

GUIDE TO MANAGING HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

Developing a significant collection

Archives in collections

Archives are collections of records, usually relating to an organisation or a person, considered to have continuing value. Increasingly historical societies receive into their collection archives, or part of an archive, of a local organisation – such as the minutes, newsletters and / or other papers of a business or sporting group for example – or records such as correspondence, diaries and memorabilia relating to a person from the local community. Each society will also have their own archive of minutes, correspondence, financial records, newsletters etc. needing to be managed.

The important thing if looking after an archive as part of a general collection is to keep all the items that belong to the archive together. Therefore if the collection has a series of minutes and other papers from the local sporting club all copies of the minutes and other papers for that sporting club would be stored together as one entity.

When cataloguing the item it is important to record the provenance – information about the organisation that created the items – the time period covered for the set of records held and a description of the items held as well as information as to where the archive collection is stored.

History Victoria e-news January 2008 – <http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/home/rhsvstate/web/Issue7b.html> - contains notes from a session, *Introduction to archives*, presented by Bruce Smith at the History Victoria Support Group Seminar Day in November 2007.

Other publications that provide information about looking after archives include:

Keeping it for the future: how to set up small community archives Canberra: National Archives of Australia, 2007 – a useful inexpensive publication providing basic information about establishing a small archive collection.

Keeping archives (3rd ed) Australian Society of Archivists, 2008 – a detailed guide designed for organisations with large archive collections.