



# HILLINGDON

LONDON

**ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL POLICY**  
LOCAL STUDIES, ARCHIVES AND MUSEUM SERVICE  
LONDON BOROUGH OF HILLINGDON  
2007-2012

## 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 part-time archivist/local studies librarian, a qualified librarian and a part-time qualified museum curator.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

## 2. CURRENT STATUS OF 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 12<sup>th</sup> century Basset's Grant and the records of St. John's Church, Hillingdon. There are approximately 15,000 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 Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

### 3. ACQUISITIONS AND DISPOSALS POLICY

#### 3.1 General Principles

- 3.1.1 In collecting or dealing with potential collections the Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service should adhere to all current legislation or agreed conventions, as laid down in the Museums Association Code of Ethics (2002), the Museums and Galleries Commission's Registration Guidelines and Code of Practice on Archives for Museums (1990) as well as BS5454 and the National Archives "A Standard for Record Repositories" (2004).
- 3.1.2 The Acquisitions and Disposals Policy should be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. Acquisitions outside the stated policy should only be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by the Council, having regard to the interests of other museums. The Regional Agency / Museum council / CyMAL will be notified of any changes to the Acquisition and Disposal Policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of existing collections.
- 3.1.3 The Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service will usually only acquire an item if it can be adequately documented, preserved (in terms of conservation and security) and interpreted (either in terms of display or education, the potential for which should be present in the documentation accompanying the accession); and it will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as inadequate staffing, storage and care of collection managements.
- 3.1.4 The Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service will not normally accept an item with conditions attached, e.g. continuous display, which could interfere with the Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service's exhibition policy.
- 3.1.5 The Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service will not acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange any object or specimen unless the Council or responsible officer is satisfied the Service can acquire a valid title to the item in question and that in particular it has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. (For the purposes of this paragraph 'country of origin' includes the United Kingdom).
- 3.1.6 All decisions to collect will take account of the size and condition of the item in relation to its intended use.

## 3.2 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.

## 3.3 Collecting Policies

### 3.3.1 Archaeology

The Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service owns archaeological material from some local sites, mostly as a result of stray finds. The service does not have the resources to carry out active excavations, which are therefore carried out entirely by the Museum of London Archaeology Service or other contractors.

Since the Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service does not currently have the storage accommodation to accept archives from current excavations, these will continue to be held by the Museum of London. The Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service will continue to acquire archaeological stray finds from the London Borough of Hillingdon area.

The Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service will not acquire archaeological antiquities (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the governing body or responsible officer has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures, such as reporting finds to the landowner or occupier of the land and to the proper authorities in the case of possible treasure as defined by the Treasure Act 1996( in England, Northern Ireland and Wales) or reporting finds through the Treasure Trove procedure (in Scotland).

### 3.3.2 Natural Sciences

The Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service will not collect actively in these areas, except for specific exhibitions purposes.

It is hoped that this gap in the collections can be remedied in the future.

So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the museum will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen that has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or natural history conservation law or treaty or the United Kingdom or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority (e.g. a British court in the case of a specimen seized from a third party under the Protection of Birds Act).

### 3.3.3 Human History

This subject covers the larger part of the existing Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service collections. It includes the following categories: Local and Industrial History, including woodland crafts and rural life; Social History; Military History; Transport History; Costume; Photographs and archival material; Oral History, Printed works, Ephemera and Contemporary History. Past collecting has been passive and this has led to unequal representation of a number of subjects and geographical areas within the collections. Areas of under representation were identified in 1990 and the Local Studies, Archives and Museum Manager is actively collecting in these fields, such as material on BME groups. This material will not necessarily have a direct association to Hillingdon but will be material associated with people who have moved to the borough and lived here for a number of years.

### 3.3.4 Fine Art

The Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service owns a collection of topographical pictures. Work is ongoing to make this collection fully representative of the Borough.

The Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service will use the statement of principles 'Spoliation of Works of Art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period', issued for non-national museums in 1999 by the Museums and Galleries Commission.

### 3.3.5 Handling Collection

1. The Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service will acquire items specifically for handling use. These will be registered in a separate inventory and will not form part of the core museum collections.
2. Items will only be collected that do not conflict with the religious and multi-cultural collections already in existence and administered by the Schools Library Service.
3. Priority will be given to receiving items relevant to the historical and environmental heritage of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
4. These items will need to be appropriate for educational use and conform to safety standards.

### 3.4 Disposal Policy

- 3.4.1 It is a key function of Hillingdon Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service to acquire objects, archive material and works of art and to keep them for posterity. Consequently there must be a strong presumption against the disposal of any items in the collections.
- 3.4.2 Where the Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service is legally free to dispose of an item, (if this is in doubt, advice should be sought) it is agreed that any decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken only after due consideration.
- 3.4.3 When disposal of a museum object is being considered, the museum will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant.
- 3.4.4 Decisions to dispose of items will not be made with the principal aim of generating funds. Once a decision to dispose of an item has been taken, priority will be given to retaining the item within the public domain, unless it is destroyed. It will therefore be offered first, by exchange, gift or sale, to Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.
- 3.4.5 If the material is not acquired by any Accredited Museums to which it was offered directly, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material, normally through an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal, and in other professional journals where appropriate. The announcement must indicate the number of specimens involved, the prime objects concerned and the basis on which the material would be transferred to another institution. The announcement will indicate the number and nature of specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. Preference will be given to expressions of interest from other Accredited Museums. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed. At the end of this period, if no expressions of interest have been received, the museum may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations.
- 3.4.6 A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, exchange, sale or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections.), will be the responsibility of Hillingdon Borough Council acting on the advice of professional Local Studies, Archives and Museum Managerial staff, and not of the Local Studies, Archives and Museum Manager of the collection concerned acting alone. Full

records will be kept of all decisions on disposals and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable in accordance with SPECTRUM Procedure on deaccession and disposal.

- 3.4.7 Any monies received by the London Borough of Hillingdon from the disposal of items will be applied for the benefit of the Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions but in exceptional cases improvements relating to the care of collections may be justifiable. Advice on these cases may be sought from MLA.

This policy has been approved.

Signed.....

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