



HILLINGDON

LONDON

COLLECTIONS POLICY LOCAL STUDIES, ARCHIVES AND MUSEUM SERVICE LONDON BOROUGH OF HILLINGDON 2007-2012

A. STATEMENT OF AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service is to collect, preserve and interpret the cultural and natural heritage of the London Borough of Hillingdon for the benefit of all its residents and visitors.

This policy was adopted in October 2003, and reviewed in October 2007. It will be reviewed again in 2012.

AIMS

- 1 With imagination and enthusiasm to deliver a high quality professional service which will serve as an example of good practice.
- 2 To collect and keep permanently items which reflect every facet of Hillingdon's heritage.
- 3 To promote the Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service with displays, talks and exhibitions.
- 4 To manage the collections in accordance with good museum and archive practice.
- 5 To ensure that items are preserved in accordance with professional standards.
- 6 To meet the MLA Accreditation standards



- 7 To meet the standards set out in the National Archives 'A standard for record repositories' (2004) and Resource 'Code of Practice on Archives in Museums in the United Kingdom'.
- 8 To improve storage and display facilities for archival materials to meet BS 5454.
- 9 To maintain and promote a professional enquiry service.
- 10 To ensure that all the collections are accessible to all users or potential users, whether in the library or by remote access such as the internet.
- 11 To ensure that the collection is representative of all communities in Hillingdon, including those who are often under represented, such as the ethnic minority communities and those with special needs.
- 12 To ensure that local history library stock in all the branch libraries is appropriate to their needs.
- 13 To enhance the educational facilities provided by the Borough.
- 14 To support the interpretation of the historic environment.
- 15 To ensure that all members of the Local Studies, Archives and Museum team are aware of current professional issues.
- 16 To seek and develop all means of funding for the Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service collections and activities.
- 17 To work towards the establishment of a Hillingdon Borough Museum, with partners such as Brunel University.

B. COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The local studies and museum collections were first established in 1929 when the library was opened in a former school in Cowley Road. Two display cases were made available for the museum collection. After the move to purpose built premises in 1940 a special room was dedicated to local history. This room was named the Hamson Museum after Mr H T Hamson, editor of the Uxbridge Gazette 1906-47 and Chairman of the Uxbridge Urban District Council Library Committee 1922-47. Mr Hamson had been the driving force behind the development of the library service in general and of the local studies and museums collection in particular. Many of the items in the collection were from his own personal collection.

The first specialist Local Studies Librarian was appointed in 1973 and a museum curator in 1990.

When the service moved into the new Uxbridge Central Library the display space was limited and the bulk of the museum and archive collection is in store. An education officer was employed from 1992 until 2000.

Following reorganisation within the Libraries, Arts and Information Service the Heritage Service is now known as the Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service.

The staffing now consists of a qualified archivist/local studies librarian, a qualified librarian and a part-time qualified curator.

2. CURRENT STATUS OF THE COLLECTIONS

2.1 The Museum Collection

Through the years the collection has grown principally by means of donation and it now numbers some 2250 objects. Since the establishment of the Borough of Hillingdon in 1965 a number of objects have been acquired from other parts of the Borough, but although a certain amount of active collecting has taken place in the years 1990-99 a significant proportion of the museum collection still relates to Uxbridge town.

Special collections include topographical prints and drawings, items and material relating to Uxbridge and Harmondsworth Voluntary Fire Brigades as well as christening gowns and woodworking tools. A good collection of domestic life objects is being developed.

2.2 The Local Studies and Archive Collection

The Local Studies and Archive collection comprises approximately 5000 books, 2000 pamphlets and 1000 maps, covering all parts of the Borough of Hillingdon and its immediate environs. The collection has been acquired by purchase or donation. Around 50 local periodicals are currently collected, most of which are indexed. There is a bound file of the Gazette newspaper (with various title changes) back to 1870 and on microfilm back to 1856. The archive collection includes the records of the pre-1965 authorities plus non-official records such as property deeds, private deeds, private letters and records of businesses. Deposited items include the 12th century Basset's Grant and the records of St. John's Church, Hillingdon. There are approximately 10,000 photographs of which slightly over a quarter are of Uxbridge. Material is also held on cine-film, video, audio cassette and record. As The Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service holds archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, its governing body will be guided by the National Archives *Standard for Record Repositories* (1st ed., 2004) and the *Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom* (3rd ed., 2002).

2.3 Handling collection

The handling collection was initiated in 1992 when the Education Officer was appointed. It comprises a wide range of items which can be used with school groups and members of the public. The items in the handling collection are not local and have no provenance and they do not form part of the main museum and archive services, which are thus protected from potentially damaging handling and transportation. Particular strengths of the collection include Victoriana and 1930-40's. The collection is now administered by the Schools Library Service.

2.4 Collecting Area

The Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service collects items relevant to the human or natural history of the London Borough of Hillingdon, defined by the Borough boundaries as created in 1965.

This collecting area has been defined after consultation with the neighbouring museum services, local history societies and the Museum of London. The area overlaps with the collection area covered by the Museum of London and London Metropolitan Archives, but whereas the latter institutions collect artefacts, with a view to presenting the overall history of London, Hillingdon Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service is exclusively concerned with the local situation.

4. LOANS POLICY

4.1 Loans to the Collections

1. Acceptance of individual items on loan for indefinite periods can cause administrative problems, and raise issues of responsibility for maintenance and conservation. Loans will be accepted only if they are for a specific period of time and:
 - i If they are items required for specific temporary exhibitions (short term loans, up to one year); or
 - ii If they are a specific collection of items or a single very important item which adds to or enhance existing collections and which can be displayed for a large proportion of the loan period (long term loans, one to five years with option for renewal); or
 - iii If they are items belonging to companies, museums or organisations which are unable to transfer the ownership of the item.
2. Items will not be accepted on 'permanent loan', a term with no legal meaning, unless they are items in category 1. iii above, which would otherwise be gifts outright.

4.2 Loans from the Collections

1. Loans to other registered museums or archives are made on the condition that the borrower takes full responsibility and bears the cost for transport, insurance security and, if necessary, conservation of the item(s) loaned.
2. Loans to institutions without professional museum or archive staff are normally made as under 1. above, but at the discretion of the Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service Manager.
3. Loans to voluntary bodies: Applications to borrow items from the Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service collections should normally be made to the Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service Manager at least three weeks prior to the proposed date of the loan, by the Secretary or Chairman of the society concerned. The Society must, as a body, take responsibility for the safety in all respects (including security and insurance) for the item(s) concerned.

5. DOCUMENTATION POLICY

- 5.1 The records relating to items in museum collections are vitally important in conserving the historic significance of those items. Without information on how an item was collected, when and where made or used, and what its local links are, it can become meaningless. For purposes of study, exhibition use and public accessibility, records are essential.

Such records also supply the only acceptable basis for auditing of the collections, and are essential to security as the only proof of ownership accepted by the courts.

- 5.2 All items within the care of the Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service must be recorded, including the circumstances and conditions of acceptance and such other information as is necessary to complement the object, in an appropriate, secure and permanent form capable of easy retrieval. In this work the data standards set up by the Museums Documentation Association will be followed.
- 5.3 It is the Local Studies, Archives and Museum Manager's responsibility to safeguard the confidentiality of sensitive data contained in the Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service's records, and to ensure that the Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service operates within the provisions of the Data Protection Act.

6. CONSERVATION POLICY

- 6.1 It is the Local Studies, Archives and Museum Manager's primary responsibility to do all in her/his power fully to protect all items in her/his care against physical deterioration whether on display, in store, subject to research or conservation or on loan elsewhere.
- 6.2 While it is the proper role of the Local Studies, Archives and Museum Manager to take responsibility for the physical care of all items in the Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service collections, the limits of Local Studies, Archives and Museum Managerial expertise need to be acknowledged and access to professional, skilled conservation services is a necessity. Hillingdon Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service has neither trained staff nor the facilities to undertake specialist conservation work in-house.
- 6.3 The Local Studies, Archives and Museum Manager must consult professional colleagues outside the Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service when her/his expertise and that of immediate colleagues are insufficient to ensure the welfare of items in the collections under her/his care.

C. ACCESS AND COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

1. EDUCATION POLICY

- 1.1 The role of heritage education is to support the overall mission of the Local Studies, Archives and Museum service by expanding the range of communication between the Service and its audience.
- 1.2 The Service will provide, in association with the Borough History Advisor, INSET training courses and other workshops for teachers.
- 1.3 Talks and displays to adult groups will be given.
- 1.4 A heritage handling collection will be maintained, separate from the main museum and archive collections. The handling collection will include a number of items provided in loans boxes. This will be administered by the Schools Library Service.

2. EXHIBITIONS POLICY

- 2.1 When a Borough Museum is established the Service will present the human and natural history of the Borough in a high quality display with a significant proportion of participatory and interactive exhibits.
 - 2.1.1 The Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service will actively work with partners, such as Brunel University, to develop plans for a Borough Museum/exhibition space.
 - 2.1.2 A display area will be maintained in the Central Library.
 - 2.1.3 The collections will be made available through temporary displays when appropriate.

3. ACCESS

- 3.1 Direct public access to the collections will be provided through a public information desk in the Local Studies Library in Uxbridge. This will be provided by professional staff.
- 3.2 To increase the accessibility of the collections a programme of digitisation of items will be undertaken, to be made available on the internet. This will make accessible materials otherwise unavailable.
- 3.3 To increase access to the collections a programme of computerised cataloguing will be undertaken to enable remote searching.

- 3.4 Wherever possible photocopies, photographs or other copies of items in the collections can be purchased by members of the public. However, such copies will be available only if the condition of the original material allows them to be made without unacceptable deterioration of the original. Each request for material will be assessed individually by the Local Studies, Archive and Museum Manager and the curator of the collection concerned.
- 3.5 To increase the accessibility of the service interpretation of the historic environment will be provided at relevant sites.
- 3.6 Interpretation of the collections relevant to the individual requirements of those with special needs will be provided.

D. MARKETING POLICY

Marketing is concerned with how the Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service is presented to others. The Marketing Policy relates to every activity of the service.

- 1 In order to maximise the human and financial resources of the Local Studies, Archive and Museum Service, a forward plan will be produced on an annual basis as part of the annual Library Plan.
- 2 As a means of evaluating the work of the service the annual plan will be monitored
- 3 The service will take part in the annual National Survey of Archive Users and will use the responses from this to plan any future developments.
- 4 The Team will continue to raise awareness of the Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service through promotion and publicity.
- 5 The Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service will be represented with a stand at relevant heritage conferences, such as the annual Hayes History Conference.

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