

Research Resources in the College Archives

History of Education

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. Personal, administrative and organisational records provide fascinating accounts of the impact of significant social changes, including war, the admittance of male students and the merger of both colleges, upon the social and education experiences of staff and students at Bedford College and Royal Holloway. In addition, over fifty collections of personal papers record the personal lives, activities, achievements and occupations of individuals connected with the two Colleges, some of them eminent. Comprehensive and unique in the insight they provide into developments in education and employment since the mid-nineteenth century, the College Archives are a rich, unique and accessible research resource for all undergraduate and postgraduate students.

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

- Women's higher education in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries
- The academic and social impact of co-education in universities
- Developments and changes within university teaching
- 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
- The impact of social, economic and political developments on higher education
- Student social backgrounds
- Student life in twentieth century London
- The impact of war on higher education
- Pre-university education for women
- Graduate career opportunities and employment
- Nursing studies from the late nineteenth century
- Teacher training from the early twentieth century
- Student life and leisure pursuits
- Student politics
- Student drama
- Victorian philanthropy

Catalogued records relating to the history of education held in the archives include:

Records relating to the administration of Bedford College and Royal Holloway:

- Governance and financial records relating to the administration of both Colleges from the time of their foundation, including papers of the Governors or Bedford College and Royal Holloway and papers of the Finance Committees.
- Royal Holloway and Bedford College deeds of foundation.
- Royal Holloway College Education Council Minute Books (1898-1921)
- Correspondence and papers concerning the admittance of men to Royal Holloway and Bedford College, 1950s-60s.
- Bedford College and Royal Holloway Secretaries' correspondence (1886-1985), concerning issues such as student discipline, wartime arrangements, the administration of scholarships and prizes, teaching methods and courses, intercollegiate affairs, the admission of Royal Holloway as a school of the University of London, and the administration of the Gilchrist Educational Trust by Bedford College (this was a British charity established in 1841 to support the advancement and propagation of education, and provided scholarships for women's colleges).

Academic records:

- Academic department administrative papers for both colleges dating from the late nineteenth century.
- Minute books for the Faculties of Arts and Sciences at Bedford College and Royal Holloway College.
- 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.
- Papers of the Bedford College and Royal Holloway Academic Boards, including minute books (nineteenth and twentieth century).

Records relating to students:

- Bedford College and Royal Holloway College Student registers and individual student files containing information on their family background, previous education, and in some cases, testimonials from academic staff and information on their employment.
- 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.
- Student Union records.
- Papers of various academics, sports, Christian and dramatic clubs and societies.
- Debating society records, providing insight into student politics and contemporary issues, including those of the Sharp Practice Society (1896-1906), established at Royal Holloway for the purpose of holding impromptu debates on women and women's education.

- Student magazines, containing commentaries on contemporary College and social issues, and articles on various leisure activities, literature and the performing arts.
- Bedford College and Royal Holloway student reminiscences, correspondence and oral history memories concerning personal and academic experiences from the early twentieth century.
- Papers of the Royal Holloway College Association (1890-1985), including minute books and returns for a survey of occupations of old students (1939-42).
- Papers relating to Bedford College Old Students' Association (1911-1984), including minutes, correspondence, old students' reports and questionnaires for a survey of graduate employment (1950s).

Records relating to staff:

- Bedford College and Royal Holloway College staff files dating from the late nineteenth century.
- Bedford College and Royal Holloway staff reminiscences, correspondence and oral history memories concerning staff personal and work-related experiences from the late nineteenth century.
- Personal papers of eminent individuals within both colleges, including the first female professors in the University of London.

Publications relating to Bedford College and Royal Holloway:

- Brochures and prospectuses for both colleges dating from the late nineteenth century.
- Annual calendars for both Royal Holloway and Bedford College from the late nineteenth century, containing student lists, details of courses offered and copies of examination papers.
- Press-cuttings and newspaper and magazine articles relating to Bedford College and Royal Holloway College.

Additional records relating to the history of education, women's social and academic experiences, and social life at Bedford College and Royal Holloway:

- 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.
- Minutes of staff/student joint committees at Bedford College and Royal Holloway College, and Principals' correspondence with senior students.
- Papers of the Royal Holloway College War Work Committees (1915-1942) and the Bedford College War Activities Committee (1914-1919), and administrative records relating to war arrangements at both colleges.
- 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.
- Women's Employment Federation: Secretary's correspondence and meeting minutes (1933-1949, 1958-1965).

- A large collection of formal and informal Bedford College and Royal Holloway 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 Royal Holloway, dating from the late nineteenth century.

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

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.

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

- **Student files** can contain information on students' family and social backgrounds, prior education, leisure pursuits, and their life and occupations after leaving college, in addition to their college academic records.
- **Staff files** may hold records on staff pursuits, professional interests and involvement in organisations outside of Bedford College and Royal Holloway, as well as their academic and career development prior to and post their employment at either college.
- **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.

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

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)

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>.