



**BISHOPSGATE
INSTITUTE**

Bishopsgate Institute

**Collection Policy
(Special Collections and Archives)**

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Background

Bishopsgate Institute, founded in 1894, is a registered charity (no. 1090923) and a registered charitable company (no. 4362659) whose trustees are the members of the Board of Trustees. The Trustees delegate responsibility for the Special Collections and Archives, and all of the Institute's public-facing services to the Programmes Committee.

Mission Statement

Since 1895 we have been a home for ideas and debate, learning and enquiry; a place where culture, heritage and learning meet, and where independent thought is cherished.

Our mission is to provide welcoming and inspiring spaces for people with a thirst for knowledge to learn and flourish. Through our library, historic collections, courses and cultural events, we enrich, entertain and stimulate independent thought in a vibrant city environment.

Aims and Objectives

Aims

The aims of Bishopsgate Institute Special Collections and Archives are:

- To assist and promote the study of the past through use of Special Collections and Archives, in order to inform present and future generations
- To assist and promote lifelong learning through the use of Special Collections and Archives
- To collect and preserve records of historical interest or research relevant to collecting interests of Bishopsgate Institute.

Objectives

The objectives of Bishopsgate Institute Special Collections and Archives are:

- To acquire, preserve, catalogue and make available primary and secondary source materials of continuing evidential value
- To make the Institute's Special Collections and Archives accessible and promote their value as an educational resource
- To preserve new and existing records for current and future use.

Methods of Acquisition

Special Collections and Archives may be acquired in the following ways:

Gift

Legal ownership is transferred to Bishopsgate Institute. The Institute will primarily seek the transfer of ownership when accepting new collections of archival and printed material.

Purchase

Purchased from the owner or from a reputable dealer (purchase will only be made of records of outstanding importance to Bishopsgate Institute).

Transfer

Internal transfer from Bishopsgate Institute and its departments.

Loans

Custody and responsibility for the records is transferred for a fixed term while the depositor retains legal ownership. Specific agreements on the nature of the loan and any conditions of use or access will be made on a case-by-case basis, although the Institute would prefer deposits with Gift status.

Acquisition Policy

Bishopsgate Institute seeks to acquire archival and printed material, in both digital and analogue forms, concerning the following areas:

- History of London and the East End (specifically the Bishopsgate and Spitalfields area)
- Protest and campaigning with a focus on London
- LGBTQ+ history and the history of alternative sexualities
- Feminist and women's movements and history
- Freethought, secularist and humanist movements
- The co-operative movement in London, Essex and South-East England
- Labour and socialist movements (only when these coincide with other areas of the Institute's collecting policy)
- Raphael Samuel and the History Workshop Movement
- The history and activities of Bishopsgate Institute and affiliated bodies

Acquisition Areas

London

Along with previous librarians at Bishopsgate Institute who have collected material relating broadly to the area of the London County Council, now Inner London, the Institute will continue its collecting in this area. The collecting policy for the London Collection will focus on the following areas and materials:

- **Books and pamphlets**
The main focus of acquisition will be printed books and pamphlets relating to all areas of history and activity in the Bishopsgate and Spitalfields area of London. General texts on London, especially on sociological issues such as crime, politics, employment and immigration, will be collected to support this main collecting focus.
- **Guidebooks and Tourist Guides**
Bishopsgate Institute has established a national reputation for its unique collection of printed London guidebooks, and efforts should be made to add to this collection where possible.

- **Archives and manuscripts**
Archives will only be collected if they relate specifically to the Bishopsgate and Spitalfields area of London, or also relate to one of the Institute's other collecting areas. These may be the papers or digital files of individuals associated with the area or the records of organisations or businesses located in the area.
- **Ephemera and 'unofficial' material**
Efforts will be made by Special Collections and Archives staff to establish methods of collecting ephemera and 'unofficial' material relating to the Bishopsgate and Spitalfields area (e.g. menus, flyers, advertising material, etc).
- **Photographs and illustrations**
The Institute will continue to seek to acquire digital and analogue photographs and illustrations of the Bishopsgate and Spitalfields area of London. The emphasis of this collection will be street photography and the built environment of the local area. Other projects will also be strengthened, such as the London Family Photo Archive.
- **Oral History**
Oral histories of memories of people living and working in the Bishopsgate and Spitalfields area will continue to be collected through relationship-building with local heritage groups.
- **Newspaper Cuttings**
The Institute collects articles from local and national papers relating to the geographical area roughly corresponding to Spitalfields and Bishopsgate Ward.
- **Maps**
The Institute holds a good selection of 19th- and 20th-century street maps of London and its environs, many illustrating cab fares, in addition to 20th-century A-Zs. We will continue to collect maps of London, including specialist maps such as congestion zone charging and bus route maps, and seek to purchase reprints or originals to consolidate the collection.

Bishopsgate Institute

Current collections relating to Bishopsgate Institute and its activities include:

- Bishopsgate Institute archive
- City Music Society archive
- James Ince and Sons archive
- Frederick Dadswell papers

The Special Collections and Archives will continue to collect the digital and analogue records of the administration and activities of Bishopsgate Institute. It will also collect the archives of individuals and organisations closely identified with and linked to the Institute.

Co-operation

Current collections relating to the co-operative movement include:

- London Co-operative Society archive
- Co-operative Movement Collection (Printed material)

- Women's Co-operative Guild archive
- Chelmsford Star Co-operative Society archive
- Paul Derrick papers
- George Jacob Holyoake archive and library
- George Frederick Dutch papers
- Caroline Selina Ganley papers

Although some of the Special Collections and Archives in this area do have a broad national scope, such as the Women's Co-operative Guild archive, Bishopsgate Institute will in future seek to collect digital and analogue archive and printed materials relating to individuals and organisations specifically connected with the co-operative movement in London, Essex and the South East of England. This has been decided for several reasons:

- It will provide the Institute with a special and unique collecting focus in terms of its co-operative collections.
- Broader national co-operative collections are collected by other archival repositories (e.g. National Co-operative Archive – national administrative collections and the North of England; University of Wales Swansea/Welsh Political Archive – Welsh co-operation; National Library of Scotland – Scottish co-operation).

Freethought/Humanism

Current collections relating to freethought and humanism include:

- Charles Bradlaugh archive
- George Jacob Holyoake archive
- British Humanist Association archive
- Rationalist Association archive (forthcoming)
- Harry Stopes-Roe papers

The Institute's Special Collections and Archives on the freethought and humanist movement are of national and international significance and comparable in size and scope only to collections at the Humanist University in Holland or Conway Hall in London. The Institute now holds the most comprehensive collection of archive and printed material on this subject area in the country.

Deposits from the British Humanist Association and the Rationalist Association have created deposit relationships which will ensure the Institute will receive accruals from these organisations on a regular basis and maintain its significance as the main archival repository for the freethought and humanist movement in the United Kingdom.

Further deposits are also expected from local humanist groups around the country and individuals connected to the British Humanist Association and Rationalist Association.

Labour and Socialist Collections

Current collections relating to labour politics and trade unionism include:

- George Howell archive and library

- Bernie Grant archive
- General Federation of Trade Unions archive
- Campaign for Labour Party Democracy archive

It seems sensible that considering the number of larger repositories whose primary focus is the collection of labour and trade union materials (e.g. Labour History and Archive Centre, London School of Economics, Modern Records Centre, TUC Library, etc.) that the Institute should not pursue materials relating to labour politics and trade unionism unless they have a specific connection to one of the other collecting areas of Bishopsgate Institute.

However, the Institute will continue to collect printed books, pamphlets and ephemera relating to the history of labour, trade unionism and radical politics.

Protest and Campaigning

Current collections relating to radicalism include:

- Freedom Press library
- Advisory Service for Squatters archive
- Shelter archive
- Republic archive
- Focus E15 Campaign archive
- Stop the War Coalition archive
- Unite Against Fascism archive

The Institute has numerous collections which illuminate the wide scope of the history of protest, campaigning and activism in the UK, and the Institute will actively pursue collections that build on this subject area. This includes acquiring through loan and gift the digital and analogue records of organisations or individuals involved in protest and campaigning on a national or local level, although on a local level acquisitions will be London-focused only.

Feminist and Women's History

Current collections relating to feminism and women's history include:

- Feminist Library Collections
- Format Photographers Agency Archive
- Women's March on London
- Republic archive
- Dawson Family Archive
- Women's Equality Party

Bishopsgate Institute's Special Collections and Archives hold internationally recognised material relating to feminism and women's history. There have been substantial deposits/transfers of printed pamphlets, posters, ephemera and archives from the Feminist Library since 2014. The Special Collections and Archives will continue to cultivate this relationship, supporting the growth of the collection. In addition, the Institute will also actively collect digital and

analogue materials from individuals and organisations involved in campaigns regarding women's issues and the feminist movement.

Raphael Samuel and the History Workshop Movement

Current collections relating to Raphael Samuel and the History Workshop movement include:

- Raphael Samuel archive
- History Workshop movement archive
- History Workshop Journal archive
- Peter Sedgwick archive

Since the acquisition of the Raphael Samuel archive in 1998 and the subsequent deposit of material relating to Samuel and the History Workshop movement from Ruskin College in 2012, Bishopsgate Institute has become the prime repository for the records of the work, activities and legacy of Samuel and the History Workshop movement. The Institute will continue to collect material in this area, including regular deposits from the History Workshop Journal.

LGBTQ+ History and the History of Alternative Sexualities

Current collections relating to LGBTQ+ history include:

- Lesbian and Gay Newsmedia Archive
- UK Leather Archive
- Stonewall archive
- Outrage! archive
- Switchboard Archive
- GMFA Archive
- Club Rub Archive

Since the transfer of the Lesbian and Gay Newsmedia Archive (LAGNA) from Middlesex University in 2011, the Institute has become one of the major repositories for national LGBTQ+ history in the UK. Subsequent donations of archive material from organisations and individuals have strengthened holdings in this area and the Institute will continue to collect digital and analogue archival material and ephemera as well as printed materials, books and press cuttings that document LGBTQ+ history and culture in the UK.

The Institute also holds the UK Leather Archive which documents the history of gay leather, rubber and fetish sexuality across the country, and will also seek actively to broaden its collections on the history of alternative sexuality, covering such areas as BDSM, fetish lifestyles, transvestism and body modification.

Archival and Printed Material not acquired

- Where quantity outweighs the quality of the information which the records contain.

- Where the preservation/conservation costs necessary to allow access outweigh the historical value of the records.
- Those held in a format requiring skills or equipment beyond the Institute's resources to interpret, preserve or access, especially with reference to digital materials.
- Those closely associated by provenance with those already housed in another archive repository.

Acquisition Conditions

- It is a condition of acceptance that there are no unnecessary restrictions on access or availability for research.
- It is a condition of acceptance that the depositor must have the authority to transfer the material and sign a formal deposit agreement.

De-Accessioning

The purpose of Bishopsgate Institute is to collect and permanently preserve records of historical value in accordance with this Collection Policy. A periodic review of the records held shall be carried out.

Bishopsgate Institute accepts the principle that there should be a strong presumption against the disposal by sale of any records in their ownership and shall seek a more suitable repository if it is considered that the records would benefit from relocation. Only records which cannot be transferred to another repository or returned to their original owner shall be destroyed.

Review

Bishopsgate Institute reserves the right to review and alter this policy at any time.

Bishopsgate Institute will review this Collection Policy within three years (prior to December 2020).

Bishopsgate Institute is grateful to receive any information from within the Institute or externally, suggesting possible sources of records to complement existing collections.

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