

Royal Society for Asian Affairs – Archives Policy

Introduction

The RSAA archive has its origins in the Central Asia Society and the objectives of its founders “to maintain in England a central institution for the collection, provision, maintenance and diffusion of information and knowledge”. It reflects the interests and priorities of the Society’s members and consists in large part of materials donated by them. It has not sought systematically to build its collection and its operation has not previously been guided by any formally agreed policy.

Policy

1. The purpose of the RSAA archive is to preserve and make available to the public materials relating to the history, culture, religions, politics, languages and exploration of Asian countries.
2. The archive may hold materials relating to Asia and to the RSAA’s own history in any form including digital media and formats yet to be invented.
3. It will particularly seek to preserve manuscripts, maps, drawings and paintings, photographic materials and correspondence.
4. The RSAA will seek to expand the archive by the discriminating acquisition of materials that are coherent with the its existing holdings and reflect its priorities as determined from time to time by the board.
5. The RSAA archive will be open to the public by appointment.
6. The RSAA welcomes offers of records for accession to its archive.
7. Decisions on accessioning and de-accessioning are taken by the RSAA board on the recommendation of the Society’s Archivist and, if necessary, a committee formed for the purpose.
8. Items accepted into the RSAA archive will not be sold.
9. Where items accepted into the archive in the past are considered by the board to be ephemeral, they may be disposed of or offered back to the original donor if known.
10. Where items accepted into the archive in the past are considered by the board not to be coherent with the RSAA’s overall collection and priorities, such items may be transferred to another body with similar objectives of preservation and similar limitations on sale. Before such transfer, such items will be offered back to the original donor if known.
11. In the event that the RSAA archive permanently ceases to operate, the RSAA will seek to transfer the whole collection to another body with similar objectives of preservation and similar limitations on sale.

This policy was agreed by the board of the RSAA on 9 September 2019 and supersedes previous decisions on archive policy.