



**International Bomber Command Centre-University of Lincoln**

**IBCC Digital Archive Collection Policy**

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**Version history of the IBCC Digital Archive Collection Policy:**

Version 1: Authors D. Ellin, H. Hughes, A. Pesaro; approved/published March 2015 [to cater for the digital preservation of material donated to the IBCCDA]

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# **IBCC Digital Archive Collection Policy**

## **1. Basic details**

- 1.1. Name of the repository: International Bomber Command Centre Digital Archive (hereafter 'the IBCCDA', or 'the Digital Archive')
- 1.2. The IBCCDA is housed at, managed and hosted by the University of Lincoln.
- 1.3. The International Bomber Command Centre (IBCC) and the University of Lincoln work in partnership to secure and share the heritage of Bomber Command and the European bombing war, 1939-1945. The IBCC-University of Lincoln Partnership Committee oversees all aspects of the partnership. This includes the Digital Archive's Collection Policy.
- 1.4. Building a digital archive is essentially a two-stage process: preserving materials and publishing materials.
  - 1.4.1. 'Preserving' means digitising materials and curating them so that they will be available for generations of users to come.
  - 1.4.2. 'Publishing' means adding supplementary descriptive information to items and adding these to the Digital Archive's website.

## **2. Applicability of this policy**

- 2.1. The Policy covers decisions about what the Digital Archive collects for preservation and publication and the safeguarding of materials in its care.
- 2.2. The Policy does not cover other repositories of information associated with the IBCC, such as the Losses Database.
- 2.3. In all cases, the Digital Archive will deal only with the owner of a collection (sometimes also referred to below as 'the donor'). We may require evidence of ownership.

## **Section A – Preserving**

### **3. Purpose of the Digital Archive**

- 3.1. The Archive collects the tangible and intangible heritage of Bomber Command and the European bombing war, 1939-1945, as an evidence base for the purposes of public information, education and research and not for individual or collective financial gain. Any income (for example, via application to funding bodies) shall be devoted to the maintenance and development of the Archive. Any exceptions are referred to the IBCC Partnership Committee before any transactions are entered into.
- 3.2. Archive materials also form the basis for the exhibition that is housed in the IBCC's Chadwick Centre. The Archive team has been responsible for devising and maintaining the Interpretation Plan and providing content for the exhibition. The project ethos, as set out in the Interpretation Plan, is also foundational to the construction of the Digital Archive.

### **4. Standards of conduct in the Digital Archive**

- 4.1. Archive staff are required to observe the highest standards of integrity and ethics in the processes of acquiring and maintaining items in the Digital Archive. Ethical approval for the construction of the Digital Archive has been gained from the University of Lincoln.
- 4.2. Volunteers and staff are bound by the IBCC's 'Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults' Policy and the Archive's 'Code of behaviour'.
- 4.3. All personal information about interviewees and donors who loan us material is maintained on a database behind password protection and available only to staff in the Digital Archive and at the IBCC. The way we protect this information is covered by the University of Lincoln's and the IBCC's privacy policies, which are fully compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation.
- 4.4. All those who donate items or interviews to the Digital Archive will receive copies of the agreement forms they have signed.

## 5. Scope and breadth of collection for the Digital Archive

5.1. The IBCCDA digitises/collects two main kinds of sources in the appropriate formats: oral histories (intangible heritage) and various kinds of documents and objects (tangible heritage). Items are ingested into the Digital Archive in their original, unedited state. Limited redacting for purposes of publication may be carried out only to protect donors' privacy.

5.2. In all instances of tangible and intangible heritage, the following apply in terms of breadth of collecting, which are consonant with the overall Interpretation Plan of the IBCC:

5.2.1. The widest-possible range of experience: civilians and military personnel on both sides of the conflict who were affected by the bombing war, including veterans, family members of veterans, people who worked in aircraft factories, people who lived and worked near RAF bomber stations and people who were bombed in occupied Europe, Germany and Italy.

5.2.2. The widest-possible geographical area: the Archive is interested in the history of individuals who served in armed forces or were affected by bombing anywhere in the world, including those who trained abroad, who served in zones of conflict such as North Africa, Italy or India, WAAFs who served in Balloon Command or airmen who flew with the Second Tactical Air Force.

5.2.3. A broad temporal range, encompassing pre-war lives and experiences, wartime experiences, and lives up to the present day. The rationale is to capture full life stories as a way of remembering people's humanity, although the pivot point is always the war years, 1939-1945.

### 5.3. Physical objects

5.3.1. An object is defined as a tangible cultural artefact that inherently gives cultural clues about the person who created, used, or owned it.

5.3.2. In all cases where donors lend physical objects to the Digital Archive for digitisation, they are required to sign an agreement which acknowledges the responsibilities of both the donor and the Digital Archive.

5.3.3. Occasionally the Digital Archive accepts physical objects that are offered as gifts. In such cases ownership of the original is transferred to the IBCCDA and the donor is required to sign an agreement to this effect. Such objects must also fulfil these conditions:

5.3.3.1. The donor must legally have the right to donate the object/s.

5.3.3.2. The donor must sign an agreement form for each object or group of objects (which must be individually itemised on the agreement form).

5.3.3.3. The IBCCDA will not, under any circumstances, accept objects whose possession is considered in breach of the law, or are liable to pose a health and safety hazard to staff or visitors.

5.3.3.4. Unless there are very good grounds for exception, an object will be acquired only if it is preserved in a state compatible with standard practices for handling or display purposes and is not likely to require remedial conservation in the foreseeable future.

5.3.3.5. Objects accepted by the IBCCDA are digitised (either scanned or photographed) for the Digital Archive. If there is a personal story associated with an object accepted as a donation, every effort will be made to record this story. It may take the form of an interview with the donor, a letter or other document, a photograph, etc. The necessary agreement will be obtained from the donor for such additional information.

5.3.3.6. If an object offered does not meet one or more collection criteria, the IBCCDA has the right to refuse an item.

5.3.3.7. The IBCCDA reserves the right to decide on the use of all objects accepted as outright donations. This may include display in the exhibition, becoming part of the IBCC's handling collection, or de-accessioned.

## 6. Collecting priorities

6.1. The Digital Archive is constrained by resources of staff and equipment, and we have therefore established a principle of prioritisation in terms of how much can practically be digitised according to our policy. The following tiers of priority have thus been devised for

preservation purposes.

## 6.2. Oral testimony

6.2.1. High priority: those who form a living link with Second World War bombing. Given the length of time since the War, these potential informants are now of a great age.

6.2.2. Medium priority: the relatives and friends of those who had a connection with Second World War bombing. They are the custodians of memories and/or memorabilia.

6.2.3. Low priority: those who have an interest in the subject of the bombing war and may have acquired information that they wish to share with the Digital Archive.

6.3. Documentary materials and objects loaned to the Digital Archive for digitisation or offered in digital format.

6.3.1. Urgent: materials that are unique and were created, or served a specific purpose, during the Second World War and record first-hand observations, testimonies and experiences. Examples include logbooks, diaries, correspondence, photographs, lucky charms, decorations, citations, handwritten training materials, memoirs and personal memorabilia.

6.3.2. High priority: materials that are rare, have a specific story attached to them or have a distinctive feature or features and were created, or served a specific purpose, during or after the Second World War and were created by mechanical duplication of a prototype

Examples include campaign medals, uniforms, maps.

6.3.3. Medium priority: Materials that are likely to be found elsewhere in multiple, identical copies or do not have a specific story attached to them and were created, or served a specific purpose, during or after the Second World War and were created by mechanical duplication of a prototype, Examples include service materials, badges, promotional items, blank stationery, souvenirs.

6.3.4. We tend not to collect materials that are the result of personal research, have been created by mechanical duplication of a prototype, are held in other repositories, or constitute published materials. Examples include published material such as books, magazines, booklets, pamphlets, maps, guides, flyers, posters, whole newspapers, magazines, DVD and VHS formats; creative works produced by individuals other than those associated with a collection, such as paintings, sketches, cartoons, pieces of poetry; unpublished research if authored by someone who is not the person who signed the release form; materials intended for sale, such as badges, lapel pins, and promotional items; copies of documents kept in other archives.

6.3.5. In addition to the above priorities, items will only be digitised if basic information about them can reasonably be established for purposes of a documentary record and for interpretation. Where appropriate, this will be recorded in the inventory attached to its Agreement Form and should include all or most of the following:

- \* what it is
- \* where it came from
- \* who owned it
- \* what it was used for
- \* what it is made of
- \* who made it

## 7. Safeguarding original collections on temporary loan to the Digital Archive for digitisation

7.1. We define a collection as one item or more of original memorabilia donated by a named individual.

7.2. We have a duty of care to do all in our power to ensure that original documents and objects entrusted to the Digital Archive are kept safe while being digitised and either collected by, or in transit back to, their owners. We try to reduce as far as humanly possible all risks to their safety and to the integrity of the Digital Archive.

7.3. The IBCC established a Collections Department in 2019 to facilitate the accession of collections by visitors to the Centre. The Collections Department is managed and resourced

by the IBCC, although it is governed by the Digital Archive's Collection Policy. The Digital Archive works closely with the Collections Department to safeguard the digitised copies of all collections processed at the Collection Department.

7.4. The Digital Archive continues to receive some original collections directly. In these cases, accession procedures are as follows.

7.4.1. At the point when items/collections are accepted into the Digital Archive, owners/donors sign an agreement form which contains their personal details, details of the collection, an acknowledgement that to the best of their knowledge they have permission to allow us to make digital copies (or are permitted to do so themselves) and an indication of what is to happen to the original items after digitisation.

7.4.2. The agreement form will always be fully completed under the supervision of a member of staff before the IBCCDA will take formal responsibility for the collection.

7.4.3. Paper originals of agreement forms are kept on file in secure storage and scanned copies are securely stored behind password protection. Copies of completed agreement forms are given to donors.

7.4.4. Anyone wishing to lend a collection to the Digital Archive and who can visit physically should make prior arrangements for its arrival. If the owner is unable to bring a collection him/herself, arrangements are to be by mutual consent of the owner as well as the Digital Archive.

7.4.5. An inventory of the collection will be completed before digitisation begins. This will be attached to the agreement form (both paper and scanned versions) and a copy sent to the owner.

7.4.6. Material will normally be scanned immediately, according to the Digital Archive's Digital Media Creation Guidelines and the originals returned to the owner to take away with them. If collections are to be deposited for later scanning, they will be securely locked in a fire-proof environment.

7.4.7. If a collection is too large or contains irregularly shaped objects too large to be stored securely, or contains items that require photography, donors are urged to bring these to the Digital Archive offices themselves.

7.4.8. When interviewers conduct interviews on behalf of the Digital Archive, they are not permitted under any circumstances to remove collections from the interviewee's possession. Interviewers should instead inform the Digital Archive of the nature of such collections and arrangements will be made for their digitisation later.

7.4.9. In exceptional circumstances, it may be possible for staff to accept collections at a place which is neither the IBCC Collections Department nor the Digital Archive, observing all the above accession procedures. It is necessary to make prior arrangements in such cases.

7.5. In cases where the Digital Archive directly receives collections to digitise, safe handling in the IBCCDA offices is as follows.

7.5.1. A collections tracking database is used to record all movements and progress of each collection. It is the responsibility of IBCCDA staff to ensure they complete the spreadsheet as successive tasks in the collections management workflow are signed off.

7.5.2. Collections are kept securely bound together in the Digital Archive's safe, together with a copy of the agreement form.

7.5.3. Small objects such as photographs are kept in envelopes in the collection.

7.5.4. Where, for practical reasons, such as the size of 3D objects, it is not possible to keep collections bound together, each part of the collection is stored as safely as possible in lockable cabinets and a copy of the agreement form is attached to each part of the collection. A note is made on the active collection database and each separate part of the collection is numbered 1 of 3, 2 of 3 etc., to avoid collections being mixed or the creation of orphaned objects.

7.5.5. Only one collection at a time is removed from the safe for digitising; its agreement form always accompanies it. Collections are not removed from the safe for any reason other than for purposes of digitising or return to owners.

7.5.6. Material must be scanned in the same room as it is stored. Under exceptional circumstances, material can be removed to a different room for scanning but this procedure

must always be overseen by a member of staff. Collections are moved in secure containers, such as storage boxes and envelopes.

7.5.7. Where it is necessary to transport collections between the Digital Archive and the IBCC, this is only to be undertaken by IBCCDA or IBCC staff members, whose details will be recorded in the collections tracking database.

7.5.8. Rooms where collections are held or scanned are clean, dry and well-lit. Disturbances from draughts or other potentially damaging air flows (such as open windows) are minimised. No food or drink is permitted in rooms where documents are kept or scanned. Pens and other permanent markers are removed from the immediate area of original items.

7.5.9. At all times when the safe is unlocked, a member of staff is present in the room.

7.5.10. All those making scanned or photographic copies of original items will have received training and work under the supervision of a staff member. Objects must only be handled with clean, dry hands.

7.5.11. The Digital Archive observes a completion target of 15 working days; if there is any delay, staff members will keep donors informed.

7.5.12. All items must be collected by the donor, in person. If this is impossible, collections can, with the agreement of the donor, be returned via secure courier service. It is necessary to make prior arrangements in such cases.

7.5.13. If a courier service is to be used, at the point when a collection is ready to be returned to its owner, the owner is contacted to alert them to expect the collection. The contact is noted on the tracking spreadsheet.

7.5.14. Two staff members sign off on the tracking spreadsheet that the contents match the inventory and that the collection is securely packaged.

7.5.15. Parcels are clearly addressed using a label that is displayed in a document pocket securely affixed to each one (this includes addressee and return address, as well as receipt).

7.5.16. A sticker bearing the IBCC logo is affixed to the obverse of each parcel. Two staff members sign off on the tracking spreadsheet that parcels are addressed/labelled correctly.

7.5.17. Parcels are deposited in a postbag in the Digital Archive office. Postbags are collected from the office by University post room staff. The date on which each parcel is collected is noted on the spreadsheet. Copies of receipts are lodged with the Archive, scanned and filed. Missing receipts will be followed up immediately.

7.6. Donors dealing directly with the Collections Department at the IBCC should obtain information directly from Collections Department staff regarding safeguarding policies in force on the site.

## **8. Accession of previously-digitised copies**

8.1.1. In instances where it is impractical for donors to lend original materials to the IBCCDA, the Digital Archive will accept scans/photographs of the originals, provided these fit with the priorities outlined above and meet the minimum digitisation criteria. These are laid out in the Digital Archive's Digital Media Creation Guidelines.

8.1.2. Donors who provide scanned or photographed copies of original documents are required to sign an agreement which specifies the terms under which the Archive is permitted to preserve and publish the digital copies. The Digital Archive will normally seek a licence to publish previously-digitised material.

8.1.3. Similarly, there may be instances where previously-recorded interviews both audio and video, are offered to the Digital Archive. Provided such an interview fits with the priorities outlined above, the donor is required to sign an agreement specifying the terms under which the Archive is permitted to preserve and publish the interview. The Digital Archive will normally seek a licence to publish previously-digitised interviews.

8.1.4. The Archive's copy of each signed agreement for previously-digitised material is securely stored behind password protection; a copy of the same is sent to the donor.

## Section B – Publishing

### 9. Basic publishing details

9.1. Once materials have been preserved, they enter the publication workflow. In this process, items are supplemented with additional information (called metadata) intended to make items discoverable, understandable, and usable. Once this process is complete, items are in published on the Digital Archive’s website.

### 10. Processing

10.1. In view of the very advanced age of most of our interviewees, and of the endangered nature of many collections – as people move on or pass away, much material is simply thrown away – it has been a race against time to collect what we have. In other words, we have focused on preserving material at risk. This means that we have a backlog of preserved material to process, which archive staff and volunteers are steadily working through. Standard practice is to publish collections following the same order as preservation.

10.2. The process of publication is time consuming. Scans, which constitute the overwhelming majority of items in the IBCCDA’s digitised collection, must be cropped, rotated and watermarked, then substantial descriptive information has to be added in order to make each one discoverable and usable. Our Digital Archive is highly unusual in providing description at item or even page level, which is a great benefit to users, in that items of interest can be located quickly and efficiently.

10.3. Furthermore, specific item types require further processing.

10.3.1. After an interview has been recorded, it is transcribed and supplemented with a summary. Both are then reviewed. For a one-hour recorded interview, at least another 16 hours are required to publish it.

10.3.2. Hand written documents are also transcribed and supplemented with a summary. Both are reviewed for accuracy. This process can take many hours, depending on the length of each document and the number of such documents in a collection.

10.3.3. These processes allow both interviews and hand written documents to be full-text searchable, a feature rarely offered by digital repositories.

10.3.4. The Digital Archive has developed a unique approach to the transcription of log books, again in the interests of making them more searchable. Logbook transcriptions can take up to ten hours to complete.

10.3.5. If a collection that was lent to the Digital Archive or Collections Department is not yet published, the reason is the associated workflow, as outlined above.

### 11. Description level

11.1. Descriptions of Digital Archive items are mainly based on information gathered from the item itself (for example, ‘two aircrew standing in front of a Halifax bomber’) and not from extended research. This is because of the vast number of items to prepare for publication. The Digital Archive welcomes further information about an item from users, who are requested to [contact](#) the staff.

11.2. Also in line with the Digital Archive’s aim to make resources accessible and discoverable, slang, acronyms and technical terms are avoided.

### 12. Limits to publication

12.1. The Digital Archive is sometimes unable to publish certain items that have been preserved as a part of a collection. There are three main reasons: they are governed by existing copyright (such as pamphlets or postcards); they may interfere with the privacy rights of third parties; or are unrelated to the scope of the Digital Archive.

12.2. Some items may have additional limitations attached. For example, certain oral history interviews can be accessed only at the Digital Archive or at the IBCC, in accordance with the conditions stipulated by the donor.

### 13. Publishing licence

13.1. Unless otherwise stated, Digital Archive content is made available under a CC BY-NC 4.0 International license (Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0). Further information is available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/> and the IBCCDA's [legal page](#). Anyone wishing to use items for purposes not covered by this license must contact the Digital Archive.

13.2. Some items (such as those previously-digitised) are published on the Digital Archive website under licence from the owner. This is clearly indicated in the description: 'This content is property of [name of the licensor] who has kindly granted the International Bomber Command Centre Digital Archive royalty-free permission to publish it'.

13.3. Such items are therefore governed by existing copyright residing with the licensor. Anyone wishing to use such items should contact the licensor directly.

### 14. Absence of digital items

14.1. In a limited number of cases, the Digital Archive has asserted the right to publish descriptive information without the relevant digital item. This is usually to acknowledge sensitivities surrounding the content of such items.

### 15. Redaction

15.1. Some items have been redacted prior to publishing, in order to protect privacy of donors or third parties. In accordance with accepted standards of practice, redaction has been made explicit by using either a continuous tone (audio materials) or a uniform grey patch (visual materials).

### 16. Take-down policy

16.1. If a user believes a particular item should not have been published, they are requested to [contact](#) the Digital Archive, quoting the item's address and/or the item's unique identifier and the reason for the objection. The Digital Archive's take-down policy will come into immediate force: visit the [legal page](#) for more information.

### 17. Feedback

17.1. The Digital Archive is, and will be for years to come, a work in progress. IBCCDA staff welcome users' assistance in improving its quality, such as indicating errors or offering additional information. Users are requested to [contact](#) the Digital Archive, quoting details of an item or collection.

17.2. The Digital Archive also possesses a number of items that have evaded identification. If users are able to assist, please [contact](#) the Digital Archive.