

Victoria Baths Archive

Manchester's Victoria Baths were opened in 1906 to provide swimming and bathing facilities for the three wards of Longsight, Rusholme, and Ardwick (then called St Luke's). A testament to Edwardian architecture, its magnificent red-brick and terracotta exterior housed 3 pools, 64 wash baths, a Turkish baths suite and a large flat for the superintendent. The Victoria Baths History Archive represents the rich social and sporting history of this beautiful and fascinating building.



Where does our Archive come from?

Some items contained in our archive were left in the Baths upon its closure in 1993, history that would have been lost for ever if it hadn't been rescued by volunteers. A larger proportion is made up of donations from the public, who have been very keen to share their memories and memorabilia with us. We have also actively acquired some material.

What do we collect and how do we collect it?

Our archive covers the history of Victoria Baths, the Baths and Wash-houses of Manchester, and the history of swimming and Turkish baths in general.

Memories have an especially important place in our archive as they build up a colourful picture of how the Baths was used over the years.

"It was only in about 1937 that they allowed men to wear trunks. I was pleased to have trunks."

Wilfred Hoyle

We welcome memories from any period of the Baths life, but are particularly keen to collect older memories before they are lost forever. We collect memories at Open Days and by post or email.

Photographs are particularly valuable in bringing history to life. We love to hold original photographs but know that they can be of great personal value so also accept scans or photocopies.



Objects range from original fittings and fixtures from the building, through swimming medals and badges to larger items including a set of swimming shields and an oil portrait which are on long term loan to us. We put items on display as much as possible.



Newspaper clippings highlight what the press deemed important at the time, recognising both individual achievements and social developments, which makes them a welcome contribution to our archive.

Documents make up a large section of our archive. They are not only a pleasure to read, but can be highly attractive and also provide important and sometimes detailed information which enables us to establish a clear account of our history. Donations can be made either by post, e-mail or at Open Days.

Our **Audio Visual** collection includes a small amount of film footage and a large number of recordings that we have made. These include short interviews and longer oral histories. We are very keen to collect these spoken accounts of the history of Victoria Baths and can arrange home visits to make recordings.



How do we care for our archive?

Our archive is housed in a temperature and humidity controlled environment with items stored in acid free boxes, inserts, tissue paper or fabric. Professional handling and care is given to all items that are donated or loaned. Some items have been repaired using a conservation approach.

How do we use our Archive?



By using items in our archive we have been able to create displays and interpretation boards, both for Victoria Baths and for other sites or events. We use information and images from the archive in our popular guided tours of the building and have also published a book and a series of leaflets. People can access our archive for research and this facility has been used by many of the artists who use Victoria Baths.

How to access our Archive

We make our Archive available for private research by groups or individuals. Simply contact us by phone or email to arrange a time for your visit.

Our Archive catalogue is also available for viewing at most of our public Open Days.

The development of the Victoria Baths History Archive has been funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.



Getting here



Find us at: Victoria Baths, Hathersage Road, Chorlton-on-Medlock, Manchester, M13 0FE

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Victoria Baths
History Archive

1900



1915



1930

1940



1960



1970

1990