

Preserving the Home Office Addicts Files & Indices as a Research Resource

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What I will cover

- History of British system of addict notifications
- The Files
- Overview of Preservation Project
- Hints and tips for preservation projects
- Outcomes – databases and data.

History-British System –notification of addicts

- Opiate use in UK during 19th century is well documented
- Defence of the Realm Act amended re control of cocaine and opium
- Morphine not included as abuse of it was not so urgent or serious
- 1920s departmental committee on morphine and heroin rollers ton committee asked to consider introducing a formal requirement for doctors to notify addicts to the Home Office
- Why?– to detect instances of addicts obtaining drugs from more than one doctor

History-British System –notification of addicts

- Few doctors saw cases of addiction
- Most doctors informally reported addicts to the HO to avoid double scripting for dangerous drugs
- From this a card index of known addicts was kept from the 1930s
- Watershed year 1951 police investigations following thefts of a large quantity of morphine, heroin and cocaine from hospital in Kent revealed a number of newer younger addicts in London-who were more adept at obtains heroin and dealing.
- 1960s Brain Committee on drug addiction - reported that sufficient controls in place.

History-British System –notification of addicts

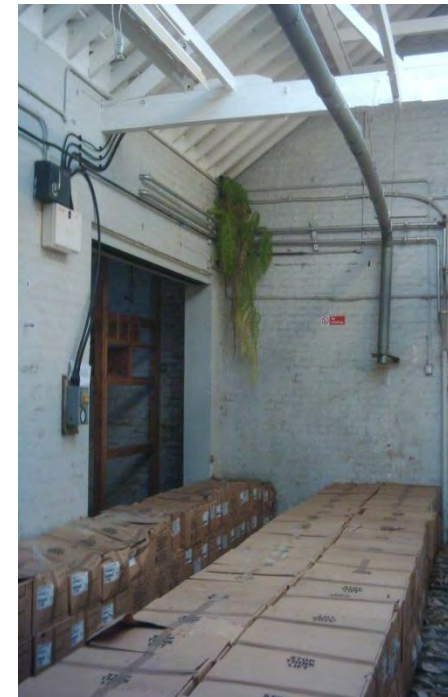
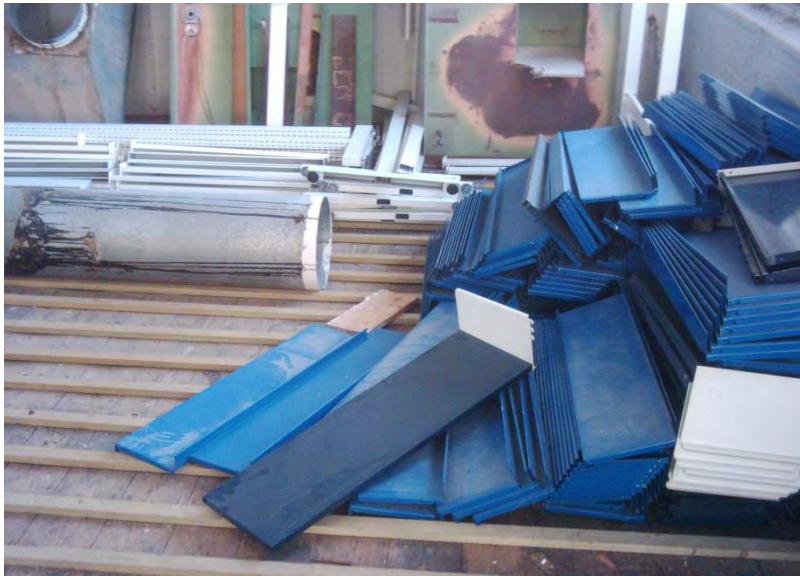
- In 1965 recommendation that a formal notification system be established, implemented under Dangerous Drugs Act 1967
- Addicts Index created in 1968
- Covers notifications to the Home Office Addicts Index of individuals seeking treatment for drug dependence received from Drug Dependence Unit, prison and police, doctors, etc, as well as on prescribers and inspections of chemists and pharmaceutical companies.
- In 1984 a decision was taken to up date the Index and from this date forward data was also entered and stored electronically
- Notification system ended in 1997 – question what to with paper files – destroy or keep?

The Files- destroy, keep or transfer ?

- 1997 paper files transferred to St George's.. Why?
- By 2007 the storage of records under threat and they were beginning to deteriorate
- Decision taken to seek funding to digitise records
- Project established to seek funding for digitisation of the over 190,000+ records of the Addicts Index files
- Aim of project – to provide a research resource for researchers including addiction specialists, medical historians and sociologist, both in the UK and world wide.



Temporary storage



Project Overview

Assessed state of documents, storage facilities

Options paper written

Decision to digitise

Specialist companies asked to submit estimates of costs and samples of scanned/ digitised documents.

Funding sources identified

Funding applications submitted.

Outcome – successful in obtaining funds

Select specialist company



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Next stage

Tender issued – to microfilming/
scanning companies

Company quotes and tenders
examined

Short list of companies invited to
present to Project Steering Group

MicroFormat selected – why?

- ✓ The MicroFormat Group - one of Europe's leading providers of archive preservation, microfilming and digital solutions with centres in Britain, The Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, Czech Republic and Russia.
- ✓ MicroFormat (UK) - one of the largest and oldest document conversion specialists in the British Isles supplying archive preservation document management and digital services.
- ✓ Specialise in provision of solutions tailored to the individual requirements of their clients, demonstrating unrivalled flexibility and standards of service.

MicroFormat selected – why?

- ✓ Large client base including NHS Trusts (such as Royal Free Hampstead, Guy's & St. Thomas', Chelsea & Westminster Healthcare, South West London & St. George's Mental Health) The British Library, The National Gallery, Trade Guilds, Genealogical societies and many more.
- ✓ Experienced in document conversion projects in Europe, the conversion of the World War 1 soldiers medical records, and conversion of the entire archive of every newspaper ever produced for the British Library.

Addicts Index Digitisation Project Steering Group

- The Project Steering Group role is to provide additional expertise and advice to the project.
- 1. To monitor the progress against the specification of the digitisation, both microfilming and pdf outputs, of the addicts index files.
- 2. To review at regular intervals the progress of the project and its outcomes and project deliverables.
- 3. To advise on the guidance for researchers access including dissemination.
- 4. To provide support to the Director of the International Centre for Drug Policy (ICDP) who was the custodian of the Addicts Index files and led on the implementation of the project.



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Specification and work programme

- Microfilming of records onto 16mm Silver Halide long term retention roll film
- Film scanning from the master negative to produce images on CD/DVD or portable hard drive
- Supply of transportation cartons
- Preparation of documents prior to filming
- Contents of each Master Negative and copy indexing onto each CD/DVD
- Database of index and pdfs to mirror the filmed records.



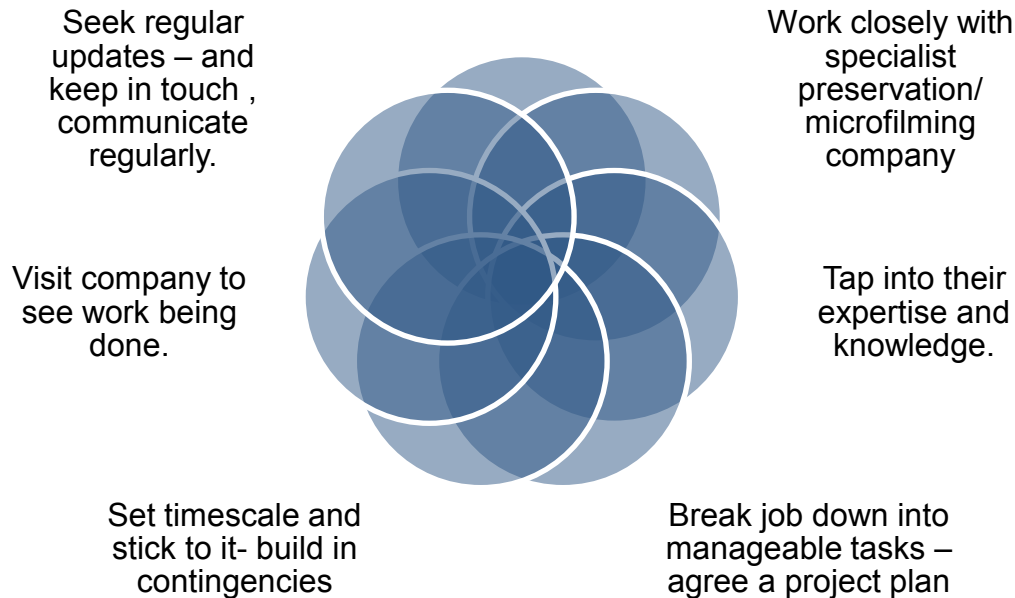
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Specification and work programme

- Images provided back with each file becoming a .pdf document
- Collection and delivery of files
- File retrieval within 24 hours of notification
- Each box collected will represent an individual file folder within will contain pdf's for each file
- An Excel spreadsheet will be present within each file folder as index to that folder and to aid searching for a particular pdf
- A full Excel spreadsheet will be provided also separately that will contain the entire index
- Confirmation of final destruction of paper records
- Database of files & pdfs.

Learning – hints and tips from what made our preservation project a success.

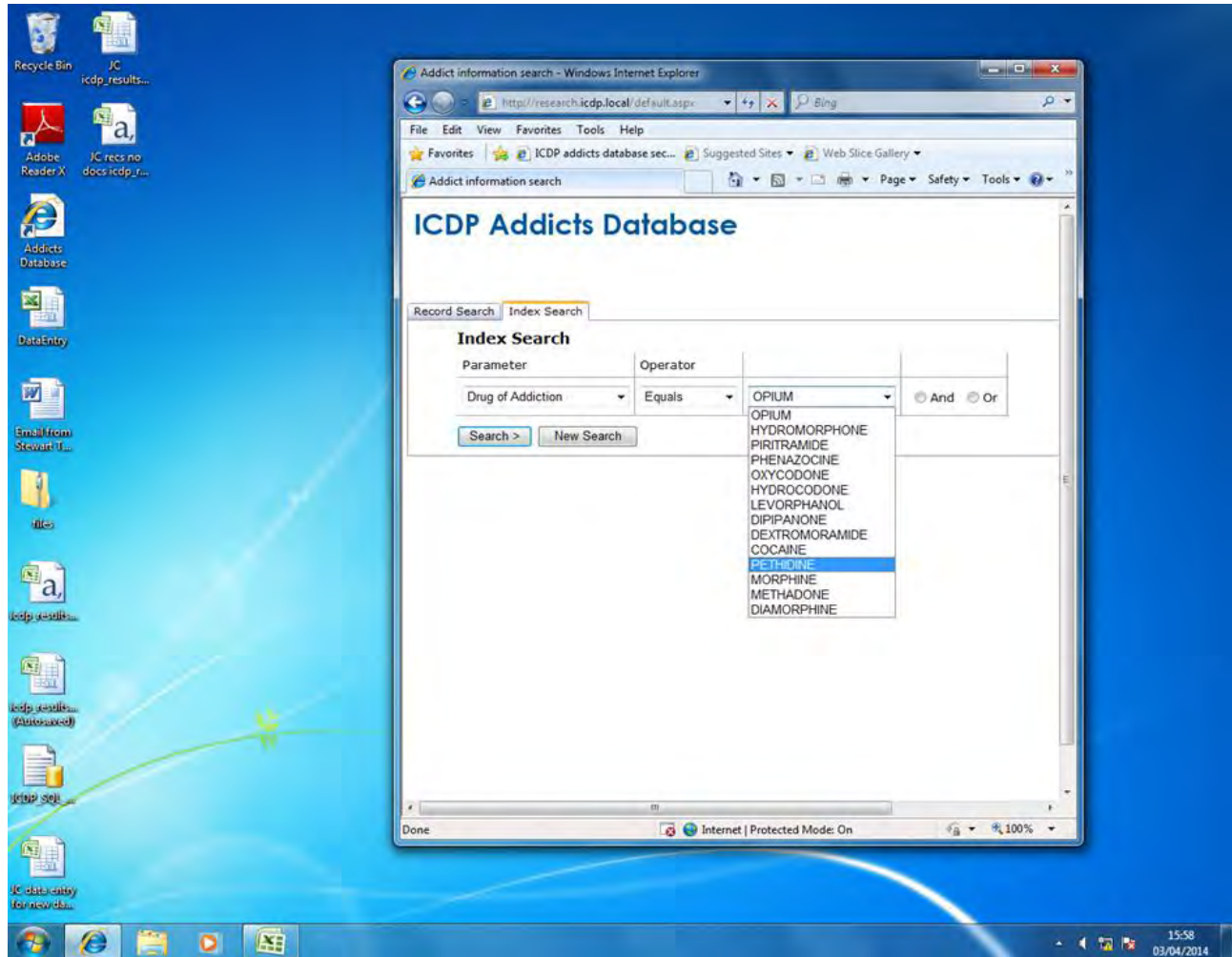




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DATA ON ADDICTS INDEX

- Name, address, date of birth, NHS number of addict
- Nationality/ ethnicity
- Injecting status (from September 1987)
- Original drug(s) of addiction, current drug(s) of addiction and treatment
- Origin of addiction (therapeutic or otherwise)
- Details of death, date, cause drug(s) of overdose
- Notifier- doctor, prison office, police, hospital, treatment centre
- 151,414 addicts & 22,356 notifiers



Recycle Bin
JC icdp_results...

Adobe Reader X
JC recs no docs icdp_r...

Addicts Database

DataEntry

Email from Stewart T...

files

icdp_results...

icdp_results... (Autosaved)

icdp_results...

JC data entry for new db...

Addict information search - Windows Internet Explorer

http://research.icdp.local/default.aspx

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

ICDP Addicts Database

Record Search Index Search

Index Search

Parameter	Operator		
Drug of Addiction	Equals	OPIUM	<input type="radio"/> And <input type="radio"/> Or

Search > New Search

- OPIUM
- HYDROMORPHONE
- PIRITRAMIDE
- PHENAZOCINE
- OXYCODONE
- HYDROCODONE
- LEVORPHANOL
- DIPANONE
- DEXTROMORAMIDE
- COCAINE
- FENTANYL**
- MORPHINE
- METHADONE
- DIAMORPHINE

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What is of interest/value to researchers -

That a unique collection of records previously unavailable, can be available to researchers.

Provision of an historical collection within addictions for analysis of prescribing practices, policy changes and treatments.

Tracking of addict careers both of individuals and different populations over several decades.

Detection of patterns of drug use over time and consider its impact upon societal and health matters, like investigating predictors of premature death among notified addicts.

Insights into government policy regarding treatment; impact of drug control policies on prescribing practices; impact of prescribing practices

These records combined with current monitoring can be used for a UK cohort study of a size un-parallel anywhere in the world to explore survival and death rates of UK addicts.

References/further reading

Bing S & Mott J (2002) *Heroin addiction care and control: the British System 1916-1984*. London: DrugScope

Kilpatrick B, Mortality Statistics of Drug Addicts in the UK (1996) Substance Misuse Bulletin, Vol 29 no 2 p4

Corkery, J.M (n.d) the Home Office Addicts Index as a Research Resource (unpublished)

Step-by-Step Guide to Digitisation Projects

www.cdncouncilarchives.ca/DigitisationToolkitv2.pdf