



North Herts Museum Service has just been awarded £700 by the East of England Regional Archive Council (EERAC) to improve access and storage of our vast archive collection.

You may not know it, but Hitchin Museum has a store full to the rafters with documents, photographs and maps. These have been used by hundreds of researchers over the years, as well as museum staff when creating exhibitions. The chairman for EERAC was very impressed by the quality of documents we hold when he visited recently. The archives contains a whole array of photographs and postcards from the whole district, as well as poems, personal accounts and diaries of people who have lived in North Herts over the years. Some of the manuscripts date back to the 17th century and contain wax seals and are pretty hard to decipher for the untrained eye.

The grant money EERAC have kindly awarded us will go towards funding new storage files for the documents, these will be archival quality and will help to protect the items for much longer. So we are now starting an archive project, where volunteers from the Hitchin Historical Society will assist staff in repacking the archives and making sure documentation is up to date, so everything will be much more readily available and accessible when they are moved to the new museum for 2015. Here, alongside digital records of the museum collections, they will form part of the new study area where visitors will be able to come and find out more about how people have lived in North Herts.

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