

**Collections Information Policy
Kingston History Centre**



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KINGSTON UPON THAMES

Signed:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Theobald'.

Date:

1.9.17

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Kingston History Centre, along with Kingston Museum forms the Kingston Heritage Service. The Heritage Service exists to identify and celebrate what is uniquely special about our borough and its people, locales, traditions and institutions and to build on this history while striving to discover, record and share the new stories occurring all around us.
- 1.2. The Heritage Service has the following objectives:
 - To collect, care for, interpret and promote the borough's heritage in order to inspire a sense of pride and a greater understanding of Kingston's rich and diverse history.
 - To work with other local cultural organisations to make connections between the aspects of culture in the borough which define Kingston as a unique place, such as its riverside location, its royal connections and its innovation, creativity and developments in arts and science.
 - To contribute to the growth, regeneration, health and wellbeing of our borough through a variety of partnerships, projects and learning opportunities.
- 1.3. Kingston History Centre (referred to as the "History Centre") collects, manages and provides access and understanding to historical archives and local studies materials relating primarily to the area of present day borough, with some items contributing to a wider local, national and international understanding of its past.
- 1.4. The purpose of this policy is:
 - To ensure that adequate and appropriate information about collections held by the History Centre care is created, managed and made available to the widest possible audience
 - To raise awareness among staff, researchers, depositors and others about issues relating to the management of information about collections held by the History Centre
 - To provide guidance for staff involved in making decisions about the management of information about collections held by the History Centre
 - To guide the development of plans and procedures relating to collections information at the History Centre.
- 1.5. This policy relates to and is supported by the following documents:
 - Kingston Heritage Service Forward Plan 2016-2020
 - Kingston Library and Heritage Strategy 2017-2020
 - Kingston History Centre Collections Development Policy
 - Kingston History Centre Collections Care and Conservation Policy
 - Kingston History Centre Collections Improvement Plan
 - Kingston History Centre Access Policy
- 1.6. This policy is also supported by relevant procedural documents which will be regularly reviewed and updated. These cover activity such as accessioning, cataloguing, loans and movement control.

- 1.7. The policy has been created in consultation with Kingston Heritage Service staff, and senior colleagues to align with the strategy for the entire Heritage Service and Culture Team. Those consulted will be able to access the Policy as defined below in section 11.

2. Context to collections information

2.1 Background

- 2.1.1 Records of Kingston town were first pulled together in 1684. Originally stored within the Town Hall, various surveys and inventories of the records were made, with rearrangement of the records in the 1920s forming part of a Surrey wide inventory issued in 1929 by Surrey County Council and the Surrey Record Society.
- 2.1.2 When the boroughs of Kingston, Surbiton and Maldens and Coombe were brought together in 1965 to form the new London Borough, the archives of the new borough up to this point were re-arranged and re-listed. The Guide to the Borough Records was published as a full hard copy catalogue in 1970. This was later retro converted into the specialist Adlib cataloguing software.
- 2.1.3 Approximately 40% of archive deposits acquired since 1965 have been fully catalogued, first on paper lists, and subsequently retro converted into Adlib. All fully catalogued material on Adlib is now available on the National Archives Discovery catalogue and this is the main method by which researchers can currently directly access information about the archive collections.
- 2.1.4 Most archival deposits acquired since 1980 have been recorded in a hard copy accession register and until 2005 were also uploaded into Adlib. Some of this information is available to researchers on the National Archives Discovery catalogue. Although most depositors are known, only limited information about the ownership and legal status of much of the collection appears to survive.
- 2.1.5 The use of Adlib was gradually discontinued until 2015 and a significant cataloguing backlog developed leaving a substantial proportion of the collection only box listed. Small amounts remain completely unaccessioned and/or unlisted.
- 2.1.6 The local history collections were physically brought together with the archival collections in the 1980s, and have retained separate accessioning, cataloguing and disposal procedures. A number of hard copy indexes, excel databases and Adlib catalogues exist which act as the primary means for staff and researchers to search and locate this material.
- 2.1.7 In 2015 the History Centre completed its move from the North Kingston Centre to new accommodation in the Guildhall. At its former home, all material was stored on-

site. As a result of moving to the Guildhall, the archive collections and some local history material was moved to off-site storage and the need to improve location information was identified.

- 2.1.8 There has been little formal information collected in relation to the disposal of archival material as very little activity has taken place to date.

2.2 Recent developments

- 2.2.1 In 2015 an audit began to improve information held about the exact box location of material held at the off-site storage facility. This is ongoing.
- 2.2.2 In 2016 the History Centre began taking steps to realign the archival and local history collections and introduce shared policies, plans and procedures in order to increase efficiency and enhance the experience of researchers. The collection now broadly comprises two categories: archival material (which now includes ephemeral items, oral histories, photographs etc.) and published material.
- 2.2.3 In 2017 the Heritage Service completed the migration of data from Adlib to CALM, which is now the specialist software to manage information about archival, published and museum collections. Information was mapped into CALM from Adlib, however this data requires considerable cleaning and supplementing with information contained in other locations. This work is underway.
- 2.2.4 The introduction of CALM led to the development of a new hierarchical catalogue structure for the archival and published collections. Existing catalogues are being converted into the new structure and a cataloguing audit is planned in order to identify which other material should be prioritised for new cataloguing activity.

3. Intentions for collections information

- 3.1 The History Centre recognises that creating, maintaining and safeguarding information about its collections and associated intellectual property is key to enabling access and proving the integrity and legal ownership of records, as well as being integral to good collections management.
- 3.2 In addition to the ongoing work identified in section 2.2, the History Centre will seek to collect information during the 'life' of an acquisition as follows:
- during acquisition and accessioning
 - during cataloguing (including accruals)
 - about location, movement, demand and use
 - about access conditions
 - about physical condition, preservation and conservation activities
 - about disposal.

- 3.3 Collections information is currently held in a variety of places and formats, however the History Centre will work towards CALM being the primary means by which collections information is created and managed where this is appropriate.
- 3.4 The History Centre will merge collection information procedures relating to archival material and local history material wherever this is possible and appropriate, while adhering to recognised standards.
- 3.5 The History Centre will use in house accessioning and cataloguing procedures which draw upon, but are not limited to the following standards and guidance:
- International Standard Archival Description (ISAD(G))
 - Manual of Archival Description (MAD)
 - National Council on Archives, Rules for the Construction of Personal, Place and Corporate Names (1997) (NCA)
 - International Council on Archives, International Standard Archival Authority for Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families [ISAAR(CPF)]
 - Local Government Classification Scheme
 - Dewey Decimal Classification Scheme
- 3.6 The History Centre will work towards recording the information required to ensure digital materials are preserved and can be retrieved and used in line with the Open Archival Information System (OAIS) reference model.

4. Acquisition and accessioning

- 4.1 The terms concerning all new acquisitions, whether archival, published or mixed, will be confirmed in writing on a standard form signed by both parties (see also **Collections Development Policy**)
- 4.2 An accession record will be created on CALM for all new acquisitions.
- 4.3 Acquisitions containing archival material (including ephemeral, photographic and oral history based material) will have the following minimum information recorded during accessioning:
- Unique accession number
 - Acquisition date
 - Accession category
 - Content description (box list), extent and covering dates
 - Contact details of the source of acquisition
 - Administrative and custodial history
 - Legal status (including terms of deposit, access conditions and intellectual property rights)
 - Any additional depositor imposed restrictions
 - Condition and location information

- 4.4 Acquisitions containing only published material will have the following minimum information recorded during accessioning:
- Unique accession number
 - Acquisition date
 - Title, author and publication details
 - Contact details of the source of acquisition
 - Extent, condition and location information
- 4.5 Procedures are being adapted to fully encompass digital acquisitions. Until then, in addition to the above, depositors will be asked to provide additional metadata if possible and confirm that they are happy for preservation activities to be carried out on the deposit as required.
- 4.6 Each acquisition will have a hard copy Object Entry File containing copies of all correspondence and forms completed as part of the acquisition process.
- 4.7 Once the acquisition is formally accessioned into the collection, a receipt will be issued to the depositor.
- 4.8 A finite number of collections for which we receive regular additions by the same depositor e.g. minutes, newsletters, will be accepted without the completion of additional acquisition paperwork and will be added to the appropriate CALM accession record.
- 4.9 The History Centre will participate in The National Archives' annual Accessions to Repositories Survey to enable up-to-date information to appear on the National Archives website.

5. Cataloguing

- 5.1 The History Centre understands that the creation of finding aids is key to making the collections accessible to the widest possible audience.
- 5.2 The History Centre is committed to ensuring that all archival material (including ephemeral material, oral histories and relevant photographic deposits) is catalogued to at least collection level as soon as possible after acquisition.
- 5.3 The History Centre will arrange archival records hierarchically according to provenance and original order wherever possible. If it is not possible to arrange by provenance, a functional approach to arrangement will be taken.
- 5.4 Accruals to existing archival collections will be catalogued alongside the existing material, but will be identified as separate acquisitions through their accession number.

- 5.5 Catalogue records for archival material created on CALM will include the following mandatory information in accordance with ISAD(G):
- Unique reference number
 - Title
 - Date
 - Extent
 - Level of description
 - Creator
- 5.6 In addition to the above mandatory information, catalogue records for archival material will also include the following (as appropriate to the level of description):
- Accession number
 - Administrative and custodial history
 - Description
 - Appraisal decisions
 - Conditions of access
 - Reproduction conditions
 - Condition and location information
- 5.7 Catalogue records for published material created on CALM will include the following mandatory information:
- Shelf mark and copy number
 - Title, author, ISBN and publication details
 - Extent, condition and location information
- 5.8 The History Centre maintains a variety of existing lists and indexes to specific collections. As CALM allows for searching by key-word, new indexing activity will initially be undertaken on a case-by-case basis and the approach reviewed regularly.
- 5.9 The History Centre will work towards making its catalogue available through CalmView. Until editing work is completed on CALM, researchers will be directed to the National Archives Discovery catalogue.
- 5.10 The History Centre is committed to producing a range of other finding aids which will be made available online, as well as in hardcopy in the Reading Room.
- 5.11 The History Centre understands the importance of other online gateways, notably the Archives Hub, as well as social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter and Flickr. It will work towards improving the information available on these platforms.

6. Location, movement, demand and usage

- 6.1 The shelf location of all material held permanently on-site at the History Centre will be held on CALM.
- 6.2 Most archival material and some published material is held permanently off-site due to space restrictions at the History Centre. Due to the temporary nature of the current off-site storage arrangements and the cataloguing backlog, box locations of this material will be held in a spreadsheet rather than on CALM for the foreseeable future.
- 6.3 Information relating to the movement of any material between the off-site storage and the History Centre will be recorded and retained.
- 6.4 Information about mislaid or withdrawn records will be recorded in the appropriate catalogue record and location list.
- 6.5 Information relating to loans of material to/from the History Centre and external bodies will be recorded and retained.
- 6.6 Demand and usage of material will be recorded in several ways. This information will be used to help prioritise collections improvement tasks.

7. Access

- 7.1 The History Centre's collection includes material which is subject to certain access and reproduction restrictions. These may be determined by the depositor, The National Archives and the Information Commissioner's Office, or the following legislation:
 - The Freedom of Information Act 2000
 - The Data Protection Act 2000
 - Copyright and Related Rights Regulations Act 2003
 - Environmental Information Regulations 2004
 - Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964
- 7.2 The History Centre will ensure that the information it creates and maintains enables it to comply with the above conditions. Any restrictions will be recorded on the appropriate CALM accession and catalogue records, and on archival packaging.
- 7.3 Access restrictions may also be necessary due to the format and condition of the material. Where special equipment is required to view material or where only surrogates are available, this will be recorded on the CALM record and flagged with researchers.

8. Physical condition, preservation and conservation

- 8.1 The physical condition of material will be assessed during acquisition, accessioning and cataloguing. This information will be entered into CALM used to identify material requiring conservation or preservation work.
- 8.2 Conservation activities undertaken on material will be recorded in CALM. See also the **Collections Care and Conservation Policy**.

9. Disposal

- 9.1 During the acquisition process the History Centre will record whether permission is given by the depositor for the History Centre to offer the material to another repository or confidentially destroy it if appropriate. See the **Collections Development Policy** for further details.
- 9.2 The History Centre will maintain a register of all disposal decisions. They will also be recorded on the appropriate CALM accession or catalogue record.

10. Roles and responsibilities

- 10.1. The collections managers, as detailed in this policy, relate to the Borough Archivist, Assistant Archivist and Local History Officer. These posts are responsible for decision making about the creation and management of information about the collection as set out in this policy.
- 10.2. Volunteers and other members of the Heritage Team will follow and implement this policy in consultation with the collection managers who will provide training and guidance on specific activities such as cataloguing using CALM.

11. Communicating this policy

- 11.1. The History Centre will ensure that this policy is promoted, publicised and understood by staff, volunteers, public, management and stakeholders through:
 - Production of this policy on the Heritage Service's website for access by the public and local groups, such as the Friends of Kingston Museum and Heritage Service.
 - Training for staff, volunteers and where appropriate other stakeholders
 - Promotion in professional activities.

12. Implementation, Monitoring & Review

- 12.1. The Heritage Service acknowledges that a policy is a time bound document and that the priorities and objectives of any organisation change over time due to a range of impacts. The policy must be flexible and able to respond to change – both to local impacts and wider economic and political contexts.
- 12.2. The policy will be reviewed in October 2020, with all necessary consultation being undertaken as part of this process.