



ARCHIVES & LOCAL STUDIES

Barnsley MBC Place Directorate

Culture, Housing and Regulation

Culture and Visitor Economy Service

Barnsley Museums

Barnsley Archives and Local Studies

Collections Care & Conservation Policy

March 2017

ARCHIVES & LOCAL STUDIES

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Barnsley Archives and Local Studies (hereinafter referred to as Barnsley Archives) is part of Barnsley Museums, within the Culture and Visitor Economy Service of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (hereinafter referred to as Barnsley MBC).
- 1.2 Barnsley Archives exists to preserve and provide access to the historical archives and resources in its care. It aims to provide borough-wide service that meets the needs of its collections and customers to the best standards of quality and value possible.
- 1.3 The long-term preservation of the historical archives in the care of the Service are paramount and at the forefront of our planning processes.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 Preservation: the passive protection of material where no direct physical or chemical treatment occurs.
- 2.2 Conservation: the active protection of material using physical and chemical treatment necessary to prevent further deterioration.

3. Principles

- 3.1 The work of Barnsley Archives is informed by the following standards:

PD5454:2012 Guide for the storage and exhibition of archival material.

PAS 198:2012 Specification for Managing Environmental Conditions for Cultural Collections.

Standard for Record Repositories (The National Archive, 2004).

ARCHIVES & LOCAL STUDIES

Preservation Assessment Survey for Libraries and Archives
(Preservation Advisory Centre).

- 3.2 The Archives and Local Studies Officer oversees the preservation and conservation of the collections. He is responsible for the storage areas and for setting and maintaining standards.
- 3.3 Some preventative conservation is undertaken in-house. This includes wrapping, cleaning and boxing.
- 3.4 As the service does not employ any trained conservation staff, conservation work that requires specialist treatment is normally done via external practitioners.

4. Storage

- 4.1 Wherever possible, collections are stored in strongrooms which adhere to PD 5454:2012. Where this is not possible, all reasonable steps are taken to minimise deterioration and degradation of materials.
- 4.2 Barnsley Archives' primary store is in Barnsley Town Hall and was created in 2013. It sits alongside a special media store for film, photographic and digital material. Archives are also currently stored in two outstores – one at Grimethorpe and one at Shortwood Villas near Hoyland. Plans are underway during 2017-18 to create a new storage area, in conjunction with the Records Management Service. It is intended that this new store will accommodate new records transferred to us by the Court Service, all records currently stored in our Grimethorpe store, as well as providing accrual space for a number of years.
- 4.3 Incoming material is initially stored in the service's Transit Store. The Archives and Local Studies Officer will determine whether any cleaning or drying is required before the items are accessioned and transferred to the main store.
- 4.4 Items that are heavily infested or badly damaged may not be retained for permanent preservation. Decisions are made on the informational and evidential value of the document, its intrinsic value and its likely future use by the public.

ARCHIVES & LOCAL STUDIES

- 4.5 Newly received material is packaged as soon as possible after receipt. Minimum protection is provided by adding the material to an acid-free archival box and wrapping if deemed to be a priority.
- 4.6 Many collections held off-site have no minimum protection in place, but that is steadily being reduced and eventually eliminated.
- 4.7 Access to strongrooms and other storage areas is restricted to Archives staff and Records Management staff (in the case of those archives held at our Shortwood outstore).
- 4.8 Strongrooms are protected against unlawful intrusion.
- 4.9 The main stores in the Town Hall are protected by an FM200 fire suppression system as well as a water detection alarm.
- 4.10 The environment in our Town Hall stores is maintained within the parameters set out in PD 5454:2012. Regular readings are taken and if concerns occur, Facilities Management and/or contractors are called to investigate and rectify problems.
- 4.11 Storage areas are generally kept tidy. They are not used as general storage areas for equipment or furniture.
- 4.12 All shelves and bays in the main stores have a unique number. This is recorded on the customer request slip so that items consulted can be quickly returned to the correct box or shelf.
- 4.13 Steel shelves and cabinets are used to store material. Archives are no longer stored in any wooden cabinets or on any wooden shelves.
- 4.14 Strongrooms in the Town Hall and in our Shortwood outstore are cleaned regularly. It is not possible to provide a similar service at our Grimethorpe outstore.

5. **Document handling**

ARCHIVES & LOCAL STUDIES

- 5.1 All staff are trained in the safe and correct handling of items from within the collections. Refresher courses are run regularly as part of the training programme.
- 5.2 Printed guidelines for searchroom users are provided at the time of registration. This provides practical dos and don'ts, to help protect the collections.
- 5.3 The searchroom is under constant supervision by staff. In addition, CCTV cameras are monitored by Town Hall officers.
- 5.4 Equipment is provided for items which are outsize or awkward. This includes weights, melinex sleeves, cushions and other support devices.
- 5.5 Items from the collections which we have surrogates in place for are not normally made available to researchers.
- 5.6 Catalogues are used to help users identify suitable items to be consulted, and so reduce the need for handling of original records unnecessarily. There is also an online catalogue available at www.explorebarnsleycollections.com.
- 5.7 Items from secure areas are not left out for longer than is necessary and in any case are returned to secure areas at the end of the working day.
- 5.8 Original archives do not generally leave a secure area, as a dumb waiter is used to transport archives between the stores and the public searchroom.
- 5.9 Items loaned out or exhibited are subject to an agreement being signed and a number of stipulations and requirements being met.
- 5.10 Items may be withdrawn from public access if they are heavily damaged and at risk from further handling. Where possible, surrogate copies will be provided. Such items may be made available under supervision.

6. **Reprography**

ARCHIVES & LOCAL STUDIES

- 6.1 When making decisions about providing copies of items, its preservation needs are taken into account and remain a priority.
- 6.2 All photocopying is undertaken by staff.
- 6.3 Parchment items and bound archival volumes are not generally photocopied.
- 6.4 Items larger than the photocopier platen (i.e. A3 size) are only photocopied at the discretion of staff, if the document is not likely to be damaged in any way.
- 6.5 A range of other copying options are available. For example large maps and plans can be copied off-site, and items can be scanned or photographed.
- 6.6 Subject to certain restrictions, researchers are able to use their own digital cameras, after purchasing a permit.

7. Training and Awareness

- 7.1 Whilst Barnsley Archives does not have a Conservation Unit or trained conservators, we maintain a relationship with the Conservation Unit at Sheffield Archives.
- 7.2 The conservators at Sheffield Archives have in recent years delivered bespoke preservation training sessions for our staff. These will be repeated on a regular basis.
- 7.3 Internal training sessions on basic preservation and handling techniques are delivered periodically.

8. Dissemination and Review

- 8.1 This Policy will be made available to the public and a copy will be sent to the National Archives.
- 8.2 This Policy will be reviewed as necessary to take into account any changed circumstances and in any case it will be reviewed after 5 years.