

**Collections Development Policy
Kingston History Centre**



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KINGSTON UPON THAMES

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Thorne'.

Date:

19.17

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 the History Centre's collections accurately reflect the history of the council and the people of Kingston upon Thames
 - To raise awareness among staff, researchers, depositors and others about issues relating to the development of collections at the History Centre
 - To provide guidance for staff involved in making decisions about the development of collections held by the History Centre
 - To guide the development of plans and procedures relating to collections development 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 Service Strategy 2017-2020
 - Kingston History Centre Collections Information 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 supported by relevant procedural documents which will be regularly reviewed and updated. These cover activity such as acquisition, accessioning, deaccessioning and disposal.
- 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 10.

2. Context to collections development

2.1 Background

- 2.1.1 The Borough's records date back to the 1208 Charter issued by King John which granted Kingston certain freedoms from the crown. 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 the 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 Malden and Coombe were brought together in 1965 to form the new London Borough, the records of the new borough were re-arranged and re-listed and access provided to them via the Surrey Record Office. The Guide to the Borough Records was published as a full hard copy catalogue in 1970.
- 2.1.3 In 1980 archives and local history material were brought together with the museum, art and archaeology collections to form a new Heritage Unit at Kingston Museum. This brought together the archives for the borough with the local history material which was transferred from the reference libraries. It was at this point that the service also started collecting records which were not products of the council.
- 2.1.4 The previous location of what is now with Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames within Surrey meant that a number of records remained with Surrey Record Office, and continue to do so.
- 2.1.5 The History Centre now forms part of the Kingston Heritage Service, along with Kingston Museum. In 2015 the History Centre completed its move from the North Kingston Centre to new accommodation in the Guildhall. As a result of moving to the Guildhall, the archive collections and some local history material were moved to off-site storage.

2.2 Recent developments

- 2.2.1 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.
- 2.2.2 This is the first Collections Development Policy adopted by the History Centre, prior to that, activity was guided by a Collecting Policy. This policy related only to archive material and was focused on passive, routine and reactive accessions rather than proactive collecting.

2.3 Legal status

- 2.3.1 The Borough has a duty to care for its own records under the Local Government Act 1972, specifically section 224 which states that councils will 'make proper arrangements with respect to any documents that belong to or are in the custody of the council or any of their officers'.
- 2.3.2 The History Centre has been appointed by the Lord Chancellor as a repository for specific classes of Public Records under section 4 the Public Records Act, 1958.
- 2.3.3 The History Centre has been appointed to hold and receive on deposit manorial and tithe records by recognition of the Master of the Rolls through The National Archives, under the Law of Property Act 1922 and the Tithe Act 1936. Ongoing oversight of recognised repositories is now part of Archive Service Accreditation.
- 2.3.4 The History Centre is aware of and will adhere to the following legislation, where appropriate:
- 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

3. Scope

- 3.1. The History Centre will identify, collect and preserve the documentary heritage of Kingston upon Thames and make it available to the widest possible audience. In doing so it will seek to ensure that its collections reflect all communities living and working in the borough in order to develop a representative history of the area.

- 3.2. The History Centre will acquire material which relates to the geographical area covered by the present Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames (as of 1965), including the former Boroughs of Surbiton and Malden and Coombe.
- 3.3. The History Centre will acquire non-current records and associated ephemera of informational or historical importance created by:
- The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames and its predecessors. This will include evidence of high level decision making, governance records and departmental records.
 - Businesses, charities, societies, schools and other bodies based in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames.
 - Individuals living in or otherwise connected with the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames. These will include personal papers, photographs, oral histories, and memoirs.
- 3.4. The History Centre will acquire certain classes of local public records held under the Public Records Act, 1958.
- 3.5. The History Centre will acquire photographs depicting places within the geographic area specified in 3.2
- 3.6. The History Centre will acquire the following categories of published material relating to the geographic area, including but not limited to:
- Books and pamphlets
 - Maps (predominantly OS and road maps)
 - Journals and periodicals
 - Newspapers
- 3.7. Material is not defined by format and may include paper, parchment, audio-visual media, born digital records or any other format which holds unique legal, administrative or historical evidence deemed worthy of permanent preservation.
- 3.8. Audio-visual material may be stored in the care of a specialist repository such as the London Screen Archives if appropriate, with access copies available at the History Centre. A judgement will be made on the care and access requirements of the material.
- 3.9. Digitised and analogue copies and surrogates may be accepted or created where appropriate, at the discretion of the appropriate collections manager.
- 3.10. Records that meet the other selection criteria will be accepted regardless of date.
- 3.11. A collections manager may exercise their judgement on the significance of material offered to the History Centre which falls outside the scope of this policy.

4. Exceptions

- 4.1. The History Centre will not accept material primarily relating to or arising in areas outside the boundaries specified in 3.2 unless it provides context to other material held by the History Centre or unless there are exceptional circumstances and the agreement of any other more appropriate archive authorities has been sought.
- 4.2. The History Centre will not accept material of low informational value or where it shows little about the aims and objectives of the creator.
- 4.3. The History Centre will not seek to compete for material with other repositories.
- 4.4. The History Centre may refer depositors to Surrey History Centre or another repository if the material being offered is an accrual or otherwise closely relates to collections already held there.
- 4.5. The History Centre will work with other ARCHON registered archive repositories in the borough, namely Kingston University, Kingston Grammar School and Dorich House Museum, to ensure related records are deposited in the most suitable location.
- 4.6. The History Centre will not collect records created by the Church of England within the boundaries of the Royal Borough. Depositors will be referred to Surrey History Centre or London Metropolitan Archives, these being the official Diocesan Record Offices.
- 4.7. The History Centre will not collect records created by the Methodist Church. Surrey History Centre has an agreement with the Methodist Church to hold records of churches within their catchment area and depositors will be referred there.
- 4.8. Where appropriate, artefacts will be directed to the Kingston Museum and any links between collections held by the Museum and History Centre recorded. The decision will be based on the nature and volume of the artefacts and the existing collections.
- 4.9. The History Centre reserves the right to refuse material of a specialist nature which requires for its management, skills and resources which are unavailable, or where there is a more suitable repository available.
- 4.10. The History Centre will not normally accept material which is not deemed to be of sufficient quality or physical condition for permanent preservation or where there are insufficient resources available to store and administer it to the required standards as defined in PD5454:2012. If material requires significant repackaging or repair, the costs of this work may be required from the depositor or creating body before the records are accepted into the collection.
- 4.11. The History Centre is committed to ensuring the public access to its collections. Records which will be closed for a significant period of time after processing, other

than for compliance with Data Protection legislation, or other applicable legislation, will not usually be accepted. Exceptions for fixed time periods may occasionally be made if requested on the basis of security or legal concerns. The 20 year closure period for records created by the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames may be used as a guide.

- 4.12. The History Centre will not normally accept material for which the equipment required to read or otherwise access it is unavailable or financially prohibitive to acquire.
- 4.13. The History Centre will not formally accession duplicate material, other than some published material. Copies and transcripts of records held in the archive may be accepted but held as part of the non-collection 'surrogate' files or added to the published book collection as appropriate.
- 4.14. The History Centre will not formally accession copies of archival records where the original is held at a different ARCHON registered archive repository. When offered, these may be added to the non-collection 'local history reference' files and/or the catalogue entries for related items annotated with the external reference number.
- 4.15. The History Centre will not accept any material without completion of the appropriate paperwork.
- 4.16. The History Centre no longer accepts material on long-term loan or deposit unless as part of an existing and actively managed arrangement.
- 4.17. Copyright for archival material should be transferred to Kingston History Centre at the point of deposit. Kingston History Centre reserves the right to refuse material where copyright is retained by the depositor and will not accept any material which it is unable to make use of itself for educational and publicity purposes.
- 4.18. The History Centre will not accept material for which there are concerns about legal ownership and proof may be sought from the donor.

5. Methods

- 5.1. The History Centre will work with other council departments, in conjunction with Records Management, to identify records suitable for permanent retention and to arrange for their transfer to the History Centre after they have reached the end of their active life cycle.
- 5.2. The History Centre will seek to acquire material from external depositors as a gift, or in exceptional circumstances, through purchase.

- 5.3. Deposits will be encouraged through information on the website, through working with local communities and individuals to proactively identify material of historical significance and through working with other collecting repositories.
- 5.4. Depositors will be encouraged to provide advance information about potential deposits order to enable staff to evaluate the deposit against this policy.
- 5.5. All gifts and internal transfers will be confirmed in writing by the appropriate deposit and transfer forms signed by both parties.
- 5.6. Transfers from other repositories will be accepted with transfer note where the History Centre is the most appropriate repository.
- 5.7. Service generated archive content will require the completion of appropriate paperwork.
- 5.8. All material will become the property of the council once formally accessioned.
- 5.9. Where unsolicited material is deposited by post, effort will be made to obtain the correct paperwork as set out in 5.5. Where no contact details are supplied, the material will automatically become the property of the council upon receipt.
- 5.10. The History Centre may require finding aids to be provided by the depositor if the size or complexity of the deposit is likely to render the documents otherwise inaccessible until processed.
- 5.11. All material will be assessed against the criteria in sections 3 and 4 on arrival. The History Centre has the right to refuse all or part of a deposit on these grounds.

6. Collection priorities

- 6.1. The History Centre will oversee the continued development of its collections in order to ensure that they reflect all aspects of the borough's past as identified.
- 6.2. Collecting priorities will include those records at threat of loss, damage or destruction, and those which are under-represented in the History Centre's holdings.
- 6.3. The History Centre will continue to identify strengths and weaknesses in the collections (see appendix A). This will be achieved by:
 - increasing and reviewing collections information
 - analysing use of the collections
 - analysing trends in the composition of the borough's inhabitants
 - monitoring other key changes within the borough
 - consulting with key stakeholders.

- 6.4. The History Centre will develop retention schedules for certain types of archives and depositors in order to develop more rigorous and consistent selection criteria and to assist with the appraisal and transfer process.

7. Processing and access

- 7.1. All new acquisitions will be entered onto the CALM accessions database
- 7.2. Acquisitions will be classified as formally accessioned when a receipt (and box listing if appropriate) has been issued to the depositor. This will occur within a reasonable time frame.
- 7.3. Collection level cataloguing of archive material to ISAD(G) standard and its inclusion in finding aids will be overseen by the collections manager and will occur at the earliest opportunity in order to ensure public access.
- 7.4. Cataloguing of published material to approved standards and its inclusion in finding aids will be overseen by the collections manager and will occur at the earliest opportunity in order to ensure public access.

8. Deaccessioning

- 8.1. Material worthy of permanent preservation will be selected by qualified staff with the agreement of the depositor prior to acquisition wherever possible.
- 8.2. Further appraisal may be undertaken during formal accessioning, cataloguing or periodic reappraisal. At this point the unwanted material will be returned to the depositor, offered to another repository or confidentially destroyed depending upon the ownership status and according to the disposal process and senior sign off.
- 8.3. The History Centre shall have authority to transfer records to a more suitable repository if it is considered that the documents would benefit from relocation.

9. Roles and responsibilities

- 9.1. 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 on the development of the collection as set out in this policy.

- 9.2. Other members of the Heritage Team will follow and implement this policy in consultation with the collection managers. Final decisions are at the discretion of the collections managers.

10. Communicating this policy

- 10.1. 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.

11. Implementation, Monitoring & Review

- 11.1. 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.
- 11.2. The policy will be reviewed in October 2020, with all necessary consultation being undertaken as part of this process.

Appendix A

The History Centre will continue to identify strengths and weaknesses in the collections, both published and archival, through the implementation of the **Collections Improvement Plan**. This will be achieved by:

- increasing and reviewing collections information
- analysing use of the collections
- analysing trends in the composition of the borough's inhabitants
- monitoring other key changes within the borough
- consulting with key stakeholders.

Collection Strengths

- The records of the local administration in the period before the Royal London Borough was formed in 1965. As well as records from the administration and its functions (including, planning, education, justice and trade etc.), early parts of the borough collections include private documents, estate records and records relating to military matters, amongst others.
- Over 600 deposited collections from a mixture of depositors, such as schools, charities, community groups, individuals and families.
- Early 20th Century photographic collections covering a wide of geographic locations, events and activities.
- Local news coverage, with an almost complete collection of The Surrey Comet newspaper dating from 1854 to the current day.

Collecting Priorities

The History Centre has identified the following initial areas as priorities for collecting:

- Communities and people including, but not limited to:
 - Recent migrant communities and populations e.g. the Tamil, Korean and South Asian communities
 - Refugee populations
 - Transient populations e.g. economic workers, military personnel, students etc.
 - Other communities, e.g. LGBTQ, disability groups
- Collections from the south of the borough including Tolworth and Chessington
- Records of religious houses, faith groups and related organisations
- Records of RBK since 1965 to enhance ad-hoc collections and better represent the activities of the administration
- Local sub-cultures and activities outside of formal groups and societies

We recognise that most information produced now is born digital, and that as we develop our procedures and systems to accept and manage these types of records, we will start to actively seek out these formats in tandem with analogue collections.