



	ACCESSIONS TO REPOSITORIES			
			2018	
THE				
NATIONAL				
ARCHIVES				

INTRODUCTION

The Accessions to Repositories Survey provides a unique insight into archival collecting across the UK and elsewhere.

In the latest survey, we received reports from a variety of archival institutions who responded with details of thousands of new collections acquired and accessioned in 2018. We estimate that UK repositories took in over 300,000 files and boxes. This represents millions of personal papers, letters, diaries, and even 13th-century manuscripts.

The survey also includes digital deposits such as business records, photographs and oral history projects. By combining all of this data, we can analyse variations in accessions by region and type of repository, as well as estimate the scope of digital preservation across the sector. The Accessions to Repositories Survey also provides an overview of emerging and enduring themes in new or accruing collections, from war and conflict to scientific discovery.

A variety of famous authors feature in the 2018 survey, such as Lee Child, Samuel Beckett, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Daphne du Maurier. Other well-known figures include poet Moniza Alvi, the rock band Super Furry Animals, and the transgender activist Alice Purnell. There are records reflecting contemporary society and attitudes towards slavery, mental health and immigrant experiences.

The details of the survey published on Discovery help researchers locate new material and, while accessions are not always immediately available for viewing, making descriptive information available can stimulate research interest and allow archives to gauge the demand for new or uncatalogued collections.

Highlights from the survey, showcased on Twitter with #NewInArchives and featured on this report's poster, celebrate archives and the work they do and underline the way collections reflect and enrich society.



The records of Cameron Balloons Ltd, accessioned by Bristol Archives, illustrate the establishment of one of the largest manufacturers of hot-air balloons.

Image credit: Bristol Archives, ref: 46017

SCALE OF COLLECTING

We received reports from 256 archives, who described details of 15,156 new collections accessioned in 2018. 35 archive services purchased a total of 83 collections that were up for sale and 75 repositories accessioned more than 300 collections of Public Records. While the institutions participating in the survey correspond to only about 10% of repositories with entries in the ARCHON directory, it is a representative sample of institutions actively collecting new material.

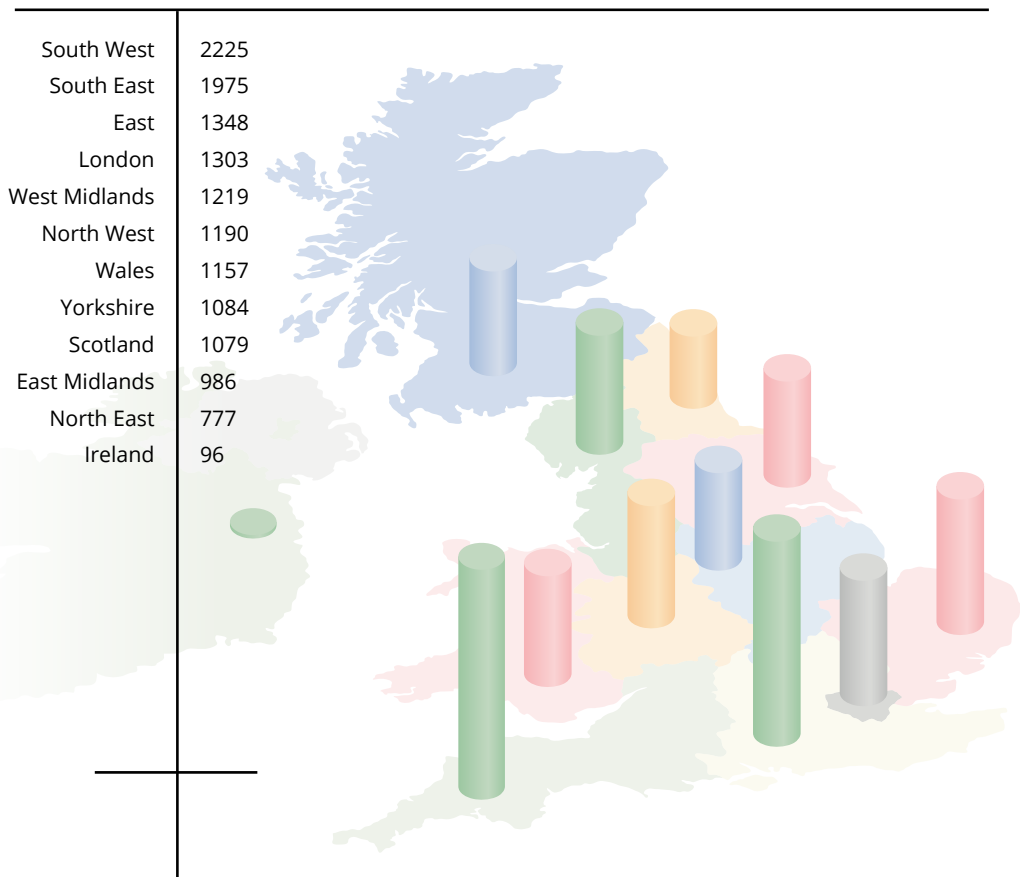


Figure 1. Number of collections accessioned by region

DIGITAL ACCESSIONS

In 2018, archives were able to provide information on 539 digital collections, constituting 6.3 terabytes in total. This represented 3.6% of all reported accessions. In comparison, the volume of this data in 2017 was 5.8 terabytes from 281 collections, which made up 1.8% of the total reported. Many digital collections remain hybrids, with a digital element listed alongside a set of physical records, but the volume accessioned has varied significantly by region and by repository type. For national and university collections in 2018, roughly 8.2% of accessioned collections were digital. For specialist repositories this was 15%, and for local archives it was 1.6%.

Although local archives took in 179 of the 539, or just over 30% of all digital collections, this is relatively small compared to the total volume of their collecting. Overall, the number of digital accessions continues to be rather low considering the growing amount of digital material being created.

The largest single digital accession was a mixed collection of tapes, cine films and unedited footage including 1534GB of digital material, collected by the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. The next largest was Hull University Archives' accession of 1220GB of images and video files documenting events and activities from the 2017 Hull City of Culture.

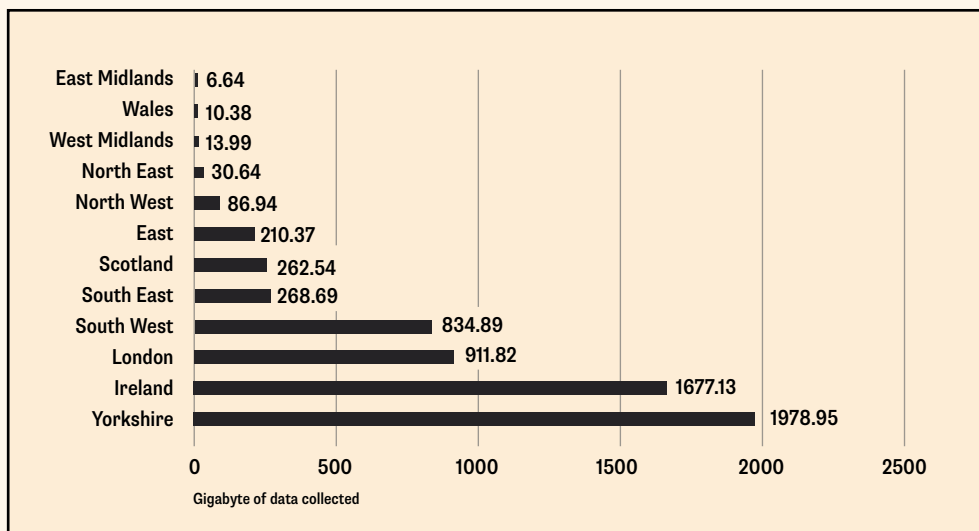


Figure 2. Percentage of accessions containing digital material by region

KEYWORDS

National and university accessions continue to focus on political and military records, but the analysis also highlights the cultural content of their collections. Overall collecting, however, is dominated by local record offices' focus on council, church and school records.

Type	2018 Keywords	Count	2017 Keywords	Count
Special	nursing	109	watermills	21
	hospital	107	windmills	19
	digital	76	medicine	13
	canal	63	childbirth	11
	royal	60	midwifery	11
	college	54	LGBT	11
University	university	180	theatre	110
	history	108	higher education	72
	oral	73	music	37
	Oman	69	university	37
	interview	65	education	36
	renaissance	63	literature	35
National	war	100	British Army	90
	royal	79	House of Commons	45
	British	77	procedure	40
	army service	73	family history	30
	history	68	House of Lords	28
	family	66	Royal Navy	23
Local	church	1257	religion	276
	school	935	education	256
	parish	835	local government	221
	council	734	parish	180
	st (saint)	709	parish records	180
	accounts	693	business	180
All	church	1312		
	school	1013		
	parish	845		
	st (saint)	804		
	council	774		

HIGHLIGHTS

21st Century

Records created this century constitute a range of material, including both born-digital and more traditional archival material. They range from records relating to LGBTQ organisations to material created by community and heritage projects.

20th Century

Twentieth-century records cover diverse themes and are the largest group of 2018 accessions. They shed light on lifestyles and mental health, scientific advancements, social and political movements, as well as major events that defined the century.

19th Century

Records of the nineteenth century collected in 2018 are an eclectic mix, with themes ranging from health and social issues to religion and science. They also touch on more political themes including records related to colonial rule and maritime and naval endeavours.

18th Century

Many of the eighteenth-century documents accessioned in 2018 relate to family and estate papers, manorial documents and maps and plans. But there are also records relating to war, maritime expansion, farming and predicting the harvest.

17th Century

Few records accessioned in 2018 relate to the seventeenth-century, but several interesting examples are featured on the inside poster.

16th Century

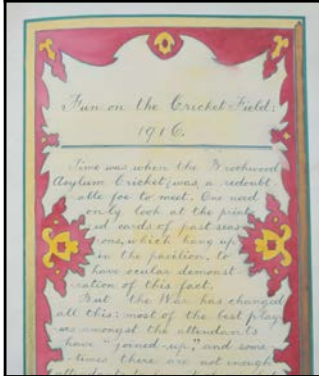
Sixteenth-century records primarily include collections of deeds, but there are also those that speak to aspects of local life and political statements.

Medieval

Medieval texts collected in 2018 represent an interesting mix of the devotional and the secular.



NEW IN ARCHIVES



JOURNAL OF ALICK SMITH, PATIENT AT BROOKWOOD ASYLUM

Surrey History Centre

Themes in this little volume, handwritten and illustrated between 1912 and 1922, range from the impact of the First World War, to the hospital cats and fortunes of the cricket team. Over the course of his stay, Alick's feelings about the institution changed from considering it 'a little corner of Hell' to one of tolerance and even appreciation.

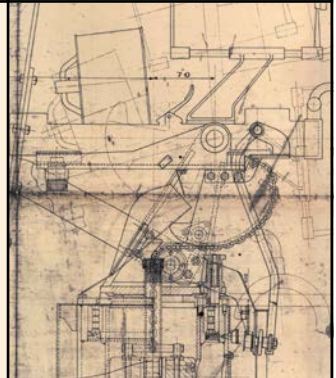
Image credit: Surrey History Centre

DRAWINGS OF PARTS FOR OBERON CLASS SUBMARINES

Cumbria Archive and Local Studies
Centre, Barrow

These intricate drawings were deposited with the archive service when plans to build a Submarine Heritage Centre in Barrow-in-Furness fell through. The heritage centre would have celebrated the town's illustrious submarine-building history but these records still remain to remember that heritage.

Image credit: Cumbria Archive and Local Studies Centre, Barrow



GLASS NEGATIVES OF PRISONERS FROM HM PRISON LEWES

East Sussex Record Office

These negatives, dating 1898-1916, were used for education within the prison. Some images show prisoners dressed in the typical uniform decorated with broad arrows to hinder escape and act as a badge of shame. Other images depict those who have just been arrested, still dressed in their own clothes and some looking highly respectable.

Image credit: East Sussex Record Office

More examples of accessions from 2018
can be seen on the poster...



ABOUT THE SURVEY

The Accessions to Repositories Survey is conducted annually to find out what archive services have added to their collections in the previous year.


Information from the participating archives is gathered in spreadsheets. This format provides a crucial structure that allows us to pull all the data together and to analyse the information as a whole. The analysis in this publication takes into account the full set of data that archive services return for the survey.

Discovery users can view summaries of these new collections and other record creator based descriptions alongside full catalogues. This gives users an unrivalled overview of collections primarily relating to British history, but with some material of a global scope.

We publish highlights on our website at: nationalarchives.gov.uk/accessions with selections searchable via the Discovery service: nationalarchives.gov.uk/discovery

If you are interested in contributing to the next Accessions to Repositories survey, please visit our website: nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/projects-and-programmes/accessions

Thank you to all of the archives that contributed to the 2018 Accessions to Repositories Survey, including those who kindly provided images for use in this report.



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