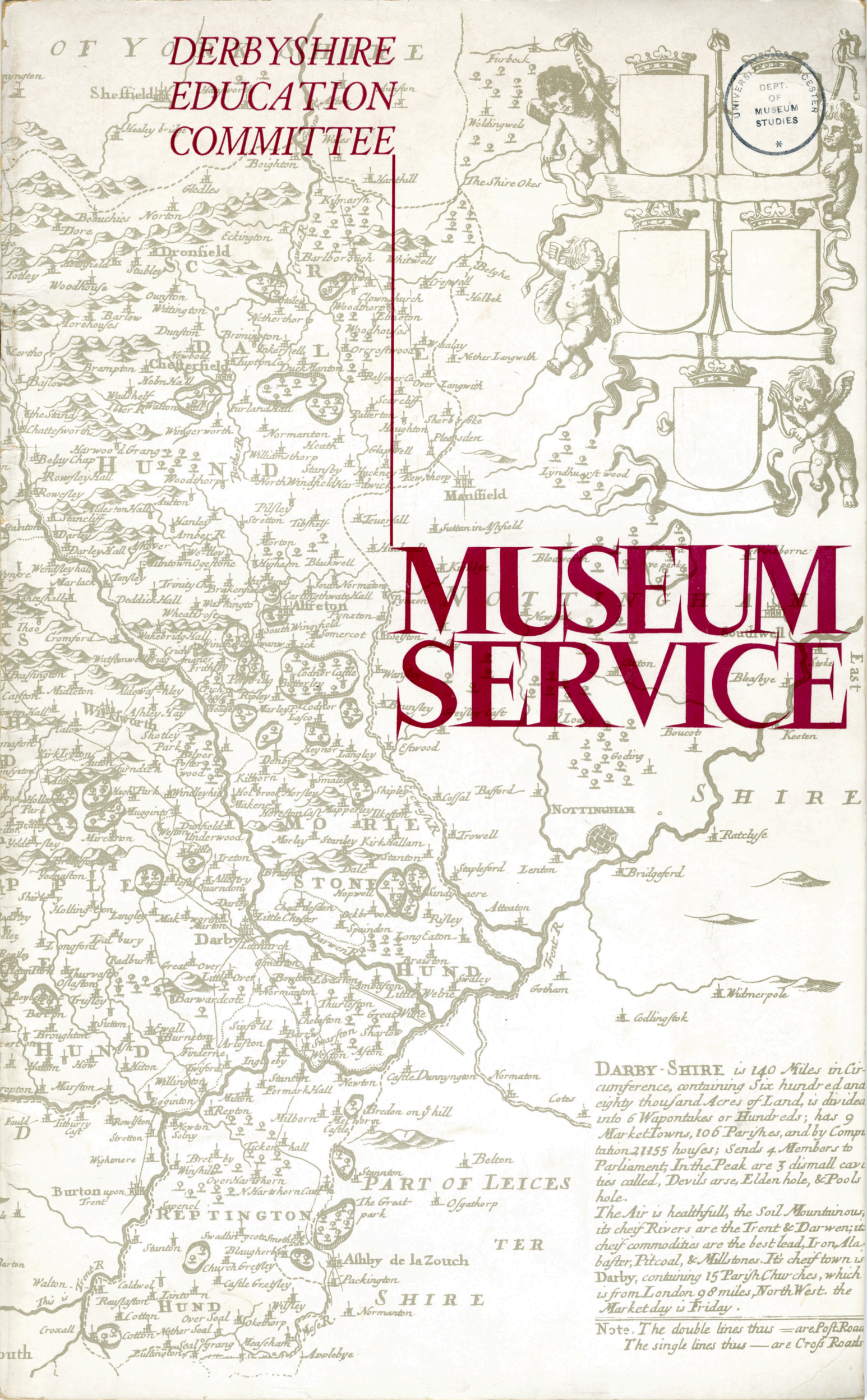


OF Y **DERBYSHIRE** L
EDUCATION
COMMITTEE



MUSEUM
SERVICE

DARBY-SHIRE is 140 Miles in Circumference, containing Six hundred and eighty thousand Acres of Land, is divided into 6 Wapontakes or Hundreds; has 9 Market Towns, 106 Parishes, and by Computation 21155 houses; Sends 4 Members to Parliament; In the Peak are 3 dismall caves called, Devils arse, Elden hole, & Pools hole. The Air is healthfull, the Soil Mountainous, its cheif Rivers are the Trent & Darwen; its cheif commodities are the best lead, Iron, Alabaster, Pitcoal, & Millstones. Its cheif town is Darby, containing 15 Parish Churches, which is from London 98 miles, North West. the Market day is Friday.

*Note, The double lines thus — are Post Roads
The single lines thus — are Croft Roads*

DERBYSHIRE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Museum Service

THE AIMS OF THE SERVICE

The object of the Museum Service is to provide schools and other bodies of students with teaching material of cultural and general interest. Such a service is particularly important in areas where good museums are few and visits to these and similar places of interest are limited.

Derbyshire possesses only two public museums, and many of the schools are situated in places from which neither is easily accessible. It was, therefore, with the aim of providing educational material of the type not normally found as part of school equipment, to schools and classes in the administrative area, that the Derbyshire Education Committee inaugurated its School Museum Service in 1936 with the aid of a grant from the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust and with the approval of the Board of Education.

The functions of a public museum differ in certain ways from those of a museum loan service. Whereas a public museum provides for a wide range of age groups and must exhibit objects of interest to all sections of the community at one time, a loan service provides for specialised groups of people divided according to age, pursuits and so forth. The aims of the two services differ in that a loan service makes a more limited and specialised contribution and the public museum a more general contribution to public education.

The aims of the Derbyshire service, in short, are to provide visible, tangible and aural material of a cultural nature to educational groups, this material to be of a kind which would not normally be found in schools and other educational institutions. It is not the purpose of this service to provide material which should form part of the permanent equipment of such an institution, nor is it the intention of the Education Committee that material available for loan should take the place of the teacher, or of any other aid to education, but that its use should supplement the more usual aids.

The loan service has certain advantages over class visits to a museum, in that when exhibits are brought into the student's normal environment, there is less distraction by the isolation of a single specimen or a small group of exhibits and at the same time, a greater opportunity is offered for the examination of the material. In the case of a school, a teacher can more easily fit into his curriculum objects loaned to the school than a visit to a museum. On the other hand, it is only through excursions outside the four walls of a room that the student can examine certain objects, which, by reason of their size, situation or rarity, cannot be included in a loan collection. Where a loan service is operated by a public museum, these two advantages can be combined, and where possible, loans of material to classes should be followed up by excursions to public museums and art galleries, local historical and archaeological sites, factories and so on.

HISTORY

The Derbyshire School Museum Service was established in September, 1936. Its origin is due to the offer by the Carnegie Trust of a limited number of grants to County Education Authorities to establish a circulating school museum service, which Mr. Edgar Osborne, the County Librarian, had observed to be operating successfully in the United States.

Application for a grant made by the Education Committee to the Carnegie Trustees was favourably received, and an Organiser was appointed in August, 1936. The following month, the Organiser commenced duties by working for two weeks with the Leicester Public Museum Schools Loan Department to acquire experience. Meanwhile, headquarters accommodation in Derby, consisting of two rooms on the top floor of the County Library building, was being equipped.

In July, 1938, the first Annual Report was published, describing the progress of the work. At this time, the collection consisted of some three hundred exhibits, together with a large amount of illustrative material. A start had been made on the loan of framed reproductions of paintings to schools, and the Museum had taken over a collection of gramophone records which had formerly been circulated to schools from the Education Office, and eight distributions of material—three every term—had been arranged.

During 1938, Major S. F. Markham, Empire Secretary to the Museums Association, visited Derby and commented on the Service in his report to the Carnegie Trustees on "The Museums and Art Galleries of the British Isles" (Chapter XIV, pages 127-131). Also this year, two small rooms were added to the original accommodation at the County Library, and a clerical assistant was appointed.

In 1939, attempts were made to secure larger premises, for the size of the collection was fast outgrowing the original rooms. This project had to be abandoned on the outbreak of war in September, which coincided almost to the day with the end of the Carnegie experimental period, and for a time the Service was partially closed down. Some of the more valuable material was transferred for safety to a County Branch Library, where it was made available to schools in the neighbourhood, teachers and children coming to the Library weekly to exchange exhibits. Early the following year, however, it was found possible to re-establish the Service, though on a restricted basis of one distribution a term instead of three. During the war, the use of the Service was extended to schools evacuated into the county.

As the final payment of the Carnegie Grant did not coincide with the end of the Local Government financial year, the Trustees generously agreed to a further grant being made to cover the interim period up to 31st March, 1940. Subsequently, further financial aid was granted by the Trustees covering the next three years, the Trust paying half of the expenditure on exhibits up to a maximum sum of £750.

Later on, in 1942, the Army Educational Corps approached the Education Committee with a view to the Museum's facilities being extended to A.E.C. officers stationed in the area. The War Office made a small grant towards the purchase of extra material, and many units stationed in the county made regular use of the Service throughout the war. The Museum benefited from this work, since it provided experience in the provision of material likely to be of use in adult classes.

After the end of the war, negotiations were re-opened for the purchase of alternative premises as Museum headquarters; this became a matter of urgency on the implementation of the 1944 Education Act, when the Service was extended to all schools in the County, including the schools of the four non-county boroughs, whereas formerly, the main collections of the Museum had been available only to schools with senior pupils. The number of borrowers increased by almost 100%, necessitating a rapid increase in the size and scope of the collection. Formal recognition of the Service as a permanent feature of the Authority's administration was made by the Ministry of Education in 1945.

In 1946, nearly ten years after the establishment of the Service, a large house about a mile from the centre of Derby was purchased as permanent headquarters. Work on the repair and fitting of the building was started early in 1947, and when the Museum was installed in its new home in April, adequate, well-equipped work-rooms and good storage space were available for the first time, so that work on extending and improving the Service could go ahead rapidly.

The following year a 30-cwt. van was purchased for distributing material to borrowers, and bore the new title of Museum Service—the word “ School ” now being dropped to signify the widening scope of the activities of the Service. Formerly, transport had been undertaken by an outside contractor, and although this arrangement worked satisfactorily, it restricted the efficiency of the Service, since a van was available only intermittently.

In October, 1948, the Museum was honoured by a visit from the Minister of Education, the Rt. Hon. Mr. George Tomlinson, M.P., an indication that this Service, which began twelve years ago as an experiment, had now become an accepted part of normal education in the county.

This record of the Derbyshire Education Committee's Museum Service would be incomplete without recognition being made of the invaluable help, particularly in the early stages, so readily given by many individuals and organisations. In particular, thanks are due to the Carnegie Trustees; to Dr. Lowe, Director of Leicester Museum until 1940; to Mr. W. G. Briggs, Director of Education for Derbyshire until 1948, and to the Librarian and staff of the Derbyshire County Library.

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

In a large borough, a loan service is best conducted from a Public Museum, as is the case already in many towns, several such services receiving grants of some kind from the local education authority. In these instances, the loan of material to schools and other bodies is usually preceded or followed up by organised visits to the public galleries. Thus, the service run from the public museum has the advantage that the resources of the exhibition galleries, the store material and the specialised staff of the museum are available.

Outside the bounds of big towns there are, however, large tracts of country where schools and homes are far removed from any good public museum or art gallery, and where visits to them, if they occur at all, are sporadic. In such areas, a museum loan service of a cultural and educational nature is fundamental, and the local education authority is the obvious administrative body for such a service. In the case of the Derbyshire Service, the administration is in the hands of a trained Organiser working under the general direction of the Director of Education and with the aid of an Advisory Committee, which reports to the Education Committee. The membership of the Advisory Committee is made up as follows :—

Three members of the County Education Committee.

Representatives of :—

Nottingham University.
Derbyshire Association of Teachers.
Joint Secondary School Association.
Rural Community Council.
Derbyshire Federation of Women's Institutes.
Townswomen's Guild.
Derbyshire Archaeological Society.

Two co-opted members.