

# Collection Development Policy for The National Archives' Library

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## Introduction

This policy is intended to evolve and develop in line with the strategic priorities of The National Archives (TNA), especially in areas of research and teaching. It will be reviewed regularly, in particular to keep up-to-date with technological advances in electronic publications such as e-books.

### 1. Library mission

The National Archive's Library provides a research level, publicly accessible information service to:

- aid interpretation, use and preservation of The National Archives' holdings;
- support the corporate decision-making, professional roles and research requirements of The National Archives;
- support the development of National Archives' staff.

It does this by the provision of published materials in appropriate media and by the provision of information systems and services that facilitate the exploitation of its materials. It also provides expert staff, including professionally qualified librarians, who are knowledgeable about the collection and its management.

### 2. Collection overview

The Library was founded at the time the Public Record Office was established in 1838. It incorporates two early collections; that of the Record Commission, which provided its original nucleus, and that of the State Paper Office, which was absorbed into the new Public Record Office building in Chancery Lane in 1854. In 2003 the Historical Manuscripts Commission (HMC) joined with the Public Record Office to form The National Archives. At that time HMC's library collection came to Kew. The whole Library collection is listed on the online Library Catalogue.

The Library is a specialist library that is distinctive because it is a library collection within an archive. It is also a research level library, covering British history that is freely available to the public. Unlike similar libraries, the majority of the collection is on open access and can be browsed.

The collection includes printed materials from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards, and continues to be developed and added to. The collection consists of primary published materials, for example directories from the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and topographical publications published at a time when the study of antiquities, topography and genealogy was developing. It also includes secondary published sources that provide contextual information relevant to the subject areas covered by the public records, and many publications that reference the public records and can be used as additional finding aids.

The Library provides published resources for all TNA departments as required. Some departments house books and journals directly relevant to their business areas, for example Collection Care, but they are all accessible through the Library Catalogue.

### **3. Core collection definition**

The National Archives' Library covers the following core areas:

- 3.1 Materials which directly facilitate access to the original records of central government, the law courts and the armed services held by The National Archives, from the 11<sup>th</sup> century onwards, especially where citations to documents held by The National Archives are provided. Such works include: works on the military forces in all aspects; historical monographs on politics and government, social and economic history, the intelligence agencies, trade and commerce, transport, the history and working of the English law courts, seals and palaeography.
- 3.2 Materials which directly facilitate the use of the records for research on British overseas policy, from the medieval period onwards, especially where citations to documents held by The National Archives are provided. Such works include: histories of British foreign policy and policy making bodies; imperial and colonial histories; histories of individual countries and regions.
- 3.3 Materials which directly facilitate the use of records for the study of personal and local history, such as guides to genealogical and family history or publications of local record offices, especially where citations to documents held by The National Archives are provided.

3.4 Materials which provide guidance to other repositories and their holdings in the British Isles and selected publications of national and other archives around the world, particularly those published guides, directories, reports and surveys required to sustain the work of the National Register of Archives.

3.5 Professional literature in archives and records management, which provide essential corporate and personal development information; public sector and other management in general; finance; human resource management; staff development; conservation; information technology and information studies in general.

## 4 Audiences

The Library is available for any user of The National Archives. It is available to onsite visitors on a reference basis. TNA staff may borrow material to support their daily business, teaching, learning and research needs.

## 5 General principles

5.1 We will align new acquisitions with [TNA's research priorities](#).

5.2 The Library collects printed or online published resources. It does not collect manuscripts or archives or maps, although there are a few examples of these within the existing collection.

5.3 The usual readership level is postgraduate. However, there will be exceptions where material is required or donated that is at a more general level but is still relevant to the collection.

5.4 As a general rule rare books (i.e. publications published before 1850) are not acquired and the rare book collection is not being added to other than from existing collections. However, if a book was identified as an essential addition to the collection for its content, acquisition would be considered, depending on cost, availability elsewhere, condition of the item and any other factors that may need to be considered.

5.5 Duplication will be avoided unless multiple copies are required between enquiry points or departments or usage of material warrants retaining multiple copies. Duplicate copies of material identified as part of the Heritage collection (see 9.1) will be retained.

5.6 Items for personal use, not meeting the core collection definition, will not be acquired.

5.7 Electronic resources are available for onsite access only to the public; remote access is available for staff to some resources.

**5.8** Suggestions for purchase are welcomed from any reader or member of staff of The National Archives, but the final decision for selection rests with the Librarians.

**5.9** The Library does not operate an Exchange programme.

## **6 Formats**

6.1 Printed material is primarily collected in hardback format for long-term preservation reasons; paperback books will be acquired if hardback is not available.

6.2 The Library arranges books into three sizes: up to 30 cm in height is standard size; over-size is between 31 and 40 cm; and over-over-size over 40 cm.

6.3 Other printed formats include:

- pamphlets, including off-prints of journal articles – defined by the Library as an item where the spine is too thin for a spine label;
- journals or periodicals – publications received on subscription and published periodically, for example monthly, fortnightly, annually etc.;
- annuals – books published once a year such as *Who's Who* or *Whitaker's Almanac*.

6.4 The Library also acquires electronic publications including full-text databases, online reference sources, electronic journals and we are now beginning to add e-books. Currently technical, archiving and legal issues around access to electronic resources limit a whole-sale move towards electronic delivery of published materials. However, the long-term aim is to acquire more electronic material and to reduce the amount of printed material that is collected.

6.5 Although some material acquired in the past is held on CD-Rom this format is no longer collected because there are no means of providing access to the public. Where a printed book includes a CD-Rom, the CD is removed and stored in the Library office area but cannot be made publicly available. A note to this effect is added to the catalogue description of that book.

## **7 Language**

The majority of the collection is in English, although a wide range of other languages are represented, especially European languages. As a general rule we do not collect material in languages using non-roman script such as Chinese, Japanese, and Arabic. However, if a publication was of particular significance for the collection, for example because of research using records held at The National Archives, then acquisition would be considered if it is possible to transcribe the publication details to create a bibliographic description for the Library catalogue.

## **8 Constraints**

There are some constraints to acquiring comprehensively in any area.

### **8.1 Budget**

The Library purchases material in the most appropriate and cost effective way, using framework agreements where possible. The Library budget is reviewed each year and is limited by overall TNA budget requirements.

### **8.2 Space**

Growth space for the Library collection is finite. Material categorised under the Self-renewing or Finite categories in point 9 below, will be reviewed and withdrawn as appropriate to maintain space.

### **8.3 Data protection/copyright**

For Copyright reasons photocopies of journal articles or books cannot be added to the Library collection unless they have been made for preservation reasons or to replace lost copies from the collection. Off-prints of journal articles can be added to the collection. Current directories received through society memberships are not added to the collection for data protection reasons, particularly if personal data is listed.

## 9 Donations

The Library benefits from donations of individual items, and occasional collections, and continues to welcome offers of gifts and donations in line with the Collection Development Policy. We do not accept bequests or material on deposit or loan. Where possible one copy of any book published in association with The National Archives will be donated to the Library. If further copies are required they will be purchased. In addition, copies of PhD theses by students on TNA's Collaborative Doctoral Award scheme, will be donated to the Library.

Donations are accepted if they cover the core collection definitions set out in section 3 above. We generally do not accept personal memoirs or family histories of individuals, even where documents held by The National Archives have been cited. We cannot accept photocopies of publications that are still in copyright. We do not accept duplicate copies of publications already in the library collection, unless there are specific reasons for having multiple copies. The language of the item must fit with the policy described in section 7 above.

The following factors will be considered when determining the acceptance of donations:

- Value to the Library collection – does the item fit with the Collection development policy including any references to TNA documents;
- Intrinsic value – does the item have intrinsic value, for example is it rare or unusual;
- Collection care – is the material in a suitable physical condition to be added to the Library collection without incurring additional cost;
- Stock management – is there appropriate space to store the material;
- Cataloguing – is there resource for cataloguing large collections of material in particular;
- Gifts are accepted on the understanding that any unwanted material may be disposed of according to Library policy.

## 10 Collections

This document uses the types used by [Leeds University Library](#) and [Bradford University Special Collections](#) to categorise the collection.

**10.1 Heritage.** Collections, or clusters of collections, which are unique, distinctive and relevant to our mission. We are recognised as and expected to be specialists in these areas. These areas are our priority for collection management and collection development and are to be retained permanently.



## Completed publications no longer being acquired

- Material with State Paper Office ownership stamp – this originated with the State Paper Office, a forerunner of the Public Record Office, and forms part of the original library collection. Further work is required to identify this material and note the presence of a stamp on the bibliographic record.
- Record Commission publications – material acquired by or originating from the Record Commissions between 1800 and 1831, including Statutes of the Realm, and early Charter, Patent and Close Rolls.
- ‘Rare book collection’ – all material published up to 1800 plus some specific items beyond this date.
- *Lists and Indexes* publications – maintain one complete set in the Library. Other specific volumes held in reading rooms and enquiry points as required.
- *Rolls Series* – maintain one complete set.
- *Annual reports of the Deputy Keeper and Keeper of the Public Record Office*. For current annual reports see Current acquisitions below.
- Material listed on the English Short Title Catalogue as held by TNA. Further work is required to identify these.
- Annotated set of Historical Manuscript Commission (HMC) reports.

## Current acquisitions

- Calendars – maintain one complete set of all Calendars of public records in the Library with duplicate volumes in the Map and Large Document Reading Room and Staff Reading Room as required.
- *List and Index Society* publications. One complete set is maintained in the Library. Additional copies will be acquired for the Map and Large Document Reading Room as required.
- Other material relating to the history of the Public Record Office, the Historical Manuscript Commission and the Office of Public Sector Information prior to them joining the Public Record Office to form The National Archives. This may include histories of these institutions or material owned by former members of staff and containing ownership marks and/or manuscript annotations.
- Local history/topography/cartography – this is one of TNA’s core collections, with many books having been acquired at the time of publication in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The subject is part of the Public History subject area which has its own subject team within Advice and Records Knowledge Department. We will continue to collect selectively in this area and will acquire all volumes of the Victoria County History as published, and all publications from the various English local record societies.
- Seals, Palaeography and Diplomatic.
- Military history – material relating to activities of the HM Forces.
- History of government departments including directories such as Army Lists or Foreign Office lists, official histories.

- Publications relating to the administration of government and the courts – critical to understanding of how the records are organised throughout history.
- PRO/TNA publications – ensure one copy of each publication is retained including previous editions.
- History of public records and record keeping including early guides to the records such as those by Thomas Francis Sheppard, Samuel Robert Scargill-Bird and Montague Spencer Giuseppi.
- Transcriptions or facsimiles of public records or other key historical documents, for example all facsimiles of Domesday Book.
- Journals that directly relate to the records and may include transcriptions – *Pipe Roll Society, Hakluyt Society, Navy Records Society, Camden Society, Harleian Society*.
- Annual reports of The National Archives.
- Archival practice, digitisation and training in archival services delivery.

**10.2 Legacy.** Like Heritage collections, these materials are unique or distinctive. However they are a lower priority for collecting because they are less relevant to our mission, already collected by others with a stronger claim, or already complete with little scope for enhancement. They are to be retained for the foreseeable future because they are important materials which are well used, but we will only add where this is essential to enhance or interpret existing materials.

- Directories and Annuals such as Post Office Directories.
- Statutes and Statutory Instruments.
- Journals of House of Commons and House of Lords.
- History of bibliography – catalogues of other libraries.
- Sales catalogues for Archive Services Development.

**10.3 Self-renewing.** This is material intended to be self-renewing, to support our services to visitors and enquirers and/or to assist staff and volunteers in their work and research. Examples include reference works, working copies in remote offices, librarian and archivist textbooks, professional standards, manuals and reports. Superseded editions will be replaced as appropriate. Examples include:

- IT software manuals.
- Family history series such as Gibson Guides.
- Current language dictionaries.

**10.4 Finite.** Material which is no longer relevant. We aim wherever possible to de-accession this material, to enable us to concentrate resources on material which is relevant, and to allow it to be more useful in a different context. Material is de-accessioned in line with the Retention and Disposal policy. Examples include:

- Duplicate copies no longer required.
- Material damaged beyond repair or where costs of repair outweigh value of content.
- Annual reports – annual reports are often donated by a range of national and international organisations. Those from other national archives, and from organisations of direct relevance to The National Archives, if not available online will be held for five years before being considered for disposal.