

Islington Local History Centre Collection Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Islington Local History Centre has a dual role as the local history provision and (historic) record office for the London Borough of Islington.

1.2 The Centre's aims are:

- To record life and events in Islington: its people, buildings, institutions and events past and present by collecting local material and records.
- To preserve the collections for the use of future generations, through appropriate storage, handling and conservation.
- To make the collections available to users researching in person at the Centre, through the production of catalogues, indexes and other finding aids, through a postal, telephone and e-mail enquiry service, and through publications, outreach and education activities.

1.3 Where there is conflict between the preservation of collections and the desire to make them publicly available, the need to preserve the collections will be paramount. Items which are damaged or fragile will be conserved as soon as funding permits in order to make them accessible.

1.4 The Centre will operate a policy of transferring archives and other original material on to microfilm (or copying them by another means) to help preserve items that are fragile or likely to be damaged by excessive handling. Where items have been microfilmed, digitised or copied, the original will only be produced in exceptional circumstances.

1.5 The Council adopts A Standard for Records Repositories, published by the National Archives (2004), and Local Studies Libraries: Library Association Guidelines for Local Studies Provision in Public Libraries, published by the Library Association (2002), as its guides to good practice.

1.6 This collection policy will be reviewed and if necessary revised every five years.

1.7 As well as the Islington Local History Centre, the following record offices, libraries and museums are collecting certain material relating to the London Borough of Islington:

- Guildhall Library
- Islington Museum
- London Metropolitan Archives
- London Metropolitan University (Irish Studies Centre)
- The National Archives

The Centre adopts a policy of co-operation with such organisations, particularly concerning the exchange of information and copies of relevant finding aids.

2. Acquisitions

2.1 The Centre seeks to acquire material by transfer, gift, deposit or purchase. There are three exceptions to this policy.

(i) Material which the Centre is not authorised to collect by law, such as:

- Anglican parish registers, which under the terms of Parochial Registers and Records Measure 1978 must be deposited in London Metropolitan Archives.
- Public records as defined under the terms of the Public Records Act 1958-1967.

- Manorial and tithe records as defined under the Manorial Documents Rule 1960 and under the Tithe Act 1936.
- The Centre abides by all current archival legislation.

(ii) Material which, according to established usage and the collection policies of other bodies, is more appropriately held elsewhere. For example, records of the London County Council should normally be deposited in London Metropolitan Archives, which is the recognised repository L.C.C records, even if they relate to the Islington area.

(iii) Material which is offered by persons who have no legal right to donate, deposit or sell them.

2.2 The terms and conditions of donation/deposit are stated in a separate document, copies of which are given to donors/depositors. The Centre reserves the right to refuse material which the Local History Manager or appropriate professional staff judge to be unsuitable for permanent preservation or which are records still in current use. The Centre will seek in its acquisitions policy to reflect objectively the rich diversity of the Borough's life and history. Materials in languages other than English may be acquired; the depositor will be asked to provide a full summary translation where possible.

2.3 If the Centre is offered a small number of items which have become separated from a larger collection of material already held elsewhere, the Local History Manager or appropriate professional staff may recommend that such material should be united with the larger deposit, subject to the agreement of the depositor.

3. Collecting area

3.1 The geographic collecting area of the Centre is defined by the boundaries of the London Borough of Islington as existing on 1 April 1965. In debatable cases – for instance, where the Borough boundaries have changed, or where record-creating bodies have covered areas crossing the present Borough boundaries – a decision to acquire records will be taken after consultation with the appropriate neighbouring record offices or libraries. A group of business records, for example, may relate to several different areas, but should not be broken up.

3.2 In any case of conflicting interest between itself and another body concerning the acquisition of material, the Centre will seek to resolve the issue in a professional manner by mutual agreement. The advice of a neutral arbiter such as The National Archives or the Chartered Institute of Librarians and Informational Professionals (CILIP) will be sought if agreement cannot be reached.

3.3 The Centre may occasionally accept non-local material which is in danger of destruction, in order to rescue and store it temporarily before a suitable place of deposit is found.

4. Types of materials

4.1 Books and other printed material

4.1.1 The Centre aims to collect all printed works relating to the London Borough of Islington and a selection of other relevant material. Multiple copies of the most important publications will be obtained to ensure against loss or damage and to allow some books to be kept on open access.

4.1.2 Books, pamphlets or articles about the London Borough of Islington as a local authority.

4.1.3 Material relating to the area within the Borough boundary, apart from national institutions, people or businesses based in the area which have no particular or long term local connections.

4.1.4 A selection of general works on London. Usually books with some reference to the Islington area are selected.

4.1.5 A selection of books about the neighbouring Boroughs of Camden, City of London, Hackney, Haringey, particularly material dealing with districts which span Borough boundaries, e.g. Clerkenwell, Finsbury Park, Highgate, King's Cross and Old Street.

4.1.6 Works about the study of local history, oral history, genealogy and guides to historical sources. Manuals of local studies librarianship, archive administration and archive conservation.

4.1.7 A small selection of books on other subjects which reflect life in Islington, e.g. the organisation of the Medieval manor, Poor Law administration and life during the First and Second World Wars.

4.1.8 Sample local history publications produced by other local authorities.

4.1.9 Serial publications including local newspapers; periodicals about local history, archive administration and genealogy, newsletters produced by Islington Council Departments, clubs and societies, churches, schools, colleges and other institutions, local amenity groups and pressure groups; house journals of local companies.

4.1.10 Newscuttings from local newspapers and relevant newscuttings and articles appearing in other periodicals and newspapers, including international, national or London newspapers and other journals.

4.1.11 Ephemeral material including publicity material issued by local businesses, election publicity and other political matter, programmes for local events, reports of local organisations, trade catalogues, property information, etc.

4.1.12 Posters and handbills advertising cultural and commercial events and exhibitions, including arts festivals and exhibitions, theatre stage plays, cinema film seasons and trade exhibitions.

4.2 Illustrations, maps and plans

4.2.1 The centre aims to collect visual images of the people and topography of Islington in a variety of formats.

4.2.2 Photographic material including postcards and up-to-date photographic images. There are many streets and areas in the Borough for which the Centre holds no pictures and we will actively encourage a programme of copying material from other collections or in private hands, subject to copyright conditions.

4.2.3 Digitally stored images and photographic slides of the Centre's existing material for the purpose of conserving originals and for giving talks and presentations.

4.2.4 Topographic prints and engravings.

4.2.5 Original drawings, watercolours and oil paintings. Purchase of new items will only be considered if the item is of topographic value and fills a gap in the collections. If a substantial collection became available this would only be purchased if special funding was available.

4.2.6 Maps and plans, including local parish or borough maps, other maps covering parts of the London Borough of Islington, Ordnance Survey maps, maps produced by other Council Departments and plans of individual properties. We will aim to complete existing editions of Ordnance Survey maps where necessary and to collect new editions of the 1:1250 and 1:2500 and other scales covering the Borough, subject to available funding.

4.3 Archives

4.3.1 The Centre is the recognised place of deposit for the London Borough of Islington's own historic archives and those of its predecessor bodies and accepts deposits of archives from other bodies or individuals relating to the history of the London Borough of Islington and its people, subject to deposit conditions (see section 2.2).

4.3.2 Records of the London Borough of Islington. While the Centre does not currently offer a records management service, important non-current records of Council Departments are accepted in order to ensure their preservation. The Local History Manager or appropriate professional staff will liaise with other council officers to identify archives which should be deposited, and will also provide advice to Council Departments to ensure that records they wish to retain for the present are kept in suitable conditions to allow eventual transfer to the Centre. Current or semi-current records, e.g. records used on a regular basis cannot be accepted.

4.3.3 Archives of predecessor local authorities, including the Metropolitan Boroughs of Finsbury and Islington and other bodies.

4.3.4 Archives of local parishes and liberties. The Centre will not seek to acquire any parish records as outlined in section 2.1).

4.3.5 Archives of individual or bodies which either are or have been active in Islington, and where the material relates to aspects of the Borough's life and history. These will include records from local societies, organisations, churches and businesses, muniments of title and other records from solicitors and papers from individuals.

4.3.6 The Centre will not seek to collect archives which have no long term local connection. Where possible the Centre will seek to recommend an alternative place of deposit.

4.3.7 Paper and parchment records of all dates are acquired providing they fall within the collection policy. Record groups may also contain material in other formats, such as photographs, drawings, plans, videos, CD-ROMs, CDs, DVDs, removable computer hard drives and other digital technology. These will be accessioned as part of the archive holdings if appropriate.

4.4 Material in other formats

4.4.1 Some material in other formats is collected. These may include videos and films on local subjects, oral history tapes and CDs and items published on microfilm or microfiche or as CD-ROMs, CDs, DVDs, removable computer hard drives and other digital technology.

4.4.2 Three-dimensional objects are not acquired by the Centre unless they cannot be separated from a collection without destroying its integrity. Those wishing to donate three-dimensional objects may contact the Centre's partner, Islington Museum, which also actively seeks to acquire three-dimensional objects that relate to the Borough's life and history.

5 Disposal

5.1 The first duty of the Islington Local History Centre is to preserve the material in its care. Material held by the Centre has been acquired because it is judged to be worthy of permanent preservation, and will not normally be destroyed. The Centre accepts the principle that there should be a strong presumption against the disposal by sale of any material in its ownership.

5.2 At the time of listing, appropriate professional staff may destroy certain ephemeral, duplicate or otherwise unwanted items with the consent of the depositor. The Centre may also transfer material to a more appropriate repository if it is felt that the material and its users would benefit from the relocation.

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