

Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums

Archives Collection, Acquisition and Disposal Policy

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Tyne & Wear Archives

Collection, Acquisition and Disposal Policy

Background

A county archives service for Tyne and Wear was established in 1974 by Tyne and Wear County Council, on the foundation of the collections of the Newcastle Archives Office, whose remit was extended to cover the whole of Tyne and Wear. A branch archive was maintained in North Tyneside until 1988, when the collections there were centralised, and significant archive collections held by libraries and museums in the other Tyne and Wear local authorities have also been transferred to Tyne & Wear Archives over the years. Rationalisation of holdings has also taken place from 1974 with Durham County Record Office and Northumberland Archives, particularly (though not exclusively) in relation to the archives of local authorities and their predecessors.

Introduction

Tyne & Wear Archives accepts records for continuing preservation in accordance with its Collection, Acquisition and Disposal policy. This policy sets out criteria for selection decisions and also identifies material that falls outside the scope of the collection.

For the purposes of this policy, archives are defined as an accumulation of records from an organisation or individual, which are no longer needed to conduct current business and which are selected for preservation because of the evidential and historical information they contain or as evidence of activities.

Records are defined as including, but not restricted to, manuscripts, typescripts, maps, plans, drawings, photographs, digital records, sound and moving image recordings, printed works and any other formats that form an archive, or an integral part of an archive, of an organisation or individual.

A broad policy cannot cover all eventualities and the Archives Manager will have discretion to exercise judgement on the historical and informational significance of records offered to the Archives.

Legislative context

- Under the Local Government (Records) Act, 1962 and Local Government Act, 1972, each of the five Tyne and Wear authorities of Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland is appointed an archive authority for local government districts within their respective areas of jurisdiction. These powers relate both to the authorities' own administrative records and to other records in their care. Further guidance on the provisions of the 1972

Act was issued by the Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) in 1999 (Cm.4516).

- By virtue of a joint agreement originally made in 1986 and subsequently renewed in 1996 and 2006 the five Tyne and Wear districts discharge their archive powers jointly through the Tyne & Wear Archives Service. In 2009 Tyne & Wear Archives Service and Tyne & Wear Museums merged to form Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums, with Newcastle City Council as the lead authority. A new joint agreement was signed.
- Under the Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967, Tyne & Wear Archives is an approved place of deposit for a number of classes of records of central government and the courts of law (*ie* public records) held locally. These include records of Quarter Sessions, Petty Sessions and Magistrates Courts, Coroners, and of the National Health Service.
- Tyne & Wear Archives Service was formerly recognised by the Master of the Rolls as a repository for manorial and tithe records under the Law of Property Act, 1922, and the Tithe Act, 1936. This recognition is now superseded.
- Tyne & Wear Archives does not exercise delegated powers under the Parochial Registers and Records Measure, 1978 (as amended 1993). Northumberland Archives and Durham County Record Office exercise these powers for Church of England parishes within the dioceses of Newcastle and Durham respectively.
- Additional requirements with regard to access to information in records and archives have been imposed through the Data Protection Act, 1998, the Freedom of Information Act, 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations. These include a statutory right for the citizen of access to information, subject to certain exemptions and conditions.

Geographical area of collection

Tyne & Wear Archives may acquire records created or held by organisations and individuals based or operating in Tyne and Wear, and which contribute to the documentation of any aspect of life in, or the history of, the area. Archives may include records relating to other areas where they form an integral part of an archive relating primarily or most significantly to Tyne and Wear. Tyne and Wear is defined as covering the local authority areas of Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland.

Tyne & Wear Archives may acquire records that meet one or more of the following criteria, in order to provide an evidential and research resource for present and future generations.

- Key records¹ created or held by Tyne and Wear County Council
- Key records¹ created or held by the metropolitan authorities within the area formerly covered by Tyne and Wear County Council or their predecessors

¹ Key records are identified as those that give evidence of significant functions, policy or procedure, changes in functions, policy or procedure, the impact of legislation, and other significant developments

- Gateshead Council
- Newcastle City Council
- North Tyneside Council
- South Tyneside Council
- Sunderland City Council
- Key records¹ created or held by other local authorities (eg town or parish councils) within the above areas.
- Records of other statutory bodies operating within the collecting area.
- Public records offered to the archives service under the terms of the Public Records Act eg health service, courts etc or by presentation from the National Archives
- Records of organisations, businesses, churches, societies and individuals relevant to Tyne and Wear, however they may be constituted.

The archives service will particularly seek to ensure that the records it acquires represent, as far as possible, the full range of activities, cultures and viewpoints within Tyne & Wear. The collections will be regularly reviewed to identify any gaps in their range and steps taken to address this as far as is practicable, via a Collections Development Plan.

Exclusions

Tyne & Wear Archives will not normally acquire the following types of material

- Works of art, three-dimensional objects or artefacts.
- Collections wholly of printed, published material, except where these relate substantially to the wider archival holdings and can be added to the searchroom library.
- Topographical or other photographs except where they represent the archive of a photographer.
- Collections wholly of film, video or similar material more appropriately held by repositories offering specialist storage and consultation facilities.
- Records whose ownership cannot be reasonably established (unless specifically anonymously donated) or is disputed.
- Records whose significance is outweighed by serious physical defects, deterioration or other damage.
- Records of a low historical or informational value, or which do not contribute to an understanding of the aims and objectives of the creating body or individual.
- Records of a type already well represented within the collections unless they are of exceptional quality or particular historical significance.
- Records of the Church of England
- Copies of archival records held in other publicly accessible collections, except for reference purposes

Tyne & Wear Archives reserves the right to refuse records that do not fall within the remit of this collection policy and will seek to suggest alternative repositories if Tyne & Wear Archives is not appropriate, if necessary taking advice from the National Archives, or other appropriate bodies as to the most suitable home for the items offered.

Methods of acquisition

Tyne & Wear Archives will normally acquire records in two ways.

- Donation, by gifting them outright (including by bequest)
- Deposit, by agreeing to place them with us on long-term loan in accordance with our Terms of Deposit
<http://www.twmuseums.org.uk/userfiles/Deposit%20terms.pdf>.

In exceptional circumstances, when the records will not be made available to the archives service by any other means and they are judged to be of significant archival value, records may be purchased, subject to availability of funding.

The Archives may also in exceptional circumstances acquire copies of records held in private hands, by purchase or other arrangement, where they are judged

- Unlikely to be available for acquisition in the original format
- Of significant interest or value to users of the archives service

Disposal

Tyne & Wear Archives may dispose of records in the following circumstances:

- It is considered that the records would be more appropriately stored in another repository
- It is considered that the records are not worthy of permanent preservation or do not fall within the terms of this collection policy.
- The records duplicate others already held, or the information contained in others already held.
- The records are readily separable from other archives and records held by Tyne & Wear Archives.
- The owners of the records, where they can be traced, agree to the method of disposal. (Where owners cannot reasonably be traced records will be presumed to have been gifted to the Archives).

In case of disposal it will generally be presumed that records more appropriate to another repository will be offered free of charge, except recovery of expenses of transfer, and that records not so offered will be confidentially destroyed or returned to the depositor.

Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction over records in the custody of Tyne & Wear Archives falls into three categories:-

Deposited records remain in the ownership of the depositor

Records created by individual local authorities or their predecessors remain the property of that authority

In accordance with the arrangements of the original joint agreement records gifted to or purchased by the Archives are under the jurisdiction of the lead authority for the time being, unless purchased (since April 2009) using the specific purchase funds of an individual local authority.

Collecting policies of other archives

In deciding whether to accept records, TWA will take into account the reasonable collecting policies of other established archive repositories, including (but not limited to) Durham County Record Office, Northumberland Archives, the North East Film Archive (with which a contractual arrangement for management of archive film is in place), University of Newcastle Special Collections, University of Durham Special Collections and the National Archives. We will not seek to acquire records which would more suitably be held elsewhere.

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