

Lancashire Archives

inspiring people and communities to explore their heritage; promoting and continuing to collect Lancashire's archives while preserving them for everyone to use and enjoy, now and in the future

Collections Development Policy

1 Purpose of Policy

- 1.1 This policy is one of several existing policies relating to different elements of the Heritage collections which are preserved and managed by Lancashire County Council. The aim of the policies is to ensure that the diverse elements of the Heritage collections are properly managed, preserved and are made available in the most appropriate manner to ensure their long-term survival and usability.
- 1.2 This policy forms part of the suite of policies relating specifically to the collections held by Lancashire Archives. It should be read in conjunction with the ***Collections Management Policy*** which provides a definition of archives and describes the statutory and legal basis for Lancashire Archives and the management of its collections, the framework of standards within which it operates and the code of ethics followed by staff developing the collections.
- 1.3 This policy explains in more detail what Lancashire Archives collects and how we will ensure that our collections continue to be a unique resource for everyone researching any aspect of Lancashire's past.
- 1.4 This policy will be reviewed no later than 5 years after the date of approval.

2 Scope of existing archive collections

- 2.1 Lancashire Archives holds more than 4,400 separate archive collections in a variety of formats. They document the county's diverse history and culture from the mid-twelfth century to the present day and include the archives of people, organisations, local authorities and businesses in Lancashire, reflecting the changing landscape, communities and economy over nine centuries.
- 2.2 The archive collections include material covering the pre-1974 county of Lancashire - the historic County Palatine of Lancaster - which stretched from South Lakeland to Merseyside, Manchester and Warrington. Many of the collections are of national and international importance as well as regional and local significance.

- 2.3 Today Lancashire Archives collects unique and irreplaceable archives and other relevant material of enduring historic value relating to the areas administered by Lancashire County Council, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and Blackpool Council. It preserves them and makes them available for use so that people and communities can explore their heritage
- 2.4 Lancashire Archives accepts transfers of material from the Records Management service of Lancashire County Council in accordance with agreed retention schedules or following appraisal.
- 2.5 Lancashire Archives offers facilities for organisations and individuals to deposit or donate archive collections for safekeeping, and for the benefit of research, in accordance with our current terms of agreement for the deposit of records. We prefer to receive archives and other material as gifts, although we accept long-term loans and make occasional acquisitions by purchase.
- 2.6 The main types of official archives we collect are:
- local authority archives including those of Lancashire County Council and district and parish councils, and their predecessors, including Quarter Sessions and poor law unions
 - Public Records for which Lancashire Archives is the appointed the place of deposit. These are from organisations funded by central government such as hospitals, prisons and new towns
 - archives relating to all faiths and religious groups
 - tithe maps and schedules
 - manorial records
- 2.7 Lancashire Archives also collects archives from private individuals, organisations and businesses. 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
- 2.8 We also collect other material which complements the archive collections, including:
- books and other printed material –the Lancashire Printed Collection
 - photographs
 - ephemera
 - copies of significant archives relating to Lancashire but held elsewhere

2.9 Lancashire Archives will always aim to identify the most appropriate repository for archives it is offered and is mindful of the collecting policies of other organisations.

3 Exceptions

3.1 There are some situations when we will not collect archives relating to Lancashire or when we might collect archives from outside the stated administrative boundaries.

- Sound recordings are sent to the North West Sound Archive¹, where there are appropriate facilities for storage and access, unless the material is in a digital format and forms part of an archive which cannot be split up.
- Film recordings are sent the North West Film Archive², where there are appropriate facilities for storage and access, unless the material is in a digital format and forms part of an archive which cannot be split up.
- The Archives Service Manager may occasionally accept significant archives that fall outside the terms of this policy if they appear to be at risk of being destroyed or lost. Steps would then be taken to ensure their transfer to an appropriate repository.
- We will not accept records if required to place unreasonable restrictions on public access.
- Occasionally we will collect archives and other material from outside present-day Lancashire. These usually relate to organisations which operate across local authority boundaries.

4 Appraisal/Acquisition of archives

4.1 When archives are offered to Lancashire Archives, a professionally qualified archivist assesses their significance, with reference to this policy and our ***Appraisal Guidelines***, as well as considering the impact of the potential acquisition on the service in terms of care and conservation, in order to decide what should be accepted.

4.2 Lancashire Archives, on behalf of Lancashire County Council, uses the ***Terms of agreement for the deposit of archive material*** to assert its responsibility for the archives it acquires.

4.3 Individual items or collections accepted by Lancashire Archives on behalf of Lancashire County Council are recorded and documented in accordance with our ***Collections Information Policy***.

¹ North West Sound Archive, Clitheroe Castle, Clitheroe, BB7 1AZ

² North West Film Archive, Minshull House, 47 Chorlton Street, Manchester, M1 3FY

5 Developing the archive collections

5.1 Lancashire Archives aims to ensure that its collections represent, as fully as possible, the past activities of all communities within its collecting area. To achieve this we seek to address the existing weaknesses of our collections while continuing to build on their many strengths.

5.2 *How we identify gaps in our collections*

Lancashire Archives will continue to identify aspects of the county's history which are not sufficiently represented in our collections, as well as areas which may be over-represented. We will do this by:

- continually working to increase and improve the information we have about our collections
- analysing information in our electronic collections management system
- consulting with key stakeholders:
 - our customers
 - people with expert historical knowledge
 - depositors
- reviewing our ***Collections Development Plan*** each year

5.3 *What gaps are there?*

There are some significant gaps in the collections held by Lancashire Archives, so we are particularly interested in acquiring archives from:

- individuals and families, particularly material from the 20th century
- post-1974 local authorities
- Christian churches other than Anglican, Roman Catholic or main Non-Conformist denominations, particularly those associated with minority communities.
- other faiths
- all business sectors, but especially local and smaller businesses, including retail and financial and some professions, such as architects, dentists, doctors and opticians
- all industrial sectors, but particularly aerospace, agriculture, construction and high specification engineering
- voluntary organisations and charities
- local pressure groups
- trade unions and employers and business organisations
- politicians and political parties
- minority groups e.g. LGBT, black and mixed minority ethnic, Eastern European, disabled
- societies and clubs
- professional and amateur sports clubs and regional sporting organisations
- arts organisations

5.4 *How we will make our collections more representative*

A five year **Collections Development Plan** outlines how these gaps will be addressed in the medium term. Lancashire Archives annual service plan always contains specific targets for acquiring archives in areas where gaps have been acknowledged.

To ensure that these acquisitions are made, we will:

- promote the idea of depositing archives to relevant individuals and organisations:
 - online, including the use of social media channels
 - by attending appropriate events
 - using leaflets and posters
 - through direct contact with relevant organisations and individuals to discuss their archive collections and the benefits of depositing archives
- monitor auction catalogues
- work with our colleagues in other Lancashire County Council Cultural Services, particularly Community Heritage Managers, to:
 - identify potential depositors in the communities they work in
 - secure the transfer of relevant archives currently held in libraries and museums

6 **Disposal of archives**

Sometimes we decide that archives are not sufficiently significant to be preserved permanently.

6.1 This decision may be made during the initial selection and appraisal process, but there may also be occasions after archives have been acquired when a collection is reviewed and we decide that the material is no longer worth preserving permanently.

6.2 Unwanted material will be treated in one of the following ways:

- returned to the depositor
- confidentially destroyed, with the depositor's permission, by an approved contractor, in accordance with Lancashire County Council's Information Assurance Policy Framework - Secure Disposal and Destruction Policy, 2013.
- transferred, with the depositor's permission, to another archive service

6.3 The appraisal and disposal of material will be recorded in Lancashire Archives' collections management system.

January 2013

Approved by the Head of Cultural Services, 21 February 2014