

LOCAL STUDIES – COLLECTIONS POLICY

Title:	Collections Policy
Contents:	The Local Studies policies relating to Collections Management, Loans, Donations, Documentation, Conservation, Electronic Archiving, Access, Marketing & Volunteers

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Local Studies Collection of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames is based at the Old Town Hall, Richmond and provides access to material relating to the history of the Borough and the individuals, organisations and businesses within it.
- 1.2 Local Studies is administratively part of the Library Service, which falls within the Education, Children’s Services and Culture directorate of the Council.

2. STATEMENT OF AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives of the Local Studies Collection are as follows:

- 2.1 To collect and retain written, photographic and other records reflecting every aspect of the Borough’s rich heritage.
- 2.2 To manage the collection in accordance with good library and archive practice.
- 2.3 To ensure that items are preserved and stored in accordance with the relevant government and professional standards.
- 2.4 To raise awareness of the collection among potential users and encourage personal visits and access to online resources.
- 2.5 To enable as many users as possible to access the collections either by visiting us in person or by means of online resources.
- 2.6 To ensure that the collection is representative of all communities within the Borough, including those such as ethnic minorities that have historically been under-represented
- 2.7 To maintain and promote a professional enquiry service
- 2.8 To enhance the educational facilities for children and adults that are provided by the Borough

- 2.9 To seek incremental sources of funding to enhance the collection and enable it to be made more widely available
- 2.10 To work closely with other Council departments, Richmond Museum, Local History Societies, Family History Societies, other archives within the Borough (for example Richmond Park, Hampton Court and Kew Gardens) and the archive services of the adjoining London Boroughs
- 2.11 To strengthen links with the local community by providing opportunities for volunteering

3. COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY

Historical Background

- 3.1 The Local Studies Collection includes the collections previously held by the former boroughs of Barnes, Richmond and Twickenham. In Richmond there has been a dedicated Local Studies Librarian since 1985. The current Local Studies searchroom is named the Albert Barkas Room after the librarian of Richmond who started the collection in 1893. Mr Arthur Burrell started the Twickenham Local Studies Collection. He was Chairman of the Libraries Committee from 1925 to 1944 and was a notable local historian. The Richmond and Twickenham collections were combined at the Old Town Hall, Richmond in 2000.

Local Studies Collection

- 3.2 As at December 2011 the Collection comprises approximately:
 - 17,000 letterpress items (books and pamphlets)
 - 17,000 photographs
 - 4,000 prints, watercolours and engravings
 - 4,000 maps
- 3.3 The items cover all parts of the Borough of Richmond upon Thames and its immediate environs. The collection has been acquired from the records of the Council and its predecessors, by donation and to a lesser extent by purchase. There is a near-complete run on microfilm of the Richmond and Twickenham Times from its first publication in 1873 to December 2009, and copies of many other shorter-lived newspapers with local coverage.
- 3.4 Special collections include a unique collection of playbills for Richmond Theatre dating back to 1769.
- 3.5 A small amount of material is also held on cine-film, video and audio cassette. A project is underway to convert some of these items to a digital format.

Archives Collection

- 3.6 The Archives Collection includes:
- Over 5,000 property deeds dating back to 1489
 - Parish records (though not registers of baptisms, marriages and burials)
 - Workhouse records
 - Collections of material deposited by the originators – for example the records of the Richmond Labour Party
 - Files of miscellaneous information, newspaper cuttings etc covering most of the roads and larger buildings, societies and famous former residents of the borough
 - Collections of the works of local residents Alexander Pope (1688-1744) and Horace Walpole (1717-1797)
 - Correspondence of literary agent and author Douglas Sladen (1856-1947)
 - Collections of local historians.
 - Collections of local firms, societies and organisations.
- 3.7 Much of the material in § 3.6 has yet to be catalogued. There is currently (2011) a ten-year backlog of items awaiting cataloguing.

Geographic coverage

- 3.8 The Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service collects items relevant to the history of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, defined by the Borough boundaries as created in 1965.
- 3.9 The area overlaps with the collection areas covered by Surrey History Centre (SHC) and London Metropolitan Archives (LMA). In particular, most surviving parish registers for the Surrey side of the Borough are at SHC and for the Middlesex side at LMA. Despite this, Local Studies staff consider that, in general, items dealing with places or events wholly within the Borough are best kept in the local collection. Items which also cover other London Boroughs are more appropriately held at SHC or LMA. Duplicates of the microfilms of the parish registers of the Borough held at SHC/LMA and other items with a strong local connection held in other archives will be acquired over time.
- 3.10 Items relating to the history of areas outside the Borough, which might create overlap with other London Boroughs, will not normally be collected. However, there are likely to be occasions in which items are of interest to more than one Borough. In these cases the most appropriate location for the item will be discussed with the Borough or Boroughs concerned.
- 3.11 Objects are not usually collected unless they form an integral part of a documentary collection. Potential donors will be encouraged to offer objects that do not fall into this category to the museums of Richmond and Twickenham.

3.12 Similarly, paintings and other works of art will usually be part of the Borough's Fine Art Collection, based at Orleans House Gallery in Twickenham.

4. LOANS POLICY

Loans to the collection

- 4.1 Acceptance of individual items on loan for indefinite periods can cause administrative problems, and raise issues of responsibility for maintenance and conservation. Loans will therefore be accepted if they are for a specified period of time only and:
- a) If they are items required for specific temporary exhibitions (short term loans, up to one year); or
 - b) If they are a specific collection of items or a single very important item which significantly enhances the existing collection (long term loans, one to five years with option for renewal); or
 - c) If they are items belonging to companies, museums or organisations which are unable to transfer the ownership of the item.
- 4.2 The term 'permanent loan' has no legal meaning. Items will only be accepted on this basis if they are in category c) above and would otherwise be outright gifts.

Loans from the collection

- 4.3 **Books.** Some duplicate volumes in the Local Studies Collection are available for loan to individuals at the discretion of the senior member of staff on duty. No other items will be lent to individuals.
- 4.4 **Archival Material.** Loans to other archives will only be made on the condition that the borrower takes full responsibility, and bears the cost, for transport, insurance, security and, if necessary, conservation of the item(s) loaned. Loans of archival material will only be made to individuals in exceptional circumstances – for example to the originators of the material for indexing.
- 4.5 **Illustrations.** Photographs, prints and engravings will be loaned to institutions for exhibitions, provided that insurance and other costs are covered by them and at the discretion of the Local Studies Librarian.
- 4.6 **Slides** will be available for loan to local groups, organisations and individuals

5. DONATIONS POLICY

- 5.1 The Local Studies team always welcome donations to the collection where these contribute to the knowledge and understanding of the Borough.

However under the usual terms The Library retains the right to break up the components of the donation and dispose of duplicate material or items that we do not consider of lasting value where we consider this most appropriate for the collection as a whole.

- 5.2 In cases where donors request that a closure period be applied to their donations, their wishes will be respected unless these conflict with Freedom of Information or other applicable legislation.
- 5.3 For *permanent loans* see § 4.1 of Loans Policy above.

6. DOCUMENTATION POLICY

- 6.1 For purposes of study, audit, proof of ownership and legal admissibility the collection will be documented to the appropriate professional standards.
- 6.2 All items within the care of the Local Studies Collection will be fully recorded according to standard archival practice subject to the constraints on the service. This will include the circumstances and conditions of their acceptance / accession and such other information as is necessary to complement the object, in an appropriate, secure and permanent form capable of easy retrieval. Newly acquired items will be added to the Local Studies current archival cataloguing system, and older material will be added to the system over time.
- 6.3 All books held in the Local Studies Library will be catalogued on the Library Service's current library management system used by (and thus visible to) all the libraries within the Borough.
- 6.4 It is the responsibility of all staff to safeguard the confidentiality of sensitive data contained in the Local Studies Collection and to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act (1998), the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and all future applicable legislation.

7. CONSERVATION POLICY

- 7.1 The Local Studies team will protect the items in the collection against physical deterioration whether in use, in store, or on loan elsewhere.
- 7.2 Local Studies staff do not have the training or the facilities to undertake specialist conservation work. Access to professional, skilled conservation services will therefore be obtained as required. Staff will make use of these services where necessary (subject to funding constraints) to ensure the welfare of items in the collection.

8. ELECTRONIC ARCHIVING

- 8.1 The Service does not have the resources or the expertise to take responsibility for any aspects of electronic archiving, for archiving web pages on which the local collections are represented or for archiving the Library Service or Corporate websites.

9. ACCESS AND COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Access

- 9.1 Direct public access to the Local Studies Collection will usually be in the searchroom on the second floor of the Old Town Hall, Richmond. The searchroom has twelve study places, three computers offering access to the internet and two reader printers for viewing and making copies from microfilm and fiche. Power sockets are also available for those using their own equipment. Most of the archival holdings are in an adjoining store and can be retrieved quickly on request without the need for a formal ordering process.
- 9.2 Experienced Local Studies staff are always on hand in the searchroom to offer help and professional expertise in the use of Ancestry and other on line resources.
- 9.3 There is no disabled access to the searchroom but special arrangements can be made to allow wheelchair users to consult items in the first floor Reference Library. It would be helpful to have prior notice of this.
- 9.4 In order to make the items in the collection discoverable online, Local Studies staff will continue the programme of cataloguing and digitisation. Customers will be able to assess the resources held before visiting in person. To increase the range of materials in the collection available for remote access more items will be digitised for online display. Due to the volume of material and the cost digitisation will proceed slowly. It will eventually make many of our most popular items – photographs, for example – available online.

Reprographics

- 9.5 Local Studies staff will permit copies to be made of items in the collection wherever possible, subject to copyright laws. However, it may not be possible to photocopy or scan large or delicate items – the preservation of the items in our care must be the highest priority. An appropriate fee will be charged for all reprographics, including the use of personal digital cameras and scanners.

Education

- 9.6 Local Studies will take an active role in heritage education within the Borough including hosting visits by school groups in conjunction with Richmond Museum. Wherever possible The Local Studies Library will seek to forge long-term links with local schools and maintain participation in the Borough's Family Learning scheme.
- 9.7 Local Studies staff will undertake to give talks, presentations and displays to adult groups, and to host annually a Local Studies Evening for the Borough's three local history societies.
- 9.8 Local Studies staff will, as part of their Continuing Personal Development - subject to service requirements and funding constraints - attend external courses relevant to the promotion of local history.

10. MARKETING POLICY

- 10.1 The Local Studies Team will continue to raise awareness of the service through promotion and publicity.
- 10.2 Local Studies will be represented at relevant heritage conferences and events and, staffing permitted, at local fairs in the Borough.
- 10.3 Local Studies staff will work closely with all relevant local and national organisations to actively promote interest in the Local Studies Library and its collections.
- 10.4 Forward planning for the Local Studies and Archive will be in line with corporate and Library Service policies and plans.

11. VOLUNTEER POLICY

- 11.1 Local Studies will welcome volunteer support in line with the current Council policy. In addition:
 - Volunteers are only accepted at the discretion of the Local Studies Librarian
 - An appropriate level of staff supervision is maintained
 - Wherever possible tasks are given that align with the interests and experience of the individual volunteers
 - A Volunteer Support Group has been formed to facilitate feedback from volunteers and encourage suggestions for future activities
 - All volunteers sign a form that confirms their conditions of service
 - It is recognised that managing the volunteer workforce effectively is a significant responsibility for permanent staff members.