

## Case Study: John Lewis

### Partnership Archivist

#### Cookham's New Venue Sparkles

A bubbling event for the fleetest ticket buyers - the talk on the John Lewis Fabric Archive was very sought after, and the tickets could have been sold many times over.

It was a previous talk at the Cookham Festival some years ago, on the history of the old pottery at Grove Farm, that set running the germ of an idea to bring the Textile Collection to Cookham. Judy Faraday, the Partnership Archivist, approached the John Lewis board and the idea took wing.

The sun shone to show to its best the new Grove Heritage Centre's building. The Charles Voysey inspired cedar paneling on the exterior was looking splendid as was the light, bright interior so that the 5,500 textile designs could be seen in all their richness. After a welcoming tea and delicious cake supplied by the ladies of the church, we were given a talk by Judy Faraday on the development of fabric printing processes over time; the Lewis family history; and how the John Lewis Partnership came about.

### A new home for our Archive

#### A place by the River

By Judy Faraday

Grove Farm at the end of Odney Lane was, for many years after the demise of the Odney Pottery, a building without a purpose.

With the closure of the Stevenage warehouse which had housed the Partnership's archive since the mid 1960s and the ending of the lease on rooms holding the textile collection in Carlisle, the decision was taken to relocate the two valuable archives to Odney. Not only was there space, but it also presented the business with the opportunity to work more closely with the resources of the archive.

Opened in October 2013, design teams, buyers, Partners and academics visit the Centre during the week and it remains open on Saturdays to enable the public to view some of the history of John Lewis and Waitrose.

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Viewing the textile archive  
*John Lewis Partnership Heritage Services*



Archive strongroom  
*John Lewis Partnership Heritage Services*

**on to Judy Faraday: How did you push the Partnership Archive up the agenda of Board so that they supported the idea of bring the archive to Cookham?**

Judy built up a group of important stakeholders ie. Judy's boss and people that influence the CEO. For example, identify people who'd role it is to protect the cultures of the business for example.

Once Judy had made contact, she took it to a personal level to build a rapport and understanding of the importance of the archive " In your loft you have a box of things that are personal; you don't need to see them everyday but you need to know they are there because they represent who you are and where you've come from."

For each stakeholder that would be involved in the decision Judy made a point of considering the decision from their point of view and anticipating what their concerns would be; she was then able to research and prepare information to address and overcome the objections before they were raised. This preparation included preparing the financial case for options the alternative ie. If the collections remain out sourced to a third party

In addition Judy considered how the archives could add value to the organisation, for example to the buying team looking for inspiration. And the marketing and comms team – with 2014 came the 150 year anniversary. Also the legal team – bring the collection in house brought advantages in terms of compliance

The proposal was rejected by the Board the first time, but Judy took on board the feedback and tried again. Judy met with the Chairman and produced the original and first John Lewis cheque book – the chairman gave his approval and the real work began!