



The Lanchester Interactive Archive ~~ *“Calling all Lanchester enthusiasts!”* ~~

For many years the main holder worldwide of Lanchester information has been Coventry University. It presents the Lanchester Trust’s annual Student Prize and is sponsoring, with the Lanchester Trust, a Lanchester PhD Scholarship. Its library has been named The Lanchester Library and it is housed in The Frederick Lanchester Building. Its impressive Lanchester collection includes photos, correspondence, notebooks, sketch books, patents, blueprints, hardback books, magazines, press cuttings, audio and visual discs, and so much more. Many of these items and artefacts have been donated by myself, members of the Lanchester family and others.

The continual hunt for Lanchester information received a special boost a few months ago when the Heritage Lotteries Fund recognised the University’s desire to make the general public more aware of the profound work of Frederick Lanchester, along with his younger brothers, Frank and George. HLF’s generous three-year support has allowed most of the Lanchester Collection to be moved to the National Archive for conservation and digitisation. The results will allow, for example, easy access to hundreds of copies of original documents from the 1890s, originally written by Lanchester in pencil, and easily smudged!

HLF funding has also allowed for a large, permanent display room to be created within the Lanchester Library. It will be a place of fun and learning about Lanchester, for children and adults alike. Plans are already in place to arrange visits from student groups from primary through to university ages, while adult groups with varying interests will be welcomed. Individuals can attend unannounced, as this centre for Lanchester discovery will hopefully open many days each week. Officially named the Lanchester Interactive Archive, the impressive project will later employ two part-time Outreach Officers to spread the Lanchester gospel far and wide.

Amongst many other initiatives, Frederick Lanchester’s profound work on ‘heavier-than-air’ flight will be highlighted and his ‘flying machine’ designs will be reproduced in model form to enlighten visitors.



One of the enterprising thoughts is to exhibit parts to make up the front half of a Lanchester car, from the bumper back to the front doors. Fulfilling another aim to encourage interest in engineering, the car's components will be shown highlighted by means of computer-driven augmented reality. It may also be that with engine covers removed, visitors will be able to see how car engines work, as they will show components moving, in linear and rotary movement, and with different gears in action.

There is a great amount of work to do before the LIA is finished but it should be open to the public in spring 2017, the Lanchester Trust Members receiving early, VIP attention of course. All this will be followed up by the first of the annual Lanchester Days, which will showcase primarily dozens of Lanchester cars from 1895 to 1956, plus Daimler and BSA cars and, indeed, anyone in a Veteran, Vintage, or Classic vehicle. Participants and friends will then be able to explore the adjacent Library's LIA. Volunteers from the Lanchester Trust and other organisations will be encouraged to join in and help with next year's event.

As well as this, there is the offer to be involved with the whole Lanchester Interactive Archive project.

Voluntary assistance will be needed in many areas, such as:

- assisting with the creation of the Lanchester car front
- making models of Lanchester aeroplanes and of his other inventions
- recreating Frederick Lanchester's desk and workplace
- introducing the information and artefacts to visitors
- introducing computer games and augmented reality to visitors

To create a display worthy of Lanchester, it is hoped that enthusiasts and the public will wish to donate Lanchester artefacts, photos, documents etc to the LIA. Most urgently needed are parts to make up the front half of the 1930s Lanchester car for public display: a radiator shell, grille and cap, head and side lamps, front bumper, windscreen surround, front axle, hubs and caps, shock absorbers, two front wheels, two matching tyres, brake drums, spring sets, two front wings, bonnet top, scuttle, and two front doors. Please note that even a smashed engine and gearbox, for example, will be gratefully received as more internal components will thus be visible and this half a car really isn't going anywhere!

For more information about this great Lanchester project that we can all share and enjoy, please contact Chris Clark, Lanchester Historian (and volunteer at Coventry University since 1983). Thank you very much for your consideration.

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