

# St Helens Archive Service

## Collection Development Policy

### 1. Introduction

This policy applies to Archive collections relating to St Helens Archive Service; local and family history resources relating to St Helens that are kept at St Helens Archives; and publications bought by St Helens Archives for those libraries offering local and family history resources. It supports the services' mission statement and should be read in conjunction with the Collection Development Plan, Collection Information Policy, Depositor guidelines and other relevant policy documents.

### 2. Background

2.1. St Helens Archive Service collects and acquires records relating to the geographical area known as the St Helens borough. The borough lies within Merseyside and is part of the historical County of Lancashire. It is made up of 16 wards:

- Billinge and Seneley Green
- Blackbrook
- Bold
- Earlestown
- Eccleston
- Haydock
- Moss Bank
- Newton
- Parr
- Rainford
- Rainhill
- Sutton
- Thatto Heath
- Town Centre
- West Park
- Windle

### 3. External recognition

3.1. St Helens Archive Service is:

- The authorised Archive service for the custody of the official records of St Helens Council and its predecessor authorities under the Local Government Act 1972
- An approved Place of Deposit under the Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967 for a number of classes of Central Government records held locally (public records) such as those of Quarter Sessions, Magistrates Courts, Coroners, County Courts, Health Authorities.

- Empowered to acquire Archives by deposit, gift or purchase and to preserve and make them available under the Local Government (Records) Act 1962

#### **4. Acquisition**

- 4.1. St Helens Archive will seek to ensure that the collection of Archives reflects the life and work of the people of St Helens. It will support the council's aims, vision and values and the future direction of the collection will seek to maximise the social inclusion of all sections of the community and generate new audiences to engage with its collection.
- 4.2. The collection of Archives will be acquired through transfer from St Helens Council, public records under the Public Records Act, donation through societies, charities, organisations, institutions, business's, industrial and commercial organisations, families, individuals, trade unions and political parties and occasionally by purchase.
- 4.3. St Helens Archive reserves the right to require a potential donor to provide proof of ownership and to refuse to accept a donation if this cannot be supplied. Formal agreements may also be required regarding any obligations under The Data Protection Act 2018.
- 4.4. St Helens Archive subscribes to the North West Film Archive as a service for storing, preserving and making accessible film Archive. Potential donors of original film Archive will be referred to the North West Film Archive and copies of key footage will be made accessible for St Helens Archive users within the Search Room.
- 4.5. St Helens Archive Service aims to develop its collections to reflect as fully as possible all communities and all areas within the borough. Non-mainstream and under-represented groups will be engaged with in order to increase representation.

#### **5. The Collecting Activities**

##### 6. The main strands of current activities are:

- Ongoing formal arrangements for deposits of Council Archives, including developing new procedures for keeping digital records.
- Liaising with creators of Public Records to ensure they are transferred to the Archive in a timely way.
- Growing the St Helens Archive Service network and delivering a range of activities which raises the profile and encourages people to engage with their documented heritage.
- Delivering advice and support through responding to remote enquiries to the Archive Service to the communities served.
- Aiming to achieve status as an accredited Archive Service.
- Identifying and consulting with under-represented communities – for example BME, religious groups and LGBTQ+ communities; to raise awareness of the Archive among new audiences and to identify potential new Archive collections.
- Encouraging and advising community heritage projects at their outset, supporting them to gather, keep and share any collections they create, including digital oral history recordings.

- Working with The National Archives, local historical societies, the St Helens Heritage network and communities to identify collections that are at risk, supporting better care and where appropriate, arranging for their transfer.
- Researching, developing and sharing strategies and tools to preserve digital records.
- Liaising with local repositories so that the respective collecting activities are complementary and information is shared about collections.
- Monitoring and purchasing new publications relating to local and family history, to add to the collections held at St Helens Archive Service and in St Helens Libraries.

## **7. Limitations of the Collections Policy**

- 7.1. Fine art or three-dimensional artefacts will not be collected unless they form an integral part of an Archival collection. Depositors will instead be directed to the World of Glass (which houses the St Helens Council museum and fine art collections).
- 7.2. Records which do not have any relevance to St Helens borough will not be collected. St Helens Archive Service observes the provisions of the 'Merseyside Archives Liaison Group Collections Statement' to avoid conflict and duplication with neighbouring authorities.

## **8. Developing the Archive Collections**

- 8.1. St Helens Archive Service aims to ensure that its collections represent, as fully as possible, the activities of all communities within its collecting area. To achieve this, weaknesses in the collections will be addressed by acquiring documents in the following areas:
- Local Authority Archives (past and current)
  - St Helens and Knowsley Hospitals NHS Trust (Place of Deposit)
  - NHS St Helens Clinical Commissioning Group (Place of Deposit)
  - Parish Council Archives post c2000
  - BME groups
  - Non-Christian religions
  - LGBTQ\*
  - Records relating to St Helens Canal

## **9. Publishing Collections**

- 9.1. Notice of new accessions will be made public via the annual Place of Deposit Accession Return to The National Archives. The Accession Return will be published on the St Helens Archive Service website annually.
- 9.2. Newly catalogued collections will be made public via the Calmview website ([www.sthelens.gov.uk/history](http://www.sthelens.gov.uk/history))

## **10. Appraisal and de-accessioning**

- 10.1 St Helens Archive Service may transfer records to a more suitable repository if it is considered that the documents would benefit from relocation, subject to the overriding principle that the integrity of the collection shall be maintained as far as possible. St Helens Archive Service shall evaluate and/or dispose of those documents deemed not worthy of permanent preservation and the intention to do this shall be made explicit at the time of deposit.

## **11. Review**

<b>Version date</b>	April 2021
<b>Approved by</b>	Bill Renshaw
<b>Date of review</b>	July 2023