

IWCRO Collections Development Policy

A) INTRODUCTION

A1) Mission Statement and Aims

The aim of the Isle of Wight County Record Office (afterwards IWCRO) is to collect records which reflect the history and diversity of the Isle of Wight and its inhabitants. It will then provide conditions to ensure the conservation of these records for present and future generations. IWCRO will also make these records universally accessible to researchers, Isle of Wight Council and other bodies, both through the Record Office search room and through an outreach programme. This outreach will enhance understanding and inform local decision making, as well as strengthening local community and cultural identity.

A2) Purpose of this Policy

This document is concerned with the collecting parameters of IWCRO and identifying strengths and weaknesses within the collection as we seek to reflect the history and diversity of the Island. Accompanying documents will address the stages at which information is collected archival deposits and steps taken to make these records universally accessible to present and future researchers. Further documents will address the conservation requirements of documents collected under this policy.

In the context of this and accompanying policies, Archives are defined as documents which have been generated over the lifespan of an individual or business. They are defined (and therefore grouped) by provenance rather than by their subject matter, and the significance of individual items is enhanced through their relationship with the collection as a whole.

B) STATUTORY

The Collections Development Policy at the IWCRO is informed by a number of pieces of legislation which have evolved over time:

The Local Government (Records) Act 1962 which enabled local authorities to promote the use of their own records and enabled County Councils to acquire records by gift, deposit or purchase as 'Principal Archive Authorities'

The Local Government Act 1972 stressed that the Principal Archive Authorities shall 'make proper arrangements with respect to any documents that are in the custody of the Council or any of their officers'.

The Public Records Act 1958 (amended 1967) provides for the deposit of any class of public records to be deposited at places other than the Public Record Office (now The National Archives), once they have been designated as a Place of Deposit. This designation depends on having facilities for storage and safekeeping as determined by inspection.

Manorial Document Rules and Tithe Apportionment Rules 1959 and 1960 (amended 1967 and 1963) relate to the storing of these classes of records at Places of Deposit on behalf of the Master of the Rolls and such places are inspected on his behalf.

The Parochial Registers and Records Measure 1978 (amended 1992) identified a Record Office in each Diocese for the deposit of all non-current parochial registers and records over 100 years old unless storage of specified high standard is provided within the parish church.

C) SCOPE OF COLLECTIONS

C1) Geographical Area

The IWCRO will collect records that relate to the Isle of Wight and its communities. Collections containing a minority of records relating to outside the geographical area may be accepted in order to maintain the integrity of the collection as a whole.

C2) Chronological Period

IWCRO will collect all items within our Collecting Criteria regardless of date.

C3) Format and Media

IWCRO will collect written records on paper and parchment. We currently hold few Primary Sources on CD, DVD or Memory Stick. With the growth of Digital Media, the Isle of Wight County Record Office is working with other Record Offices in the region as well as the ICT department of Isle of Wight Council to develop a Digital Preservation Policy to ensure that these records can be preserved with confidence. In the meantime, the IWCRO is maintaining a dialogue with local organisations such as the local health authority with large collections of 'Born Digital' records.

D) COLLECTION SOURCES

D1) Local Government

IWCRO is responsible for the records of the Isle of Wight Council, a Unitary Authority created in 1995, as well as the records of predecessor authorities from the medieval boroughs to 1995.

The Council Retention Policy also ensures that records of possible archival interest are drawn to the attention of Record Office staff. A good working relationship with Civil Parish Councils and Town Councils across the Island also means that material generated by these organisations is offered to IWCRO.

D2) Public Records

IWCRO has been designated a place of deposit under the Public Records Act (1958) and therefore has a large collection of public records for public institutions on the Isle of Wight. Examples include records of Island hospitals and the House of Industry or Workhouse (one of the earliest such institutions in the country), as well as historic records of the Island's prisons. We also hold historic court

records, although, reflecting the Island's relationship with Hampshire, County Quarter Session records are held at Hampshire Record Office.

D3) Church of England Records and Registers

IWCRO has been recognised as the Diocesan Record Office for that part of the Diocese of Portsmouth which forms the Arch-Deaconry of the Isle of Wight under the Parochial Records and Registers Act 1978 (amended 1992). The Record Office is therefore responsible for Anglican Baptism, Marriage and Burial Registers from 1538 to the present day. A good working relationship with Portsmouth Diocese and Island churches means that both church registers and associated records are regularly deposited with this office. The fact that the Isle of Wight has always been part of a larger diocese (now Portsmouth and formerly Winchester) means that some diocesan records including wills and inventories are held elsewhere.

D4) Non-Conformist Records and Registers

The Isle of Wight County Record Office maintains a good relationship with representatives of many Non-Conformist congregations on the Island and therefore historic registers and administrative records are regularly deposited. However Roman Catholic Records and those of some smaller independent congregations are poorly represented. Records of other faiths are not yet represented, the majority of these being relatively new to the Isle of Wight.

D5) Businesses, Clubs and Societies

The Isle of Wight County Record Office collects records of local businesses, clubs and societies in order to represent the diversity of the Island community. We collect the records of these organisations as well as ephemera that reflects them. Limited space and resources mean that the Record Office does not encourage ongoing deposits. It does, however maintain relationships with many of these clubs and societies, advising on storage, retention and cataloguing and always keeping open the option of transfer to IWCRO if necessary. Of concern are the weaker relationships with

Island businesses, particularly the maritime industry, agriculture and tourism, all of which have significant heritage on the Island.

D6) Individuals

Island solicitors and landed families played an important role in the establishment of the Record Office, and so recognised the benefit of storing historic records in a County Archive. As a result large quantities of family and estate records were received in the early years of the office existence. These form some of the most important collections at the Record Office today, and although large estate collections are no longer forthcoming, ongoing relationships mean that the Record office is still making small additions to these collections. Relationships with local solicitors also continue to lead to collections of Title Deeds for individual properties being deposited.

D7) Secondary Material

IWCRO also collects secondary source material relating to the history of the Island and makes it available through our search-room. These secondary sources include:

Printed Books

Prints and Postcards

Ephemera reflecting the Isle of Wight and its inhabitants

Local Newspapers

Printed Maps and Plans

D8) Limits of Acquisition

IWCRO will not collect records which are not covered by our Collections Development Policy

IWCRO will not accept hazardous material (such as cellulose nitrate) or infested material which might pose a risk to other collections.

IWCRO will not accept material that is damaged beyond repair unless the long-term value is considered to be significant.

IWCRO will not accept material with unacceptable conditions of access or where it might cause us to commit an offence.

IWCRO will not accept material unless a depositor/donor can prove title.

IWCRO will not sell original documents but may offer copies of printed material to other local history groups once IWCRO and the Local History Collection hold copies.

D9) Method of Acquisition

IWCRO will accept items under the following terms:

Gift (Including bequest), our preferred option unless the depositor has a legal need to retain legal title

Deposit on long-term loan

Transfer from Isle of Wight Council, The National Archives or other Archive

Purchase (exceptional cases only)

D10) Working with Other Institutions

Offers of documents not relating to the Isle of Wight will be redirected to the appropriate County Record Office.

Offers of original audio-visual material will be redirected to the Wessex Film and Sound Archive.

Offers of photographic glass plates, sand paintings and fine art will be assessed in consultation with colleagues in the Isle of Wight Heritage Service and are usually directed to the Isle of Wight Council Museum Service.

Offers of three-dimensional artefacts will be redirected to the Isle of Wight Council Museum Service.

Offers of printed material will be assessed by the archivist on a case by case basis to decide whether the volume is to be stored in the strong rooms or made accessible in the search room. Additional

copies will be either kept in the strong room or used to stock the Local History Collection.

E) COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

IWCRO has been developing its collections for over 50 years and is constantly looking to strengthen these collections as a reflection of the history and diversity of the Island.

It recognises that its collections are not exhaustive. It will therefore conduct annual surveys of its collections in order to identify where gaps exist within existing collections and within the wider narrative of the county. These surveys will then inform the targeting of the collection policy of IWCRO in the future.

IWCRO will maintain a proactive dialogue with the depositors of existing collections to ensure that these collections grow to their fullest extent and reflect every aspect of the purpose for which they were created.

IWCRO will actively encourage deposits from elements of the Isle of Wight that are currently under-represented, as informed by collections surveys.

IWCRO will continue to work closely with colleagues across the Isle of Wight Council to ensure that the work of the council is accurately reflected in the collections held at this office.

Cataloguing is a key function for IWCRO in order to provide the widest possible access to their collections. Broad cataloguing priorities between new accessions and the long-term backlog are assigned on an annual basis in a conversation between the Archivist and Heritage Service Manager, and then re-evaluated throughout the year.

F) ACCESS

Deposits are accepted on the presumption that the donor is willing to make the documents available within a short time (and within legal requirements). In some circumstances, personal papers are accepted with limited closure periods negotiated with the depositor. The terms of these closures are agreed in writing, and the collection will be catalogued in preparation for release.

An annual list of accessions is produced and published on our website and a return is also sent to the National Register of Archives for inclusion on The National Archives website. Deposit highlights are promoted at outreach and in local history publications.

G) DISPOSAL

IWCRO reserves the right to dispose of material that does not meet our collecting policy.

IWCRO agrees appropriate terms of disposal with a depositor at the time of receipt. These will usually be one of the following:

Return to depositor – we advise the depositor that any material not collected by a certain date will be disposed of as waste.

Transfer to a more appropriate repository

Destroy by appropriate methods – Confidential waste will be destroyed by Isle of Wight Council to the appropriate industry standards.

IWCRO does not sell archive material. Published material owned by Isle of Wight Council may be sold if it duplicates material already held, or does not meet our Collection Policy, and only after the copies have been offered to relevant local groups. Any funds generated by these sales will be used for the benefit of the collections.

H) REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed within five years of publication or when a change is made. The date of the next review will be before 2023