

Information for visitors to the Heinz Archive and Library

Introduction

The Heinz Archive and Library dates back to the foundation of the National Portrait Gallery in 1856 and is the prime centre for research in the field of British portraiture.

On arrival

- Please report to the Enquiry Desk.
- Deposit coats and any bags larger than A4 size in the cupboard provided.
- Please ensure that all mobile phones are turned off.
- First time visitors will be asked to show some form of identification such as a passport or driver's licence and to fill in an Access Agreement Form.

Use of computers and photocopier

- Points for laptop computers are provided under each of the tables.
- A photocopier is provided behind the Enquiry Desk. Copies are charged at 10p a sheet for both A4 and A3. The copier is self service. Please pay for any copies you have made at the Enquiry Desk before you leave. A receipt can be provided.
- You are welcome to photocopy most items you find in the Sitter and Artist Boxes, but we do not permit the copying of hand-coloured prints, mezzotints or torn and fragile items. Please ask at the Enquiry Desk if you are unsure whether an item can be photocopied.
- Separate regulations on photocopying from books are displayed above the photocopier (see overleaf).

Photography

You may take photographs of material held in Gallery Records, Collected Archives and the Library for private research purposes, subject to UK and European copyright legislation. You will be asked to fill in a Photography Declaration form before you are permitted to do so.

Sitter and Artist Boxes

The Archive and Library records British portraits by collecting prints, photographs and reproductions of works held in

collections worldwide. These images are arranged in 4,000 boxes kept in the Public Study Room.

These boxes are arranged in the following sequences:

- British sitters (green boxes) filed alphabetically by the last known surname or title of the sitter. Royal sitters appear at the end of the sequence, arranged by reign.
- Foreign Sitters (brown boxes) filed alphabetically by the last known surname or title of the sitter. Royal sitters are filed under the name of their country.
- Artists (red boxes) arranged firstly by medium, then in twenty-five year periods, then alphabetically by surname. Artists' names are included in the [online public access catalogue](#) for the Library, which indicates their location in the sequence. A plan of the running order of the boxes is provided.
- Types (brown boxes) filed thematically by subject. An alphabetical subject index to these files is provided.
- Costume (green boxes) filed chronologically by period.

Portrait Index

This contains index slips for British sitters, filed alphabetically as for the Sitter Boxes above. They provide details of portraits predominantly held in other collections that are illustrated or recorded in books and other sources in the Archive and Library.

Reference Collection

This collection contains 80,000 prints and drawings, including many discrete named collections, such as grangerised/extra-illustrated volumes, bound collections of prints, albums of drawings and sketchbooks.

The collection is being catalogued on the Gallery's collections database. A [hand-list of the named collections](#) can be found on the Gallery website.

Photographs Collection

This collection holds more than 240,000 original prints and negatives. It includes substantial holdings for Camille Silvy, Ida Kar, Madame Yevonde, Howard Coster, Bassano and Cecil Beaton.

The collection is being catalogued on the Gallery's collections database. A hand-list of named collections and albums can be found on the Gallery website.

Those wishing to consult portrait photographs should contact the [Photographs Curator](#).

Gallery Records

Registered Packets

These contain information on portraits in the Primary Collection, ranging from acquisition and conservation records, research notes, correspondence and press cuttings. They are being catalogued on the archive system.

Notes files

These contain correspondence, notes and cuttings, including information about portraits not held by the Gallery, filed by sitter, artist or collection.

Institutional Records

The institutional records of the Gallery include minutes of trustee meetings and administrative, financial, exhibition and collections records dating from 1856 to the present. They are being catalogued on the archive system. For access please contact the [Archivist and Records Manager](#).

Collected Archives

These include artists' account books, studio ledgers, sitter books and papers, a collection of autograph letters, and the notes and correspondence of researchers in the field of portraiture. A hand-list is available on the Gallery website.

Library

The library holds 35,000 books, 150 periodical titles and a number of special collections, including the private library of the Gallery's first Director, Sir George Scharf, rare books and important sets of illustrated magazines.

A card catalogue covers acquisitions between 1856 and 1994, and an [online public access catalogue](#) includes items acquired from 1994 and gives access to other available online resources.

Electronic Resources

There are a number of useful electronic resources available in the Public Study Room. These include: the Gallery's collections database (for portraits) and the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.

Health and Safety

- Boxes may be heavy – please be careful when removing them from shelves and carrying them to a counter or desk.
- Kick-stools are available but please be careful when using them. Alternatively, a library ladder with support rails is available.
- Please do not leave kick-stools where they cannot be seen or may be tripped over.
- Please do not leave index drawers, boxes or books protruding from cabinets or shelves where they may be knocked into or tripped over.

Obtaining Prints

Print sales and copyright control are handled by the Picture Library. Order forms are available from the Enquiry Desk. When completing this form, please provide a reference to the location of the original (if it is in the Heinz Archive and Library) and/or a photocopy of the image (if this does not contravene photocopying restrictions).

Please ask at the Enquiry Desk if you need advice on this or any of the following points:

1) Who owns the picture?

The Archive contains a wealth of reference material and includes copies of works in other collections. In general, we only supply images from the National Portrait Gallery's collection.

2) Which part of our collection does the picture belong to?

National Portrait Gallery's pictures belong either to the Primary Collection (8" x 6" b/w prints available from stock) or the reference collections (prints produced to order).

3) Is new photography required?

Most works in the Primary Collection have already been photographed. Some reference collection works have been photographed - these have a code ('RN' followed by a number), which you must copy onto print orders.

Other works will need to be photographed before prints can be produced. 'RN' orders are usually completed in two weeks but new photography orders may take longer.

4) Do you require a colour image?

If you require a colour image, please contact the [Picture Library](#) directly.

5) Do you want to reproduce the image?

If you want to reproduce an image, please contact the [Picture Library](#) directly. The purchase of prints does not include the right to reproduce them, so if you intend to reproduce or copy images in our collections in any way (including for website use or print publishing) you must first obtain permission.

There are occasions where we will not be able to supply prints, due to copyright restrictions.

Public opening times

The Heinz Archive and Library is open by appointment only:
Tuesday – Friday 10.00–17.00

Closed: 24 December – 1 January inclusive, weekends, public bank holidays and for a two week stock-take between mid-August and mid-September.

Access

All facilities are suitable for wheelchair access.

The Public Study Room is fitted with two induction loops, including one portable facility.

A large print version of our visitor's leaflet is available on request and magnifying sheets and torches are provided in the Public Study Room.

If you have any special requirements for your visit please notify Archive and Library staff in advance. Thank you.

Contact details

Telephone: +44 (0)20 7321 6617

E-mail: archive@npg.org.uk

Website: www.npg.org.uk/research/archive

Library catalogue: librarycatalogue.npg.org.uk

Archive catalogue: archivecatalogue.npg.org.uk