

Seven Localities: One Community

Kingston at Leisure is a community based project centering around the importance of local history; focusing on ordinary people, how they choose to spend their leisure time and the records they have kept in the process.

The Royal Borough of Kingston has a large, diverse community composed of residents of varying ages, nationalities, occupations and interests living in the towns of Kingston, New Malden, Old Malden, Surbiton, Tolworth, Hook and Chessington. Many residents will be and may have been members of clubs and societies, choosing to spend their leisure time as part of smaller communities within the larger borough community.

By locating the records of clubs and societies in the borough from nineteenth century to the present day, the Kingston at Leisure Project seeks to list and preserve these valuable sources for community history. It will ultimately provide the means for current and future generations to engage with local social history.

Perhaps you are or were a society member, secretary or chairperson. Whether your club or society is old or new, existing or disbanded, if you or your society would like to contribute to the understanding of leisure time activities in Kingston then please do get in contact. We are keen to identify and note the records of all societies regardless of size and are happy to offer conservation advice and if requested can provide space for your records in a local public archive.

A Society View

"The availability of the archive facility at The Local History Room is pure gold. Founded in June 1955, our society has acquired many documents and artefacts over the years. Some documents have been very fragile and the fact that professional archivists are able to look after them on our behalf has been a great weight off the shoulders of previous Hon. Secretaries.

Whenever we needed documents for exhibitions and the like, the relevant documents were handed over, as soon as The Local History Room had received our code numbers. When documents are returned to them, I think we all breathe a sigh of relief as the committee is sure that they are now in very secure accommodation. This cannot be said for the ordinary house which may, possibly, be burgled or even catch fire and irreplaceable papers and artefacts would be lost forever.

I would always recommend professional archiving and The Local History Room's reputation in this respect is second to none. Our society has had a superb service from The Local History Room over many years."

- Marilyn Jennings, Hon. Secretary, Surbiton & District Historical Society (July 2010)

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KINGSTON AT LEISURE:

Bring out your records!

An opportunity for residents of Kingston, New Malden, Old Malden, Surbiton, Tolworth, Hook & Chessington.



REVEAL AND PRESERVE

THE HIDDEN RECORDS OF THE BOROUGH'S CLUBS AND SOCIETIES

Kingston University London



Your Records: Preservation Advice



Why should I take note?

Your records highlight the existence of your club or society; members and their positions; events that were held; and goals, triumphs and tragedies that you experienced.

Records are not only deeply significant to your organisation, they also add to the history of the wider community. However re-constructing history, whether organisational or wider community, is only possible if records of past and present clubs and societies survive.

Unfortunately records created on paper undergo an inevitable ageing process which can lead to loss of some or all content. Such records are very fragile and at risk from environmental factors such as light, temperature, humidity and handling. Electronic records can be at risk from corruption of data. Changes in technology make hardware or software obsolete, remember the floppy disk!

Steps can be taken to increase the lifetime of your records by following some basic steps:

Location

Whether paper or digital, records risk damage from numerous factors including:

- Structural or building failure such as leaks in roof, poor wiring, sewer, drainage or energy failure.
- Unforeseen events such as floods, lightning strikes, fire or gas leaks.
- Accidental loss through human error, or damage by pests.

- Criminal behaviour such as theft, arson or vandalism.

Records need to be kept in secure locations designed to minimise damage and to assist with long-term preservation

Storage

Significant damage can be caused by unsuitable storage conditions which can rapidly increase deterioration. Some simple rules include:

Paper: Store flat, in acid free enclosures, either paper or card, or Melinex (a clear polyester film). Paper picks up acid when in direct contact with acidic materials, unsuitable enclosures or fasteners will cause paper to become acidic, discoloured or stained.

Standard paper clips, staples, sellotape, plastic wallets should be avoided and conservation friendly alternatives used such as brass or stainless steel paper clips and staples and cotton tape.

Photographs:

- Avoid high temperatures and harsh lighting which speed up fading and deterioration.
- Avoid damp or dry conditions which result in mould or discoloration, cracking or brittleness.
- Always use acid free storage and avoid acid based fasteners.
- Aim for a stable environment and humidity, low levels of light and ensure handling with clean hands.



Photographs damaged by poor storage

Archives: How We Help

Effective record keeping and long term preservation can be expensive and time consuming. Your local archive repository may be able to help.



Glass plate negative stored in acid free paper, tissue paper and box.

We can rehouse your collection in suitable acid free materials and can provide a secure storage facility with appropriate temperature and humidity.

Depositing your records in an archive ensures they will receive the best possible care by qualified professionals whose focus is the preservation of records.

- **Your records will remain your property, the archive and its staff are here to help you ensure preservation and assist with effective record keeping.**
- **You can set restrictions on what material can be seen by the general public.**
- **We can efficiently locate and provide records that your society needs.**

We are here to help you and are happy to talk about your preservation and record keeping needs.



Local History Room Store at North Kingston Centre