



## THE ROYAL LIFE SAVING SOCIETY

### POSITION STATEMENT

**TITLE:** Heritage of, to and in the Royal Life Saving Society – A Remarkable History Worth Sharing

**DATE:** June 2019

#### 1. PURPOSE

To set the relevance of Heritage to and in the Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS) and our approach to it so far as it relates to our history and current and future activity

#### 2. BACKGROUND

The RLSS has a long and proud history which encompasses approaches to rescue, lifeguarding, resuscitation, drowning prevention and lifesaving sport; the establishment and development of Lifesaving Organisations throughout the Commonwealth and beyond; the engagement of the Royal Family; the involvement of huge numbers of volunteers.

Elements of the RLSS history reside with RLSS Members, with individual members and their descendants and the wider world; some are known and some are unknown and waiting to be discovered.

We know that many branches have developed and maintained excellent records over time and have organized and published their history including on-line.

Over almost 130 years RLSS Headquarters has produced or collected a considerable number of relevant materials evidencing its history but has not documented its approach to these.

#### 3. DEFINITIONS

##### ***Heritage means***

A legacy inherited from the past, valued in the present – which it helps interpret – and safeguarded for the future – which it helps shape. Heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations. <sup>1</sup>

##### ***Archive means***

An accumulation of historical records or the physical place they are located. Archives contain primary source documents that have been collected and preserved and developed over the course of an organisation's lifetime, and are kept to show the function of that organisation.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)

In the RLSS context this includes our Royal Charters and By-laws; Annual and other Reports; Handbooks and Manuals; Programme materials and resources; Charts; photographs; correspondence; certificates; press cuttings; meeting minutes; Members' Annual Reports; RLSS Diploma submissions; competition rules and results; medal citations.

**Artefacts means**

Objects made by a human being, typically one of cultural or historical interest. In the RLSS context this includes trophies, medals, medallions, badges, mementos.

**The Collection**

In this Statement means the accumulated Archive and Artefacts held by RLSS.

**Intellectual Property means**

Creations of the mind: inventions, literary and artistic works, and symbols, names, images, and designs used in commerce.<sup>2</sup>

**4. STATEMENTS**

**Ownership and responsibilities**

- The Collection is an asset of RLSS
- RLSS retains the Copyright in the materials it has produced including Annual Reports and Handbooks
- The RLSS Supplemental Charter contains the following provisions

- "3. The objects and intention of the Society shall be the promotion of technical education in swimming, saving life by drowning, electrocution and suffocation by gas or smoke and resuscitation of the apparently drowned, electrocuted or suffocated.*
4. *For the purpose of attaining the aforesaid objects, the Society shall have power to do any lawful thing and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing shall have power:*
- (a) *to acquire, own, construct, provide, maintain, manage, repair and dispose of any real or other property;.....*
  - (d) *to collect, compile, print publish and disseminate information and generally to give and exchange information and advice by whatever means for the purpose of stimulating interest in and promoting the objects of the Society;.....*

- RLSS Trustees have a duty to safeguard and protect the assets of the RLSS.

**Relevance/Value of the Collection**

- RLSS values its Heritage of which the Collection is evidence
- RLSS acknowledges that the Collection is relevant to its work and has a value to researchers and others interested in social history
- Elements of the Archive form parts of the RLSS Intellectual Property
- Elements of the Collection are irreplaceable and priceless
- Some individual Artefacts have considerable monetary value
- The Collection aims to support the work of the RLSS by facilitating the exploration of its heritage, promoting its use to engage Members and supporters by delivering accessible research resources to all.

**Use**

The purpose of the Collection is to collect, preserve and promote the documentary evidence for the history of the Royal Life Saving Society not only for the sake of heritage but also in its future development.

- Our objectives are to preserve records :

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<sup>2</sup> World Intellectual Property Organisation

- Of how the RLSS was formed and developed
  - Showcasing our unique journey in the area of lifesaving and drowning prevention
  - Showing what the RLSS has done more widely
  - Demonstrating the RLSS's impact locally, nationally and in the wider world
- The Collection will provide learning from previous activities and guidance for the present and future
  - Sharing and interpreting our story for years to come
  - Bestow a sense of community and the unique identity that makes us different
  - Identify long term members, volunteers and contributors for recognition
  - Measure the RLSS's growth and development
  - Inspire future improvements and learn from past developments.
  - The Collection will be a resource for researchers
  - The Collection will enhance the profile of the RLSS by using material for the publication of promotion and information articles
  - Enhancement and promotion of the Collection will lead to greater exposure and promotion of the Society generally
  - The Collection will provide information about our anniversaries and those of our members
  - The Collection will provide elements for induction/awareness of staff and volunteers and build a feeling of belonging and sense of pride in past accomplishments

### **Preservation**

It is important that the Collection is maintained and looked after.

- RLSS will seek to preserve the Archive by digitising its copyrighted material and conserving the originals in the Archive when possible
- RLSS will insure suitable artefacts and endeavour to keep them secure.
- RLSS will seek to provide physical protection to the Collection

### **Access**

The Collection will serve RLSS and society generally better if it is available to Members and researchers

- RLSS will seek ways to make its Archive more readily available
- RLSS will seek to catalogue the Archive with effective search functions made available to users.

### **Supplementing, enhancing and acquiring**

By definition the Collection is growing as the work of the RLSS continues. This includes minutes, briefings, documents, project reports, newsletters and so on. Our Members have elements of their history which can supplement the RLSS heritage. Individual members create talks, carry out research, or have particular projects relevant to RLSS heritage. At the time of special events, Members often donate commemorative artefacts to the Society.

- RLSS will find a way to organise and catalogue new/ongoing material so that it forms part of the Archive
- RLSS will continue to document the Collection
- RLSS will seek to capitalise on donations of research of and by our volunteers
- RLSS will seek opportunities to gather Oral Histories
- RLSS will investigate establishing a platform to allow Members to upload material to the Collection
- RLSS will acquire records of the RLSS. Donations (which will be encouraged) and purchases are preferred to deposits on loan. All donations and loans will be confirmed in writing by either a deed of gift form or loan agreement as appropriate, signed by both parties. Purchases will be made only if the documents are of outstanding importance to the RLSS

- Items will be accepted in every format, whether manuscript, printed or electronic and may include artefacts or objects.

### **Administration**

The RLSS has limited capacity to devote to the Collection

- RLSS has established a small Heritage Working Group (HWG) of interested volunteers most of who are published historians
- The Collection is overseen by Commonwealth Headquarters staff but RLSS will continue to rely on volunteer support for the Collection
- RLSS will continue its subscription to the Life Saving Awards Research Society and other relevant organisations e.g. Charity Archivists and Record Management Group; Association of Commonwealth Archivists and Record Managers; Corporate Collections Subject Specialist Network
- RLSS will maintain contact with other organisations that have Archives e.g. Royal National Lifeboat Institute, The Scout Association, Red Cross and so on and will seek to draw on what we can learn from their experience and expertise
- Where appropriate, RLSS will seek external expertise relating to the management of the Collection

### **Allocating Resources**

- RLSS will support the ongoing work of the Heritage Working Group within its Terms of Reference with a view to developing a permanent Heritage portfolio
- RLSS will allocate resources as set out in this Statement and will provide space in RLSS Commonwealth Headquarters for the Collection. Where space is limited elements of the Collection will be securely secured at another site.

### **Funding**

The preservation, accessibility and enhancement of the Collection will require funding

- RLSS will apply for grants, loans or donations for evaluation, preservation and enhancement of the Collection
- RLSS will seek and accept private donations
- RLSS will consider ways in which the Collection can be monetised with any income dedicated to the enhancement of the Collection,
- RLSS will consider allocating funds in future budgets for the preservation and enhancement of the Collection
- RLSS will fund insurance cover on relevant aspects of the Collection

### **Collaboration**

Our limited capacity and expertise in managing/developing an archive means that we will need to collaborate

- RLSS will work with other organisations and advisors to maximise the preservation and use of the Collection
- RLSS will seek support from its Members to enhance the Collection
- RLSS will seek to work with other organisations which have similar collections with a view to mutual benefit.

### **Disposal**

- The Collection has a long-term purpose and RLSS will possess a permanent collection in relation to these stated objectives.

- RLSS accepts the principle that there is a strong presumption against the disposal of any parts of the Collections except where there is no direct relevance to RLSS or where the Collection contains duplicate material.
- Items identified for disposal will first be offered to Members and any proceeds received will be retained for acquisitions to the Collection.
- RLSS will seek to protect against inadvertent disposal

### **Measuring Impact**

- RLSS will evaluate the use and impact of the Collection in the following areas
  - Performance against the HWG Project Plan
  - Publication of Articles using material from the Collection
  - Number of enquiries received and dealt with
  - Comments received from Members, enquirers, other collections and so on
  - Donations of material received
  - Funds raised towards the evaluation, preservation and enhancement of the Collection

## **5. APPROVAL**

This Position Statement was first approved by the Board of Trustees in June 2019.

## **6. CONTACT**

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