

STAFFORDSHIRE AND STOKE ON TRENT ARCHIVE SERVICE

COLLECTIONS INFORMATION POLICY

1 MISSION STATEMENT

1.1 Staffordshire Archives and Heritage is made up of the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service and the County Museum Service. It also manages the William Salt Library on behalf of the charitable trust that administers the Library.

1.2 The aim of the Service is to locate, collect and preserve irreplaceable archive and museum collections relating to the past and present life and work of people of the County of Staffordshire and the City of Stoke on Trent and to preserve the archives of the Diocese of Lichfield, thereby contributing to the national network of archive and museum care.

1.3 Our Mission is :

To connect people to the memories of Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent, by engaging them with the collections we develop and preserve for current and future generations

2 GENERAL CONTEXT

2.1 The Archive Service is responsible to its parent authorities, Staffordshire County Council and Stoke on Trent City Council, and to the owners of deposited collections, for its stewardship of the records in its care.

2.2 Collections Information is of vital importance in fulfilling the responsibilities outlined above. It enables the service to manage the collections in such a way as to maintain good stewardship, and to provide access to the collections to a wide range of researchers.

2.3 This Policy enables the Service to demonstrate to its parent authorities, to depositors of collections, to external funding bodies and to interested members of the wider public, its commitment to good stewardship and wider access to collections.

2.4 The County Record Office, Stafford, (now Staffordshire Record Office), was established in 1947 to act as a repository for the historic records of Staffordshire County Council.

Lichfield Joint Record Office (now Lichfield Record Office) was established in 1959 to act as a repository for the records of the Diocese of Lichfield and Lichfield City Council. On the closure of Burton Archives in 2003 it received the archives formerly held there.

Stoke on Trent City Archives was established in 1997 to act as a repository for records of Stoke on Trent City Council, and of a wide range of

organisations and individuals in the City.

Collecting statements for each repository are set out in the Service's *Collections Development Policy and Strategy*.

3 LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

- 3.1 Public records: Staffordshire Record Office, Lichfield Record Office and Stoke on Trent City Archives are appointed by the Lord Chancellor for the deposit of Public Records under the terms of the Public Records Act 1958, for the deposit of specified classes of Public Records including Quarter Sessions, HM Coroners, hospital records, magistrates' court records.

Manorial records: Staffordshire Record Office and Lichfield Record Office are recognised by the Master of the Rolls for the deposit of manorial and tithe records under the Law of Property Act, 1922, and the Tithe Act, 1936.

Anglican parish records: Staffordshire Record Office is designated by the Bishop of Lichfield for the deposit of Anglican parish records for the archdeaconries of Lichfield, Stoke on Trent and Walsall under the Parochial Registers and Records Measure, 1978 (amended 1992). Lichfield Record Office is designated under the same legislation for parish records for the Deanery of Lichfield and Tamworth.

Anglican diocesan records: Lichfield Record Office is designated by the Bishop of Lichfield for the deposit of the archives of the central administration of the Diocese of Lichfield, under the Parochial Registers and Records Measure, 1978 (amended 1992).

- 3.2 The Archive Service will comply with the Freedom of Information Act with regard to both its own records and as custodian of records of its parent authorities and third-party organisations containing information falling within the scope of the Act.

The Archive Service will comply with the Data Protection Act, either as data controller or as data processor, as appropriate, for records containing personal information about living persons, falling within the scope of the Act.

4 SYSTEMS FOR RECORDING COLLECTIONS INFORMATION

- 4.1 Accessions: New accessioning will be carried out using CALM archive management software at all repositories. Prior to 2001 accessions were recorded in manual accession registers. Legacy systems will continue to be maintained as a backup for current electronic accessioning.

- 3.2 Depositor records: New depositor records for all three offices will be held on CALM archive management software. Prior to 2001 depositor records were held in manual systems, which will continue to be maintained as a backup for current electronic accessioning.

- 4.3 Filing systems: Current correspondence between depositors or their officers, agents or legal representatives and the Archive Service will be

saved electronically, wherever possible. Legacy paper records have not been digitised.

4.4 Conservation information: New conservation records will be recorded in CALM archive management software, wherever possible. Paper record systems used prior to 2012 remain in use as a back-up: conservation record sheets, retained in document reference number order, have been kept since 1961; conservation register, in date order, since 1991.

4.5 Electronic systems:

- Archive management software: CALM ALM (Axiell Ltd.)
- Word-processing: MS Word (Microsoft Corporation)
- Spreadsheets: MS Excel (Microsoft Corporation)

5 ACCESSIONING/POINT OF DEPOSIT

5.1 Accessions

We will record the following information at the time of receipt of the records, using the interim receipt form: name of donor/depositor, contact and intermediary information, a brief description of the records and note of creating body with covering dates, where identified, whether permission is given in advance for any transfer or disposal. The form will be signed and dated by the person who hands over the records and the receiving member of staff.

We will create a formal accession record from this information, in combination with information gained from a closer look at the records, with date of accession, and a more detailed description where possible.

We will send out a formal final receipt, unless the depositor or donor requests otherwise, within a target timescale of 12 working days. A signed copy is returned by the depositor, which we will retain permanently.

5.2 Depositor records

We will record the following information at the time of receipt of the records, using the interim receipt form: the name and address of the owner or owning organisation, and of any intermediary, with contact names, as applicable. Where ownership is unclear, such as where items have been found or have been passed on anonymously, that fact is also noted.

We will inform depositors and donors of the obligation to update the Archives Service with changes to any of the above information.

We will attempt to trace lost contacts/relatives when the need arises but we are limited in what is feasible. We have a number of key collections where we maintain good contact with depositors.

5.3 Intellectual property rights

We will record the following information at the time of receipt of the records, using the interim receipt form: material subject to copyright and

name and contact details of the copyright owner, where known. We will provide a guidance note for donors and depositors, which explains various issues around intellectual property rights.

Upon formal accessioning, where the records are looked at in more detail, or during later cataloguing, it may be noted that specific items are subject to copyright as published works, and this information will be noted in the catalogue, as appropriate. Copyright in unpublished works is dealt with on a case-by-case basis if requested for further publication. Copying of unpublished works will be allowed for private and non-commercial use.

5.4 **Access restrictions**

We will record the following information at the time of receipt of the records, using the interim receipt form: access restrictions, most commonly for data protection reasons. We will always raise this issue explicitly with donors and depositors.

We will review the requirement for access restrictions both at the time of formal accessioning and during cataloguing, ensuring that sensitive personal information falling within the scope of the Data Protection Act is correctly identified. If appropriate, we will also consider at this point whether it may be more appropriate to return such records to the donor or depositor.

We will include clear information about access restrictions in catalogue descriptions, including under which provision of the Data Protection Act information is exempt from disclosure.

We will negotiate with depositors who wish to place their own non-statutory access restrictions on records, ensuring that such restrictions are minimised.

We will apply three levels of access restriction:

- can be seen if a third party data protection declaration is signed;
- cannot be seen, but information may be extracted by staff;
- confidential deposit - no record of the accession is published during the period of the restriction (very rarely used)

5.5 **Ownership and legal status of collections**

We will record the following information at the time of receipt of the records: whether it is a deposit (indefinite loan), donation, transfer between repositories, bequest, or presentation under Public Records Act or other relevant legislation.

5.6 **Publicising new accessions**

We will publish an annual list of all new accessions across the Archive Service (with the exception of confidential deposits) on the Archive Service website. We will publicise new accessions in our *Annual Report* and our newsletters, and through social media and events. We will complete an annual return of new accessions for The National Archives.

We will ensure that our staff is aware of new accessions so that they are better equipped to advise researchers.

6 Disposals and withdrawals

6.1 The Service's approach to disposals is detailed in the *Acquisitions and Disposals Policy*. We will review long-held collections against the *Collections Development Policy*, and draw up an annual list of collections, and of parts of collections, no longer deemed to conform to the policy. We will submit this, together with recommendations for actions to be taken, to the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Joint Archives Committee for approval, as appropriate, depending upon whether the archives are held in one of the county repositories or in the city repository.

6.2 The Service's approach to withdrawals is detailed in the *Terms of Agreement for the Deposit of Records*. We will supply a copy of this document to all new depositors, together with a guidance leaflet covering handling and security of original records.

7 Location and Movement Control

7.1 Since 2014/15 the Location module of CALM has been used to link catalogue entries at Item level to shelf locations in the Locations database. This supersedes diverse practice across the Service's three repositories:

- SRO: In general, collections are located in deposit number order, split between volumes, boxes, maps and photographs. However, a number of large or otherwise significant collections were located out of sequence for a variety of reasons, for which there is a paper list in the strongrooms. There is an electronic locations list for maps and outsize items, with paper copies in the strongrooms. There are electronic lists of collections and items stored off-site.
- LRO: collections were located initially in deposit number order, split between volumes, boxes, maps and photographs. A card location index at collection/section/series level, as appropriate, was created in 2007. Storage use more recently has been more random, to use all space more effectively.
- SoTCA: archive material is located to a shelf using a card index system. In order to ensure that one system is always accurate and up-to date, the card index system will be maintained until a future switchover *en bloc* to CALM-only locations.

It will take some time for this process of Location linking in CALM to be completed, during which time the legacy information, both analogue and digital, remains vital.

7.2 Permanent or semi-permanent transfer of collections between repositories within the Service will be recorded in the accession registers of both the sending and receiving repositories.

Movement of items or collections withdrawn by depositors will be recorded in the withdrawals register, covering both temporary/short-term and permanent withdrawals.

Movements of items out of the strongrooms for use by researchers, archive service staff, for conservation work, or for reprographic work, and their return, will be recorded using a duplicate or triplicate slip system. This includes short-term transfers between repositories, for specialist photography, for example.

The triplicate slips act both as a control in the strongrooms for issued items, and as receipts for both the Service and the person to whom the document is issued. Following the return of documents, two copies will be retained by the Service in monthly bundles, sorted in different ways to ensure ease of checking for security purposes. One copy may be retained by the issuee, should they wish.

8 Finding Aids (non-Catalogue)

8.1 The following finding aids are published currently:

Guide to the Contents of Lichfield Record Office, 1999

Family Collections, 1992

Cross-Service "Guides to Sources" series:

1. *Parish Registers and Bishops Transcripts*
2. *Nonconformist Registers*
3. *Tithe Maps and Awards*
4. *Business Records*
5. *Enclosure Acts, Awards and Maps*
6. *Colliery Records*
7. *Manorial Records*
8. *Transport Records*
9. *Electoral Registers*
10. *Estate Maps, and Estate Maps Supplement*

8.2 A copy of each of the cross-service guides is kept in our reading rooms, from which staff provide advice to members of the public. Cataloguing archivists manually update these guides when relevant material is accessioned. Each publication will be reviewed on a biennial basis to determine whether it should be revised and re-issued.

8.3 The *Guide to the Contents of Lichfield Record Office*, *Family Collections*, and *Guide to Sources 10 Estate Maps* are hard-copy publications, and will not be re-published in their current format once the existing stock is depleted. Any future publication of all or selected parts of these documents will be as free-to-download PDF files, available on our website.

All remaining focussed cross-Service Guides to Sources are published as free-to-download PDF files on the Service's website.

8.4 A number of analogue indexes are maintained in the reading rooms of the various repositories, relating to their own holdings. These were developed to meet the individual circumstances of each repository and, where appropriate, have been maintained during the gradual process of retro-conversion.

9 Cataloguing

- 9.1 Archival description through cataloguing is fundamental to both the intellectual and the physical accessibility of archives.

Intellectual access is provided through high-quality catalogues, enabling an understanding of the context of the records, their inter-connectedness, and the richness of their content. Intellectual access is widened by the availability of archive catalogues online. Physical access is facilitated through the numbering of individual units of production (individual documents, bundles, volumes, maps, etc.), which enables efficient retrieval of items from storage for research in the Service's searchrooms.

Our long-term aim, therefore, is to ensure that all archives in our care are catalogued to international standards, and that all catalogues are available online, to ensure the widest-possible degree of access. Working towards that goal involves progressing several work-streams: retrospective conversion, cataloguing of newly-deposited and backlog collections, and catalogue improvement.

- 9.2 The Service's *Collections Information Manual* (formerly *Cataloguing Manual*), setting out procedures and standards for principal data fields was adopted in 2000, when CALM archive management software was introduced for cataloguing across the Service. Prior to this point cataloguing standards had varied over the years and were not codified.

The Manual adopted *International Standard Archival Description (General)* [ISAD(G)] with additional restrictions to ensure further uniformity across the Service, for example, for date formats.

Digital records are catalogued in the same way as analogue records.

- 9.3 Retrospective conversion of analogue catalogues began in 2000 through an HLF-funded project, which established our online catalogue "Gateway to the Past" and enabled 30% of our catalogues to be retro-converted. Since then work has continued, through both involvement with national projects ("Access to Archives") and local work by staff and volunteers. Currently (2016) 82% of archive holdings have a full catalogue online.
- 9.4 Collections in the cataloguing backlog have been prioritised using the Logjam methodology developed by MLA North West.
- 9.5 Following public consultation on the Staffordshire History Centre Project in 2015 priority will be given to the publication of electronic collection-level descriptions for each collection held at Lichfield Record Office prior to their move into the Staffordshire History Centre. This will be followed by similar work on uncatalogued collections across the Service.
- 9.6 Members of the public have access to:
- publicly available electronic cataloguing through "Gateway to the Past" (www.archives.staffordshire.gov.uk), our online catalogue;
 - publicly available electronic cataloguing of certain collections through the National Archives' Discovery portal, as a result of participation in regional Access to Archives projects ("*Muck and*

- *Brass*, 2002, and *Seven Ages of Man*, 2003);
- paper catalogues, including those awaiting retrospective conversion in our reading rooms;
- where appropriate, mediated access to “cataloguing in progress”

Additionally, in order to carry out their duties, Archive Service staff have access to draft lists or box lists for collections which are not yet fully catalogued and to uncatalogued collections currently lacking finding aids.

Authorised personnel of the police and other regulatory authorities will be permitted wider access than ordinary members of the public where this is permitted by the Data Protection Act or mandated by the provisions of other legislation currently in force.

10 Conservation and Preservation Information

- 10.1 Conservation record sheets have been kept since the Service’s conservation workshop opened at Staffordshire Record Office in 1961. They are retained in document reference number order to enable easy access to information about work that might have carried out on a specific item.
- 10.2 In 1991 a Conservation Register was set up to enable an overview of the work carried out, and at the same time the amount of information recorded on the conservation sheets was expanded significantly.
- 10.3 Since 2012 the Conservation database in the CALM archive management software has been used, but legacy data has not been migrated.

11 Staffing and Funding

- 11.1 All Archive Service staff, both professional and para-professional, are involved in the creation or editing of collections information. For some staff this work is the main focus of their rôle.

Core staff time is allocated to the following functions:

- accessioning of new archive deposits, including the recording of donor/depositor information, access information, and information regarding intellectual property rights
- cataloguing of new deposits
- cataloguing of backlog collections
- retrospective conversion of paper catalogues
- catalogue enhancement
- creation of new name and place authority records
- recording of conservation and preservation information

Prioritisation between and within the various strands of this work is carried out by the Service’s cross-repository Collections Development Team and by the Collections Management Teams in each of the repositories, as appropriate.

- 11.2 External funding is regularly sought to enable:

- Cataloguing of large collections. A recent example is the Minton Collection project at Stoke on Trent City Archives, supported by the Art Fund, which opened up the records of Britain's premier ceramic design archive to experts and amateurs alike.
- Catalogue enhancement. A recent example is the Liverpool University Collaborative Doctoral Research project at Staffordshire Record Office, in which the catalogues of certain categories of collection will be improved by addition of information about flooding and land drainage. This will enable resource discovery by researchers into climate change and the mitigation of its effects.

New cataloguing and catalogue enhancement undertaken through externally-funded projects generally involve both qualified project officers and volunteers.

11.3 With regard to collections information, volunteers create and edit archive catalogue data under the supervision of a qualified member of staff or project officer. Supervision takes the form of training on the software and on cataloguing standards, and quality assurance before the relevant collection catalogue is published. The use of volunteers is explained more fully in the Service's *Volunteer Policy*.

11.4 Individual volunteer agreements explicitly include a transfer to the Archive Service of intellectual property rights in the resources created whilst volunteering.

12 Protecting Collections Information

12.1 Electronic data:

The CALM archive management system includes the following databases: Accessions; Depositors; Locations; and Catalog with associated Name, Place and Terms Authority Files. The server for the CALM system is on the Staffordshire County Council network.

Electronic filing is on servers on the networks of both partner local authorities.

Back-ups of both the CALM system and of electronic filing are automatically made daily through a process administered by the authorities' ICT departments.

The CALM Security module affords a means of providing various levels of access for professional and para-professional members of staff and service volunteers to each of the databases making up the archive management system, tailored to their role.

12.2 Manual data:

Accession registers: manuscript registers are all backed up. SRO has digital images of its accession registers on the SCC network, and SRO also holds security photocopies of the accession registers for LRO and SoTCA.

Depositor information: manual correspondence files, including signed receipts completed at point of deposit, are kept in a secure room.

Catalogue information: a master set of legacy paper-only catalogues for all repositories is maintained off-site.

Conservation information: the master set of paper conservation records (conservation register and conservation work sheets) are kept in the conservation workshop at Staffordshire. Digital images of the conservation registers are kept on the SCC network.

Document issue information: retained security sets of document issue slips are kept in the strongrooms of the relevant repository for a minimum of ten years.

13 Collections Information Improvement Strategy

- 13.1 Programmes of work to improve collections information are identified and prioritised by the Collections Development and Collections Management Teams, and are reviewed and approved by Archives and Heritage Management Team.

14 Review

- 14.1 This policy will be review every five years, or sooner if the need arises.