

## Personal Diary and Journal Archiving Guidance During COVID-19 Pandemic

### Why are we interested in diaries and journals during this time?

Edinburgh City Archives is looking to collect people's diaries and journals during this time of pandemic and unprecedented social distancing to help us ensure its impact upon the city is properly captured for the future.

Personal diaries and journals of the past provide insight into the lives of people during extraordinary times. They tell us what mattered to people at the time and what they thought of the events going on around them.

Diaries and journals of ordinary people have provided context to events such as the Great Fire and Plague of London in 1666, the European colonisation of the Americas and Australia during the 17th and 18th centuries, the Industrial Revolution and its effect on both labour and landowning classes, the wars and revolutions of the 20th Century, as well as its artistic movements and musical changes.

Archivists collect, preserve and provide access to diaries and journals so that historians can better understand the time and events that they are studying. They provide unique voices to contrast against official records and data for the times they were written in.

### What are we interested in?

We are interested in the experiences of the residents of Edinburgh, as they live through this time, captured through daily diaries and journals. These can be as simple or as detailed as you like. For example:

- What you are doing? (Hobbies, work, education, exercise, activities)
- What are you seeing? (Weather, whilst shopping, from your windows)
- What are you feeling?
- What are you eating?
- Who are you with / are you alone?
- How has the virus impacted your daily life and that of your friends and family?
- What do you miss?

We will collect diaries in all forms; whether that is paper or digital, text or audio-visual, published on a website / social media or kept privately in an app, book or document.

The main requirements are that these are regularly updated over this period and they can be deposited with us outside of any software or platform. Ideally, they should also be kept in the same form throughout the crisis but can incorporate different media (e.g. images in a blog, photographs in a book etc.).

We may also consider diaries and journals before this period if they are part of a longer existing run of records.

## Who can take part?

Anyone who lives or works in Edinburgh during this time can offer us their diaries or journals. We are looking for contributions from a cross-section of society; people of all ages, backgrounds and occupations.

If you are considering offering your diaries or journals, please do not censure yourself or change your style or approach. An important element to all of this is authenticity.

## What will we do with them?

Any diaries or journals we accept will be given a unique reference number and preserved permanently in the City Archives. All such content will be stored in our environmentally controlled store which will ensure they survive for generations to come. Digital diaries and journals will be preserved through our plans for a digital repository this year.

Diaries and journals kept in the City Archives will be publicly accessible in our searchroom, either immediately or in the future. Some of our collections are closed to public access for a period due to their sensitive content or at the request of their depositor over privacy concerns of the material. We will consider similar requests for closure over any offered diaries and journals, but we may end turning down offers with long closure periods required as part of the deposit.

We hope that this initiative will result in many diaries and journals being offered to us. However, we will likely not be able to take all is offered. Sometimes this will be because of technical reasons, other times it might be because we have already taken in similar diaries or journals. If we are not going to take your diaries or journals, we will always offer them back to you.

## How will we take them?

First, you will need to contact us by email at [archives@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:archives@edinburgh.gov.uk), indicating your interest in depositing your diaries or journals with us. Please give us an idea of the size and format of the collection, any links to publicly accessible online material, and a little bit about yourself too.

We will then confirm receipt of any offers and log them for follow up post the pandemic emergency. At this stage during the social distancing measures, that is all any of us can do.

After the social distancing measures have been relaxed to the point where our usual working arrangements can be resumed, we will contact those people who have approached us to organise a sample of the material to be given to us for appraisal.

After appraisal and acceptance, the actual transfer of your diaries or journals will involve either sending your diaries by post to us or coming in to visit us in our searchroom in the City Chambers. For particularly large physical collections, we may be able to pick them up from where they are currently kept.

Digital diaries and journals will need to be exported and / or downloaded from whatever software or platform they have been created on and saved in a standard format on removable media. This will then need to either be brought or sent to us in the City Chambers.

**Please note, we will not be able to take any diaries and journals while the social distancing measures are in place. Given current Government advice and our service planning, this means we probably will not take in deposits until nearer the end of the year.**