

Research Resources in the College Archives

English

The College Archives, housing the records of Bedford College and Royal Holloway College, contain some of the earliest, most comprehensive and diverse collections relating to women's higher education and history in Britain since the mid-nineteenth century. However, the archives are not limited to those of the two colleges, or to the subject of women's history and education. Theatre and performing arts collections, and an extensive array of personal papers, also provide formal and informal accounts of major social, political and economic concepts, issues, events and developments. These personal, administrative and organisational records can provide abundant and varied sources and inspiration for creative writing and studies of contemporary society and literature. Accessible to all undergraduate and postgraduate students, the College Archives are a rich, unique and accessible research resource for those seeking direct insight into nineteenth and twentieth century British society, culture and politics.

The Royal Holloway and Bedford College collections can be used to research a variety of subject areas, including:

- History of education, notably women's higher education in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries
- The academic and social impact of co-education in universities
- Social and cultural history of university life
- Attitudes towards women's education
- Women's career opportunities and employment
- Nursing studies from the late nineteenth century
- Teacher training from the early twentieth century
- Gender and patriarchy
- Victorian and Edwardian femininity and sexuality
- Women's social and political activity and status in nineteenth and twentieth century Britain
- Women's suffrage
- Female social reformers
- Life in wartime and the war effort
- Women's fashion (see online ['College Fashion Exhibition'](#) on the Archives website)
- Victorian and Edwardian domesticity
- The domestic interior
- Material culture
- Medical advertising
- Visual representation through photography
- Life in nineteenth and twentieth century London
- Nineteenth century economic and social history

- Nineteenth century medicine
- Victorian philanthropy
- History of art and architecture
- Nineteenth and twentieth century journalism
- Student politics
- Student literature and poetry
- Leisure pursuits and sports
- Student drama

The archives can also provide information and guidance in the following areas:

- Nineteenth and early twentieth century palaeography
- Literary criticism
- Life narratives, oral history and auto/biography
- Drama and theatre history
- Victorian art, media and culture

Relevant highlights from the collections include:

- Administrative and financial records relating to the governance of both Colleges from the time of their foundation
- Bedford College and Royal Holloway College Student registers and individual student files containing information on their family background and previous education
- A large collection of formal and informal staff and student photographs dating from the 1880s, including several personal albums
- An extensive collection of photographs of student and staff bedrooms and studies at the College
- Student diaries from the early twentieth century, including the diaries of Winifred Seville (1906-1910), providing a detailed and personal account of life at Royal Holloway College
- Former staff and student reminiscences, correspondence and oral history memories, including a large collection of nineteenth and twentieth century correspondence
- Student Union records
- Student magazines, containing literary, theatre and dance reviews and examples of student creative writing
- Debating society records, providing insight into student politics and contemporary issues
- Press-cuttings and newspaper and magazine articles relating to Bedford College and Royal Holloway College – providing examples of nineteenth and twentieth century advertising and journalism
- Papers relating to the Public Hygiene course and the Nursing Studies and (teacher) Training Department at Bedford College, documenting the professionalisation of women's employment
- Records relating to Elizabeth Jesser Reid, founder of Bedford College, anti-slavery campaigner and philanthropist
- Papers relating to Thomas Holloway, medical entrepreneur and philanthropist, and the foundation of Royal Holloway College, and the Sanatorium at Virginia Water

- Advertising records relating to Thomas Holloway's manufacture of pills and ointments, and material relating to the Holloway Sanatorium
- Records relating to the design and construction of Bedford College and Royal Holloway College buildings and interiors
- Records relating to the Picture Gallery, including correspondence from and regarding the Victorian painters William Powell Frith and Luke Fildes
- Lecture notes and correspondence relating to the 'Fawcett Lectures', a series of public lectures relating to women's issues held at Bedford College between 1930 and 1980 – notable speakers included Vita Sackville-West, Eleanor Rathbone and Louisa Garrett Anderson, suffragette, medical pioneer and social reformer

A number of reference works on the history of Bedford and Royal Holloway Colleges, the Picture Gallery, women's education, and the life and work of Thomas Holloway are available for consultation in the Archives Reading Room.

NB. Collections range in size from single items to large personal, departmental and organisational archives and series.

Other significant collections include:

- The **Personal Papers of Professors Geoffrey and Kathleen Tillotson, 1690-2001 (PP56)**, authors and editors of numerous publications on Victorian writers, including Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray, Charlotte Brontë, and William Morris, and eighteenth and nineteenth century poets, such as Alexander Pope, Byron and Wordsworth. The papers also contain research on nineteenth and non-nineteenth century dramatists, Gilbert and Sullivan, and Victorian pantomime and melodrama, plus notes and cuttings on contemporary descriptions of visits to the theatre and Victorian commentary on drama.
- The **Personal Papers of Professor Caroline Spurgeon, 1890-1936 (PP7)**, lecturer and Head of English at Bedford College. The collection contains papers relating to Spurgeon's research on Shakespeare, Chaucer, Keats and mysticism.
- The **archives of the controversial and innovative Red Shift (RSTC), Gay Sweatshop (GS) and Half Moon Theatre (HMT) Companies**, dating from 1972 to 2007, and which contain scripts and production records relating to modern adaptations of Shakespeare's plays.
- The **personal papers of Sir Alfred Sherman**, journalist, political commentator and personal adviser to Margaret Thatcher.
- The **manuscript diaries of Anne and Frances Dickinson (1814-1881)**, which throw light onto the domestic lives of nineteenth century women.

Sources do not only provide information on single topics, but can be used to study a variety of issues, for example:

- **Photographs** can provide insight into women's fashion, material consumption and domestic interiors, leisure pursuits, sporting activities, architecture and social relationships.

- **Reminiscences and diaries** contain information on student life, life in London, family life, social and political values, female relationships and life in wartime.

The archives contain material that may be particularly relevant to the following courses:

Undergraduate:

First Year:

- **CW1010** - Introduction to Creative Writing - Fiction & Poetry
- **CW1020** - Why Write? The History and Theory of Creative Writing
- **EN1106** - Shakespeare
- **EN1112** - Introducing English Poetry

Second Year:

- **DT2091A** - Shakespeare from Page to Stage
- **EN1106** - Shakespeare
- **EN2208** - Ritual and Society in C19th Fiction and Painting
- **EN2309** – Literature of the *Fin de Siècle*, 1883-1903: Degeneration, Decadence and Empire
- **EN 2202** - Romantic Poetry II: Byron, Shelley and Keats
- **EN 2206** - Gaskell, Eliot and Dickens
- **EN2314** – British Drama Since 1956
- **CW2020** - Creative Writing: Fiction
- **CW2030** - Creative Writing: Poetry

Third Year:

- Special author project option
- Special Topic option – especially **EN3202 - Nineteenth-Century Literature & Culture**
- Dissertation
- **EN3306** - Women, Writing and Difference
- **DT3306** - Politics, Self and Stage, 1880-1914
- **CW3030** - Final Projects Poetry, Fiction, Playwriting

Postgraduate:

- MA in Creative Writing
- MA in English
- MA in Literatures of Modernity
- MA in Victorian Media and Culture
- MA in Shakespeare

Examples of some previous dissertations and theses researched using records from the College Archives (available for consultation in the Archives Reading Room):

Biltcliff, P., *A Cultural Geography of Victorian Art Collecting: Identity, acquisition and display*, (PhD, RHUL, 2007)

Bosley, M., *Sexuality, Society and Style: An analysis of the diaries of Winifred Mary Seville*, (MA, RHUL, 1997)

Broad, A., *'Abundant and splendid work for those who are brave enough': Bedford College and Royal Holloway College Graduate Teachers in the Dominions, 1890-1939*, (MA, RHUL)

Clayborough, S., *Discovering Social Experiences: Women staff and students at Royal Holloway College, 1887-1920*, (University of Sussex, 1996)

Hamlett, J., *Gender and the Social Interior: Personal rooms at Royal Holloway and Oxford and Cambridge Universities, 1890-1910*, (MA, RHUL, 2001)

Kirk, E.L., *'Nice Girls'? The regulation of feminine conduct at Royal Holloway, Bedford and Girton Colleges between the wars*, (MA, RHUL, 1995)

Kirk, E.L., *Femininity and Female Community at Royal Holloway and Bedford Colleges, 1945-65*, (MPhil, RHUL, 2002)

Milton, L., *'Never Dispair': Holloway's remedies and the patent medicine market, 1837-1937*, (MSc., University of Oxford, 1997)

Okubo, I., *Philanthropy and its Role in the Establishment of Women's Higher Education: A study of Bedford College and Royal Holloway College in the nineteenth-century*, (MA, RHUL, 1996)

Stevens, A., *'Women and Cricket: 1880-1926'*, (MA, University of London, 2003)

Stevens, S., *The Life of Thomas Holloway: An example of the values and status of the Victorian nouveau riche*, (RHUL, 2003)

Wiggins, S., *'Mine was the Motion': Political activity and activism at Royal Holloway College, 1890-1920*, (MA, RHUL, 1998)

Wilcocks, M., *'Socks fit for heroes': War work at Royal Holloway College and Bedford College during the First World War*, (BA, RHUL, 2004)

Wong, S., *'Brazen Amazons and Gentle Ladies': The Royal Holloway Hockey Club, 1890-1914*, (MA, RHUL, 1998)

Appointment and Contact Details:

An appointment is necessary if you wish to view records from the archives. Please contact us at archives@rhul.ac.uk to arrange an appointment.

However, you are welcome to visit the Archive Service without appointment to enquire about the collections and to view our corridor displays.

Further information about the Archive Service, including the online catalogue, facilities, location details, opening hours and contact details can be found on our website at <http://www.rhul.ac.uk/archives>.