
Worcestershire Archive Service

Collection Development Plan 2013-2018

a partnership between

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1.0 Mission Statement

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service's (WAAS) priority is to ensure the proper management of Worcestershire's heritage for current and future generations. We protect, preserve, manage, record, interpret, share and promote the history and historic environment of Worcestershire. We help the modern county of Worcestershire to achieve its priorities as identified in the Corporate Plan, especially sustainable development, a strong economy, better education and skills and independent healthy living. We are developing a sustainable model for the continuance and growth of the Archive and Archaeology Service in the current financial climate.

2.0 Introduction

Worcestershire Archive Service seeks to identify, collect and preserve the documentary heritage of Worcestershire and make it available for use both now and in the future and to encourage the broadest public access to archives. In fulfilling these duties we will abide by all relevant legislation including:

- Public Records Acts 1958, 1967
- Manorial Documents Rules 1959 and 1967
- Tithe Apportionment Rules 1960 and 1963
- Local Government (Records) Act 1962
- Local Government Act 1972
- Parochial Registers and Records Measure 1978, amended 1992
- Local Government (Access to Information Act) 1985
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 2000

3.0 Aims

This plan outlines the steps Worcestershire Archive Service (WAS; the Service) needs to take to fulfil the aims outlined in our *Acquisition and Collection Policy* by specifically identifying our priorities for collecting over the ensuing 5 year period. This will ensure that we address the gaps in our current collections which have been identified as weaknesses through our established monitoring processes.

Worcestershire Archive Service will seek to ensure its collections reflect all aspects of Worcestershire's communities and their activities, past and present and will collect records from whatever source that can contribute to a better understanding of the history and development of the County.

In order to ensure our holdings represent as complete a coverage of Worcestershire's past as possible, the Archive Service will seek to add further collections to reflect all aspects of life in the area it serves, aiming to cover all parts of the county's past and present and as wide a range of institutions and subjects as possible.

Our collecting priorities are constantly evolving in order to reflect the continuing development of our collections. Whilst priority in acquiring records will be given to archives at risk of loss, destruction or damage, we will actively seek to acquire record collections that are currently underrepresented within the Service's holdings. Prioritisation is established through the information provided in our Strengths and Weaknesses documentation (see section 6.0 below), which was compiled on the basis of a survey of the complete collections held by the Service. This is reassessed each year through the analysis of our annual accessions returns in conjunction with a continuous process of monitoring during the processing of existing collections, as specified in our *Collections Information Policy and Plan*.

4.0 Acquisition

Worcestershire Archive Service collects material that fulfils one or more of the following criteria:

- Records of the County Council and its predecessor bodies
- Records of other local authorities and their predecessors and statutory bodies operating within the County
- Local public records held under the Public Records Acts
- Ecclesiastical records of the diocese of Worcester
- Records of regional bodies which have their headquarters within the County except where provision has already been made with another repository
- All types of record-creating bodies within Worcestershire such as Faith groups other than the Church of England, clubs, societies and associations, businesses, families, including landed estates and individuals

5.0 Appraisal and review of existing collections

In order to ensure that the collections of records acquired by Worcestershire Archive Service are fully in line with the conditions of our *Acquisition and Collection Policy* a process of appraisal and review takes place, whereby the records are assessed for their research value and for the suitability of Worcestershire as their long-term repository. Appraisal takes place at three points within the accessioning process:

- By the depositor prior to accessioning by Worcestershire Archive Service. Whilst this is not an enforced process it is something that the service strongly

encourages our existing and potential depositors to carry out. Specific advice on reviewing and appraising parish and town council records, ecclesiastical records and school records can be found on our website:

<http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/archive-and-archaeology/depositing-records.aspx#review>. Further guides will be made available in the future.

- By Worcestershire Archive Service prior to accepting the collections into our care. Preliminary sorting and appraisal is carried out as part of the accessioning process, particularly where it is evident that this has not been carried out by the depositor.
- By trained Worcestershire Archive Service staff during the sorting and listing stage that is carried out prior to cataloguing collections.

Appraisal is to be carried out in accordance with Worcestershire Archive Service's *Acquisition and Collection Policy*. Records contained within a collection must adhere fully to the terms specified within this Policy, specifically that the records relate to the history of Worcestershire and its administration. Worcestershire Archive Service is currently working on producing Selection and Weeding Guidelines, which are available in draft form. This will ultimately feed into our approach for dealing with the appraisal and sorting of our existing collections.

Where appraisal of a collection identifies a section of records that do not adhere to the *Acquisition and Collection Policy* and the removal of such records would threaten the integrity of the wider collection, the appropriate action to be taken is to be decided at the senior archivist's discretion.

5.1 Disposal of records

If, during the appraisal process, records are encountered that do not adhere to the conditions specified within the *Acquisition and Collection Policy* or are deemed to be unworthy of permanent preservation then they may be returned to the depositor, transferred to a more appropriate repository or destroyed confidentially in accordance with the wishes of the depositor as specified on the accessioning paperwork that was completed at the point of deposit.

6.0 Strengths and Weaknesses of the Collections

A survey of our collections carried out in 2010 revealed the strengths and weaknesses of our holdings, which are as follows:

6.1 Areas of strength

Quarter Sessions records
Magistrates' Courts records
Local Authority (County and District Councils) records
Town and parish council records
Records of former Boroughs
Ecclesiastical parish records
Diocesan records
Poor Law records
Nonconformist churches, particularly Methodist and Society of Friends, records
Family and estate records
Solicitors' records
Photographs of the county
Oral history records
Hospital and mental health records, including nursing and practice records
Political organisations' records
Police records
Coroner's records (late 20th cent. onwards)
Personal journals and diaries

6.2 Areas of weakness

Business archives of many significant local trades and industries
Charities
Voluntary Sector organisations
School log books
Trades Union records
Many less main stream Non-conformist churches
Minority ethnic and religious bodies (especially non-Christian)
Agricultural and farming records
Records of sporting clubs and societies
Military records (personal and individual)
Records of artistic and cultural organisations and individuals
Architectural records
Petty Sessional records
Personal and family papers of the 20th century

Using this information as a guide we are able to establish clear targets for our collecting priorities. Whilst it is essential that we maintain our current strengths and continue to develop relationships with our existing depositors, this information provides us with specific areas to focus upon for future development of our collections.

7.0 Depositor relationships

We maintain relationships with depositors largely through the Friends of the Archive Service or through various local history groups and societies, but this is dependent on them being members in the first place. We also produce an Annual Report. Larger and regular depositors are recipients of all our usual publicity. Occasional opportunities are taken to develop existing contacts such as a recent display of archives, talk and tour of The Hive for the Worcester Clothiers Company who have an important deposit in our collections. Regular contact is maintained with the Diocesan Registrar and the Diocesan Advisory Committee. However, the Archive Service recognises that more could be done to involve depositors and to engage with them and their contacts, to encourage them also to deposit records with the Service. The practice of holding Depositor events is therefore being resurrected in order to develop awareness and disseminate information.

8.0 Annual review and surveying of collections

In order to ensure that we maintain an up-to-date overview of the coverage of our collections and that our understanding of the weaknesses of our holdings and those areas which require further development through active collection are accurate, it is essential that we carry out a continuous programme of reviewing and surveying our collections.

Worcestershire Archive Service takes part in The National Archives' Annual Accessions to Repositories Survey, which collates information about the accessions made to the office over the preceding 12 months. The information that is submitted is used in conjunction with the results of our previous Collections Survey to annually assess our holdings in order that we may have an accurate list detailing the strengths and weaknesses of our collections.

Whilst we are careful to monitor and compare new collections that are deposited with Worcestershire Archive Service against our Collections Survey findings, many of the contents of the larger collections that are currently placed on our Backlog of accessions awaiting processing are still unknown to us. For this reason we employ a continuous process of monitoring during the processing of existing collections. Further details of our procedures for dealing with records held on our Backlog can be found in our *Collections Information Policy and Plan* documents. The cataloguing activity of staff within the Service is assigned and closely monitored by our Collections Team archivists in order that we maintain an accurate picture of the records we hold. Should our staff come across any records during the sorting, listing and cataloguing of documents that directly affect our Collections Survey work then this information is recorded and passed on to the appropriate Collections Team staff in order that amendments may be made where appropriate.

The information that is gathered through our sorting and cataloguing activity and through the statistics compiled for the Annual Accessions to Repositories Survey is carefully monitored and is then used to feed in to our collections development priorities for the ensuing years. Although we create our Collection Development plans on a five-yearly basis we maintain the right to review this document prior to its published end date should we find that our collecting priorities are dramatically altered as a result of deposits made or records discovered through the course of cataloguing during this period.

8.1 Surveys for the Parochial Registers and Records Measure 1978

Under the Parochial Registers and Records Measure of 1978 Worcestershire Archive Service has been designated by the Bishop of Worcester as the Diocesan Record Office for the Diocese of Worcester. In accordance with the Measure we are the designated repository for the deposit of parochial registers and other records.

The Parochial Registers and Records Measure of 1978 (amended as to 2003) stipulates that "Every archdeacon shall cause the register books and records in parochial custody in his archdeaconry, including register books in use for the purpose of making entries therein, to be inspected and reported on periodically by such person or persons as he may appoint."¹ Traditionally this role has been carried out by Worcestershire Archive Service. The Measure also states that the survey must be carried out every five years. Whilst we do not have the resources available to carry out a full survey every five years, we do maintain regular contact with the parishes within Worcester Diocese. Wherever frequent contact is not maintained we will seek to initiate a parochial survey in line with the five-year guideline.

The aim of conducting the surveys is to ensure the long term preservation and accessibility of parochial registers and records as a reflection of the heritage of the Diocese. By compiling lists of the records held and assessing the conditions in which they are kept, recommendations and advice can then be given as to the best course of action for different records, to ensure their long term preservation and accessibility. Ensuring the security of these records both prior to their deposit and throughout the duration of our custody of the records is a high priority Collections Development task for the Archive Service.

¹ Parochial Registers and Records Measure 1978 No.2, F4 – 9, (1)

9.0 Collecting Priorities

Worcestershire Archive Service has identified several priority areas which we will seek to develop our coverage of through a programme of active collection and community engagement over the next five-year period:

9.1 Business archives of local trades and industries and records of Trade Unions

Industry in Worcestershire has been varied, including carpets, needles, coal, light engineering and agriculture. While a number of individual companies have deposited records, many more still current businesses, have not. Our approach to collecting business records is twofold. Firstly, we monitor local newspapers for news of mergers or collapses of local business and then attempt, sensitively, to discuss the legacy the local business can leave in the community. With concerns over the future of such nationally significant businesses as Kay's Catalogues, Lea and Perrins and Metal Box, contacts are made and in many cases successfully pursued. A recent example of such successful negotiation is Crown Packaging, who closed their Worcester site in June 2013 – previously (Carnaud) Metal Box – from where Worcestershire Archive Service was able to collect a significant deposit of photographs and records documenting around 80 years of the firm's history in Worcester.

Secondly, Worcestershire Archive Service works to raise our own awareness of potential collections through communication with partners and trade organisations, such as the Chamber of Commerce. When highlighting how depositing records with the Service can secure the future of a business's documents we also endeavour to demonstrate how the profile of the originating body can be potentially raised through us, as their records will be accessible to a wider audience than previously. In turn, our work with individual companies serves as exposure that will raise our profile within the local business community as a whole. In part our contact with local businesses takes place where community activity is already occurring and we actively seek business cooperation.

Commercial opportunities for the storage of records within our secure, onsite strongrooms also exist and it is hoped that the relationships built through this activity could ultimately lead to permanent acquisitions of further business record collections.

In line with the results of our Collections Survey, Worcestershire Archive Service is also keen to collect records of the local branches of trade unions connected to these businesses. Existing trade union records held by the Service originate predominantly from the service industries, such as teaching, local government and health unions. These records include those of the National Union of Teachers and UNISON. A more active attempt to acquire records from industrial concerns is currently being pursued.

The local Trades Union Council is supportive of our efforts, and have deposited their own records at The Hive, as have social and political organisations, such as the Co-operative Party and branches of the local Labour and Conservative parties.

Worcestershire Archive Service works closely with other collecting institutions in the county such as Museums Worcestershire - the county's museum service, but more particularly the Carpet Museum in Kidderminster and the Forge Mill Needle Museum in Redditch, in relation to records of those industries and their trade unions. A recent opportunity has been taken to digitise records of the Powerloom Workers Union, the originals of which will continue to be held at The Hive. By placing digital surrogates of these in the Carpet Museum, it is intended that local community voluntary activity will raise awareness of the Carpet Museum and serve to develop local audiences.

9.2 Community Archives projects

Worcestershire Archive Service is currently engaged in two distinct projects that will serve to address the gaps in our holdings which relate to personal and family papers of the 20th century and also to records of charities and voluntary sector organisations. The projects will also strongly contribute to the aims of our Outreach team as stated in our *Outreach and Promotion* and our *Educational Use of Archives* policies.

9.2.1 Dines Green People's Archive

Worcestershire Archive Service is currently liaising with the project leader of Dines Green People's Museum and Archive. Dines Green is an area of Worcester which will soon be the focus of a housing development project. As part of the upcoming work plans are in place to launch a project that is aimed at getting people to start reflecting upon and articulating the value of their experiences and their lives in Dines Green.

Alongside an archaeological dig taking place people will be encouraged, through workshops and one-to-one communication, to gather materials that reflect their lives on the estate including photographs, documents and artefacts alongside gathering oral history accounts of their experiences. With the ultimate aim of creating a community arts space there are plans to create an installation to display the items collected through this work, with the possibility of a permanent exhibition being erected on the estate.

Worcestershire Archive Service seeks to use this project as a platform for engaging the local community by demonstrating the value of archives and to communicate to new audiences the existing wealth of our collections. Preliminary research for this project uses material from Worcestershire Archive Service to obtain a greater understanding of the history of Dines Green. As part of the project a workshop, or potentially a series of workshops, will be run either on the estate or on site at The Hive to inform the local

community about the records we hold and to encourage them to explore the rich history of their community further. The Service is also engaged in plans to allow original documents out on the site of the community project, although high quality surrogates may be used where this is felt to be more appropriate.

The ultimate aim of developing the relationship of Worcestershire Archive Service with the Dines Green housing development project is to bring our archives to life for the people of this local community. A by-product of this community engagement will be to create an archive that will be deposited with the Service. A photographer will be present throughout the course of the project and the images taken will be included as part of the deposit, alongside the documents, images and accounts gathered by the residents of Dines Green. Prior to deposit, and in accordance with a pre-arranged agreement, the collection will be professionally assessed and where appropriate appraised in order to ensure that it is fully in compliance with our *Acquisitions and Collection Policy*.

9.2.2 Worcestershire World War One Hundred project

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service is currently engaged in a joint Heritage Lottery Fund bid for the Worcestershire World War 100 project. WAAS is the lead organisation in a partnership signed up to by the following members:

- Museums Worcestershire (a joint County and City Councils Service)
- Mayor and Worcester City Council
- University of Worcester
- Worcester City Archaeology Service
- Worcester Cathedral
- Worcestershire Regimental Museum
- Worcestershire Yeomanry Cavalry Museum Trust
- George Marshall Medical Museum (NHS)
- The Infirmary Museum (University of Worcester)
- Tudor House, Worcestershire Museum of Local Life
- Elgar Birthplace Museum
- Avoncroft Museum
- Royal Worcester Porcelain Museum

The project is concerned with the range of different aspects of the heritage of the First World War in relation to Worcestershire. This heritage tells us the stories of the soldiers and their families, about improvements in healthcare, the effect it had on women and their education and employment, the impact of the War throughout the rest of the twentieth century in Worcestershire, and the contribution of local people to the legacy of the War.

One of the aims of the project is to enable people who own heritage items relating to the First World War connected to Worcester and/or Worcestershire such as diaries, letters

and photographs, to be able to deposit these in a suitable repository. The Worcestershire World War 100 partners are happy to consider any material of WWI date relating to:

The City of Worcester
The County of Worcestershire
Those that lived/originated in the City and County
The Worcestershire Regiment
The Worcestershire Yeomanry

Material that is submitted to be deposited specifically with Worcestershire Archive Service will be subject to the conditions of our *Acquisitions and Collection Policy* and therefore may be appraised in order to assess the appropriateness of the collection for deposit prior to accessioning. Alongside direct deposits with the Service we may also consider photographing or digitally copying records in order that surrogate copies may be held for use by researchers.

9.3 Digital Records

Worcestershire Archive Service's *Digital Preservation and Digitisation Strategy* outlines the approach required to ensure digital materials are effectively preserved and can be efficiently retrieved and utilised by future researchers. The Service's overriding priority in relation to digital records over the ensuing five year period is to take steps to implement the recommendations outlined in this strategy in order to ensure that we are effectively dealing with and are actively encouraging the deposit of digital records.

As outlined in our *Collections Information Plan* we have medium-term plans to recommence an existing survey of digital and non-paper analogue holdings. This will ensure that we have an accurate picture of the materials we hold and allow us to develop a plan for the proper storage, cataloguing and management of the records. The *Collections Information Plan* also outlines our intentions to further develop our Accessions forms and processes in order to fit the needs of digital records. We will also liaise with Worcestershire County Council ICT department (Systems & Customer Access) to develop policies and plans for a digital repository that can potentially store and allow onsite access to born digital material.

Alongside our plans to prepare Worcestershire Archive Service for the efficient storage, management and retrieval of digital records, our focus for the duration of this *Collection Development Plan* is to strive to create awareness amongst existing and potential depositors of the importance of managing, retaining and depositing their born-digital material. We will develop information documents outlining the steps required for dealing with digital material. We will also create templates that will encourage people to prepare their records prior to deposit, outlining details including the essential metadata requirements for records. Depositors will be targeted through in-branch publicity; information supplied via our Service's website and social media accounts and through

direct written contact where existing relationships are established. Digital material deposited with the Service will be subject to the criteria for collecting records outlined in our *Acquisition and Collection Policy*.

This plan was written in July 2013 and will be reviewed in 2018.