The National Fairground Archive: A case study

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

The National Fairground Archive at the University of Sheffield forms part of Special Collections in the University Library. It is a unique collection of printed, manuscript, photographic, audiovisual and ephemeral material covering all aspects of working class culture from the 19th Century to the present day. It has rich resources in all formats covering fairground, circus, theatre and early film. The archive represents an important part of the cultural heritage of the nation. It is a primary resource of rich potential for research at every level.

This research investigates, using the National Fairground Archive as a case study, if archives held in University Libraries are relevant in supporting the learning and teaching of students in the University they are held. The case study’s main unit of analysis are the users and non-users of the archive and the aim of studying these users and non-users is to obtain a rich picture of the current situation.

The study uses both quantitative and qualitative research methods in data collection and analysis. A case study methodological plan is followed, a theoretical proposition and rival proposition was developed first and this guided data collection and analysis. The quantitative research methods include; visitor book analysis, email analysis, customer questionnaire and academic teaching staff questionnaire. The qualitative research methods include; customer and academic teaching staff interviews.

The results of the research show that academic teaching staff and students at the University of Sheffield have a reasonable level of awareness of the National Fairground Archive. However, it is argued that they do not know enough about the relevance of the resources with regards to their own subject area. It is also argued that the resources in the National Fairground Archive could support innovative and stimulating learning and teaching styles in an Inquiry Based Learning environment, which is something that the University of Sheffield wants to encourage.
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Chapter 1 Introduction

“The archive is a place of alchemy, where raw materials can be turned through the process of engagement and interpretation into research and learning gold” Gardner (2007).

The purpose of this study is to investigate if archives held in University Libraries are relevant in supporting the learning and teaching of students in the University they are held; it uses the National Fairground Archive at the University of Sheffield as a case study. The National Fairground Archive forms part of Special Collections at the University of Sheffield Library and has features that are unique but also features that may be generalised to other archives in University Libraries. The case study’s main unit of analysis are the users and non-users of the archive, and the aim of studying these users and non-users is to obtain a rich picture of the current situation and add to the discussions found in the literature.

“The institutions that continue to build manuscript and special collections during the digital revolution will emerge as the distinguished research institutions in the future, not those that have given all to becoming merely information retrieval centres” Schushard (2002).

A report published by the Council on Libraries and Information Resources (1999), says that there is a trend towards collections that resemble one another to the detriment of collections of unique material. These collections have been called “Maclibraries” and are described as institutions that so replicate each other’s holdings that in the end there remains no significant difference between them Gundersheimer (2000).

1.1 The University of Sheffield

The University of Sheffield has over 24,000 students from 131 different countries, it is recognised as a leading international research-led university that
delivers learning and teaching, research and knowledge transfer of the highest quality. University guides confirm Sheffield’s position as one of the UK’s leading universities. The Virgin 2008 Alternative Guide to British Universities says "Sheffield is a top university across the board" Dudgeon (2008). Teaching quality assessments rate teaching very highly across a wide range of subjects, and official research assessments confirm the University’s reputation as a centre for world-class research in many disciplines.

The University of Sheffield forms part of the Russell Group\(^1\); the Russell Group is an association of twenty major research-intensive universities of the United Kingdom\(^2\). The purpose of the Russell Group is to provide thought, leadership and strategic direction for the universities in the group. It aims to ensure that policy development in a wide range of issues relating to higher education is underpinned by a robust evidence base and a commitment to civic responsibility, improving life chances, raising aspirations and contributing to economic prosperity and innovation.

1.2 The National Fairground Archive

The National Fairground Archive, directed by Professor Vanessa Toulmin, began life as one box of material initially kept in a basement of the Western Bank Library at the University of Sheffield. It was inaugurated by the Vice Chancellor of the University of Sheffield in 1994, with the support of the Showmen’s Guild of Great Britain and the Fairground Association of Great Britain. It is now housed in expanded premises with its own reading room.

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\(^1\) [http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk/](http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk/)

\(^2\) The twenty Russell Group Universities are: University of Birmingham, University of Bristol, University of Cambridge, Cardiff University, University of Edinburgh, University of Glasgow, Imperial College London, King's College London, University of London, University College London, University of London, University of Leeds, University of Liverpool, London School of Economics and Political Science, University of London, University of Manchester, Newcastle University University of Nottingham, Queen's University Belfast, University of Oxford, University of Sheffield, University of Southampton, University of Warwick.
It is a unique collection of photographic, printed, manuscript, audiovisual and ephemeral material covering all aspects of working class entertainment and popular culture from the 19th Century to the present day. It has rich resources in all formats covering the fairground, circus, theatre, variety and magic shows and history of early film including Bioscope shows first seen at fairgrounds.

The National Fairground Archive forms part of Special Collections at Western Bank Library, it is the largest collection in Special Collections and continues to grow. At present there are over 80,000 images in the photographic collection and over 3,000 monographs. The archive currently has four members of staff; the Research Director, Personal Assistant to the Research Director, Digital Collections manager and Senior Library Assistant who oversees the reading room and assists in cataloguing the collection. The reading room houses the books, journals, pamphlets, audiovisual material and image database, it has a desk with study space for eight people, a networked computer and a sofa area for reading and study. The archive is downstairs below the reading room; this holds the main archived collection and includes posters, programmes, handbills, letters, charters, proclamations, maps, plans and the unique body of ephemera. NFA stands for National Fairground Archive but also for “No fixed abode” as it is an archive of temporary entertainment in a fixed environment.

The National Fairground Archive represents an important part of the cultural heritage of the nation. It is a primary resource of rich potential for research at every level; it provides a new and exciting source of teaching material for education at all levels, and provides access to a wealth of popular cultural history.

1.3 Learning and Teaching

Learning and Teaching Services at the University of Sheffield aims to work with staff and students to develop a university that offers exciting and contemporary approaches to teaching, learning and assessment.

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3 Professor Toulmin speaking to the researcher.
4 http://www.shef.ac.uk/lets/
The department is currently running a project called “The Inclusive Learning and Teaching project.” The aim of the project is to work with staff and students to make a learning culture at the University of Sheffield which is accessible and creates the right conditions and opportunities to help all students achieve their potential. Two of the project’s aims are to:

- Make what the university teaches and the way subjects are taught more flexible.
- Take into consideration different learning styles.

The Inclusive Learning and Teaching project have produced a document that looks at how academics can use inclusive learning and teaching to engage students in their lectures. The project says that lecturers should ask themselves if their teaching:

- Engages and motivates students.
- Sparks interest in students.
- Provides relevant, real life learning opportunities.

1.4 CILASS

The Centre for Inquiry-based Learning in the Arts and Social Sciences (CILASS) at the University of Sheffield is a Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL), awarded to the University of Sheffield by HEFCE in recognition of existing excellence in inquiry-based learning in the Faculties of Arts, Social Sciences and Law. CILASS is committed to supporting further development and innovation in inquiry-based learning, with the aim of embedding inquiry at the heart of the student learning experience at the University of Sheffield.

Inquiry Based Learning (IBL) is a term used to describe an active learning approach that is based on a process of self-directed inquiry or research. Students conduct small or large-scale inquiries that enable them to engage actively and

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3 http://www.shef.ac.uk/lets/projects/inclusivel&t
6 http://www.shef.ac.uk/cilass/
creatively with the questions and problems of their discipline, often in collaboration with others. It is a key characteristic of Inquiry Based Learning that inquiry tasks facilitate exploration and investigation of issues or scenarios that are open-ended enough for different responses and solutions to be possible Khan & O’Rourke (2005).

1.5 Background and rationale of the research

During the second year of the Masters programme in Librarianship and after studying the archiving module in the second semester the researcher became very interested in the role archives can play in education. After speaking to Professor Vanessa Toulmin about this subject a decision was made to investigate the National Fairground Archive as a potential subject for the dissertation. In April 2009 the researcher was seconded from a post in the Information Commons to cover a maternity leave post in the National Fairground Archive and therefore was in a unique position to use the archive as a case study.

Whilst conducting an early review of the literature, discussions were found about archives supporting learning and teaching. Literature was also found about different ways of learning, especially non-traditional ways such as visual learning and how resources in archives can support this. From this early research it became clear that the National Fairground Archive would make a good case study, as it was felt to be an interesting and exciting resource and it holds the types of material that can support different ways of learning.

After spending a short amount of time working in the National Fairground Archive it was interesting to observe how many enquiries came from external researchers and family history researchers compared to Sheffield University students. As this was a personal perception a decision was made that an aspect of the case study would be to identify the users and non-users of the archive.

From these initial ideas about users of archives previous dissertations were sought with other issues to consider, for example Gill (2007) asks about archives actively promoting their resources to people tracing their family history. The
National Fairground Archive is very often involved in promotional and outreach work for the University and this attracts external users such as personal interest and family history researchers, however there has never been a full analysis of the users and non-users to give a fuller picture of this.

Another dissertation found about Special Collections and archives suggested that future research would benefit from the involvement of students and other users of collections to help evaluate how collections are used or to identify why individuals do not use the collections” Phillips (2002). This was another indication that the study would be worthwhile.

1.6 Theoretical proposition

Theoretical propositions can be defined as “hypothetical stories about why acts, events, structure and thoughts occur” Sutton & Straw (1995). For case studies, theory development as part of the design phase is “essential because prior development of a theoretical proposition will provide strong guidance in determining what data to collect and the strategies for analysing the data” Yin (2009).

The theoretical proposition will direct attention to what should be examined within the scope of the study. Yin (2009) believes, “Only if you are forced to state a proposition will you move in the right direction”. Therefore the proposition, besides reflecting an important theoretical issue, also indicates where to look for relevant evidence.

This role of theory development before data collection is one point of difference between case studies and related methods such as ethnography and grounded theory. These related methods avoid making any theoretical propositions before data collection.

To begin to develop the theoretical proposition for the study it was essential to look at existing knowledge about the National Fairground Archive and learning and teaching at the University of Sheffield.
• The National Fairground Archive is a primary resource at the heart of the university campus that attracts customers from different user groups.

• The University of Sheffield is an excellent university and, like all good universities, is always looking at ways to improve its standards in teaching and learning. The university’s Department of Learning and Teaching is investigating new ways of teaching and advising academics on how to engage and motivate students by looking at different learning styles.

• CILASS is committed to supporting further development and innovation in inquiry based learning, with the aim of embedding inquiry at the heart of the student learning experience at the University of Sheffield.

From the existing knowledge the following theoretical proposition to be used in the research was developed:

The National Fairground Archive is a primary resource at the heart of the university campus; it has rich potential for research and teaching at every level and therefore should be used by students of the University of Sheffield.

The archive could support the university’s commitment to investigating new ways of learning and teaching by helping to bring variety to lectures, which would in turn engage and motivate students and support different learning styles. Therefore, academic teaching staff at the University of Sheffield should be aware of and know enough about the National Fairground Archive to make an informed choice of whether its unique resources are relevant to them and could support their teaching.

1.7 Rival theoretical proposition

Yin (2009) believes that a valuable approach to case study design is a consideration of “rival propositions and the analysis of the evidence in terms of such rivals”. Therefore, to represent an alternative perspective adequately a different theoretical proposition was anticipated and identified; this proposition should challenge the assumptions of the case study:
The National Fairground Archive is for personal interest and family history researchers and not useful for students, therefore, academic teaching staff at the University of Sheffield do not need to use the archive because it has no relevant teaching material for their courses.

This alternative perspective will be compared with the theoretical proposition in the conclusion chapter of the dissertation.

1.8 Aims and objectives

Using guidance from the theoretical proposition and rival proposition the aims and objectives were formed:

Aims

- The first aim of the study was to identify the different users of the National Fairground Archive at the University of Sheffield and investigate the way the customers use the resources.
- The second aim was to investigate if members of academic teaching staff at the University of Sheffield are aware of the National Fairground Archive and know enough about it and its resources to make an informed decision about whether the archive is relevant and could support their teaching.
- The third aim was to investigate the views of some customers who have used the archive for educational purposes.

Objectives

- Examine the visitor book in the National Fairground Archive.
- Examine emails received at the National Fairground Archive.
- Obtain information about customers of the archive using a questionnaire.
- Obtain information about academic teaching staff using a questionnaire.
- Interview some customers and academic teaching staff.
1.9 Structure of the dissertation

The next chapter, the literature review gives an overview of the published literature and discusses other material relevant to the study. Chapter three focuses on the methodology of the research and discusses the research methods used for data collection and analysis. Chapter four interprets the results and identifies key findings of the quantitative research. Chapter five interprets the findings of the qualitative research and groups them into key themes. Chapter six integrates the quantitative and qualitative findings and interprets them again using key themes. Chapter seven draws conclusions and discusses the results in terms of the theoretical proposition and rival proposition identified in this chapter. Chapter eight reflects on the research process, looks at the limitations of this case study, makes suggestions for further study and identifies some recommendations to take this work forward.
Chapter 2  Literature review

2.1  Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to evaluate, analyse and synthesise the existing knowledge relevant to the case study. Therefore, the literature was searched for discussions and studies published on the subject of how special collections and archives held in University Libraries are used and who they are used by. This was challenging as most of the literature found about resources in special collections and archives is discussed in terms of the conservation and preservation issues and not how customers use the material.

2.2  Special Collections and archives in University Libraries

According to Auchstetter (1990) by the late 1980’s very little had been written on the role, purpose or function of any rare book library and it was worse if the subject was limited to collections within higher education. By the beginning of the 21st Century the situation had not changed and existing scholarship about special collections and archives still mostly addressed issues involving acquisitions, conservation, restoration and security Schmiesing & Hollis (2002).

Looking back further at the literature it seems that some librarians were very precious about students using rare and unique materials, in 1949 a noted librarian, Lawrence Clark Powell declared that librarians can dispose of teaching needs by the flat statement that rare books have small place in the undergraduate programme.

“The very nature of rare books and manuscripts, their scarcity and their value, means that they cannot be subjected to steady and heavy use” Powell (1949).

Recently however, some commentators are beginning to distance themselves from this attitude.

“Special collections must overcome their exclusionary origins in the monastery or aristocratic library, must shed their image of aloofness and precocity, must get their precious treasures and scholarly ephemera into the
sometimes dirty hands of potential users. They must build a wider audience including the traditional scholar, the innovator in new uses of old stuff and more importantly for survival, the inquiring student” Stam (2001).

Stam argues that the term special collections is outdated, he says it sounds grand but divides rather than unites, separating the prima donnas from the chorus.

Some commentators are worried that special collections and archives are becoming an outdated subject to study in this Web 2.0 world. According to Wendorf (2002) very few American library schools offer courses associated with rare books and rare book librarianship. He argues that the focus is on the electronic future and worries,

“If eventually, virtually everything in a particular field is available online, what shall we ask our students to read? How will scholarly research change? What is “research” on eighteenth-century France, for instance when all of the texts, documents and manuscripts are in a machine” Wendorf (2002).

2.3 Changes in Special Collections

Recently commentators are expressing the view that there should be radical changes in special collections. The main issues being discussed are promoting archives to new users and the use of special collections and archives for teaching.

Daniel H. Traister is one of the main advocates for a change in attitude and argues that the world in which archives exist is changing radically, but not in the direction of increased restrictions but towards expanded access and openness. Traister (2000) believes that librarians are changing from receiving an item in special collections, cataloguing and preserving it, to cataloguing and promoting it and he asserts that this is exactly what should be happening.

“Collections formed primarily to provide for the security of materials, but not for the convenience of users, cost too much for staff and housing and provide too little return in frequency of use to easily justify themselves in an increasingly tough library economy” Traister (2000).
Chodorow & Claassen (1995) agree with Traister and believe that special collections librarians should look at their collections as academic resources, not precious stones. They say that users are the life-givers of collections and the future of special collections demands that users play a more vital role. They argue that in the past, special collections departments have been treated as treasure houses, rather than academic resources and treasures are collected for their market value, not necessarily their academic value.

Torre (2008:38) agrees with Chodorow & Claassen (1995) and states, “a rare book, no matter how intrinsically valuable or monetarily priceless, signifies little until a human being engages with it”.

2.4 Teaching from archives

According to Traister (2000), a good place to start changing the role of special collections is in the academic community; he says this means “the aggressive pursuit and encouragement of instructors and of their classes to visit special collections”, not a passive wait for their requests for such visits. He states that undergraduates should use these collections because,

“What you find whenever you browse in stacks is the book you did not already know about and hence could not have looked up” Traister (2000).

Byrd (2001) agrees with Traister and holds the view that active promotion and use of special collections is the way forward. He believes that librarians and archivists should encourage special collection use to students not by waiting to hear from the faculty who may wish to bring their classes to the library, but by examining course offerings, visiting academic departments and requesting copies of syllabus and reading lists to identify courses that might make use of the special collections.

The views of Byrd (2001) are that special collections should exist to support teaching and learning as well as original scholarship. He maintains that special collections and archives should, in addition to promoting access and use, examine their collecting focus. Byrd believes that it is even more critical in academic research
libraries whose collecting should be linked to the sense of identity goals, ambitions and academic programs of the University.

According to Gardner (2007:36), there has been a marked increase across the UK in recent years in the level of exploitation of special collections for teaching in higher education. In 2001 at the University of Exeter there was a direct strategy to make the collections as relevant as possible for the home institution for teaching as well as research. Gardner (2007) believes that the experience at Exeter suggests that collection based teaching not only helps to de-mystify access to the collections but can genuinely help to develop core research skills that undergraduates and taught postgraduates need if they are expected to go beyond the basic classroom materials provided for any course of study and to begin to produce original work.

Chodorow & Claassen (1995) have an American perspective on the subject of teaching using special collections and archives; they call the process “academic partnering”, which is a means to help move special collections into the mainstream. They argue that much of the activity in special collections departments appears to be unrelated to the current interests of the faculty and students. They believe that special collections librarians should try to link collecting activities to long-term commitments by the university administration to support the programs for which the collecting is being done.

The views of Allen (1999), like Chodorow & Claassen (1995) and Torre (2008) are that a book or any other object in special collections is nothing until a human being interacts with it. Allen argues that the education of too many undergraduates depends on large lectures and assignments that consist of reading a vast quantity of secondary literature. However, when students gain access to original materials then a conversation of “mythical proportions” becomes possible Allen (1999).

2.5 Inquiry based learning

Inquiry based learning is an approach that can bring primary source material into the undergraduate student experience. The Centre for Inquiry based Learning in the Arts and Social Sciences (CILASS) website explains that Inquiry Based Learning
is an active learning approach that reflects a strong student-centred conception of learning. Research has demonstrated that active learning approaches such as IBL are particularly powerful educationally, improving the experience of discipline-based learning Prosser & Trigwell (1999). Further benefits for students include the development of a wide range of transferable capabilities in crucial areas such as autonomous learning, critical thinking, teamwork and information literacy. Capabilities that are developed through inquiry-based activity are essential not only for students’ academic work, but also for their employability and lifelong learning. At the same time, IBL can greatly enhance students’ enthusiasm and motivation for learning Brew (2006).

An example of this can be found on the CILASS-Student-Blog7. In this case CILASS student ambassadors were asked to evaluate a history module in which the students were allowed to research a topic of interest to them in depth using primary sources in special collections. The students felt that the module was interesting and worthwhile as it helped them to engage with primary sources. They also found that the skills they gained from this module helped them in other modules.

Another example can be found on the University of Sheffield Learning and Teaching department case studies wiki8. In this case study an undergraduate student from the department of History found that the use of primary source material in a History seminar changed the way she understood both her discipline and class participation. The student said, “Actively engaging with primary sources is more productive for my learning than only reading secondary literature”. She said that the use of primary sources encourages active participation in seminars and breaks up the intensity of the learning environment. This approach to learning had made a difference to her levels of understanding of the subject.

7 http://cilass-student-blog.group.shef.ac.uk/?p=170
8 http://www.good.group.shef.ac.uk/wiki/index.php/Student_Submission:_Primary_Sources_increase_interest_and_confidence_in_seminars
According to Schmiesing & Hollis (2002) there are three principles of active learning:

- Teaching diverse learning styles.
- Offering visual support.
- Enabling students to see themselves as stewards of their own learning.

Many of the commentators believe that visits to special collections can maximize active learning because the visits can be visually stimulating and appeal to diverse learning styles. Photographs, posters and illustrations not only appeal to visual learners but also break the monotony of a sea of printed words.

Greenberg (1993) believes that there is a revolution in humanities scholarship and across the disciplines new definitions are developing about what and who is appropriate for study by extending the existing definitions across space, time and culture as well as through the class structure of society. He argues that one important area of change involves the study of those whose production of written records and texts was very limited, called among other things “the study of the inarticulate”. This particular set of changes in scholarly investigation seeks to recover the experience and culture of members of society who left traces of themselves in public records and through their behaviour but were frequently illiterate.

According to Greenberg (1993) these new subjects include; the study of the popular press and material culture, the impact of mass behaviour in political and economic life, demography and social structure. In history this sometimes means the abandonment of textual research and scholars have had to find new bodies of source material qualitatively different from those that they used in the past. Greenberg (1993) discusses using ephemera - materials that no one really expected would be saved and which were produced for the moment - such as handbills, leaflets, posters, tickets and films and photographs as a way of studying these new subjects.
This is comparable with the view of Schushard (2002) who states that there should be a teaching revolution using special collections in universities. Schushard believes that special collections libraries should take action in opening doors and re-establishing strong lines of communication between librarians and faculty.

“The institutions that continue to build manuscript and special collections during the digital revolution will emerge as the distinguished research institutions in the future not those that have given all to becoming merely information retrieval centres” Schushard (2002:60).

The view of Greenberg (1993) is that researchers are arriving in archives and libraries not just for text resources but for a wide array of other things including ephemera. He believes that the broadening of scholarship will require a broadening of special collections since almost everything that is written, played, drawn, thought spoken or in any way produced by any person at any time and in any culture for any purpose is a likely source of information for the researcher.

“Archives must make themselves aware of these changes in humanities scholarship and have thoughtful informed approaches to collection development or the “old fashioned special collection librarian will become a professional anachronism” Greenberg (1993:92).

A study by Schmiesing & Hollis (2002) found that of all visitors to special collections at the University of Colorado at Boulder (UCB) in 2001 only 23 per cent were UCB students visiting in a course related session. They argue that there is little research in either pedagogical or library science journals on the role that special collections departments can play in enhancing the teaching of the humanities.

This is also the view of Torre (2008) who believes that special collections are predominantly portrayed or perceived as a place for researchers rather than as a means for enhancing the learning experiences for the undergraduate student. According to Schmiesing & Hollis (2002) there are some studies that examine the use of archival materials in teaching composition or research writing but do not
address the pedagogical strategies for and benefits of class visits to special collection departments. They believe that the meaning conveyed by the physical features of a book or manuscript can be used to shed light on almost any academic subject.

“In an age of paperbacks and cybertexts, studying rare materials provides a unique opportunity for students to reflect on the effect that the physical form in which a text appears has on the reader’s reception of it” Schmiesing & Hollis (2002).

2.6 Digitisation

According to Gundersheimer (2000), the research library community has recently become acutely aware of some of the implications of the information revolution that were quite unclear at the beginning. He believes that the most profound of these implications is the democratisation of access to printed materials through digitisation and the downloading potential of the Internet, he argues that the process has levelled the playing field of research libraries.

In the Council on Libraries and Information Resources Report (1999) the five reporting task forces noted that the trend towards collections which resemble one another to the detriment of amassing collections of unique material, manuscripts, archives and rare books was a threat to the continued success and growth of scholarship and teaching in North America. The report calls for a reduction in duplication or overlap. Gundersheimer (2000) calls this the creation of “MacLibraires”, these are institutions so naturally inclined to replicate each others holdings that in the end there remains no significant difference between them.

Some commentators argue that special collections need to reinsert themselves into the mainstream of intellectual life and promote themselves to students and scholars more effectively. They believe that scholars need notebooks, drafts, revisions, dedications, letters, envelopes, postmarks, diaries, clippings photographs and ephemera.
Schuchard (2002) thinks that the process of scholarly excavation should be slow and faster is not better. His view is that the reason there are fewer scholars in the archives is because of the advent of the digital revolution. He believes that there has been little pressure by humanities faculties on their libraries for archival material and print collections but much pressure for new electronic resources as they work in their offices or homes and not in libraries.

However, Schushard (2002) declares that the digitisation market will eventually have a re-examination of the foundations of significant research and that the necessary corrections and major advances in humanistic scholarship will draw deeply on archives.

The digitisation of documents can raise serious questions about transcription and electronic texts can mask the very details of a texts materiality that make it valuable for teaching Falbo (2000). Falbo argues that if a reader has to scroll down in order to see an entire page, the material integrity of the text is compromised as seeing a whole page at once can inform the work interpretation. Students can learn and discuss these issues of texts electronic transformation but such issues remain invisible unless students also have the opportunity to sit and work with the text or image in its own terms.

2.7 Transforming potential of the physical item

Stam (2001) thinks that there is a “transforming potential” for the student touching the rare and unusual and the special thing is the palpable connection to history that comes from the tactile experience of touching the rare book or unusual manuscript. Wendorf (2002) agrees and also believes that there is no more magical teaching moment than when an undergraduate is handed a manuscript inscribed by their favourite author. Wendorf proclaims that students must learn the skills of excavating, rather than surfing, in this he agrees with Schuchard (2002) who believes that scholarly investigation should be a slower process.

Gardner (2007) agrees with Stam (2001), Wendorf (2002) and Schuchard (2002) and believes that there is a magical value of unique and rare objects that can lead to
transformative and creative learning. Gardner believes that there are numerous examples of good practice in teaching based on special collections throughout the UK higher education institutes, however most of the published sources on this subject come from the United States. Special collections in the UK are poor at gathering the data required to demonstrate the impact and value of their teaching activities. According to Gardner (2007) there is a strong case to be made for UK staff of special collections to become more vocal about their delivery and support for learning activities.

These commentators all believe that the traditional perception of special collections as a focal point for research rather than teaching is long out of date and badly needs updating with persuasive evidence that demonstrates the leaning potential for new audiences.

“The archive is a place of alchemy where raw materials can be turned through the process of engagement and interpretation into research and learning gold” Gardner (2007).

In this case study all groups of customers visiting the National Fairground Archive are examined and therefore it is important to look at the literature that has been published about another large group of customers of archives; family history researchers.

2.8 Family history research

During the second half of the twentieth century there has been a phenomenal increase in the amount of family history research being conducted in archives and libraries. Before the 1970’s and 80’s archives were closed institutions mostly used by professional researchers. Mortimer (2002) comments that until the mass explosion of the recreational history market, the development of the archival profession was one, which largely favoured academic and other professional researchers. However, studies now show that on average more than half of all users of archives are family historians Boyns (1999).
The issue of personal heritage may be difficult for some to understand but for others it is impossible to escape. Cadell (2002) believes that there is an ever increasing demand to meet what for many people has become a psychological need; the need to find fixed points in a world of constant change. There are now over 5000 Internet sites dedicated to genealogy and this figure is growing daily Longmore (2000).

Boyns (1999) found in a study that archivists sometimes find family historians difficult to deal with in search rooms as they can be unprepared, have unrealistic expectations, not understand the technology and need a lot of assistance. Their enquiries can also be repetitive in nature and this can be a strain on staff patience. In terms of the educational background of the researcher, they may not have good search skills and therefore need more help; this has an affect on search room organisation and staffing and therefore cannot be ignored.

Cadell (2002) believes that family historians can sometimes take up a disproportionate amount of the archivist’s time. They can be more demanding because their needs are greater as they are inexperienced researchers and their questions may keep the archivists from other tasks.

Staff time can also be taken up by the amount of email requests sent to archives with the expectation of immediate answers, users have been found to send blanket emails out to all major archives asking for help in their research. Boyns (1999) found that some archive staff were concerned that emphasis on family historians should not divert staff time and resources from other user groups, particularly educational users. Longmore (2000) agrees and says that there is a dilemma for the archivist in that user demand can take archivists away from some of their primary roles.

Mortimer (2002) believes that academic researchers are being increasingly marginalized, to the point that some areas of archival investigation are being inhibited. Mortimer (2002) argues that that academic and professional research is more important than family history research and professional researchers should have priority treatment. However, Moran & Taylor (2003) argue that Mortimer’s
view of implementing a policy, which would discriminate in favour of certain types of reader doing certain types of research, would be in direct opposition to national and international principles on access.

Swanson (2002) argues that genealogists have moved away from simply completing ancestral and descendency charts to compiling data about the historical context in which their ancestors lived and worked. Mills (2003) agrees and argues that genealogy is a legitimate, vital history, which should actually be called “generational history”, she defines this as “an interdisciplinary study of the development of individual families across generations - the practice of genealogy as a field of history, following the precepts of peer-reviewed scholarship”. Mills (2003) believes that generational history’s most pressing need is to achieve educational equality and genealogists are important in historical research as they, “see the actual effect upon human lives of the grand world events that historians write about – wars, economic depressions, plagues, politics and persecutions”.

Mills (2003) cautions that archivists who shun genealogists run the risk of losing potentially lucrative methods of generating income and losing the support of a very important archival user group. It would seem that at times like this it is important that archives can point to a high level of usage to argue for development of services or to fight proposed cuts. Smith (2003) states that “there has been a traditional hostility between some academics and personal interest researchers. However, many academics now recognise the effectiveness of the family history sector in lobbying successfully for funding for archive service enhancements which are of benefit to all users and are increasingly seeing the general public and personal interest researchers as key end-users.

Cadell (2002) has identified that there can be a breakdown in the distinction between archives and information and some inexperienced users expect repositories or documents to have instant replies to questions on matters of fact. It is almost as if people are beginning to lose the understanding of where information comes from. Gee (2002) agrees and comments on an incident in a local authority record office where a family historian asked to be able to look at the original parish
register because the version he had before him on microfilm did not have the information he was hoping for.

As Smith (2003) argues, academic and professional researchers are beginning to recognise the effectiveness of the massive group of family history researchers in lobbying successfully for funding for archive service enhancements, which are of benefit to all users, themselves included.

2.9 Local, National and International use

According to Chodorow & Claassen (1995) special collections and archives that spend significant resources on collections that, having little or nothing to do with current or planned academic interests of the campus, are actually an expensive gift made by the university to outsiders – to either local “non-primary clientele” or to the international community of scholars.

However, Brown (2007) believes that librarians should be skilled at representing the role of special collections in a number of different contexts. He says that it is essential that managers of special collections and archives are clear in terms of audience and the extent to which they are making conscious efforts to promote and exploit the value of the collections both internally and externally.

Brown (2007) accepts that his view and this approach could raise certain dilemmas for Higher Education institutions but maintains that as researchers belong to an international community the work done internationally may be as significant as work done internally. He argues that there is significant value to be mined from promoting the collections and the institutions that hold them need to understand that it is of major importance if their valuable collections are recognised as nationally or internationally significant. This may encourage potential donors and funding agencies to engage with the institution and this can contribute to the overall profile.

It would seem that Brown (2007) believes that special collections and archives have a duty to promote the educational and cultural role of the university in which
they are held internationally, nationally, regionally and locally. All universities are keen to emphasise their external profile and special collections can contribute to this.

A balanced view is held by Byrd (2001) who believes that it is desirable to find areas of congruence between ongoing institutional commitments and opportunities for regional, national, or international distinctiveness. According to Byrd serving the former ensures the usefulness of special collections to a primary clientele for the home institution, whereas responding to the latter attracts visiting researchers and makes the library a centre of scholarship in its field. Byrd states that library directors should expect the following from their special collections

- Outreach to students, faculty and classes.
- Collecting that is tied to institutional priorities and academic programs.
- Distinctiveness in collections.
- Public programs that contribute to making the library a centre of intellectual activity on campus.
- Goals that support the libraries strategic plan.

“One day the perception of special collections as a backwater of inactivity will be replaced by the reality of distinctive collections as centres for learning and scholarship” Byrd (2001).
Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Research design

Every type of empirical research has a research design. Yin (2009) defines research design as “the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study’s initial research questions and, ultimately, to its conclusions”.

The research design for this project has a deductive approach, in that the theoretical proposition was developed first and then data was collected to test the theory. This approach is often used in quantitative research methods, however this research project used mixed methods and therefore the deductive approach was also used in the qualitative research. Creswell (2003:131) observes, “qualitative researchers increasingly use a theoretical lens or perspective to guide their study”.

3.2 Mixed methods

Quantitative and qualitative approaches to research have important differences in the nature of their data, and in methods for collecting and analysing the data Punch (2005:234).

Quantitative data enables standardized objective comparisons to be made; but qualitative research is flexible and is well suited to study real life situations. Each approach has its strengths and weaknesses and the reason for combining the two approaches in this study are to capitalize on the strengths of both of them and compensate for the weaknesses.

Punch (2005:238) believes that over-reliance on any one method is not appropriate and researchers cannot find out everything they might want to know using only one approach. The researcher believes, like Punch (2005) that combining the two approaches can increase the scope, depth and power of this research.
3.2.1 Triangulation

Stake (1995:173) defines triangulation as “working to substantiate an interpretation or to clarify its different meanings”. Punch (2005) believes that the logic of triangulation is that the findings from one type of study for example, the quantitative results can be checked against the findings from the other type, the qualitative findings. This study aims to enhance the validity of the findings in the research and increase confidence in the interpretation by using triangulation as part of the methodology. This methodological triangulation should minimise misperception and the invalidity of the conclusions Stake (1995).

3.3 Case study

A case study is a distinct empirical inquiry; Yin (2009) defines a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”. In this study the phenomenon are the users and non-users of the National Fairground Archive and the context is the archive and the University of Sheffield.

The decision to use a case study approach for this research meant a rigorous methodological plan was followed; this is because a common concern about conducting a single case study is that it will not provide a basis for scientific generalisation. However the goal of this case study is to generalise to a theoretical proposition and not to a population.

It was decided that a detailed and in depth study of the National Fairground Archive would discover issues in an example of Special Collections that may not be apparent in more superficial research. This deductive, mixed method approach was hoped to yield interesting and useful results.

3.4 Justification for studying the National Fairground Archive

The National Fairground Archive was chosen to be studied as a single case because it is an example of an archive within a Special Collections department in a
University Library that is used by both internal and external customers. The archive has its own reading room, its own users and its own collecting policy; therefore it could be seen as a small-scale Special Collections department in its own right. The study was an opportunity to look at the many users of a service such as this but with clear boundaries and on a scale that is manageable within this project. The National Fairground Archive has specific attributes that are significant in terms of the practical problem and theoretical issue that the researcher wanted to investigate.

Yin (2009) argues that a case study should:

- Identify significant features on which comparison with others in the class can be made
- Report on the case study in a way that will include sufficient detail about how the case compares with others in its class for the reader to make an informed judgement

The introductory chapter of the study identifies details of the University of Sheffield and the National Fairground Archive and its significant features to ensure that the reader can compare the findings with others in the same class and make an informed judgement like Yin (2009) suggests and as Stake (1995:4) believes, “We do not study a case primarily to understand other cases, our first obligation is to understand this one case” Stake (1995:4).

3.5 **Boundaries of the case study**

The aim of the case study was to research the users and non-users of the National Fairground Archive. The users and non-users are studied, not the archive itself, even though there is background information about the archive to put the study into context and ensure that there is sufficient detail for others to compare.

Yin (2009) calls the component of case study research design that identifies the boundaries of what to study; the “fundamental problem of defining what the case
is” and calls the “case” that is identified to study the “unit of analysis”. Therefore the “unit of analysis” in this study are the users and non-users of the archive.

3.6 Ethical issues

Whilst undertaking the research for this case study it was important to consider the ethical issues, therefore to ensure that the research was ethical the formal procedures set by the University of Sheffield Ethics Review System was followed.

Informed consent was obtained from each participant by giving him or her an information sheet (Appendix A) that outlined the purpose of the project and explained that the information collected would be kept confidential. This document also included the names and contact details of the researcher and dissertation supervisor to provide access to more information about the research if the participant required. A signed participant consent form (Appendix B) was obtained to ensure written consent.

The anonymity of the participants was protected during the data gathering, analysis and writing up stages of the case study.

3.7 Methods of data collection

Yin (2009) says that a case study inquiry should “rely on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion”. The five types of investigation used are a mix of quantitative and qualitative. The data was collected in phases; the quantitative data was collected first followed by the qualitative data.

- Literature review
- Visitor book (Quantitative)
- Email (Quantitative)
- Questionnaires (Quantitative)
• Interviews (Qualitative)

The choice of data to collect and the gathering of the data were guided by the theoretical proposition and the aims of the research.

3.7.1 Literature review

The literature review was essential to find the main issues to be examined in the case study. It was especially important to look for discussions about ways of learning and teaching in university environments using resources in archives. The literature review helped to develop the theoretical proposition and then the aims and objectives; it also guided the design of the questionnaires and interviews.

3.7.2 Quantitative methods

Quantitative research methods use predetermined methods and structured questions to obtain data that is interpreted by statistical analysis. It conceptualizes reality in terms of variables and the relationship between them.

3.7.2.1 Visitor book

Each visitor to the National Fairground Archive signs the visitor book. The aim of examining the visitor book was to get an overall picture of how many visitors the National Fairground Archive has had over a period of time. The reading room in the archive opened in December 2007 and therefore another aim was to compare the number of visitors from before and after the reading room opened. The visitor book was examined from January 2007 to June 2007 (before the reading room), then from January 2008 to June 2008 (after the reading room) and then again from January 2009 to June 2009. The visitor book does not include details of who the customers are or why they are visiting the archive therefore other documentation had to be examined to obtain this data.

3.7.2.2 Emails

Emails are received at the National Fairground Archive from customers writing to an email address (nfa@sheffield.ac.uk) which is found on the archive’s website. The emails received from April 2009 to June 2009 were examined and put into eight categories identified for data analysis. The aim of looking at the emails
was to identify the users of the email service and compare this to customers coming into the archive in person to use the resources.

The data does not include emails sent to the Research Director, the Digital Collections Manager or any other personal email address belonging to a member of staff in the archive. A number of emails received by these members of staff would have been requesting information either from or about the archive but it was not within the boundaries of this study to obtain that information.

### 3.7.2.3 Customer questionnaire

A very simple, short questionnaire was designed for customers visiting the archive to find out who they were and what their main reason was for visiting (Appendix C). The questionnaires were kept in the reading room and each visiting customer was given a copy of the questionnaire and asked to hand it to a member of staff on completion. The questionnaires were given out during April, May and June 2009, this was the same three months as the emails were examined and therefore the results could be compared. The same categories were used for identification as the emails to aid analysis. The quantitative questionnaire was also used to identify customers who would be willing to be interviewed in the qualitative research.

### 3.7.2.4 Academic teaching staff questionnaire

A questionnaire was designed to send out to an identified sample group of academic teaching staff to investigate how many of them were aware of the National Fairground Archive, how many had visited and for what purpose, how many had not and their reasons for not visiting. To get the best results from the study it was decided that only relevant teaching staff that were currently teaching subjects that may have resources covering their subject area in the archive would be sent the questionnaire. This meant that the questionnaire was sent to fifty seven members of teaching staff which is quite a small sample size, however Stake (1995:56) argues that selection of data sources can be left too much to chance, and the people who “happen to be there” are unlikely to be the best sources of data. Therefore, in this study the “best” people were identified to help illustrate the case.
This type of sampling is called “purposive sampling” and means sampling in a deliberate way, with some purpose or focus in mind (Punch, 2005). It was decided to sample this way because it was more relevant to the aims and objectives of the study and also it would not be feasible or sensible to send out the questionnaire to every member of teaching staff in the university. The sample group identified were from seventeen different departments of the university, from English and History to Management and Medicine; therefore a varied group were sampled.

Identifying the relevant teaching staff was a time consuming process. The reading list functionality “My resource lists” on the library website was examined to identify all courses currently being taught at the University of Sheffield. Each module’s reading list was then examined carefully to identify modules that may have resources covering that teaching area in the National Fairground Archive. Details of the identified academic teaching staff for the module were then found on the relevant departmental web page to ensure the member of staff was still teaching at the university and to obtain the correct email address.

The questionnaire was designed using the survey designing software: Survey Monkey. The questionnaire was short, simple and descriptive (Appendix D). The main purpose of the questionnaire was to investigate how many staff knew about the archive, how many had or had not visited and their reasons why. The questionnaire had ten fact-finding questions with either yes/no or multiple-choice answers. The questionnaire was designed to be short and easy to complete to encourage members of academic teaching staff to complete and return it. It was sent as a link in an email, which explained the study at the end of June 2009 to fifty-seven members of academic teaching staff.

### 3.7.3 Qualitative methods

Qualitative research methods use emerging methods and open-ended questions to obtain interview and observational data that is interpreted by text and

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9 [http://library.shef.ac.uk:8080/talislist/index.jsp](http://library.shef.ac.uk:8080/talislist/index.jsp)
10 [http://www.surveymonkey.com/](http://www.surveymonkey.com/)
image analysis. It is sensitive to context and aims to do justice to the complexity of social life.

### 3.7.3.1 Telephone interviews

Six customers and academic teaching staff agreed to be interviewed and the interviews were conducted by telephone. They were first contacted by email and asked to reply with their preferred contact number and a convenient date and time that the researcher could call and conduct the interview. The interviews were conducted by telephone for a number of reasons:

- One of the customer interviewees lives in London and had only filled out the questionnaire because she had travelled to Sheffield to visit the archive; therefore a face-to-face interview with this customer was impossible.
- The speed of telephone interviewing meant that the interviews could take place and analysed quickly, it was decided that the advantage of this outweighed the disadvantage of not interviewing face-to-face.
- Mobile phones mean that people can talk at times when it is convenient for them; the researcher conducted an interview whilst a member of staff was on a train.

Oppenheim (1992:98) believes that “all but the most complex kind of question can be asked successfully over the phone, and the telephone often seems to reduce resistance to ‘sensitive’ items”.

### 3.7.3.1.1 Customer interviews

The aim of the customer interviews was to obtain an interpretation of the National Fairground Archive from some individual customers, because the archive will not be seen the same by all customers. As Stake (1995:65) says, “the interview is the main road to multiple realities”.


Using the returned customer questionnaires ten customers indicated that they would be willing to be interviewed, six were contacted and three agreed to be interviewed by telephone.

The purpose of these interviews was to develop ideas and explore the customer’s individual viewpoints of the archive not to collect data as this had been achieved during the quantitative data collection; the interviews were therefore exploratory Oppenheim (1992). The interviewees were asked the same ten questions, however the process could be seen as a guided conversation more than an interview to ensure the honest views of the interviewee could be elicited.

3.7.3.1.2 Academic teaching staff interviews

Using information gathered from the academic teaching staff questionnaire three members of academic staff were interviewed by telephone. Once again the purpose of these interviews was to explore the views of the members of staff not to collect quantitative data. Therefore the interviews were more like informal guided conversations to try to ensure that the interviewee’s felt they could speak freely about the subject. The interviewee’s were asked ten questions, however as one of the interviewee’s had not visited the archive before, the first question for this participant was slightly different.

It was important to obtain the views of non-users and especially academic teaching staff because they would be the people who would recommend the National Fairground Archive to students.

3.8 Methods of data analysis

3.8.1 Theoretical and rival proposition

The theoretical and rival proposition discussed in the introductory chapter was separated into two key themes; these were awareness and relevance (of the National Fairground Archive). The results and findings of the data gathered was analysed with the aid of these two key themes and the full theoretical proposition was always kept in mind. Yin (2009) argues that the first and most preferred
strategy for analysing case study evidence is to follow the theoretical propositions that led to the research.

3.8.2 Quantitative data

The results from the investigation of the visitor book and emails were organised into tables and key findings were identified. The results of the customer questionnaire meant that the number of customers visiting personally could be compared with the number of customers sending emails to the archive. The results of the academic teaching staff questionnaire was analysed using the key themes of awareness and relevance taken from the theoretical proposition, as Yin (2009) suggests. However, during this process another key theme was identified from the responses and this was the concept of time. Therefore three key themes were used to guide the analysis. The results and analysis of the quantitative data is discussed in chapter 4.

3.8.3 Qualitative data

The findings of the academic teaching staff interviews and customer interviews were analysed, once again using the guidance of the three key themes identified from the theoretical proposition and results of the quantitative data. The findings and analysis of the qualitative data is discussed in chapter 5.

3.8.4 Triangulation methods

The quantitative results and qualitative findings were then integrated and analysed together to highlight the complexities in the case study.

The key themes of awareness, relevance and time were once again used to aid analysis, however inquiry based learning had been identified during the integration process and therefore this was added as another key theme to discuss. The integrated findings are discussed in chapter 6.
Chapter 4 Results and analysis of the quantitative data

4.1 Visitor book

The number of people visiting the National Fairground Archive was examined to produce an overall picture of customer numbers, it was also used to compare the numbers from before and after the reading room opened, the reading room opened in December 2007. The results are shown in table 4.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Number of visitors</th>
<th>Average number of visitors per month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 2007 – June 2007</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 2008 – June 2008</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 2009 – June 2009</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 4.1 Number of people visiting the National Fairground Archive.

Key findings:

- The number of visitors to the archive almost doubled in the first six months of the reading room opening and by the following year had more than doubled.

4.2 Emails

The emails received in the National Fairground Archive’s email box during the three-month period, April 2009 to June 2009 were counted and put into one of eight categories that were identified for data analysis, the eight categories are:

- Internal students/staff: members of the University of Sheffield.
- External students/staff: members of another educational institution.
- Family history researchers: researching family tree or looking for information about family members.
- Personal interest researchers: fairground/circus enthusiasts or looking for general information about subjects held in the archive for personal use.
- External projects/business: writing articles/books, researching for TV/Radio or looking for information for business purposes.

- Showmen/performers.

- Conference delegates: customers interested in conferences the archive is involved in.

- Other: including donors, comments, history groups and other libraries.

In the three-month period eighty-four emails were received in the National Fairground Archive’s email box. The results are shown in table 4.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer group</th>
<th>Number of emails</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal interest researchers</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family history researchers</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External students/staff</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External projects/business</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showmen/performers</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference delegates</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal students/staff</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>84</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 4.2 Number of emails received from April - June 2009.

Key findings:

- The smallest number of emails (5%) were from members of the University of Sheffield compared to 17% from customers from other educational institutions.

- The largest number of emails were from personal interest and family history researchers, with a combined total of 43%.
• Showmen/performers and customers emailing for project or business purposes make up a total of 21% of the emails received, this shows that the archive provides information to external customers who use it for their own projects or business purposes.

This reflects the National Fairground Archive’s status as a primary resource of cultural information for customers in the show business and performing arts sector. It shows that the archive is fulfilling its commitment to provide the resources and information these customers need, which in turn ensures that the archive remains a centre of current development and scholarship in its field.

4.3 Customer questionnaire

From April 2009 to June 2009 46 customers were given a questionnaire and 37 were returned at a response rate of 80%. It should be noted that a small number of customers may have declined to receive a questionnaire or giving them a questionnaire may have been overlooked.

The customers were put into the same categories as the emails to aid analysis and comparison. It should be noted that there were no visits from delegates of the conference because the conference was in July. The results are shown in table 4.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer Group</th>
<th>Number of customers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal interest researchers</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family history researchers</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External students/staff</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External projects/business</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showmen/performers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal students/staff</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>37</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 4.3 Number of customers from April – June 2009.
Key findings:

- The largest group of customers, 30%, were from other educational institutions, compared to 16% from the University of Sheffield.

These are similar results to the study conducted by Schmiesing & Hollis (2002) who found that of all visitors to Special Collections at the University of Colorado at Boulder in 2001 only 23% were UCB students.

It is interesting to compare the number of customers that are obtaining information by email to the number of customers who visit the archive personally. This is shown in figure 4.3.1.

![Customers sending emails compared with customers visiting the NFA: April 09-June 09](image)

FIGURE 4.3.1 Number of emails compared to number of visitors April – June 2009.

Key findings:

- Personal interest and family history researchers made up a combined total of 30% of the visits compared to sending 43% of the emails.
• Students and staff from all educational institutions including the University of Sheffield made up a combined total of 46% of the visits compared to sending 22% of the emails.

Personal interest and family history researchers sent nearly half of the total emails received at the National Fairground Archive and customers from academic institutions sent less than a quarter. However, customers from academic institutions made up nearly half of all actual visitors compared to a third of visits from personal and family history researchers.

It could be argued that some of the personal interest and family history researchers do not live locally to the archive and therefore may email the archive instead. However, some of the educational researchers travel a long way to the archive including one of the customers interviewed for this study who travelled from London.

As more emails are received from personal interest and family history researchers, it may seem to archive staff that this group make up most of the customers; however, during this time nearly half of the customers in the reading room were researching for educational purposes.

It could be said that customers visiting for educational purposes are carrying out more of the research themselves in the reading room compared to the personal interest and family history researchers who are sending emails, which means the archive staff are carrying out the research on behalf of these customers.

These results reflect the views of Cadell (2002), Boyns (1999) and Longmore (2000) as discussed in the literature review; they believe that family historians can sometimes take up a disproportionate amount of archivist’s time. Cadell (2002) argues that time can be taken up by the amount of email requests sent to archives; he has found that these users can sometimes send blanket emails out to all major archives asking for help in their research.
4.4  **Academic teaching staff questionnaires**

The questionnaire was sent out via email to fifty-seven members of academic teaching staff and twenty were returned, a response rate of 35%.

Question 1 asked the member of staff which department they were from, the results are shown in table 4.4.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Questionnaires sent</th>
<th>Questionnaires returned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACSE</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Engineering</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Science</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Studies</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalism</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifelong Learning</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical Eng</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 4.4.1 List of Academic Departments returning completed questionnaires.**
Key findings:

- 35% of the questionnaires were sent to members of staff in the Departments of History and English; however they made up a total of 55% of the returned questionnaires. This could be because these departments feel that in general archives are relevant to them.

- Engineering, computer science and medical teaching staff were sent 16% of the questionnaires and returned 15%, therefore the returned questionnaires were from a varied group of departments.

Question 2 asked if the member of staff taught undergraduates, postgraduates or both, the results are shown in table 4.4.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of student</th>
<th>Number of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 4.4.2 Category of student taught by academic staff.

Question 3 asked members of staff which subject area they taught. This information was used in the analysis to differentiate between members of staff who were in the same department; it meant their subject area could be used to identify them, this was especially important to identify the respondents from History and English.

Question 4 asked if the member of staff was aware of the National Fairground Archive, the results are shown in table 4.4.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aware of National Fairground Archive</th>
<th>Number of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 4.4.4 Awareness of National Fairground Archive.
Key findings:

- 90% of respondents are aware of the National Fairground archive; the two respondents who were not aware of the archive were from the Medical School and Mechanical Engineering.

Before completing the questionnaire the respondent from Mechanical Engineering who was not aware of the National Fairground Archive replied to the email that was sent out with the questionnaire (Appendix E) with the response:

“Thanks for your email and choosing me as one of your ‘limited number of staff’ but I’m not sure how the National Fairground Archive will provide a resource to the students I teach (undergraduate engineers)……have you mistaken me for someone else!”

A reply was sent to explain, and encourage the respondent to complete the questionnaire:

“Thank you for your reply and a fair comment, but I have not mistaken you for someone else. I especially wanted to contact teaching staff in engineering because the National Fairground Archive has a rich seam of resources in this area. The impetus of this questionnaire is to look at ways of engaging Sheffield University students and teaching staff by providing thought provoking and unique subject material. I hope you will still complete the questionnaire, you can leave comments if you wish”.
The member of staff completed and returned the questionnaire with quite interesting results, these are discussed further in Question 9.

Question 5 asked the eighteen members of staff who were aware of the archive if they had ever visited; the results are shown in table 4.4.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visited the National Fairground Archive</th>
<th>Number of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 4.4.5 Number of Academic staff that have or have not visited the archive.

Key findings:

- The nine respondents who had visited the archive were from English (4), Management (1), History (1), Sociology (1), Lifelong Learning (1) and Architecture (1).

- The nine respondents who had not visited the archive were from English (3), History (3), Management (1), Information Studies (1) and Computer Science (1).

It is interesting to observe that only one of the four respondents from the History department had visited the archive.

Question 6 asked the nine members of staff who had visited the archive to choose their main reasons for visiting (they could choose more than one category), the results are shown in table 4.4.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for visit</th>
<th>Number of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research for teaching</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own academic research</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal interest</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 4.4.6 Academic staff reasons for visiting the archive.
Key findings:

- The five respondents who were visiting for personal interest reasons were from English (4) and Architecture.
- The four respondents who were visiting for their own academic research were from English, History, Sociology and Architecture.
- The three respondents who were visiting to carry out research for teaching were from English, History and Lifelong Learning.

It is interesting to see that more respondents said they were visiting for personal interest than to carry out research for teaching.

Question 7 asked the nine members of staff who had not visited the archive to choose their main reasons for not visiting (they could choose more than one category) the results are shown in table 4.4.7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for not visiting</th>
<th>Number of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not interested in the subject</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not think it has any resources to use in my teaching</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not think it has any resources to use in my research</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interested in the archive, but never had time to visit</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know enough about the resources in the archive</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 4.4.7 Academic staff reasons for not visiting the archive.

Key findings:

- None of the respondents said that they were not interested in the subject.
- The respondents who said that they did not think the archive had any resources for their teaching or their own research were the same two respondents from English and History. However, these two respondents also said that they do not know enough about the resources in the archive.
• The respondents who said they were interested in the archive but had never had time to visit were from English (2), History and Information Studies. Note that the respondents from English and History who said this are not the same as the respondents who said the archive did not have resources they could use.

• The respondents who said that they did not know enough about the resources were from English (2), History (2), Management and Computer Science.

Question 8 asked the eighteen members of staff who were aware of the archive if they had ever recommended any of their students to find out about the resources or visit the archive, the results are shown table 4.4.8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended a student</th>
<th>Number of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4.8 Number of Academic staff recommending students to the archive.

Key findings:

• 100% of academic staff that had visited the National Fairground Archive had recommended their students.

• 61% of academic staff that are aware of the National Fairground Archive had recommended a student to find out or visit the archive.

• Two of the respondents who had recommended a student to find out about or visit the archive had never visited the archive themselves, they were from History and English and they both had said that they are interested in the archive but they have never had the time to visit. It would seem that they had recommended their students in the hope that they would have more time to visit or find out about the archive.
• All of the respondents who had not recommended their students to visit had not visited the archive themselves. Five of these said that they do not know enough about the resources in the archive, which could explain why they have never recommended their students.

Question 9 began with a statement about the National Fairground Archive and its resources:

"The National Fairground Archive has primary resources including rare books, journals and newspapers, images, videos and dvd's, trade and advertising material, programmes, posters and ephemera that can be used to support innovative research and teaching in a variety of academic subjects, including:

Architecture: history and design of arenas, spatial planning, temporary structures and theme parks.

Engineering: history of design and technology of fairground machinery and theme parks, safety systems, computerised control and aerodynamics.

Computer Science: simulation rides and history of technical interfaces in entertainment.

Education and Lifelong learning: curriculum-targeted material using fairground subjects.

English and history: history of working class entertainment and popular culture from the 19th century to the present day, including fairground, circus, theatre, variety and magic shows and history of early film including Bioscope shows first seen at fairgrounds.

Journalism: World's Fair newspaper case studies-development of a unique communication newspaper, aspects such as censorship and control of information.

Management: event management, tourism history, design and marketing of attractions.

Medicine: Victorian show traditions (including freak shows), genetic and medical history in the context of popular entertainment and public education.

Music: fairground/entertainment and interaction with popular culture."
Philosophy: role of the fair, function of carnival, imagination and design and spatial geographies of excitement.

Psychology: illusion and perception in entertainment and magic.

Sociology: leisure and society, changes in popular culture”.

The question then asked, if the member of staff could find out more about the resources in the National Fairground Archive, did they think the archive could support their teaching?

The results are shown in table 4.4.9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Archive could support teaching</th>
<th>Number of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 4.4.9 Number of staff that believe the archive could support their teaching.

Key findings:

- After reading the statement at the beginning of the question, 100% of staff that had visited the National Fairground Archive thought the archive could support their teaching.

- After reading this statement, 78% of staff that had not visited the National Fairground Archive thought the archive could support their teaching.

- The respondent from Mechanical Engineering who sent an email asking if the questionnaire had been sent to the wrong person by mistake as discussed in Question 4 and was not aware of the National Fairground Archive, said yes, the archive might be able to support his teaching!

- The four respondents who said they didn’t think the archive could support their teaching were from Medicine, Computer Science and the two respondents from History and English who said in Question 7 that they didn’t think the archive had resources for their research or teaching.
The final question, Question 10 asked if the member of staff would be interested in any of the following (they could choose more than one category). The results are shown in table 4.4.10.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Would be interested in....</th>
<th>Number of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tour of the archive and resources for yourself by a member of archive staff</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tour of the archive and resources for your students by a member of archive staff</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of resources available in the archive that could be relevant to your teaching subject</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 4.4.10 List of ways that staff could choose to find out more about the archive.

Key findings:

- 90% of respondents said that they would be interested in a list of resources available in the archive that could be relevant to their teaching. This is compared with 80% who said they thought the archive might be able to support their teaching in Question 9. Therefore, even though the two respondents from English and Computer Science did not think the archive could support their teaching they would still be interested in a list of resources.

- The two respondents who replied “none of the above” were from Medicine and History (the same respondents from history and medicine who said the archive did not have resources to support their teaching or research in Question 7).

- Six respondents out of the seven who said they would be interested in a tour of the archive for themselves by a member of archive staff had not visited
before; the other respondent had visited. All seven of these also said they would be interested in a list of resources relevant to their teaching subject.

- Four respondents out of the six who said they would be interested in a tour of the archive for their students by a member of archive staff had visited before; the other two had not visited. All six of these also said they would be interested in a list of resources.

- The only respondent who did not think the archive could support their teaching and did not want any more information about the archive was from Medicine.
Chapter 5 Findings and analysis of the qualitative data

5.1 Academic teaching staff interviews

Three telephone interviews were conducted with members of teaching staff from three different academic departments.

- Interviewee A was from the History Department, interviewee B was from the Management School, neither of them had ever visited the archive.
- Interviewee C was from the Department of Sociology and had visited the archive before.

5.1.1 Awareness

When asked what the members of staff knew about the archive, interviewee’s A and B who had both never visited, said they did not know much, only that it was a collection about fairgrounds and the circus from late Victorian 20th Century.

Interviewee C who had visited before said he thought that even though the National Fairground Archive has a very high profile within the University and the wider community, academic teaching staff may not know about the actual resources they could use for teaching in their own subjects.

5.1.2 Relevance

When interviewee B was asked why he had not visited the archive he said the main reason was that he did “not know if it was relevant to me”.

All three of the interviewee’s did not know anyone else who had visited. When asked why they thought this might be, they said that not knowing enough about the relevance of the archive to a subject area would be a major factor.

Interviewee B said that the subject he teaches in the Management School has a very prescriptive teaching plan and therefore it might be difficult to get undergraduates involved in using any of the resources in the archive.
When asked if they would consider working with archive staff to develop ideas to use for teaching, interviewee A said he would be interested and would like to come to the archive first to find out more about the resources. Interviewee B said he thought it would be difficult to find resources to use in his subject and interviewee C said he would be “very interested”.

Interviewee A said the archive may seem to some as “specialist” and a “niche” resource and people might not know how the resources could be used.

When asked how academic staff and students could be encouraged to use the archive’s resources, interviewee A said “making clear how the resources could be used by relevant targeting”.

When asked if they thought their students would be interested in using primary sources, interviewee’s A and C said yes. Interviewee C added that for a third of the course he teaches, his students have the option of “student centred learning” which means they can choose a topic for themselves to study in depth. He said that the students have five seminars as part of this option and he wondered if during one of these seminars a member of archive staff could go along and introduce subjects and resources from the archive that students might be interested in to use in their chosen topic, it could even help them to choose a topic.

When asked if using primary sources would be beneficial to their students, interviewee A said, “yes, the history department make a big deal about primary sources”. Interviewee B said that it was not particularly beneficial in his subject area of management and interviewee C said “it is very useful and can help the students gain a sense of confidence”.

When asked if they thought that students who use primary sources could produce more original work, interviewee A said “primary sources are great, especially for students who haven’t seen them before, to see the originals they get
a sense of the real thing”. Interviewee C said that using primary sources could definitely help the student to produce better work,

“I would definitely agree with this, lecturers try to get across to their students that they will get better marks and produce more interesting work if it is original and distinctive”. (Interviewee C)

5.1.3 Time

When Interviewee A was asked why he had not visited the archive he said the main reason was “time constraints”. Interviewee C suggested that archive staff could go and talk to students during their lectures in a “visiting speaker” role. He said that he thought it was easier for a member of archive staff to speak to students as part of their lecture than for students to go to the archive as a group. He suggested that if the students were introduced to the archive in that way, then those who were interested could arrange to visit the archive in small groups with more idea of what to expect.

5.2 Customer Interviews

Three customers were interviewed by telephone, they had all indicated on the initial questionnaire that it was their first visit to the archive and they were interviewed shortly after their visit.

- Interviewee D was a Taught Postgraduate student from the London College of Fashion.
- Interviewee E was a Taught Postgraduate student in the Department of Journalism at the University of Sheffield.
• Interviewee F was a Taught Postgraduate student studying art and photography at Sheffield Hallam University.

5.2.1 Awareness

When asked where the interviewees had heard about the National Fairground Archive, they all said that they had found the archive’s website on the Internet. Interviewee E, a University of Sheffield student, said that she had found the archive by doing a search on the University website because her tutor said that there was,

“Something within the University but he wasn’t sure what, he couldn’t really remember but he had heard of something”.

Interviewee’s D and E both said that when they mentioned they were visiting the National Fairground Archive to other students on their course, a few of the students said they thought they had heard of it.

When asked what they imagined the archive to be like before their visit, interviewee E said “like a library”. Interviewee F said she expected it to be a small cornered off section of the Main Library with electronic resources, “I didn’t expect there to be as many books or cover such wide contexts”.

5.2.2 Relevance

Interviewee D said she had been looking for information about the circus for a long time so was really relieved when she visited the archive and realised it was very relevant to her research. Interviewee E said she wasn’t sure what to expect from looking at the website so had sent an initial email to the National Fairground Archive first to check it had what she needed.
When asked about their expectations and what they had wanted to achieve from visiting, they all said the archive had exceeded their expectations.

Interviewee D said that she had wanted to get pictures of circus costumes “but in the end I found much more, like books about the subject and quotes that I could use in my research”.

Interviewee E said she had wanted historic information and thought she would get this from the archive, however she said she not only got this but also “ended up with loads of contemporary stuff that I didn’t expect”. She uses an example of needing current news stories for the web page she was creating for her dissertation and she got two pieces from the archive.

After visiting the archive Interviewee F said her ideas had gone in a new direction as she had found a “new thread to my research that I didn’t expect, a brand new element!”

When asked if they would recommend the National Fairground Archive to other students and how they would describe it, they all said they would definitely recommend visiting. Interviewee D said she would be telling other students on her course that the archive has “loads of useful stuff that will be related to your subject and friendly staff”.

Interviewee E said it was “really good, extensive with so much information”. Interviewee F said she would describe it as “quirky, with a rich collection of books and photographs spanning all cultural history”. Interviewee F also said that because the archive has its own reading room it feels like a really “safe” place to be but because it has such mixed media it is “really stimulating too”.

5.2.3 Time

Interviewee D said she needed the whole day in the archive, but did manage to get everything she needed in that day, “I came up from London, so it was a big thing for me, but it was really worth it because it is the only place like it in the country”.

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Interviewee E said that because there is so much information, you do need to “plough through it” to find what you need. Interviewee F said it was such a comfortable place to be “I wanted to stay there all day and keep looking”.
Chapter 6 Interpretation and discussion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to integrate the quantitative results and the qualitative findings using the key themes identified, it will discuss the complexities that have emerged during this part of the analysis. The key themes that were drawn from the theoretical proposition, results and findings in the data are awareness, relevance and time. Inquiry based learning was identified during a further literature search and therefore added as another key theme that is discussed in this chapter.

6.2 Awareness

Visits to the National Fairground archive more than doubled by the end of the first year of the reading room being open, therefore more customers than ever are aware of the archive and the resources are being used in greater numbers.

Academic staff and students from the University of Sheffield only sent 5% of the total emails and made up 16% of the total visits to the National Fairground Archive during April to June 2009. Nevertheless, from the academic staff questionnaire 90% of the respondents say that they are aware of the archive, however only 50% of them had visited and only 33% of these visitors had used the archive to find resources or information for teaching. Therefore it would seem that general awareness of the National Fairground Archive within the University of Sheffield is high and not the main reason that staff and students are not visiting as much as external customers to use the resources.

In terms of student awareness, 61% of academic staff who were aware of the National Fairground Archive and 100% of staff who had visited had recommended their students to find out about or visit the archive. Therefore academic staff say that they are making their students aware of the archive. During the interviews two of the academic staff said that they did not know very much about the archive and one said that even though the National Fairground Archive
has a very high profile within the University, academic teaching staff may not know about the relevance of the resources for their own teaching.

All the customers that were interviewed said that they had found out about the archive by searching the Internet. The customer interviewed from the University of Sheffield had found the archive by searching on the University website because her tutor had said that he had heard of something within the University that may be relevant to her research but he wasn’t sure what. Therefore it could be argued that her tutor was aware of the archive but did not know the relevance to his students. Two of the customers interviewed said that that when they told other students they were visiting the archive the students said they thought they had heard of it but had not visited themselves.

From these findings it would seem that there is a good general awareness of the National Fairground Archive within the University. However, staff and students at the University of Sheffield are unsure about what resources and materials the archive holds and how they could use them to support their learning or teaching.

### 6.3 Relevance

During the time of this research personal interest researchers, family history researchers and customers using the archive for project or business purposes made up a total of 41% of the visits and sent 57% of the emails to the National Fairground Archive. The use of the archive by these customers shows that these enthusiasts, genealogists and business communities are aware of the archives resources and their relevance in supporting their interests. It is a good sign that the archive is providing the resources and information the customers working in these areas need.

Brown (2007) believes that special collections and archives have value in promoting the educational and cultural role of the university internationally, nationally, regionally and locally. Brown says that all universities are keen to emphasise their external profile and special collections can contribute to this. The
National Fairground Archive is playing a significant role in supporting the University of Sheffield’s profile with external customers.

On the other hand, customers from the University of Sheffield made up a lower proportion of the visitors and sent less emails. 56% of respondents of the academic teaching staff questionnaire who had not visited the archive said one of the reasons for not visiting was because they did not know enough about the resources in the archive. It could be argued that these staff would not be able to make a decision regarding their usefulness and relevance to their teaching if they do not know enough about the resources.

All the staff who had visited the archive had recommended that their students find out about or visit the archive, therefore these staff must have thought the archive relevant to the students they were teaching. All the respondents who had not recommended their students to find out about the archive or visit had never visited the archive themselves and 71% of these said they had not visited because they did not know enough about the resources.

Therefore it would seem that members of staff do not feel able to recommend their students if they do not know enough about the archive and its resources themselves. This supports the view of Casey & Flannery (2003) and Schmeising & Hollis (2002) who say that if special collections librarians collaborate with academic teaching staff it will increase the student use of collections. It could be argued that undergraduates are less likely to use the National Fairground Archive if their tutors do not encourage them and tell them about the resources, therefore the involvement of academic staff is vital.

In the academic teaching staff questionnaire, after the respondents had read the short statement of information about the archive and its resources, 78% of those who had never visited said that the archive might be able to support their teaching. 90% of the respondents said they would like a list of resources relevant to their teaching and 65% said they would like a tour of the archive for themselves or their students. The researcher would argue that given a small amount of
information about the resources in the archive, staff are open to finding out more, and may begin to consider using the archive and its resources for teaching.

Two of the staff interviewed who had not visited the archive did not know anyone else who had visited and when asked why they thought this might be they said that not knowing enough about the relevance of the resources to the teaching subject would be a factor. When asked how academic staff and students could be encouraged to use the archive, interviewee A said “making clear how the resources could be used”.

Therefore the questionnaire combined with the interviews point to the issue of academic staff not fully understanding how the archive and resources could be used to support their teaching.

When the customer interviewees were asked about the relevance of the resources they found in the archive to the research they were conducting all three of them said the resources in the archive had exceeded their expectations. They used phrases such as, “In the end I found so much more... (Interviewee D) and “…ended up with contemporary stuff that I didn’t expect” (Interviewee E).

This reflects what Traister (2000) believes when he said that undergraduates should visit because “what you find whenever you browse in stacks is the book you did not already know about and hence could not have looked up”. This was revealed when the interviewed customers said that they had found useful material that they did not know existed and therefore did not realise they would find.

The concept of relevance is complicated and the researcher would argue that the best way to approach the National Fairground Archive is with an open mind because, as interviewee F said about her visit to the archive, “I found a new element to my research that I had not even considered”.
6.4 Inquiry Based Learning

Two of the members of academic staff interviewed discussed the benefits of using primary sources and talked about how resources in special collections and archives can be used by students to produce more original work. Interviewee C talked about his students doing “student centred learning” and how the National Fairground Archive could support this. As discussed in the introduction chapter, student centred learning is a concept CILASS are very interested in as they say that Inquiry Based Learning is an active learning approach that is based on a process of self-directed inquiry or research. Interviewee C said he told his students that they would produce more interesting work and get better marks if it was original and distinctive.

These discussions support the view of the students identified in the Learning and Teaching Department’s case study Wiki and on the CILASS blog, which were previously discussed in the literature review.

6.5 Time

In the academic teaching staff questionnaire the 56% of staff who had not visited the archive said that not having enough time was one of the reasons for not visiting. Two of these respondents who had not visited because of lack of time had recommended their students to find out about or visit the archive, probably in the hope that the students would be able to find the time. All of the staff that stated lack of time as one of the reasons for not visiting said, after reading the short statement about the archive, that they thought the archive might be able to support their teaching. They also all said that they would like a tour of the archive for themselves and a list of resources relevant to their teaching subject. This shows that it is a problem for staff to find time to visit or find out about the archive even if they are interested. The National Fairground Archive should address this issue.

Issues about time were also revealed in the interviews with academic staff and customers. In the academic staff interviews, interviewee A discussed time constraints when explaining why he had not visited the archive. Interviewee C
suggested that archive staff could go and talk to students during one of their lectures about the resources in the National Fairground Archive, he thought this would be more effective in terms of time. This would mean that any students who were interested could arrange to visit the archive in small groups with more idea about the resources in the collection.

The customers who were interviewed also talked about time, but in terms of how much time they had spent in the archive gathering information they needed. Interviewee D, who had travelled from London, had spent the whole day in the archive. Interviewee E discussed the time it took to look at all the information she found and Interviewee F said that she wanted to stay there all day and keep looking. These customers were not talking about time in a negative way but to illustrate the fact that they found so much useful information in the archive, it took time to look at it all. This reflects the view of Wendorf (2002) who says that students must learn the skills of excavating, rather than surfing and Schuchard (2002) who argues that the process of scholarly excavation should be slow and faster is not better.

6.6 Non-respondents

As mentioned in the discussion of the results of the academic teaching staff questionnaire, 35% of questionnaires were sent to members of staff in the English and History Department but they made up a total of 55% of the returned questionnaires. The researcher speculates that this shows that if a member of academic staff felt that the National Fairground Archive might be relevant to them they were more likely to complete and return the questionnaire.

However, when the member of academic teaching staff from Mechanical Engineering (who thought a mistake had been made and the questionnaire had been sent to the wrong person) read the statement with information about the archive and its resources, he answered yes, the archive could be relevant to his teaching. The researcher would argue that this raises issues about how teaching
staff might have pre-conceived ideas about which resources are useful to them in the University library.

One could speculate that some of the other staff that did not respond to the questionnaire felt the same way as the member of staff from Mechanical Engineering in that they did not even think the questionnaire was relevant and therefore did not respond.

It could be argued then, that because 90% of the respondents of the academic staff questionnaire said that they were aware of the archive, the staff that received the questionnaire and did not respond may not have been aware of the archive or not aware of how the archive could be used to support their teaching.
Chapter 7  Theoretical and Rival Propositions

7.1 Introduction

As discussed in both the introduction and methodology chapters of this case study, the theoretical proposition and rival proposition was the main vehicle for generalising the results and findings. The theoretical orientation guided the case study analysis; therefore it is important to look at the theoretical and rival proposition again at the end of the case study. To facilitate the discussion in this chapter, the theoretical proposition has been divided into three main concepts and the rival proposition into two concepts.

7.2 Theoretical proposition

- The National Fairground Archive is a primary resource at the heart of the University campus; it has rich potential for research and teaching at every level and therefore should be used by students of the University of Sheffield.

The findings from the customer interviews show that the National Fairground does have “rich potential for research”; the students that were interviewed after visiting the archive all said that the resources in the archive had “exceeded their expectations” and they had found relevant information they could use in their work. Interviewee D thought she would just get some images from the archive but in the end “found so much more, like books about the subject and quotes that I could use in my research”.

The results from the academic teaching staff questionnaire show that 80% of respondents think that the National Fairground Archive could be relevant to their teaching and 90% would like a list of the resources available in their subject area. This again shows that the archive does have “rich potential” and therefore should be used by the students of the University of Sheffield.
• The archive could support the university’s commitment to investigating new ways of learning and teaching by helping to bring variety to lectures, which would in turn engage and motivate students and support different learning styles.

In the introduction chapter of this study it was identified that the Learning and Teaching Services Department at the University of Sheffield has set objectives to develop a university that offers exciting and contemporary approaches to teaching. The Inclusive Learning and Teaching Project state that lecturers should aim to “engage, motivate and spark interest” in students and take into consideration different learning styles.

The discussions in the literature, customer interviews and material written by students on the CILASS student blog and Learning and Teaching Department wiki show that the National Fairground Archive could help to support the University of Sheffield’s commitment to learning and teaching and contribute to achieving the Inclusive Learning and Teaching Project’s aims. This is because the National Fairground Archive has a variety of stimulating resources that can be used to engage and motivate students in ways that the Learning and Teaching Project is trying to encourage.

Inquiry based learning is an active learning approach that CILASS are committed to supporting in terms of further development and innovation. The results and findings of this study show that the National Fairground Archive could be used to support this development and enhance learning and teaching.

• Therefore, academic teaching staff at the University of Sheffield should be aware of and know enough about the National Fairground Archive to make an informed choice of whether its unique resources are relevant to them and could support their teaching.

The results from the academic teaching staff questionnaire show that there is good general awareness of the archive, however academic teaching staff do not
know enough about the resources to make an informed choice of whether the resources are relevant to their teaching subject. The academic staff interviews also support this view.

From the evidence collected 56% of respondents from staff who had not visited the archive said one of the reasons for not visiting was because they did not know enough about the resources in the archive. The researcher believes that these staff cannot make a decision regarding the usefulness and relevance of the resources to their teaching if they do not know enough about the material in the National Fairground Archive.

7.3 Rival theoretical proposition

- The National Fairground Archive is for personal interest and family history researchers and not useful for students.

This research shows that the archive is well used by personal interest and family history researchers; however the customer interviews show that the archive has a variety of resources that are relevant and useful to students.

Students can complete their studies without using any of the special collections in the University Library. However, if they want to produce distinctive and original work in an active learning environment they should visit the National Fairground Archive and find out about the resources that could be relevant to their subject.

- Therefore academic teaching staff at the University of Sheffield do not need to use the archive because it has no relevant teaching material for their course.

It is essential that academic teaching staff at the University of Sheffield know about the resources available in the archive, otherwise they cannot disseminate this information to their students. The academic teaching staff are a vital connection between the National Fairground Archive and the students that could make use of the resources.
7.4 Conclusion

This study shows that even though the University of Sheffield does not offer a course of study that material and resources in the National Fairground Archive visibly covers, students studying a wide range of subjects can benefit significantly from using the primary sources that are available in the archive. This is because the National Fairground Archive has resources that are distinctive and stimulating and the material can be used to enhance the students learning experience.

For the diverse population of students at the University of Sheffield the National Fairground Archive could play a crucial role in supporting new ways of teaching and facilitate a variety of learning styles.

In order to assist members of academic teaching staff and support them in finding out about the National Fairground Archive and its resources, members of archive staff might need to visit academic teaching staff and speak to students during lectures or seminars. Students need to be aware that undertaking research in an archive takes time, the material needs to be excavated rather than “surfed”. However, students should also be informed that time spent studying in the archive will be stimulating and the work they produce will be original and distinctive.

The Centre for Inquiry based Learning in the Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Sheffield is a first class centre of excellence that looks at the active learning approach of inquiry based learning. However, the researcher has found during this study that most of the attention in CILASS is centred on ways of learning and teaching using new technologies and there is limited discussion about utilizing special collections and archives to support inquiry based learning. The researcher feels that there should be more emphasis within CILASS about how primary sources can support inquiry based learning.

The University of Sheffield Library is not a “MacLibrary” Gundersheimer (2000), it could not be, because it has the National Fairground Archive, which is unique and distinctive, and of that the University of Sheffield should be proud.
Chapter 8 Reflection, suggestions and recommendations

8.1 Limitations and self reflection on the research process

The decision to use a case study approach in this research meant that a clear methodological plan was followed, this was useful for a first time researcher. It meant that the theoretical proposition and rival proposition was developed first which helped to determine what data to collect and how to analyse the collected data.

The theoretical proposition was also a good way of giving the case clear boundaries. Without these clear boundaries of investigating the users and non-users of the archive it would have been an overwhelming research project. There are so many other aspects to the National Fairground Archive that cannot be covered in this small research project.

The time period for the quantitative data collection for this study was short; it only covered three months of one year; April to June 2009. The researcher accepts that this is a limitation of the study. If other periods of the year or another year altogether were investigated different results may have emerged.

The design, execution and analysis of the academic teaching staff questionnaire became one of the main aspects of the case study. Identifying academic teaching staff to send questionnaires to was a complicated process but at the time it was felt to be an effective way of gathering results that would illuminate the case. However, because of the way members of teaching staff were identified only fifty-seven questionnaires were sent out and twenty were returned; therefore a fairly small number of questionnaires were analysed.

It was disappointing to only receive twenty completed questionnaires back from academic teaching staff, if this process was repeated the researcher would aim to identify a larger sample and send out more questionnaires.
During the design process of the academic teaching staff questionnaire a decision was made to keep the questionnaire as short as possible as it was felt that the shorter the questionnaire, the more likely the member of staff would complete and return it. However, the researcher now feels that if a respondent is going to ignore an online questionnaire they will probably ignore it whatever the length, therefore if this process was repeated the researcher would add more questions.

The majority of studies about special collections and archives ask librarians and archivists about the users of their resources but do not ask the users and non-users themselves. Therefore, in this study it was important to investigate the motivations of the users and non-users of the National Fairground Archive as this may augment existing knowledge.

The telephone interviews were felt to be a productive way to gather the qualitative data; however the researcher accepts that the case study would have been even more effective if more follow up interviews had been conducted.

As the case study evidence was collected the theoretical proposition and rival proposition was always kept in mind. Two key themes of awareness and relevance were identified from the theoretical proposition to aid analysis at the beginning of this process. The gradual building of the evidence and analysis of the data meant that new themes emerged, such as the concept of time during quantitative data collection and Inquiry Based Learning during the integration of the results and findings. Yin (2009:143) explains this as “refining a set of ideas, in which an important aspect is gained to entertain other plausible or rival explanations”. The researcher feels that this aspect of the study was successful.

8.2 Suggestions for further study

- As previously mentioned, the quantitative data collection only covered three months of one year; April to June 2009. It would be useful to collect data over a longer period of time and identify any differences in results.
• It would be worthwhile to compare the findings of this study with another archive held in a University Library.

• It would be interesting to work with CILASS and find out more about how primary sources can support inquiry based learning.

8.3 **Recommendations to take this work forward**

The researcher has identified three recommendations that could help the National Fairground Archive to take the work carried out in this case study forward and ensure the archive’s resources are more visible to members of academic teaching staff and students of the University of Sheffield:

• Develop strategies to work with members of academic teaching staff and students at the University of Sheffield.

• Develop lists of relevant resources and materials held in the National Fairground Archive to send to the academic teaching staff who have expressed an interest in this.

• Develop the National Fairground Archive’s website to include specific pages for academic teaching staff and students of the University of Sheffield. This could include learning journeys and staff and student experiences of using the archive.

Word Count: 18,340 [Excluding title page, abstract, acknowledgements, table of contents, bibliography and appendices].
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Appendix A

National Fairground Archive Questionnaire: Information Sheet

You are being invited to complete this short questionnaire as part of a research project, the results of which will form part of my dissertation. The dissertation is being undertaken as part of the Librarianship MA at the University of Sheffield.

Purpose of the project

This questionnaire will form part of a case study about the National Fairground Archive at the University of Sheffield. I am currently investigating customer use of the archive. If participants of this questionnaire are willing, I may ask if some of them will take part in a more detailed interview later in the project. There is space on this questionnaire to indicate if you would be willing to be involved in this.

This project began in March and will continue until the end of August when the completed dissertation will be submitted.

Confidentiality

All information that is collected about you during this research will be kept strictly confidential. Any information from you that I use will have your name removed so that you cannot be recognised from it.

The results of this research will be published in an MA dissertation. Dissertations are usually deposited in the University of Sheffield Library.

Who has reviewed the project?

This project has been reviewed by the University of Sheffield Research Ethics Committee.

Contacts for further information

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Appendix B

Participant Consent Form

Title of Research Project: National Fairground Archive: A Case Study

Name of Researcher: Angela Greenwood

Participant Identification Number for this project: Please tick box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated June 2009 explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project. □

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline. □

3. I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research. □

4. I agree for the data collected from me to be used in future research. □

5. I agree to take part in the above research project. □

_________________________ __________________________
Name of Participant Date Signature
(or legal representative)

_________________________ __________________________
Name of person taking consent Date Signature
(if different from lead researcher)
To be signed and dated in presence of the participant

_________________________ __________________________
Lead Researcher Date Signature
To be signed and dated in presence of the participant
Copies:
Appendix C
National Fairground Archive Visitor Questionnaire

1. As a visitor to the National Fairground Archive which of the following options best describes you? Please tick one category only.

Member of the University of Sheffield

- Academic staff (teaching) [ ]
- Academic staff (non-teaching) [ ]
- Research Postgraduate [ ]
- Taught Postgraduate [ ]
- Undergraduate [ ]
- Other [ ]

If other please give details below or any additional comments.

---------------------------------------------------------------

External visitor

- Academic [ ]
- Researcher [ ]
- Research Postgraduate [ ]
- Member of the public [ ]
- Other [ ]

If other please give details below or any additional comments.

---------------------------------------------------------------

2. Which of the following best describes why you are visiting the National Fairground Archive? Please tick one category only.

- Research for teaching purposes [ ]
- Research for postgraduate study [ ]
- Research for undergraduate study [ ]
- Research for business [ ]
- Family history research [ ]
- General interest [ ]
- Personal research [ ]
- Other [ ]

If other please give details or any additional comments.

---------------------------------------------------------------

3. Is today your first visit to the National Fairground Archive?

- Yes [ ]
- No [ ]

4. Do you plan to visit again?

- Yes [ ]
- No [ ]
- Maybe [ ]
- Don’t know [ ]

Thank you for taking the time to answer this questionnaire.

I would like to conduct short interviews with a small sample of visitors to gain more detailed information.

Would you be willing to take part in this?

- Yes [ ]
- No [ ]

If you would be willing to participate in an interview either by telephone, email or in person please indicate how you would like to be contacted:

By email: Please write your email address here: ____________________________

By telephone: Please write your number here: ____________________________
Appendix D

National Fairground Archive Case Study

Case study investigating the use of the National Fairground Archive to supp...

My name is Angela Greenwood and I am an MA student in the Department of Information Studies. I am undertaking a case study in the National Fairground Archive, Western Bank Library to investigate its use to support teaching and learning at Sheffield University.

As part of my research I have designed a short questionnaire. I am inviting you to take part because as a member of teaching staff I have identified that there could be resources in the National Fairground Archive that could potentially be used by your students to enhance their learning.

All the information I collect will be kept strictly confidential. Any information from you that I use will have your name removed so that you cannot be recognised from it. This research has been reviewed by the University of Sheffield Research Ethics Committee.

As I am only sending this to a limited number of staff, I would be really grateful if you would complete this short questionnaire.

There are ten multiple choice questions and should take less than five minutes to complete.

Thank you very much in advance.

Angela Greenwood

Academic teaching

* 1. Which department of the University do you teach?

* 2. Which category of student do you teach?
   - Undergraduate
   - Postgraduate
   - Both
   - Neither

3. What subject area do you teach?

National Fairground Archive
### National Fairground Archive Case Study

4. Are you aware of the National Fairground Archive at Western Bank Library, University of Sheffield?
   - Yes
   - No (Go to question 5)

5. Have you ever visited the National Fairground Archive?
   - Yes
   - No (Go to question 6)

6. Please tick all categories that best describe the reason for your visit to the National Fairground Archive (then go to question 8)
   - Research for teaching
   - Your own academic research
   - Personal interest
   - Other (please specify)

7. Please tick all categories that describe why you have never visited the National Fairground Archive
   - I am not interested in the subject
   - I don't think it has any resources I could use in my teaching
   - I don't think it has any resources I could use in my research
   - I am interested, but I have never had the time to visit
   - I don't know enough about the resources in the archive
   - Other (please specify)

8. Have you ever recommended any of your students to find out about the resources or visit the National Fairground Archive?
   - Yes
   - No

### Resources in the National Fairground Archive
National Fairground Archive Case Study

9. The National Fairground Archive has primary resources including rare books, journals and newspapers, images, videos and dvds, trade and advertising material, programmes, posters and ephemera that can be used to support innovative research and teaching in a variety of academic subjects, including:

Architecture: history and design of arenas, spatial planning, temporary structures and theme parks.

Engineering: history of design and technology of fairground machinery and theme parks, safety systems, computerised control and aerodynamics.

Computer Science: simulation rides and history of technical interfaces in entertainment.

Education and Lifelong learning: curriculum targeted material using fairground subjects

English and history: history of working class entertainment and popular culture from the 19th century to the present day, including fairground, circus, theatre, variety and magic shows and history of early film including Bioscope shows first seen at fairgrounds.

Journalism: World's Fair newspaper case studies-development of a unique communication newspaper, aspects such as censorship and control of information.

Management: event management, tourism history, design and marketing of attractions.

Medicine: Victorian show traditions (including freak shows), genetic and medical history in the context of popular entertainment and public education.

Music: fairground/entertainment and interaction with popular culture.

Philosophy: role of the fair, function of carnival, imagination and design and
National Fairground Archive Case Study

spatial geographies of excitement.

Psychology: illusion and perception in entertainment and magic.

Sociology: leisure and society, changes in popular culture.

If you could find out more about the resources in the National Fairground Archive, do you think they could support your teaching?

☐ Yes

☐ No

* 10. Please choose any of the following you may be interested in: (if you would like more information about the archive please leave your name and email address in the box marked other and I will contact you).

☐ Tour of the National Fairground Archive and resources for yourself by a member of archive staff

☐ Tour of the National Fairground Archive and resources for your students by a member of archive staff

☐ List of resources available in the archive that could be relevant to your teaching subject

☐ None of the above

Other (please specify)
Appendix E

My name is Angela Greenwood and I am an MA student in the Department of Information Studies. I am undertaking a case study of the National Fairground Archive, Western Bank Library, University of Sheffield.

As part of my research I have designed a questionnaire. I am inviting you to take part because as a member of teaching staff I have identified that there could be resources in the National Fairground Archive that could potentially be used by your students to enhance their learning.

All the information I collect will be kept strictly confidential. Any information from you that I use will have your name removed so that you cannot be recognised from it. This research has been reviewed by the University of Sheffield Research Ethics Committee.

As I am only sending this to a limited number of staff, I would be really grateful if you would click on the link below and complete the questionnaire.

There are ten multiple choice questions and it should take less than five minutes to complete.

Please click on the link below to complete the questionnaire.

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=pBPrWNnJN95y5SoelX0pUg_3d_3d

Thank you very much in advance.

Angela Greenwood
Appendix F

1. Can you tell me what you know about the National Fairground Archive and its resources?

2. Have you ever visited the National Fairground Archive? If not,

3. Can you tell me why you have never visited?

4. Do you know any other academic teaching staff that have used the National Fairground archive? If yes

4b Can you tell me what they said about it?

5. Do you know of any reason why academic teaching staff may not use the archive?

6. What would make the National Fairground Archive easier for you to use?

7. Would you consider working with the National Fairground Archive staff to develop ideas that you may use for teaching?

8. Do you think any of the students you teach would be interested in using any of the resources in the archive?

9. Do you think using primary sources would be beneficial for the students you teach?

10. Do you agree with the statement that students who use primary sources produce more original work?
Appendix G

1. Before your first visit to the National Fairground Archive, where did you hear about the archive?

2. Has any member of academic teaching staff in your department ever mentioned the National Fairground Archive?

3. Before your first visit to the archive, what did you imagine it to be like?

4. Was the archive how you imagined it to be?

5. Did you feel apprehensive about visiting or contacting the archive?

6. What did you expect to be able to achieve from using the National Fairground Archive?

7. Did you achieve what you wanted on your visit?

8. Was there anything else you would have liked to been able to see/do on your visit?

9. Would you recommend the archive to other students?

10. How would you describe the National Fairground Archive and its resources to other students and members of staff?