

Acquisitions Policy

1. The Friends of Devon's Archives (hereafter FoDA) endeavours to make documents of relevance to all aspects of Devon's history available to the public in repositories which are open to researchers. This policy governs the basis on which we will do this.
2. FoDA will assist with the placing of historical documents in repositories in the historic county of Devon by negotiation as gifts and long-term loans as well as purchases and part-purchases. For the avoidance of doubt 'repositories in the historic county of Devon' includes
 - a. as a priority, the three main archive collections held at Exeter, Plymouth and Barnstaple, namely at the Devon Heritage Centre; the Plymouth and West Devon Record Office and the North Devon Record Office; and
 - b. local archives and museums within the historic (pre-1974 borders of the county), which are in public ownership or owned and run by a charitable trust or a higher education institution, but only where
 - i. the host organisation has a collecting policy which clearly identifies the items in question as being suitable; and
 - ii. the FoDA committee feel there is a justification to the local deposit of a document rather than its placement in one of the three main county archives; and
 - iii. the host organisation agrees to FoDA terms of deposit (see below)
3. In deciding whether to purchase documents, FoDA will give greatest weight to items that are at risk of being lost to the local research community – especially by sale to private collectors or by export to an overseas institution.
4. A sum of money agreed by the committee will be ring fenced each year for the acquisition of documents. This is currently £1,000 per annum.
5. If a document or collection of documents comes on to the market, or is offered for sale in some other way, and the negotiation of a gift is not possible, and the contribution required from FoDA is less than £500, then any committee member may propose to the Chairman that the item be acquired. The Chairman will normally consult staff of the repository where the item is intended to be deposited to confirm that the proposed acquisition (a) meets with that organisation's collecting policy, and (b) is not in some way duplicated. (This requirement to consult with the staff of the repository may be waived if there is a time limit on the decision that precludes it.) If the Chairman approves the proposal, then the purchase may proceed without further consultation. If the Chairman becomes aware of such an item, he/she will consult staff at the intended repository and another member of the Committee prior to committing FoDA to the purchase, up to the maximum £500.
6. If a document or collection of documents comes on to the market at a price of £500 or more, the decision as to whether to buy the item(s) is one that should fall to the whole committee, including the ex-officio staff member(s) within the repository to which the document is to be given. If there is insufficient time for this to be done at a meeting then

the chairman should endeavour to contact as many members of the committee and to seek their opinions as is possible in the time available.

7. FoDA will consider assisting with the placing of historical documents of interest to historians of Devon in repositories outside the historic county of Devon only in exceptional circumstances, and where
 - a. the documents in question are at risk of being lost to researchers; and
 - b. there is no chance of the documents being placed in a Devon archive (for example, where they are part of a larger collection that rightly is to be maintained archivally intact in another repository to which the bulk of the papers relate); and
 - c. where another organisation is taking the lead role in acquiring the documents.

In such cases, the decision will be made by the FoDA committee as a whole and not by the Chairman and one other member of the committee, as in paragraph 6.

8. TERMS OF DEPOSIT

- Donations to the three main repositories (identified in paragraph 2a) will be made on condition that
 - o the repository publicly acknowledges the Friends' contribution in wholly or partly donating the item in any relevant publicity and in the catalogue, and by specifying the details of the Friends' contribution in the repository's accessions register; and
 - o the repository does not charge current members of FoDA for access to documents that the organisation has wholly or partly donated.
- Donations to the other repositories in Devon will be made on condition that
 - o the repository publicly acknowledges the Friends' contribution in wholly or partly donating the item in its newsletter or website, and by specifying the details of the Friends' contribution in the repository's accessions register; and
 - o the repository does not charge current members of FoDA for access to documents that the organisation has wholly or partly donated; and
 - o the repository binds itself legally not to sell the item(s) but to return it or them to the Friends in the event of it being unable or unwilling to continue to look after the acquisition. In such circumstances, the item(s) shall be handed to the most appropriate of the remaining repositories, as decided by the chairman of FoDA in consultation with staff of the intended repository and with the approval of at least one other member of the committee.
- Conditions applied to any contributions to acquisitions placed in national institutions and repositories outside Devon will be decided by the committee on considering such applications.

Dr Ian Mortimer, Acting Chairman

14 September 2015