

Rotherham Heritage Services

Archives and Local Studies

Collections Development Policy

2018 - 2022

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy is part of a suite of policies relating to the management, preservation, documentation and access of the archives and local studies collections to ensure their long-term survival and usability.
- 1.2 The policy supports the delivery of Rotherham Heritage Service's Forward Plan, 2018-2022. The overall vision for the Service is about 'Revealing Rotherham's small wonders and big stories', with a clear statement of purpose, which 'will bring people together to build connections, spark imaginations and create positive and renowned Rotherham stories.'
- 1.3 This policy examines the background and history to Rotherham Archives and Local Studies; the profile and scope of the collections identifying current limitations; priorities for future collections development taking into account collecting priorities for other services. It also states the Service's approach to appraisal and disposal.
- 1.4 The policy covers Archives and Local Studies collections. It does not cover objects, which are covered by a separate collections development policy or semi-current records of the Council held by the Records Management section, unless they have been identified as archives and transferred to the Service.

2. Background and History of Rotherham Archives and Local Studies

- 2.1 Rotherham Archives and Local Studies Service was established in 1986 following the abolition of the South Yorkshire County Record Office to preserve records of all aspects of life within Rotherham Metropolitan Borough and to make them accessible for use by members of the public. Prior to this date, archives and local studies material was collected by Rotherham Libraries since at least the 1930s.
- 2.2 It operates within the legislative framework of the Public Libraries Act, Public Records Acts, Local Government Act, General Data Protection Regulation, Freedom of Information Act, Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations, Representation of the People Act and Environmental Information Regulations, together with the Parochial Registers and Records Measure. All material in the care of the Service will be documented and made available for research in strict accordance with these Acts and Regulations. This includes archives:
 - By designation of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, public and presentation records relating exclusively to the areas of Rotherham Metropolitan District to be placed in a local place of deposit under the Public Records Act 1958, s. 4(1) (3) and 3(6);

- By designation of the Master of Rolls through the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts/The National Archives, manorial and tithe documents as indicated by various legislation including the Law of Property Act, 1922 and the Tithe Act, 1936.

- 2.3 Collections are stored securely, with the majority of storage areas meeting the requirements of BS 4971:2017 Conservation and care of archive and library collections.
- 2.4 Collecting has been guided through policy development since 1986 when Rotherham Archives and Local Studies was established, although in recent years it has become more formalised.

3. Profile of the Collections

- 3.1 Rotherham Archives and Local Studies currently hold more than 1,000 separate archive collections in a variety of formats. They document the borough's diverse history and culture from the 13th century to the present day.
- 3.2 The archive collections include archives of people, organisations, local authorities and businesses in the Rotherham Borough reflecting the changing landscape and communities of the area. The collections specifically cover:
- Records of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and its predecessors;
 - Records of places of worship and religious faiths, excluding Church of England;
 - Official records including parish councils and their predecessors, which cover the poor law unions;
 - Records from public bodies such as magistrates/coroners court, health bodies and manorial records;
 - Records of organisations, businesses, individuals, societies, public and private institutions including: records of clubs and societies; records of local community groups; business archives; personal and family papers, including letters, diaries and photographs and archives of trade unions, political parties and pressure groups.
- 3.3 Notable and significant collections and items include:
- York and Lancaster Regimental Archive;
 - Business archives of Guest & Chrimes, Brass Founders; Beatson Clark, Glass Manufacturers; Parkgate Iron & Steel Co.;
 - Feoffees of the Common Lands;
 - Dorothy Green papers;

- Family and estate papers of Verelsts of Aston Hall; Walker Family; Bosviles of Ravenfield;
- Parker Rhodes, Solicitors;
- Lady Mabel College and Students Association and
- Rockingham Pottery pattern book.

3.4 The Local Studies collections contain books and pamphlets, trade directories, electoral registers, ephemera, journals and newsletters, annual reports, newspapers and press cuttings, photographs and printed maps and plans.

4. Scope of the Collections

4.1 The Service seeks to collect all types of archival records relating to the Metropolitan Borough of Rotherham with a strong focus on developing the stories of children and young people and creating a positive and renowned Rotherham story. It aims to be representative of Rotherham's diverse heritage and will acquire material guided by the Service's Manifesto and Statement of Purpose. Categories include:

- Records of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and its predecessors
- Records of places of worship and religious faiths, excluding Church of England;
- Records of organisations, businesses, individuals, societies, public and private institutions and other activities relevant to the history of the Borough of Rotherham. These include: records of clubs and societies; records of local community groups; business archives; personal and family papers, including letters, diaries and photographs; archives of trade unions, political parties and pressure groups and
- Records relating to the York and Lancaster Regiment.

4.2 It seeks to cover all date periods, from the earliest times to the present day with the following exception:

- Photographs (analogue and digital); due to the volume of images created from the mid-20th Century onwards, images will be carefully selected to document the changing buildings and landscapes within the Borough of Rotherham, of people and their daily lives, of important and significant events, along with images outside of the Borough that have a strong link back to Rotherham

4.3 It will also continue to collect a variety of local studies material relating to the Metropolitan Borough of Rotherham including:

- Published or printed material; publications by local authors (those who were born or lived in the area of the Borough), including works of fiction and non-fiction relating to the Borough. The Service may also choose to collect published or printed material relating to areas surrounding the Borough (including the County of Yorkshire) where the contents are relevant to the Borough;
- Electoral registers;
- Trade directories;
- Ephemera;
- Journals and newsletters;
- Annual reports;
- Newspapers and press cuttings;
- Photographs (also see 4.2) and
- Printed maps and plans.

- 4.4 Publications giving guidance on the use and interpretation of materials will be acquired along with guides to holdings of other relevant libraries and archive services.
- 4.5 National indexes and other sources which relate to the whole country or particular regions will be acquired only if exceptionally important or there is a need to increase local access to national sources.
- 4.6 Rotherham Archives and Local Studies will not collect the following categories of archival records relating to the Borough:
- Records relating to County-wide organisations as determined by the Agreement for the Management of the South Yorkshire Joint Archives Service¹;
 - Anglican parish records, which are collected by the relevant appointed Diocesan Record Offices and
 - Records of the former West Riding County Council.
- 4.7 It will accept material by transfer (items that are in common ownership e.g. Rotherham Council), on deposit (including from public bodies), as a gift and will occasionally purchase significant archival items if there is a strong case for acquisition. Financial support can be through the Friends of Rotherham Archives, donations or by grant from a funding body.
- 4.8 A variety of formats and materials will be collected including parchment, paper, photographs, negatives, books, audio-visual (cassette, record and video), and glass, digital and electronic. Objects will not be collected unless they form an

¹ See Appendix 1 for list of County-wide organisations listed in agreement

intrinsic part of the collection or through the will of the depositor². Original film may be transferred to the Yorkshire Film Archive.

- 4.9 Acquisition will be determined by access and items will only be acquired if the Service holds the necessary equipment to facilitate this or access can be provided by different means.

5. Acquisition and Disposal Principles

- 5.1 Rotherham Heritage Service's Acquisition and Disposal Panel³ oversees the management of the acquisition and disposal of all items (objects and archives).
- 5.2 Before accepting items, Rotherham Archives and Local Studies must be satisfied that the transferor/donor has the proper authority or title to transfer or donate them.
- 5.3 Every effort will be made to avoid conflict and duplication with the collecting policies of other archive services/libraries.
- 5.4 Acquisition will not be outside the scope of this policy.
- 5.5 No attempt will be made to secure the acquisition or removal of any archives or local studies items held by another archive service/library, except with the consent of the owner and in consultation with the relevant organisation.
- 5.6 In the event of archive acquisitions by gift or loan, Rotherham Heritage Services standard terms of deposit, unless otherwise specified, will be applied.
- 5.7 As part of this process, it will also agree and transfer, where appropriate, intellectual property rights and confirm any access restrictions.
- 5.8 Rotherham Archives and Local Studies collects no more than two copies of any one local studies item.
- 5.9 Rotherham Archives and Local Studies accepts the principle there should be a strong presumption against disposal by sale of any items in its ownership.
- 5.10 Disposal does, however, have a valid role in collections development and the following will apply:

² Also refer to the Collections Development Policies – Rotherham Museum and Art Gallery and York and Lancaster Regimental Museum

³ See Appendix 2 for the Terms of Reference for the Panel

- Permission to dispose of items will be sought from the donor as part of the deposit agreement. No archival records will be disposed of in contravention of the terms of any current legislation;
- Where it has been identified that legacy material falls outside the scope of this collecting policy, it will be transferred with the consent of the owner, where feasible to a more appropriate archive service/library. Where this is not possible, the material will be returned to the owner and in some instances where this is not possible, it will be confidentially destroyed and recorded;
- If Rotherham Archives and Local Studies becomes unable, either temporarily or permanently, to provide proper care for the material, in which case they should be transferred, on such terms as may then be agreed in writing with the consent of the owner and of both governing bodies, to another appropriate archive service/library or
- The owner requests their return.

5.11 Following acquisition or disposal, collections are managed in accordance with other policies of Rotherham Heritage Services and Rotherham Archives and Local Studies.

6. Limitations of the Collections

- 6.1 The collections are strong in the areas of municipal government, established religious bodies and the York and Lancaster Regiment.
- 6.2 Areas where Rotherham Archives and Local Studies is weaker are stories about children and young people, local industry, landed families, educational institutions, non-official organisations such as local and voluntary groups and minority groups representative of Rotherham's current profile.
- 6.3 Public records relating to NHS bodies within Rotherham are significantly limited.
- 6.4 In addition, digital records are very limited across all areas.
- 6.5 These limitations have been identified by gaining a good understanding of current and potential audiences (compared to the Borough's profile⁴), reviewing the Service's overall vision and statement of purpose, analysing collections information held by Rotherham Heritage Services for both the museum and archive and local studies collections and consulting with stakeholders.

⁴ See section 6 of Rotherham Heritage Services Forward Plan, 2018-2022

7. Priorities for Collections Development

7.1 Rotherham Archives and Local Studies collections will be developed in the following areas to:

- Reflect stories of children and young people;
- Be more representative of Rotherham's communities now and in the past;
- Create a positive and renowned Rotherham story putting it on the map;
- Make certain significant archival evidence is preserved to ensure accountability and transparency;
- Meet statutory responsibilities.

7.2 Categories of archives will include:

- Non official organisations such as children and young people's groups, local and voluntary groups, sporting clubs and organisations, arts and cultural organisations, minority groups and pressure groups;
- Wider educational institutions (e.g. colleges, university centre);
- Local industry and business;
- Past landed families e.g. Walkers;
- Local government and
- Public records relating to Rotherham NHS bodies.

7.3 Arrangements for the transfer of semi-current records relating to the Council's records and Rotherham NHS bodies will be improved.

8. Review

8.1 This policy will be reviewed as required to take into account changes in circumstances and will be reviewed after 4 years in line with the Service's Forward Plan.

9. Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1 - List of County Collections held at Sheffield Archives

- South Yorkshire County Council
- South Yorkshire Joint Secretariat
- South Yorkshire Police – post 1974
- South Yorkshire Metropolitan Ambulance Service (SYMAS)
- South Yorkshire Fire Service
- South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYLTE)
- South Yorkshire County Record Office Miners' Strike material
- South Yorkshire County Council aerial photographs
- Domesday books and Forms 37 (Finance Act 1910)
- Sheffield Regional Hospital Board
- Trent Regional Health Authority
- Yorkshire Water Authority
- South Yorkshire Valuation Court
- South Yorkshire Trading Standards
- West Riding County Council Development Plans

9.2 Appendix 2 - Terms of Reference for Rotherham Heritage Services Acquisition and Disposal Panel

Terms of reference – 22 May 2018

Review – 22 May 2019

Purpose / role of the group:

- Manage acquisition and disposal of items for Rotherham Heritage Services, in line with the Service's current Collections Development Policies and overall Manifesto and Statement of Purpose.
- The aims and objectives of this group are to:
 - Assess potential acquisitions against current Collections Development Policies and make a decision whether to acquire for Heritage Services collections.
 - Assess potential disposals against current Collections Development Policies citing clear disposal criteria and relevant professional guidelines and make a decision to remove from Heritage Services collections, with agreement on method and manner of disposal
 - Present recommendations and seek approval in line with disposal process from Cabinet Member
 - Assess requests for loans in and out of the Service, as appropriate

- Rationalise historic loans
- Assess progress against Documentation Backlog Plan and Cataloguing Action Plan

Membership:

- The membership of the group will be as follows:
 - Manager, Heritage Services (Chair)
 - Project Manager, Care of Collections
 - Collections Officer
 - Archivist (with support from Archives and Local Studies Assistant as appropriate)
 - Assistant Collections Officer (currently on maternity leave)
 - Conservator (when relevant)
 - Conservation Apprentice (minute taker)
 - Visitor Experience Officer or Learning Officer

- Where appropriate (through invite by the Chair), other officers will attend depending on the agenda. This may include:
 - Elected Members
 - Other Heritage Services staff
 - Representatives from other Council services
 - Representatives of other bodies including other museums or heritage organisations

- Membership will be reviewed annually or following staff changes

Accountability:

The decision making process will be clear and accountable in line with Rotherham Heritage Services and Council Policies. No decisions should be taken without a clear audit trail and reference to relevant policies or procedures. All decisions should be legal and ethical, in line with Council and national standards.

Process:

Items for consideration will be supported by relevant research, along with an initial assessment recommendation. Relevant paperwork will be presented to the Panel. Further guidance can be found in the museum documentation procedures manual [here](#) and the archive procedures relating to accessioning and cataloguing [here](#)

Assessments will take into account origin and ownership; relevance, importance and long term value; potential use; availability of contextual information; condition; preservation and conservation requirements; accessibility; cost and ethics⁵.

Panel will discuss recommendation, determine outcome and record decision.

Item will then be processed according to Service's relevant procedures.

Review:

- The group will review the relevance and value of its work and its terms of reference on an annual basis (or earlier required).
- The chosen working method will be:
 - meetings will be held monthly, or more frequently if required to tackle backlogs or influx of items
 - meetings will be held on a formal basis, with agendas and minutes made available.
 - meeting papers will be distributed no later than 5 days before the meeting
 - draft minutes will be distributed to all members within 2 weeks of the meeting, which will then be approved at following meeting
 - Other representatives attending the meeting will be invited by the Chair or a nominated representative

⁵ For further information, please see i) Museums Association Ethical Guidelines (Number 1 second ed. 2004); *Acquisition – Guidance on the ethics and practicalities of acquisition* ii) Archives and Records Association UK & Ireland (Approved 9 May 2018); *Code of Ethics*