

# Life on the Home Front: Experiences of the Second World War in Britain

Reference: 2019-4-WAL



<b>Supervisor</b>	Laura Walker, Lead Curator of Modern Archives and Manuscripts
<b>Department, Location</b>	Modern Archives and Manuscripts – St Pancras, London
<b>Start date/timeframe</b>	Ideally this placement will take place from autumn/winter 2019 onwards, but there is some flexibility.
<b>Duration</b>	<b>3 months</b> (or part-time equivalent). For a part-time placement, the student would be required to spend a minimum of <b>2.5 days/week</b> on site at the Library.
<b>Remote-working</b>	If required, the placement could be undertaken working from home for <b>2-3 days per week</b> (or part-time equivalent).
<b>Context for placement</b>	
<p>The Modern Archives and Manuscripts team is responsible for western archive and manuscript collections dating from 1601 to 1950. This includes historical, literary and scientific collections.</p> <p>2019 marks the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War and this placement would tie into the department's plans for commemorative activities around the anniversary, which (subject to internal developments and approval processes) may include an exhibition, public events, new online content and social media activity. More details on prospective plans will be available by the time of the interview/placement start.</p>	
<b>Expected tasks and outcomes</b>	
<p>During the placement, the student would research sources relating to the British Home Front during the Second World War in the Modern Archive collections and (depending on time available) across the Library, including in the Printed Heritage Collections, India Office Records and Philatelic Collections.</p> <p>Training would be provided on how to use both the main catalogue and the archives and manuscripts catalogue to search for collection items relating to the Second World War and the Home Front. The student would research and compile the sources into a <a href="#">collection guide</a> for the Library's website. This would improve access to less well known and difficult to find collections as well as encouraging links between the Library's collections and researchers working on a range of relevant topics. The research will also identify priority items within the collections for cataloguing, conservation and digitisation.</p> <p>The student would have the opportunity to write blog posts for <a href="#">Untold Lives</a> based on the stories and information discovered during their research. Posts will be published throughout the student's placement and will reflect the scope of their research (as such, some posts will be held back to be published to tie in with later anniversaries). The student will use social media, Twitter or Instagram, to publicise their research and share the interesting accounts they find in the collections. Posts could also be of a 'on this day' nature to tie in to key events and anniversaries of the war.</p> <p>The student would give a staff talk on the range of documents they have identified and organise a knowledge exchange around the subject for staff members from different collection areas. This would ensure that the student's research and knowledge are shared across the Library and inform staff about the content of the Modern Archives and Manuscript collections.</p>	
<b>Training and experience expected to be gained by student through the placement</b>	
<p>At the beginning of the placement, the student will receive a general introduction to the work of the Library, and the Modern Archives team in particular. They will also be introduced to relevant colleagues working in other curatorial areas, with whom they might work in the course of the placement.</p> <p>The student will receive training on how to use the main catalogue and the archives and manuscript catalogue as well as how to view original material. Training would also be provided with training by Modern</p>	

Archives staff on what constitutes a good catalogue record and a brief introduction on how to catalogue archive and manuscript material in the Library. The student would also be shown how to recognise the different signs of wear and tear to collection material. If identified, the student would have the opportunity to show this material to a conservator who would be able to advise on treatment options. There may also be the chance to shadow a conservator for a day.

The student would have weekly meetings with their supervisor to monitor their progress and fulfil any training needs. The student would have the opportunity to take part in any training courses offered at the Library including the Digital Scholarship training programme and 21<sup>st</sup> century curator talks. There would be the chance to attend team and other relevant meetings. There would also be an opportunity to shadow a member of the team to see the range of work carried out in the department.

The student would develop their research skills in navigating the catalogues and selecting sources. They would gain experience of producing a range of research outputs including a collection guide for the website, social media and blog posts. They would also have the opportunity to present the findings of their research at a staff talk.

Overall, the placement would provide the student with practical experience of working with different primary sources in an archive and library environment. This would give the student an insight to day-to-day operations of a major national library, research organisation and cultural hub, highlighting different potential future career paths and showing how research skills can be applied in this context.

#### **Required knowledge and skills**

- Good knowledge of twentieth century history
- Good oral and written communication skills
- Experience of undertaking research using primary and secondary sources (desirable)
- Ability to work as part of a team and to manage own work effectively within this

This is a training and development opportunity open to current PhD students only. It is not intended to lead to a permanent post at the Library. Please note that the Library is unable to provide a stipend for PhD research placements. Applicants must obtain the support of their PhD supervisor in advance and, as part of their process, consult their HEI to ascertain what funding is available to support them.

Application deadline: 5pm on Monday, **18 February 2019**. Information on how to apply is available on our website: <https://www.bl.uk/news/2019/january/phd-research-placements-2019>