

Research Resources in the College Archives

Modern History

The College Archives, housing the records of Bedford College and Royal Holloway College, contain some of the earliest, most comprehensive and varied collections relating to women's higher education and history in Britain since the nineteenth century. However, the archives are not limited to those of the two colleges, or to the subject of women's history and education. Various other collections also provide formal and informal accounts of major social, political and economic concepts, issues, events and developments. Over fifty collections of personal papers document the personal lives, activities, achievements and occupations of individuals connected with the two Colleges, some of them eminent. 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, politics and culture.

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
- Student activities and relationships
- Women's career opportunities and employment
- Attitudes towards women's education
- Gender and patriarchy
- Victorian and Edwardian femininity
- Sexuality and female relationships
- Women's social and political activity and status in nineteenth and twentieth century Britain
- Life in wartime and the war effort
- Women's fashion (see online '[College Fashion Exhibition](#)' on the Archives website)
- Victorian and Edwardian domesticity
- Material culture
- Visual representation through photography
- Life in nineteenth and twentieth century London
- Student politics
- Nineteenth century economic and social history
- Nineteenth century medicine
- Nursing studies from the late nineteenth century
- Teacher training from the early twentieth century
- Victorian philanthropy
- History of art and architecture
- Medical advertising
- Leisure pursuits and sports
- Student drama

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, and of Mary Doreen Wainwright, a Bedford College student in the 1940s
- 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 commentaries on contemporary College and social issues, and articles on various leisure activities, literature and the performing arts
- 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, journalism and contemporary concerns
- 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
- Case books of the Royal Holloway College Nurse (1935-1940)
- 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
- Records relating to the Sanatorium at Virginia Water, including articles, annual reports, deeds and regulations
- 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, women's education, and the life and work of Thomas Holloway are available for consultation in the Archives Reading Room.

Other significant collections include:

- The archives of the Red Shift, Gay Sweatshop and Half Moon Theatre Companies (1972-2007), providing insight into contemporary social and political issues.
- The personal papers of Sir Alfred Sherman, journalist, political commentator and personal adviser to Margaret Thatcher.

- The personal papers of Geoffrey and Kathleen Tillotson, authors and editors of numerous publications on Victorian literature.
- The manuscript diaries of Anne and Frances Dickinson (1814-1881), which throw light onto the domestic lives of nineteenth century women.

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

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.

Modules and courses for which the archives may be particularly useful:

Undergraduate:

- **HS2246** – From Rakes to Respectability: Conflict and Consensus in Britain, 1815-51
- **HS3320/HS3321** - Victorian Babylon: Life, Work and People in London, c.1850-1900
- **HS3251/HS3252** - Victorian Social and Political Thought
- **HS3260** - Class, Gender and Nation in Edwardian Britain
- **HS2234** - Modern Girls: Women in Britain, c. 1914- 1984
- **HS2263** - Gender and Society in the Non-Western World
- **HS2213** - British History, 1914-1973
- **HS2212** - British History 1837-1914
- **Group 3 Dissertation**

Postgraduate:

- **HS5630** - Debates and Methodology: Gender and Society in Modern Britain
- **HS5642** - Introduction to Victorian Studies: Part One: Politics and Ideas
- **HS5643** - Introduction to Victorian Studies: Part Two: Cultural and Social History
- **HS5644** - "Behind the Veil": The Age of the Victorians
- **HS5645** - Public Decency and Private Morals: Twentieth Century British History
- **EN5801** – Victorian London (part of the MA in Victorian Media and Culture)

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>.

