respondents in the older age group. Six respondents described themselves as being students, either at university or in further education. At least three were mature students, two of whom were studying for PhDs. Two respondents chose not to answer the question, and no respondents described themselves as being unemployed.
The question on occupation also provided another layer of interpretation. As the respondents had written down their occupation, rather than merely ticking a box stating ‘Employed,’ ‘Retired,’ etc., it was possible to see whether people’s occupations had any bearing on their enquiry. A list of the occupations given by the 39 respondents who stated they were employed is given below.

Table 1: Occupations of Respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accountant</th>
<th>Chartered Engineer</th>
<th>Podiatrist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Admin Clerk</td>
<td>Commercial Landlord</td>
<td>Police Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aircraft Engineer</td>
<td>Company Director (2)</td>
<td>Process Engineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeologist</td>
<td>Consultant Surgeon</td>
<td>Risk Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archivist</td>
<td>Customs Officer</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arms/Armour Dealer</td>
<td>Force Armourer</td>
<td>Technical Author (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armourer (2)</td>
<td>Glazing Contractor</td>
<td>Technical Consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author (3)</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>Technical Instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Builder</td>
<td>Museum Curator (3)</td>
<td>Technician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carer</td>
<td>Museum Trustee</td>
<td>Warehouse Operator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpet Cleaner</td>
<td>Picture Researcher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From this list we can see that five respondents (archaeologist, museum curators and museum trustee) are directly employed in the heritage sector, and a considerable number of others, twelve out of the 39 (archivist, arms/armeor dealer, armourer, author, customs officer, picture researcher police officer, teacher), are in professions that could be directly related to their enquiry. This evidence suggests that almost half of the enquiries from employed respondents may be related to their occupation.

4.4: Q.4 - Where are you from?

This question completed the collection of demographic information. It was known that enquiries to the library came from all around the world, but there was no information on the number of international enquiries or their ratio in relation to UK enquiries. By asking the above question it was possible to discover this data. Respondents were asked to name the country they were from, and their replies are summarised in the chart below. It shows that 20% of enquiries originate abroad, with
five from the United States, three from Australia, two from Germany and Italy, and one each from Denmark and France.

The figures are skewed slightly by the relatively large (4%) size of the No Response category, but it can still be inferred that approximately three-quarters of enquiries originate in the UK.

Further analysis of the data also showed where in the world visitors to the library were from. Unsurprisingly, the vast majority were from the UK, but 12% were from abroad. The following table summarises from where library visitors originated.

Question four also asked respondents to state which town or city they came from. This was primarily aimed at UK enquirers, in order to gain a better picture of where the majority of the enquirers were from. The same information can also be used to plot where UK library visitors are from, and both sets of information are recorded on the following map.
UK respondents came from 30 counties across England, Wales and Scotland, and the numbers on the map above relate to those counties in alphabetical order, as shown on the table below. One UK respondent did not indicate where he came from.

**Table 2: Distribution of UK Respondents.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berkshire</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buckinghamshire</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheshire</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Durham</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Lothian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Sussex</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falkirk</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampshire</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancashire</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leicestershire</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincolnshire</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merseyside</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norfolk</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northamptonshire</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northumberland</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Yorkshire</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxfordshire</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peterborough</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shropshire</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Yorkshire</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffordshire</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyne and Wear</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Sussex</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Yorkshire</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiltshire</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrexham</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The numbers in **bold** correspond to the total number of respondents from that county.
The yellow areas of the map on the previous page correspond to counties from where UK visitors to the library originate. This information gives a good indication of the catchment area of the library, the regions from where people are prepared to travel to make a visit. The information is summarised in Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Distribution of UK Visitors.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Number of Visitors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cheshire</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Durham</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Lothian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancashire</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leicestershire</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincolnshire</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merseyside</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norfolk</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northumberland</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Yorkshire</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peterborough</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Yorkshire</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffordshire</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Sussex</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Yorkshire</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiltshire</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The numbers in **bold** correspond to the total number of visitors from that county.

Looking at the map, we can see that out of the 30 visitors from the UK who indicated where they came from, thirteen (42% of the total) came from within about 50 miles of Leeds. This radius incorporates all of West and South Yorkshire, most of Northumberland and about half of Lancashire. When the radius is extended to 100 miles, incorporating all of North Yorkshire and Lancashire, County Durham, Merseyside, Cheshire, Staffordshire, Leicestershire, most of Lincolnshire and parts of Northumberland, then the number of visitors rises to nineteen (61% of the total). The remaining 39% come from further afield, mostly from areas with good transport links to Leeds. That the majority of visitors come from within an easy travelling distance of the museum is not surprising. However, it is interesting to note that the catchment area for the library is as wide as it is, with visitors travelling from as far afield as mid-Scotland to the south coast of England. This suggests that the library is known to be a valuable source of information, and is considered to be worth making the visit to.

It has been noted above that the results 5.4 have been skewed because three respondents (4% of the total) fall into the Don’t Know category. This is because the respondents misinterpreted the question, and instead of stating the town or city and country they were from, they simply ticked either ‘Town/City’ or ‘Country.’ This
implied that they lived in either an urban or rural environment, but did not give a place or country or origin. This problem did not arise during the pilot of the survey, and it is not known why these respondents misinterpreted the question, but it unfortunately meant that their results were useless.

4.5: Q.5 - Type of Enquiry.

The purpose of this question was to discover the most common forms of enquiry. This was a simple closed question in which the respondents were invited to tick the appropriate category from a short list (Phone/Fax, Letter, E-Mail, Visitor). Nine respondents indicated that they had used the library and enquiry service more than once, and had made different kinds of enquiry by ticking more than one option. This brought the total number of separate enquiries recorded to 78, and the percentages in the following chart are based upon this number.

![Pie chart showing the distribution of the number of enquiries for each type of contact: Phone/Fax (37%), Letter (19%), E-Mail (14%), and Visit (30%).]

It can be seen from the above results that the most common form of enquiry is a visit to the library (29 occasions), followed by remote enquiry by e-mail (23 occasions). The remaining 33% is made up of enquiries by letter (fifteen occasions) and by telephone or fax (eleven occasions). All respondents answered this question.

4.6: Q.6 - Purpose of Enquiry.

This final question was asked to gain a further insight into why the respondents were using the services. Again, a list of options was provided, and respondents ticked those that were most appropriate to their purpose. 23 respondents
ticked multiple options, bringing the total number of stated purposes to 98. The results shown on the following chart are based upon this figure.

![Pie chart showing purpose of enquiry]

The most common purpose cited was educational (42 instances), followed by general interest (27 instances), with business third (nineteen instances). The most common multiple answers were general interest coupled with educational (14 instances), followed by business with educational (8 instances). In one instance all three reasons were combined. This would suggest that the main reasons why people use the services are general interest and education. Few respondents were in formal education, so their educational purpose would seem to be primarily a desire for knowledge, and this is borne out by noting the number of instances general interest and education are cited together as reasons. At first glance this evidence would seem to be at variance with that from question 5.3 above. Here the evidence seemed to suggest that almost half of the enquiries from employed respondents could be related to their occupation. However, when the large percentage of retired respondents is factored in, then the evidence from both questions is more in keeping.

4.7: Summary.

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, the first six questions of the survey were used to gather data to answer two of the principal questions posed by the survey; who are the library and enquiry services users, and what is the service used for? The data suggests that users are primarily male, of middle age and older, although some younger people do use the services, and a small percentage of users are female. Users come from all over the world but are principally from the UK, and
visitors are willing to travel to the library from most places in the UK from central Scotland downwards. The largest percentage of users are employed, but there are also a large number of retired users. Visiting the library is the most common form or enquiry, followed by remote enquiries by e-mail, and the main reasons for making an enquiry seem to be for general interest, the desire for knowledge either for formal education or for life long learning, and for business purposes.
Chapter 5: Results – Services.

The remainder of the survey was primarily intended to discover what services the respondents had used, and to answer the third of the underlying questions; are the services provided adequate? To do this a series of quantitative, primarily closed questions were asked about various aspects of the library and enquiry service as a whole. Several of these were followed up by open questions, which asked for responses that gave qualitative data to back up the quantitative. This chapter will address six questions that were posed to all respondents.

5.1: Q.7 - Services Used.

A list of the basic services offered by the library and enquiry service was presented, and the respondents were invited to tick those that they had used. There was also an ‘Other’ category, which allowed users to write down any other services they had used that did not feature on the list. Multiple answers were expected, and in total 41 out of the 68 respondents indicated that they had used more than one service. In all, 165 separate service uses were recorded, and this figure was used as the basis of the summary of results shown in the chart below. One respondent did not answer this question, amounting to 1% of the total.

![Q.7. Services used. (n=165)](image)

Generally speaking this pattern of results was unsurprising. The most common forms of service use, amounting to some 59% in total, were searching for books (either browsing the shelves or asking library staff), photocopying, and use of the remote enquiry service. The next most common usage was seeking specialist assistance from curators or conservation staff. The most common form of multiple service use was
searching for books and using the photocopier (25 instances), as visitors undertook research into a given topic. Very few people used the microfilm or microfiche reader (five instances), and the majority of image searches (fourteen instances) were requested by authors or picture researchers for professional purposes. What is perhaps surprising at first glance is the relatively poor use (nine instances) of the online library catalogue. However this can be explained by the fact that the catalogue is a relatively recent addition to the services provided by the library, and its format has been altered a number of times as information has been added and service providers have changed. This is an area of ongoing development, which has been prioritised for future service improvement.

Eleven respondents registered that they had used an ‘Other’ service, some of which (e.g. “Browsing,”) could be incorporated into the listed services. In all, of these eleven responses only five could not be categorised in the existing service list. These were:

- Attending seminars (2 instances).
- Access to Ministry of Defence archives (2 instances).
- Requested video footage.

The complete list of ‘Other’ services is reproduced in appendix 4.

5.2: Q.8 - Service Satisfaction.

This question asked the respondents to gage their level of satisfaction of the services they had used, based upon a five-option scale ranging from ‘Very good’ through to ‘Very poor’. The response from the 67 people who answered this question was overwhelmingly positive, as is demonstrated by the results below.
There were no returns stating a negative response, and 95% of respondents rated the service as ‘Good’ or better. Respondents were prompted to explain their replies by answering a supplementary question; “If you think the services provided were good or very good, please would you say why?” 60 respondents chose to qualify their response, and their reasons were fairly common;

“Friendly, helpful staff,” (Respondent no. 2, a visitor).

“Immediate response to an out of the blue enquiry on an obscure topic,” (Respondent no. 4, a visitor).

“Rapid and accurate response,” (Respondent no. 32, a remote enquirer).

“Fast, friendly. Professional and knowledgeable,” (Respondent no. 68, a visitor).

Generally, as the selection above shows, the responses complemented the library for delivering quick and comprehensive responses to remote enquiries, and for the attitude of the staff towards visitors. The full list of responses is reproduced in appendix 4. A further supplementary question had been prepared to ask for information on the attitudes of any respondents who had given a negative response to the main question. As there were no negative responses, this was left unanswered.

5.3: Q.9 - Other Services.

This question was asked to see if there were any gaps in the current level of service offered. It was an open question, with respondents asked to reply to the following query; “Are there any other services that you would like to see provided?”
Only eleven respondents (16%) gave any suggestions. Some simply wrote “No,” whilst most left the question blank. The eleven suggestions can be found in full in appendix 4, and their responses are summarised as follows.

- Larger size copies of texts.
- Online museum catalogue.
- Online library catalogue.
- Electronic document supply.
- Automatic cost calculation for services that carry a charge.
- Easier access to the museums’ reserve collection.

Some of these suggested additional services are already available in a limited capacity. Versions of the library and museum catalogues are in the process of going online at the moment, and they will be expanded and added to as a service priority. Some of the museums’ archives have been scanned and already exist as pdf documents. This process could be expanded, by scanning documents as they are requested rather than sending photocopies. Access to the museums’ reserve collections is also available in a limited capacity. Due to security reasons access is not likely to be expanded, but any member of the public with an interest or a need to research a given topic can be granted access to the reserve collections. In many cases therefore, it seems it may not be a matter of providing additional services, but of marketing those that are currently offered more effectively.

5.4: Q.10 – Enquiry Success.

This question aimed to determine respondents’ success rates in gaining the information they needed when they made an enquiry. After an initial ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ answer, a supplementary question asked; “If the service did not successfully answer your query, can you say how it failed?” 59 respondents answered ‘Yes’ to the initial question, with only four answering ‘No.’ Five respondents did not reply to this question.
Of the four respondents who did not get a successful answer, all replied to the supplementary question, to give the reason for the failure. One already had a broad knowledge of the subject he was researching, and was looking for any recent publications. Another was an ongoing enquiry, which had not reached its conclusion at the time. The four responses are summarised as follows:

“I found no new information on the subject,” (Respondent no. 26, a remote user and visitor).

“The library did not hold the type of information I wanted,” (Respondent no. 29, a remote user).

“Still awaiting reply to query – ongoing enquiry,” (Respondent no. 38, a remote user).

“Did not have enough time to spend to get the answer,” (Respondent no. 59, a remote user).

It is impossible to guess why five respondents did not complete this question, and their failure to do so leave something of a hole in the data. A failure rate of 6% is acceptable, but if it were as high as 13% it would indicate a potential problem or gap in the service. It is possible that the five respondents had approached the library with no actual enquiry, and had ignored the question because they felt it was of no relevance to them. Whatever the cause, we must consider the success rate at the present time to be 87%, which is good but leaves room for improvement. The main reason for a failure to provide a successful reply to an enquiry seems to be that the library may not hold the type of information that the enquirer needs. In these cases, it is usual for the library staff to try and find an alternative source of information, such as another museum or library.
5.5: Q.11 – Service Charges.

Some of the services offered carry a charge, and it was considered important to discover whether users thought that the charges were fair or too high. In response to the initial question, “If you have used a service that carries a charge, do you think that the level of charge you paid was fair?” 33 respondents thought that the charges were fair, whilst only one stated that they were too high. The other 34 respondents left the question blank, and we can assume that they had not used any chargeable services. The results are summarised in the following chart.

The chart shows that 50% of respondents used services that carried a charge, and that the majority of them accept that the charges are fair. Only one respondent therefore completed the supplementary question asking why they believed the charges were unfair. His response however did not qualify his reason;

“I can understand why seminars are quite expensive – in that they only cater for ten or twelve delegates,” (Respondent no. 1, a visitor).

This response seems to agree that the charge is necessary, and no conclusion can be drawn as to why the respondent answered in the way he did.

Answers were more forthcoming to a second supplementary question, which asked if respondents would be prepared to pay higher charges. This was an unstructured question that invited an open response. Interestingly out of the 33 respondents who had used paid services, 23 (70%) said that they would be prepared to pay higher charges, whilst nine (27%) said they would not. One (3%) chose not to
comment. The responses are summarised with a selection below, whilst they are reproduced in full in appendix 4.

“No. This collection belongs to the nation and as such should be free to all British citizens,” (Respondent no. 11, a visitor).

“Yes – probably too cheap!” (Respondent no. 18, a visitor).

“If I have to!!” (Respondent no. 24, a remote user and visitor).

The subject of paying charges for services within the museum and library sector is often an emotive one, and tends to polarise opinions both for and against it. The responses themselves were not unexpected, although the high level of preparedness to pay higher charges was quite surprising. Whether this attitude is genuinely due to a belief that services are worth paying for, or merely resignation to the realities of inflation however cannot be inferred.

5.6: Q.12 – Staff.

The staff of an organisation can be its greatest asset, or its worst enemy. The final question of this section aimed to discover how the respondents rated the staff of the library and enquiries service. This included the curators and conservation staff as well as the library staff; all museum employees who take part in dealing with public enquiries. This was another structured question that invited responses from a five-option scale, from ‘Very good’ to ‘Very poor.’

96% of respondents rated the staff as ‘Good’ or ‘Very good.’ There were no responses of ‘Adequate,’ or ‘Poor,’ or ‘Very poor,’ and the remaining 4% (three
respondents) offered no reply. A supplementary question had been inserted to ask why any respondents were unhappy with the staff. There were no replies to this question, but four respondents used the space to make positive comments. Their comments were as follows:

“Friendly and helpful, available when needed but never hindered in any way,” (Respondent no. 22, a visitor).

“Prompt response,” (Respondent no. 26, a remote user and visitor).

“Excellent and very polite,” (Respondent no. 35, a remote user).

“The service has been excellent,” (Respondent no. 41, a remote user).

The response to this question was an endorsement of the staff involved in dealing with public enquiries. They are clearly highly thought of by all users of the service, and in this case can be seen to be a great asset to the museum.

5.7: Summary.

These questions, related to services and factors common to all enquirers, can generally be seen to have elicited very positive responses. Users seem to be generally satisfied with the range of services offered, rating them all quite highly. A number of suggested additional services are already available on a limited basis, and this would suggest that the museum could market them better, but also that the museum does cater for the majority of user requirements. The bulk of enquiries are successfully answered, and those that are not are generally due to their being outside the scope of the museum and library collections. In these cases it is common for the enquirer to be directed to another source of information. Charges form services that carry them are considered by the majority to be acceptable and by some to be too low. Whilst most users indicate that they would be prepared to pay increased charges, the museum should be careful not to take this as an excuse to raise them too far, as this would result in the loss of considerable good will. Finally, the staff that administer the enquiries service are seen by their users to be excellent, and a great asset to the museum as a whole.
Chapter 6: Results – Visitors.

The third section of the survey contained four questions that were peculiar to visitors of the library in Leeds. They were designed to gauge the frequency of visits, and to determine visitors’ perceptions of the library environment and space. The questions regarding the physical space of the library and the reading room facilities, were set in response to the reduction in size of the library area in 2007, when some 40-50% of the floor space was lost to make room for new offices. This in turn led to a reorganisation of the shelving within the reading room, and the relocation of the periodicals to a storeroom. As a result visitors no longer have access to the periodicals, but must ask a member of staff to go and get them. On occasions where the reading room is busy this can be problematical, because the library staff are not meant to leave the reading room unattended when it is busy for security purposes.

6.1: Q.13 – Visiting the Library.

Question thirteen asked respondents if they had visited the library before, and required a simple ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ answer. 30 respondents had previously indicated that they were visitors (see chapter 4.5), and a further five stated that they had visited before and completed the section. The results from the 35 respondents are summarised below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q.13. Have you visited before? (n=35)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes: 51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No: 37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response: 12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More than half of the respondents (eighteen people) indicated that they were repeat visitors. Four respondents (12% of the total), all of whom had stated that they were visitors to the library, did not answer this question. This gives rise to the possibility that the percentage of repeat visitors may be higher.
Following on from this question, the eighteen respondents who were repeat visitors, were asked in a supplementary question to indicate how often they visited. A four-option scale was devised and respondents were required to tick the most appropriate response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q.13a. How often do you visit? (n=18)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 a year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1/year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results show that one respondent visited the library on a weekly basis, whilst a further three came at least once a month. Exactly half of the respondents (nine people) indicated that they visited more than once per year. With almost three-quarters of library visitors making at least one trip to the library every year, the results suggest that the library has developed a good reputation amongst its users as a source of information, and that it is a place where users will return to when they are seeking information.

6.2: Q.14 – Opening Hours.

The library is currently open to the public on Mondays to Fridays, from 10.00 to 16.30 hours. It is not open on Saturdays or Sundays, apart from special events such as seminars. During normal opening hours the public do not need to make an appointment, but are granted access to the library if they require it. In this way a visitor to the museum galleries can decide to visit the library to find information on an exhibit he or she has seen. Although the library is open without the need for an appointment, it is recommended that visitors with a particular subject interest contact the library in advance, in order to save time searching for information when they arrive. Members of the public who want curatorial or conservatorial assistance are advised to make an appointment, to ensure that they see the correct member of staff. However, if such enquirers arrive unexpected then they will be seen if at all possible.
The library is also used out of museum opening hours (10.00 – 17.00 hours) for hosting meetings of the Royal Armouries Support Group and the northern branch of the Historical Breech-Loading Small Arms Association.

The chart below shows the data gathered in response to a question asking if visitors thought that the library opening hours were adequate.

![Pie chart showing Q14. Opening hours. (n=35)]

Although the majority indicated that they thought opening hours were adequate, the large percentage of respondents (ten individuals) who chose not to answer suggests that there may be a greater level of discontent regarding opening times than the four individuals who answered ‘No’ would indicate. Seven individuals chose to reply to a supplementary question asking how opening hours could be improved. These responses all asked for extended hours during the week, or at least some limited opening at weekends. The comments are reproduced in full in appendix 4.

6.3: Q.15 – Library Space.

This question asked library visitors to state whether they thought the physical space of the reading room was adequate. A simple, closed ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ question was followed by a supplementary question that invited respondents to state why they thought the space was inadequate, if their initial response had been ‘No.’ Again, for some reason ten respondents (29% of the total) gave no answer. This may have been because, as library visitors and regular users, they did not feel able to give any negative comments about the service, even anonymously. However, their reluctance has made it difficult to derive any reliable information from this question. Although a little over half of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the library
space, if the non-respondents were dissatisfied, then it would mean that almost half of library users do not find the space adequate. If this were the case, then it would represent a considerable problem for the museums’ management. On the basis of these questionable results therefore, it would seem that further research into this subject should be made.

From the results that were gathered, a slight majority of users (nineteen individuals) believe the library space to be adequate, and six users that it is not. However, eight users chose to answer the supplementary question, and all stated that the space was small, cluttered, and could become uncomfortable when busy. These responses are reproduced in full in appendix 4., but can be summed-up by a single response;

“I get the impression that the library is not the most cherished place in the museum. I say this because a recent reorganisation has seen the amount of space given over to the function sizeably reduced. In my opinion, more should be done to encourage the library to collect relevant books and provide sufficient space for researchers who need to make use of the facilities,” (Respondent no. 38, a remote enquirer and visitor).

6.4: Q.16 – Reading Room Facilities.

In the final question for visitors, respondents were asked to state whether the reading room facilities were adequate for their needs. These facilities include a photocopier, microfilm and fiche reader, space for reading and working, and the library collection and archive itself. There are no computers available for visitors to use, and as yet there is no printed or digital catalogue available. However, digital
catalogues of the museum and library collections are available to the library staff, who will look up information for enquirers if asked.

![Pie chart showing reading room facilities responses.]

Although no responses indicated that the facilities were inadequate, the same ten (29% of the total) respondents again gave no answer. Furthermore, there were no replies to a supplementary question that asked respondents to qualify any negative responses. This is again unfortunate because it does not give us the complete picture regarding this matter. All that can be concluded is that generally speaking users of the library are satisfied with the reading room facilities, but that this is an area where further research should be carried out.

### 6.5: Summary.

From the data collected in this section it can be seen that visitors to the library are generally positive about the facilities and their experiences as users. Almost half of the users who responded were repeat visitors, and of them almost three-quarters make at least one visit per year, suggesting that the library has a reputation as a good source of information. Most users are satisfied with the current opening hours, although there are a number of calls for hours to be extended, and for some limited weekend opening to be introduced. Reading room space is thought by a small majority to be adequate, but there is vocal opinion to the contrary, and the facilities within the reading room are also generally considered to be adequate. However, as has been noted, the large number of respondents who consistently failed to provide an answer to these questions hints at a higher level of negative opinion, and further research into this subject is strongly recommended.
Chapter 7: Results – Remote Users.

The fourth section of the survey asked for respondent’s views on the remote enquiries service. This incorporated all users who had made enquiries by telephone, fax, e-mail or letter, which in combination made up 63% of all enquiries during the survey period (see chapter 4.5). 44 respondents indicated at the beginning of the survey that they were remote users, and a further three visitors stated that they had also used the services remotely. They also completed the following section, and their responses are included in the data. From the outset of this chapter it should be noted that out of the 47 respondents who indicated that they had used the services remotely, seven did not complete any of the three questions in this section. Together with occasional other users who did not answer one or more of them, this again created a large hole in the data. Again it is possible that even when responding anonymously, these users were reluctant to make any negative comments and so ignored the questions. It cannot be ascertained for certain why so many respondents failed to answer the questions, and the eventuality was not foreseen as no such event had occurred during the piloting stage. In total this failure to respond was more than 20% per question, and the reliability of the results for this whole section of the survey must therefore be in some doubt.

7.1: Q.17 – Remote Use.

This question was asked to establish the pattern of use made by remote enquirers. Respondents were firstly asked to state whether they had used the enquiry services remotely before, and were required to tick a simple ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ answer.
25 individuals (53% of the total) indicated that they were repeat users, whilst twelve (26%) indicated that they were using the services remotely for the first time. A large number of respondents (ten in all) made no reply; so it is not possible to determine the exact ratio of repeat to first-time uses. However, it can be seen that at least 53% of enquiries, just over half of the total, were made by repeat users.

The 25 respondents who were repeat users were then asked to indicate how often they used the services remotely, by ticking the most appropriate category on a four-option list, as displayed in the chart below.

Two users indicated that they made remote enquiries on a monthly basis, whilst a further sixteen use the service more than once per year. The results show that, as almost three-quarters (72% in total) of repeat enquirers use the services at least once per year, that the library has gained a reputation as being a good source of information, and where enquirers will continue to direct their enquiries.
Remote access to the library and enquiries service is provided in a number of ways (see chapter 4.5). There are two dedicated enquiry e-mail addresses, both of which are routed through the library and are checked on a daily basis by library staff. Enquiries from these sources are sifted and forwarded to the most appropriate member of staff, either in Leeds or at the Tower of London or Fort Nelson. It is also possible to contact the library through the Royal Armouries website, and enquiries from this source are also directed to the library in the first instance. Other enquiries are sent in to the personal e-mail addresses of the various members of staff. Enquiries can also be sent in by letter, or by fax and telephone. Each member of staff has his or her own telephone, with that of the Library Assistant serving as the main line for the library. During hours when the museum is closed telephone enquiries can be left on the main museum answer phone, and are forwarded to the library once they have been picked up.

The purpose of this question then, was to discover if remote users had encountered any problems in contacting the library to lodge their enquiry. A reply of ‘Yes’ to the question, indicated that users had encountered problems, whilst ‘No’ meant that they had successfully made contact.

The results show that over three-quarters of respondents (37 out of the total) had not encountered any problems in trying to contact the library. No respondents said that they had suffered any problems, but 21% (ten respondents) made no answer. If all ten respondents had been unable to make contact, then it would indicate a problem that needed to be addressed. However, as we cannot assume that failure to respond to
the question equates to a negative response in this instance, we must conclude that contacting the library remotely does not cause any severe problems to users.

Another supplementary question was included at this point, directed at respondents who indicated that they had encountered problems when trying to make contact. It asked them to explain what their problems had been. No respondents answered this question, further suggesting that none had had any problems. It is apparent that more research needs to be done on this subject in order to gain a definitive answer.

7.3: Q.19 - Response Times.

It is standard procedure to try and respond to an enquiry within 28 days of receiving it, whenever possible. If this is not possible, i.e. because the research will take longer or another establishment must be contacted to get information, then a holding message is sent out to inform the enquirer of the situation. Usually though the enquiry can be dealt with in a much shorter time frame, and a number of the respondents have already remarked elsewhere upon the, “Quick, efficient service,” (respondent no. 31, a remote user) they received (see chapter 5.2).

It is particularly important that remote enquiries should be dealt with in such an efficient way, and this question asked respondents whether they thought they had received a timely response to their query. The results are summarised below.

![Pie chart showing Q.19. Did you receive a timely response? (n=47)]

Over three-quarters (36 individuals) of the respondents stated that they had received a timely response, and no respondents indicated that they had not. However, on this
occasion eleven respondents made no answer, which once again makes it impossible

to derive a definitive conclusion from the data. It should also be noted that the
definition of ‘timely’ could be seen as a bit vague. What is timely to one user might

be unacceptable to another, and so the term is very much open to personal
interpretation. However, as no respondents indicated an un-timely response, we must
assume that their enquiries were answered within a time frame that was personally
acceptable for all.

In order to uncover any problems in response times, a supplementary
question had been set to ask any dissatisfied respondents why they thought their
response had not been timely. However there were no replies to this question, further
suggesting a general satisfaction with the speed of replies. One respondent did use
the space to leave a positive comment about his experience;

“The reply was within 10 days which when I assume there are a lot of
enquiries is a good response,” (respondent no.57, a remote enquirer).

A further supplementary question was also set at this point, to probe deeper
into any negative responses and to ask, if a respondent thought their enquiry had
taken too long, why they thought this. There were no replies to this last question, so
again it must be inferred that that the speed of response is considered acceptable by
all users.

7.4: Summary.

It must be accepted that due to the high levels of non-response, it is
impossible to gain definitive results from the data in this section of the survey. There
is no obvious solution as to why there was such a high level of non-response. It is not
thought that the survey design is at fault, as the instructions quite clearly state that
the section on remote enquiries should only be ignored if the respondent has *never*
made such an enquiry. No problem was encountered with the section when the
survey was piloted by a small number of library users in January 2008 (see chapter
3.2). Despite the incomplete data, it is still possible to draw some general
conclusions about user attitudes towards the remote enquiry service. Over half of
remote enquiries are sent in by repeat users, and of them most make at least one enquiry per year. No users have indicated that they have any problems contacting the library or sending their enquiries, and all are satisfied with the speed with which the library responds. Although the evidence is therefore very encouraging, the limitations of the data must be accepted and it is clear that further research should be done, in order to eliminate this error and gain a definitive picture.
Chapter 8: Results – Final Questions.

The last section was composed of two questions that aimed to conclude the survey, and was once more aimed at all respondents. The questions were designed to discover respondents’ plans for future use of the service, and to gain any further qualitative insights into the respondents’ thoughts about the library and enquiry service.

8.1: Q.20 – Future Use.

This question aimed to discover if the respondents intended to use the library and enquiry service again in the future. The initial question was a simple closed query that required respondents to tick a ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ response, the results of which are interpreted below.

An overwhelming majority, 61 respondents out of 68, indicated that they would use the library and enquiry service in the future. Only three users said that they would not use the service again, and four respondents gave no answer. That so many users indicated that they would use the service again, indicates that it is held in some high regard as a source of information and a place where enquiries can be answered.

A supplementary question at this point invited respondents to say why they did not think that they would use the service again, if they had so indicated in the previous response. All three respondents chose to reply, and their comments are copied below;
“Hadn’t come to use the library anyway, just visiting museum and found it,” (Respondent no. 13, a visitor).

“Unlikely to visit again, mainly because of age – 77 – and I live in Scotland. I must stress though I am sure I would if these factors were otherwise,” (Respondent no. 22, a visitor).

“Because I’m too damned old to get to Leeds anymore, I’m sorry to report!” (Respondent no. 26, a remote user and visitor).

These comments do not indicate any dissatisfaction with the services as reasons for thinking they would not be used again. Two respondents pleaded age as a reason not to return, whilst the third had not intended to use the service in the first place, but had found the library by chance.

8.2: Q.21 – Final Comments.

The final question asked respondents if they had any other comments or points that they would like to make about the library and enquiry service. In all, 35 respondents chose to comment, which made this the second largest piece of qualitative data to be gathered by the survey (see chapter 5.2). Responses were more varied on this occasion, but can be grouped into some common themes. The responses are summarised below, and the complete list of comments is reproduced in appendix 4.

8.2.1

The largest number of comments (24 in total), were to express how the respondents had had positive experiences of using the service, and their satisfaction with the results. Typical responses in this category were;

“My experience has been very positive – more so than with other – nameless – national museums,” (Respondent no. 5, a visitor).

“The staff have always been very friendly and helpful. This makes a visit all the more worthwhile and is an improvement on other museums I have been to visit. Keep up the good work!” (Respondent no. 19, a visitor).
“Our experience was so good that we hold you up as a model of good practice to others, and recommend your service,” (Respondent no. 34, a remote user and visitor).

Most comments in this section complement the service on its speed of response and thoroughness of the information it provides. There is definitely a high level of regard for the enquiries service.

8.2.2

The next largest category of responses, which incorporated seven comments, were suggestions of other services that the library could offer. Some of these had already been mentioned in chapter 5.3, although there were some new and potentially very good ideas. Typical suggestions included;

“It would be ideal for me if I could access ATHENS from the library. I am a private collector of swords and your library has excellent resource material that I can consult,” (Respondent no. 23, a remote user and visitor).

“It would be very helpful if there were online access to information even if it was just a database of records held. Another would be like some Australian archives – once someone has requested a digitised image or copy that image would be stored on computer and then can be accessed online,” (Respondent no. 44, a remote user).

“Documents/books could perhaps be offered online for a credit card charge. That would make shipping costs obsolete,” (Respondent no. 64, a remote enquirer).

It is clear that a considerable number of enquirers would like greater digital access to the collections, including online catalogues and digital document supply. Online catalogues of the museum and library collections are currently being generated, and this is an area prioritised for service improvement in the near future.

8.2.3

The third theme is rather more critical than the previous two. Three respondents wrote with generally positive comments, but expressed concerns
regarding future service provision. Representative of these concerns are the following comments;

“Although in general I am very happy with the services provided, I do feel that the number of staff providing these services is below the level of that which I would expect in what is, after all, a national service provision – as well as providing international enquiries. The library does have to close to visitors and is unable to answer telephone enquiries when staff have to undertake other duties. This is an unsatisfactory situation,” (Respondent no. 17, a visitor).

“Cherish the library and its staff. They are an invaluable asset that helps the Armouries in all sorts of ways. If the museum wants to have a high profile academically speaking then it should do as much as it can to cater for serious researchers. I noted that the museum magazine was being advertised at the recent meeting of the Society for Military History in Utah. More could be made of this especially if there was a higher academic profile for the museum and its library services,” (Respondent no. 38, a remote user).

Both of these respondents were repeat users, and had experienced service changes caused by the recent restructures. The library has taken on broader responsibilities (with the absorption of the Ministry of Defence Pattern Room archive), whilst at the same time suffered a reduction in the number of staff and an erosion of its’ physical space within the building. The above respondents raise the very real concern that, if this process were to go any further, then the service integrity would be seriously compromised.

8.2.4

There was also a single response commenting that the library had been hard to find, “Probably because of the renovation works,” (Respondent no. 4, a visitor). During the Easter period of 2008 major refurbishment work was carried out to the main street area of the museum, whilst it was kept open to the public. Due to the builder’s hoardings and safety barriers this did indeed make it hard to find and get into the library at the time. Now that this work has been completed, the barriers have all been removed and new signage put in place, so that this situation should not arise again.
8.3: Summary.

We can see from the responses to these final questions, that most enquirers, visitors or remote users, expect to use the library and enquiry service again, and that they hold the service in affection and high esteem. The comments the respondents wanted to make were all broadly positive in their outlook, hoping for a continuation of the high standards of service the library has gained a reputation for. Some respondents though sounded a note of caution, fearing further restructures within the museum would lead to a fall in service levels, which would in turn cause an erosion of the good will and esteem currently directed to the library. Such an eventuality must not be allowed to occur, as the library and enquiry service at present stands as a great asset to the museum as a whole, even if the museum itself perhaps does not recognise this.
Chapter 9: Conclusion.

The Royal Armouries Museum has an internationally important and famous collection of arms and armour, and is recognised as being one of the leading establishments in the field. The library and archive is an important part of the collection, and the data gathered by this survey conveys a generally positive attitude by the respondents towards the enquiries service the library offers. To conclude the study we will examine the three principal research questions that were defined at the beginning of the process, and see what answers the results of the survey offer in relation to them. A general discussion of the survey process itself will examine whether any improvements could have been made, and we will end by discussing what implications, if any, these results have for the library service and the museum in general.

9.1: Who are the library and enquiry services users?

The answers to this question were derived mostly from the responses to the first section of the survey (chapter 4), and allowed us to draw a number of conclusions:

- Users are primarily male, although there were a small percentage of female respondents.
- Users are primarily of middle age and older, with 80% of respondents falling into the age range of 40-79. The remainder of users were younger (20-39), but there were none of school age.
- The largest group of users were employed persons, and came from many walks of life. Retired persons form another large body of clients, and students in further and higher education also make use of the service.
- The library service deals with an international clientele, with enquiries and visitors coming in from the UK, Europe, the United States and Australia.
- The catchment area for visitors to the library encompasses most of the UK, from central Scotland to the south coast of England.
This shows that the library has a broad base of users from diverse walks of life and backgrounds. The international clientele and willingness of enquirers to travel to the museum imply that it has developed a good reputation as a source of knowledge and information.

9.2: What is the service used for?

As well as being used by a wide range of people, the library is used for a diverse range of purposes, including formal education, lifelong learning, business research, and the simple desire to learn more about a given thing or topic. From the results in chapter 4 we can conclude:

- Remote enquiries form almost two-thirds of the total number of enquiries.
- The most common purposes cited for making enquiries were education (43%), general interest (28%) and business research (19%).
- Most of the education responses can be taken to mean lifelong learning rather than formal education, as the number of respondents in formal education was low. The large number of retired persons can be assumed to account for this.
- A number of respondents worked in the heritage industry, and some of the business responses were related to their work. Other business responses were related to the professions of respondents who needed information for their work, such as authors and picture researchers.

The wide range of types of enquiry again implies that the library has developed a good reputation as a source of information, and that it is consulted for in depth business research as well as for quick answers to simple questions.

9.3: Are the services provided adequate?

This is arguably the most important of the three questions to address, for without good services there will be no enquirers. The bulk of the survey was therefore given over to answering this question (see chapters 5-8), and the following points were identified:
• Users were generally satisfied with the range of services, rating all they had used quite highly. The majority of enquiries are answered successfully.
• A number of additional services were suggested, but on closer inspection many of these are currently offered. This implies better marketing of the services is required.
• Many visitors would appreciate longer opening hours and some limited weekend opening.
• There is also a strong desire for better online resources and digital access.
• Charges for services that carry them are considered acceptable, and there is a general agreement that they are necessary. Most users would be prepared to pay slightly higher charges.
• Over half of visitors and remote users are repeat users of the services (51% and 53% respectively).
• Although most visitors state that the reading room space and facilities are adequate, many comment that the reading room is small, cramped, and becomes overcrowded during busy times.
• Most respondents thought that they would be likely to use the library and enquiries service again, and many commented upon the high standard of service they had received.

The above results point to a high level of satisfaction amongst respondents regarding the services they had used. Their concluding comments were all broadly positive in their outlook, although some sounded a note of caution, fearing that an erosion of standards would occur if further restructures are made within the museum.

9.4: The Survey.

Having completed the survey process, it is appropriate to make a few comments and observations upon it. By and large it can be said that they survey worked, for it allowed data to be gathered about a subject for which no previous data existed. That data, once collated, allowed a picture of the use and quality of the Royal Armouries library and enquiries service to be made, something that again had
never been done before. Within this basic achievement however, it must be acknowledged that there were a number of limitations.

Firstly the response rate was relatively low. 163 surveys were sent out, which represented a high proportion of the total number of enquiries during the survey period, but only 41.7% were returned. As discussed elsewhere this response rate is not considered to provide data that is representative of the sample as a whole (Slater, 1990, Hague, 1994, Powell & Connaway, 2004). When this response rate is combined with the high proportion of non-responses to some areas of the questionnaire, then we must accept that the results from the data cannot be considered to be wholly representative. As a consequence the study can only give indications of service levels and client’s perceptions, rather than facts, and it would be wrong to try and generalise too far from them.

We do not know why there were so many non-responses to certain questions. Poor survey design is not suspected, and no such problems arose when the survey was piloted. Reluctance of respondents to give criticism is one possibility, but if this is the case then an opportunity for service improvement has been lost. Further research is recommended to try and resolve these issues, and to gain stronger evidence.

Another issue to address is the lack of any ability to cross-reference the results. Because the questionnaire was the only data collection tool in the survey, there was no opportunity to triangulate the data to test its accuracy. This shortcoming was noted from the outset of the design, but as the survey was completed anonymously, there was no way that respondents could be contacted, and other data gathering techniques could not be employed. It had been anticipated that sufficient returns would have negated this problem, but unfortunately there were fewer returns than hoped for.

It would be useful to compare certain key results, such as satisfaction levels, gender and age distribution of users with those of other establishments, to see how typical the results discussed above are. However, it has not been possible to compare them to any other survey of a similar museum or specialist library, as no such
surveys were found during the literature search. Of the library surveys studied in the literature review (chapter 2), that by Davies & Kirkpatrick (1994) was closest to my own in aims and structure. They also reported high levels of user satisfaction with services (79% rating services as good or better), but results from several more similar surveys would also be needed before the results of the present study could be properly contextualised. This suggests that there is a gap in the current literature, and that the subject of user satisfaction in museum and other specialist libraries has been under explored to date. It is possible that the present study could be used as a model for designing surveys for other similar establishments.

9.5: Implications.

We have seen that the library and archive collections at the Royal Armouries are world-class, and that the enquiries service is also of international renown. The evidence shows that it is held in high regard as a source of knowledge and information, and that its users hold it in high esteem for its efficient, and friendly response to enquiries. It has been noted that education, both formal and informal, was constantly quoted as a reason why respondents used the service, and it was seen in the literature review how often current commentators cite the vital role that museum libraries should have in education (see chapter 2). The library would seem therefore to be operating in keeping with current museological theory.

It can also be seen that other practices within the library are in keeping with current theory. For example, Dilevko & Gottlieb (2004) advocate having objects and books located together so that visitors can cross-reference them for information. By bringing visitors who have brought their own objects in to the library, curators and conservators and library staff can direct them straight to relevant books and sources of information. Examples of similar objects from the museums’ reserve collection, can also be brought into the library for the visitor to examine for comparative purposes.

The study of the service quality of the library shows that it is a genuine asset to the museum as a whole. However, the study has also noted that there are some warning signs to be heeded if this high standard of is to be maintained in the future.
Museum-wide restructures over the past two years have paired down the number of staff involved in dealing with enquiries, whilst at the same time the acquisition of new material – most notably the former Ministry of Defence Pattern Room archive - has led to an increase in the responsibilities of the surviving members. Other problems have arisen due to the reduction in size of the library, causing the reading room to become cramped and for the periodicals to be stored elsewhere. These factors have combined to cause some gaps in service provision, and this has been noted by some of the survey respondents. There are times when staff cannot retrieve material for readers, as it would leave the reading room unattended, or when one member of staff is dealing with too many visitors, and cannot provide them with their full attention. On other occasions, the library has had to be closed to visitors as the staff are occupied on some other task. These events are currently still rare occurrences, but they point towards a service that is running at full stretch.

Some respondents to the survey have pointed out that the museums’ attitude towards the library appeared to be one of apathy, and, in the words of one respondent, “I get the impression that the library is not the most cherished place in the museum,” (Respondent no. 38, a remote user and visitor). They infer that the museum does not acknowledge the value of its library service, and does not give its full backing in terms of manpower, resources and support to the library. The same respondents state that this trend needs to be reversed in order that the library remains a world-class service. Clearly if the museum wants to maintain the standard, quality and renown of its library service, then it does need to give it its full backing.

The survey has shown that the library service is not elitist, but is used by people from all walks of life, whether they are academics, business researchers or enthusiastic members of the public. Whatever their purpose, all are simply seeking knowledge. As such the library must surely be a valuable and indeed vital element of the museums’ mission to preserve and disseminate knowledge in the field of arms and armour development throughout the span of human history.
Perhaps the last words should be given to another respondent of the survey; an arms and armour curator from a famous American collection, who summed up the current issues by stating:

“The library and archive collections of the Royal Armouries are vitally important and should be given full support in terms of funding, personnel, equipment and space, in order for the institution and the field of study in general to be able to continue to uphold the standards of it’s scholarly mission.” (Respondent no. 66, a remote enquirer).

Word count: 17,236.
Appendix 1: Databases used in literature search:

Subject headings: Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences and Education.

- Arts and humanities citation index via WoK.
- ASSIA via CSA.
- CSA Illumina.
- IBSS via Ovid
- Journal citation reports via WoK: Social Science.
- JSTOR.
- Library literature and Information Science full text.
- LISA via CSA.
- Pro Quest education journals.
- Scopus.
- Social Sciences citation index via WoK.
- Social abstracts via CSA.
- Web of Knowledge.
Appendix 2: Sample Cover Sheet.

A SURVEY OF USER GROUPS AT THE ROYAL ARMOURIES LIBRARY.

Dear Sir or Madam,

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this note. I am conducting a study of the library and information service at the Royal Armouries in Leeds as part of a Masters course in Librarianship in the Department of Information Studies, University of Sheffield. I am interested to know who its users are, and what they think of the services provided. I would also be interested to find out what other services users would like to see. As a user of the information service, you are in a perfect position to comment, and I would be most grateful if you would take part. Questionnaires are being sent to all users, and you will only have to complete one questionnaire, which is enclosed.

Taking part in this research is entirely voluntary. If you do decide to take part, all you need to do is spend a few minutes completing the questionnaire. Answer all the questions as objectively and frankly as you can. Once completed, return the questionnaire to me by post or email. Your answers will help to provide the information I need to complete my survey. All responses to the questionnaire will be treated anonymously. Your name will not appear in the final report, nor will it be kept on file or passed to the University, Museum or any other party. This project has been ethically approved via the Department of Information Studies’ ethics review procedure, and meets with the University’s strict research ethics criteria. Copies of the final report of the project will be kept at the University of Sheffield library and the Royal Armouries library. Thank you once again for taking the time to read this information, and for your kind participation in this project.

Contact for further information.
If you have any queries regarding this project, please feel free to contact either myself or my supervisor, Ms. Sheila Webber. If you have any complaints you should direct them in the first instance to Ms. Sheila Webber. Please find contact details below.

Stuart Ivinson
The Library
Royal Armouries
Armouries Drive
Leeds. LS10 1LT
Tel: 0113 2201832.
Email: Stuart.Ivinson@armouries.org.uk

Ms. Sheila Webber
Department of Information Studies
Regent Court
211 Portobello Street
Sheffield. S1 4DP
Tel: 0114 2222641.
Email: s.webber@shefield.ac.uk
Appendix 3: The Questionnaire.

USER SURVEY OF THE LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICE OF
THE ROYAL ARMOURIES MUSEUM, LEEDS.

General information.

1. Gender: Male. / Female.


3. Occupation / Profession ________________________________.

4. Where are you from? Town / City __________________________.
Country __________________________.

5. Type of enquiry: Telephone or Fax. / Letter. / E-Mail. / Visitor.

6. Purpose of enquiry: (Tick more than one if appropriate)

- Business or Professional.
- General interest or Recreational.
- Educational or Academic.
- Personal or Family research.

Services.

7. The Library and Information service provides a number of services for users. From the following list, please tick those that you have used (on this or any other occasion):

- Book or article search.
- Microfiche or Microfilm reader.
- Image search.
- Photocopying.
- Curatorial or Conservatorial assistance.
- Remote enquiry service (by telephone, letter, email or fax).
- Online catalogue.
- Other (please name). ________________________________.

8. Do you find the services provided satisfactory? From the list of responses below, please tick the one that matches your opinion of the standard of the services:

Very Good. / Good. / Adequate. / Poor. / Very Poor.

If you think the services provided are good or very good, please would you say why?
______________________________________________________
______________________________________________________

If you think the services provided are poor or very poor, please would you say why?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

9. Are there any other services that you would like to see provided?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

10. Did the Library and Information service successfully answer your query / enquiry?

Yes. / No.

If the service did not successfully answer your query, can you say how it failed?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

11. If you have used a service that carries a charge, do you think that the level of charge you paid was fair?

Yes. / No.

If you do not think that the charges you paid were fair, can you say why?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Would you be prepared to pay a higher charge for the services you use?

__________________________________________________________________________

12. Did you find the staff you dealt with professional and courteous? From the list of responses below, please tick the one that matches your experience of the staff:

Very Good. / Good. / Adequate. / Poor. / Very Poor.

If you think the staff were poor or very poor, please would you say why?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Visitors. (The next few questions are specifically for Library visitors. If you have not visited the Library before, please go straight to Q.17)

13. Have you visited the Library before?

Yes. / No.
If you have visited the Library before, roughly how often do you visit? Please tick the most appropriate response below:

Weekly. / Monthly. / Once or twice a year. / Less than once a year.

14. The Library is open Monday – Friday, from 10 AM – 4.30 PM. Do you think these opening hours are adequate?

Yes. / No.

If you do not think the opening hours are adequate, can you explain how you would like them to be improved?

__________________________________________________________________________.
__________________________________________________________________________.
__________________________________________________________________________.

15. Do you think that the physical space of the Library reading room is adequate?

Yes. / No.

If you do not think that the space is adequate, can you say why?

__________________________________________________________________________.
__________________________________________________________________________.
__________________________________________________________________________.

16. Were the reading room facilities adequate for your needs?

Yes. / No.

If you do not think the facilities are adequate, can you say why?

__________________________________________________________________________.
__________________________________________________________________________.
__________________________________________________________________________.

Remote users. (The next few questions are specifically for remote users. If you have never used the Library services remotely, i.e. by telephone, fax, email or letter, please go straight to Q.20)

17. Have you used the Library and Information services remotely before?

Yes. / No.

If you have used the remote services before, roughly how often have you used them? Please tick the most appropriate response below:

Weekly. / Monthly. / Once or twice a year. / Less than once a year.
18. The Library can be accessed remotely by telephone, fax, email or post. Have you had any problems contacting the Library?

Yes. / No.

If you have had problems contacting the Library, can you say what they were?
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

19. Do you think you received a timely response to your enquiry?

Yes. / No.

If you do not think that the response was timely, can you say why?
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

If you think we took too long to respond to your enquiry, can you say how long you feel it should take to respond?
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

**Conclusion.** (Please answer these final questions)

20. Do you think you will use the Library and Information services again?

Yes. / No.

If you do not think that you will use the Library and Information services again, can you say why?
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

21. Are there any other comments or points you would like to make about the Library and Information service?
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
Appendix 4: Qualitative Question Responses.

5.1: Q.7 – List of other services used:

- Seminars (Respondent no. 1, a visitor).
- Browsing books (Respondent no. 6, a visitor).
- Access to Ministry of Defence archives (Respondent no. 9, a visitor).
- Studying guns (Respondent no. 13, a visitor).
- Research on clothing/badge changes in British army using MOD material (Respondent no. 22, a visitor).
- Access to archives (Respondent no. 27, a visitor).
- Seminars (Respondent no. 33, a visitor).
- Digital image supply (Respondent no. 34, a remote user).
- General assistance to queries (Respondent no. 44, a remote user).
- Requested video footage (Respondent no. 53, a remote user).
- Information on medieval helmets (Respondent no. 56, a remote user).

5.2: Q.8 Supplementary - If you think the services provided are good or very good, please would you say why?

- “Seminars are well researched and presented by knowledgeable individuals” (Respondent no. 1, a visitor).
- “Friendly, helpful staff” (Respondent no. 2, a visitor).
- “Staff were courteous and very helpful. They provided good amounts of source material when asked. I was made most welcome and I enjoyed my time researching thoroughly” (Respondent no. 3, a visitor).
- “Immediate response to an out of the blue enquiry on an obscure topic” (Respondent no. 4, a visitor).
- “Both members of Curatorial staff who assisted with my enquiry were very knowledgeable, helpful and pleasant. Both went to some lengths to answer my queries” (Respondent no. 5, a visitor).
- “I spoke to Stuart Ivinson who was most helpful and informative” (Respondent no. 6, a visitor).
• “The personal and professional service given by the staff” (Respondent no. 7, a visitor).

• “Personal service from people who know their stuff” (Respondent no. 8, a visitor).

• “Helpful staff, good facilities. Not over – bureaucratic visit arrangements” (Respondent no. 9, a visitor).

• “Prompt efficient service” (Respondent no. 12, a visitor).

• “Staff personally showed me guns in storage” (Respondent no. 13, a visitor).

• “Quiet – a rarity in libraries now – pleasant and helpful staff” (Respondent no. 14, a visitor).

• “Very personable and knowledgeable” (Respondent no. 15, a visitor).

• “Library staff very helpful, as are staff from other departments in the museum. Book and archive resources very good” (Respondent no. 17, a visitor).

• “Excellent – I travelled to Leeds to search for information for a project on the Lewis Machine Gun. I was given full assistance, made very welcome, and provided with documents additional to what I had asked to see” (Respondent no. 18, a visitor).

• “In particular I have needed training manuals circa 1944-1953 and the Armouries have been well organised and given me much of what I wanted. Much better than the National Army Museum in London!!” (Respondent no. 19, a visitor).

• “The library provides the facility for me to research, in detail, the manufacture and construction of armour, through the availability of technical books not in my own collection. The opportunity to see books, and documents, out of print for many years is a great asset for a person studying a particular subject” (Respondent no. 20, a visitor).

• “Easy access, helpful staff, enjoyable” (Respondent no. 21, a visitor).

• “I was allowed to use a lap top computer and my friend his digital camera. This was much quicker than photocopying and more importantly much less wear on bound volumes” (Respondent no. 22, a Visitor).

• “The staff have given excellent support and advice” (Respondent no. 23, a remote user and visitor).
• “Very helpful and rapid response to initial enquiry. Excellent follow-up help during visits to Leeds and Fort Nelson” (Respondent no. 24, a remote user and Visitor).

• “Easy access” (Respondent no. 25, a visitor).

• “Very helpful response over the phone, assistance in tracking down obscure archival documents, identification of and provision of relevant publications” (Respondent no. 27, a remote user and visitor).

• “Full, prompt and helpful reply” (Respondent no. 28, a remote user).

• “The gentleman who dealt with my request was more than helpful. Brilliant job” (Respondent no. 29, a remote user).

• “Questions generally answered from personal knowledge. Failing that, research material is supplied promptly” (Respondent no. 30, a remote user).

• “Quick, efficient service provided” (Respondent no. 31, a remote user).

• “Rapid and accurate response” (Respondent no. 32, a remote user).

• “Knowledgeable, good-natured staff, willing to help” (Respondent no. 33, a remote user and visitor).

• “Response time very quick. Time and trouble taken to answer enquiry was exemplary. Images supplied quickly – and not too expensive!” (Respondent no. 34, a remote user and visitor).

• “The photocopied material was received very quickly. All of the copied material legible. I was also provided with a comprehensive list of other work on a similar subject” (Respondent no. 35, a remote user).

• “All enquiries, however big or small, have always been met with the same high level of professionalism” (Respondent no. 36, a remote user).

• “Friendly knowledgeable staff who are clearly committed to providing as good a service as they can within the limits of the resources available” (Respondent no. 38, a remote user and visitor).

• “Article search facilities on the web are good” (Respondent no. 39, a remote user).

• “The response was quick and answered my question/request” (Respondent no. 40, a remote user).

• “I received a response to my initial email to the Leeds Armoury within 48 hours. I continue to contact Stuart Ivinson with my enquiries and
correspondence is regularly addressed within 48 hours and often overnight. The service has been excellent” (Respondent no. 41, a remote user).

- “Prompt service and very helpful with what I needed” (Respondent no. 43, a remote user).

- “Very good communications, knowledge and a willingness to help. When researching something I do not always know exactly what I’m after or what the archives hold, so without the dedication of the staff a great deal of information would otherwise be unknown” (Respondent no. 44, a remote user).

- “Very efficient and polite. Also very quick” (Respondent no. 45, a remote user).

- “Staff are always keen to assist” (Respondent no. 46, a remote user).

- “The letter I sent was followed up by the museum ringing me to speed things up. Excellent! ” (Respondent no. 47, a remote user).

- “Prompt reply and good information” (Respondent no. 48, a remote user).

- “The response was quick and willing. The information given has been very useful” (Respondent no. 49, a remote user).

- “The information supplied was perfectly suited to my needs. All in all a truly excellent service” (Respondent no. 50, a remote user).

- “I was supplied with a comprehensive response to my enquiry promptly” (Respondent no. 51, a remote user).

- “Very prompt, detailed report” (Respondent no. 52, a remote user).

- “I don’t believe you get many requests like mine – asking to use video footage in a student project – but I am delighted by your positive response” (Respondent no. 53, a remote user).

- “Very professional online resources – website and catalogue. Friendly staff” (Respondent no. 54, a remote user).

- “Fast response and information will be very helpful” (Respondent no. 55, a remote user).

- “The reply was punctual, and thorough, demonstrating availability” (Respondent no. 56, a remote user).

- “Thorough explanation and guidance to possibilities even though I had not given all correct details” (Respondent no. 57, a remote user).
• “Quality of service, speed of response, quality of response. Perhaps one suggestion for improvement would be something to indicate potential costs for service requests” (Respondent no. 58, a remote user).

• “With pre-booking, I can gain access to any material I want to see” (Respondent no. 59, a remote user).

• “The curator who visits our museum to catalogue objects did this v. efficiently. Another curator provided information for a display of a loan, which was v. helpful” (Respondent no. 61, a remote user).

• “Because I got prompt and accurate replies from the curator who was obviously interested in the initial questions” (Respondent no. 62, a remote user).

• “Good online search for books, fast shipment, reasonable prices” (Respondent no. 64, a remote user).

• “It’s very good for the accuracy and the speed of the answer plus the elevate propension to help with more accurate services” (Respondent no. 65, a remote user).

• “The Royal Armouries Library and Archives are among the most important of their type in the world. The fact that they are well-managed and accessible to researchers is extremely important. Enquiries are usually dealt with in a quick and friendly manner” (Respondent no. 66, a remote user).

• “No query provided too much trouble. Curator proved to be a mine of information, helpful and eager to assist” (Respondent no. 67, a visitor).

• “Fast, friendly. Professional and knowledgeable” (Respondent no. 68, a visitor).

5.3: Q.9 - Are there any other services that you would like to see provided?

• Larger size copies (Respondent no. 9, a visitor).

• Reserve collection more accessible to public (Respondent no. 11, a visitor).

• Online index of guns available to study (Respondent no. 13, a visitor).

• Digital copying – providing a pdf of copied documents (Respondent no. 18, a visitor).

• Online library catalogue (Respondent no. 33, a Remote and visitor).

• Online library catalogue with description and annotation (Respondent no. 35, a remote user).

• More details about collection items (Respondent no. 39, a remote user).
• Electronic document supply (Respondent no. 41, a remote user).
• Greater online access (Respondent no. 44, a remote user).
• Automatic cost calculation (Respondent no. 64, a remote user).
• Access to full museum catalogue (Respondent no. 65, a remote user).

5.5: Q. 11 Supplementary - Would you be prepared to pay a higher charge for the services you use?

• “As I come under the category of ‘starving, penniless student’ I must reluctantly say no to this. If my circumstances were different, then I would perhaps agree to higher charges. (Respondent no. 3, a visitor).
• “A reasonable increase” (Respondent no. 9, a visitor).
• “No. This collection belongs to the Nation and as such should be free to all British citizens” (Respondent no. 11, a visitor).
• “Yes – for some very useful online searches undertaken by library staff” (Respondent no. 17, a visitor).
• “Yes – probably too cheap!” (Respondent no. 18, a visitor).
• “Moderately” (Respondent no. 20, a visitor).
• “If I have to!!” (Respondent no. 24, a remote user and visitor).
• “Seminars excellent value” (Respondent no. 33, a remote user and visitor).
• “I suppose yes – but usually our budgets are so tight we would have to be very selective in what we ordered” (Respondent no. 34, a remote user and visitor).
• “Yes. Locating such material is often difficult and now I am aware that this service is provided I have used it frequently” (Respondent no. 35, a remote user).
• “No. Not for copy charges” (Respondent no. 39, a remote user).
• “As long as it remains reasonable” (Respondent no. 40, a remote user).
• “It is evident the charges only cover materials and not manpower costs. The most expensive aspect of any operation is labour costs. I would be prepared to pay more for the excellent service that has been provided” (Respondent no. 41, a remote user).
• “A bit of a loaded question! No one wants to pay more but if it means having to pay more I would have to rather than not have the information” (Respondent no. 44, a remote user).

• “Think them ok at present, but would not like to see a rise!!” (Respondent no. 47, a remote user)

• “Not unless there was a grant available toward costs in which case yes as the fee was modest and reduced for museums” (Respondent no. 61, a remote user).

• “Yes – up to 20% increase” (Respondent no. 64, a remote user).

6.2: Q. 14 Supplementary - If you do not think the opening hours are adequate, can you explain how you would like them to be improved?

• “Weekend opening, even if only on a limited basis would be beneficial for those unable to visit during the week. Earlier opening and later closing would also help” (Respondent no. 3, a visitor).

• “Although adequate for me as a retired person, some limited library openings – say on Saturdays – would probably be of benefit to others” (Respondent no. 17, a visitor).

• “Times are ok but it might be nice if it could open an hour early or close an hour late sometimes” (Respondent no. 19, a visitor).

• “Either Saturday or Sunday please” (Respondent no. 33, a remote user and visitor).

• “Only in terms that access on a morning on Saturday for those not able to get during the week without using holidays from work to visit” (Respondent no. 35, a remote user).

• “Longer opening hours are always appreciated by PhD candidates. You can get more done in the time allowed” (Respondent no. 38, a remote user and visitor).

• “For researchers visiting from abroad extended hours are appreciated if possible on a case by case basis (Respondent no. 66, a remote user).
6.3: Q. 15 Supplementary - If you do not think that the space is adequate, can you say why?

- “The single large table, though having several chairs, offered no privacy. It was also a little cluttered. An influx of users would be a strain on the space available” (Respondent no. 3, a Visitor).

- “More space for tables and seating” (Respondent no. 11, a visitor).

- “Very cluttered” (Respondent no. 15, a visitor).

- “On busy days table space can be under pressure” (Respondent no. 17, a visitor).

- “Space is ok but like any facility it might be nice to have more room when busy” (Respondent no. 19, a visitor).

- “Too small – uncomfortable” (Respondent no. 21, a visitor).

- “I get the impression that the library is not the most cherished place in the museum. I say this because a recent reorganisation has seen the amount of space given over to the function sizeably reduced. In my opinion, more should be done to encourage the library to collect relevant books and provide sufficient space for researchers who need to make use of the facilities” (Respondent no. 38, a remote user and visitor).

- “Seems small given the importance and quantity of the material” (Respondent no. 66, a remote user).

8.2: Q.21 - Are there any other comments or points you would like to make about the Library and Information service?

- “Seminars should have light refreshments available in the library so delegates don’t have to go downstairs and queue up for a coffee in the breaks. Little touches like this add quality to such events” (Respondent no. 1, a visitor).

- “My time spent studying in the library was very beneficial. Information and material was available and provided promptly by the staff” (Respondent no. 3, a visitor).

- “Probably because of the renovation works, getting into the library took a little negotiating” (Respondent no. 4, a visitor).

- “My experience has been very positive – more so that with other – nameless – national museums” (Respondent no. 5, a visitor).
• “It has always been helpful” (Respondent no. 7, a visitor).

• “For my needs, for information on the hobby I have it is a great service” (Respondent no. 8, a visitor).

• “Reserve collection should be more accessible to collectors and students of firearms etc.” (Respondent no. 11, a visitor).

• “Although in general I am very happy with the services provided, I do feel that the number of staff providing these services is below the level of that which I would expect in what is, after all, a national service provision – as well as providing international enquiries. The library does have to close to visitors and is unable to answer telephone enquiries when staff have to undertake other duties. This is an unsatisfactory situation” (Respondent no. 17, a visitor).

• “I came to Leeds from Adelaide, on a mission to gather additional information on a project on the Lewis Machine Gun. I came away with the information I was expecting to find. In addition I was able to access a range of information we did not know was held in the collection. We will return!” (Respondent no. 18, a visitor).

• “The staff have always been very friendly and helpful. This makes a visit all the more worthwhile and is an improvement on other museums I have been to visit. Keep up the good work!” (Respondent no. 19, a visitor).

• “On my visits to the Armouries, and the library, I have always found the staff very helpful and knowledgeable about the specific type of questions I put to them, usually providing books or information to resolve the problem. To have the availability to use the library in this way is a pleasure. Thank you very much” (Respondent no. 20, a visitor).

• “Service welcoming and friendly” (Respondent no. 21, a visitor).

• “It would be ideal for me if I could access ATHENS from the library. I am a private collector of swords and your library has excellent resource material that I can consult” (Respondent no. 23, a remote user and visitor).

• “I have always received full and friendly responses to my rather specialised enquiries. Please continue much as you are. Many thanks” (Respondent no. 24, a remote user and visitor).

• “I have always been well treated and appreciate the service” (Respondent no. 26, a remote user and visitor).

• “Very impressed both with library and its service. We look forward to future visits. Library and its facilities deserve to be better known outside Leeds!” (Respondent no. 27, a remote user and visitor).
• “Great service!” (Respondent no. 33, a remote user and visitor).

• “Our experience was so good that we hold you up as a model of good practice to others, and recommend your service” (Respondent no. 34, a remote user and visitor).

• “Perhaps to have an email circular to users informing people say bi-annum to update any new items acquired or additional services. Overall I’m very happy with the quality of service provided to me” (Respondent no. 35, a remote user).

• “Excellent service” (Respondent no. 37, a remote user).

• “Cherish the library and its staff. They are an invaluable asset that helps the Armouries in all sorts of ways. If the museum wants to have a high profile academically speaking then it should do as much as it can to cater for serious researchers. I noted that the museum magazine was being advertised at the recent meeting of the Society for Military History in Utah. More could be made of this especially if there was a higher academic profile for the museum and its library services” (Respondent no. 38, a remote user and visitor).

• “Ordering articles off the internet (July 2007) did not work – does it now? However, emailing requirement produced a quick response” (Respondent no. 39, a remote user).

• “My remote dealings with the library have been excellent. A wonderful service; please keep it up” (Respondent no. 42, a remote user).

• “Good service with polite and friendly communications” (Respondent no. 43, a remote user).

• “It would be very helpful if there was online access to information even if it was just a database of records held. Another would be like some Australian archives – once someone has requested a digitised image or copy that image would be stored on computer and then can be accessed online” (Respondent no. 44, a remote user).

• “My enquiries have been dealt with in a proper professional manner. I will be pursuing my research in the near future and I am sure will be pleased with the level of service” (Respondent no. 47, a remote user).

• “Reply to enquiry was very prompt and helpful” (Respondent no. 48, a remote user).

• “Thank you for the excellent level of service. The photocopies which you sent are superb” (Respondent no. 50, a remote user).

• “The response I received was full, timely and courteous. I have no adverse comments” (Respondent no. 51, a remote user).
• “An excellent service” (Respondent no. 52, a remote user).

• “Service has been fantastic both in time and information supplied” (Respondent no. 55, a remote user).

• “Superb free service. Thank you” (Respondent no. 57, a remote user).

• “Always courteous” (Respondent no. 59, a remote user).

• “Documents/books could perhaps be offered online for a credit card charge. That would make shipping costs obsolete” (Respondent no. 64, a remote user).

• “The Library and Archive collections of the Royal Armouries are vitally important and should be given full support in terms of funding, personnel, equipment and space, in order for the institution and the field of study in general to be able to continue to uphold the standards of its scholarly mission (Respondent no. 66, a remote user).
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