Today, The National Archives announced the successful applicants who have received funding from the COVID-19 Archives Fund. 25 archives from across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have each received up to £50,000 from the fund.

The fund, which was allocated £500,000 from HM Treasury, will allow archives to secure physical and born-digital records that are at risk of being dispersed or lost. This government support comes at a time when many organisations are struggling to deal with issues related to their collections which have arisen as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

‘It is so important to protect our nation's history for future generations to learn from and enjoy.’

‘I am pleased that this funding will help preserve collections across the length and breadth of the Union for years to come and I thank The National Archives for their work on this project.’

One archive which has benefitted is the Spetchley Park Gardens Charitable Trust. They will purchase conservation supplies to preserve material from the archive of horticulturalist Ellen Ann Willmott. The records were found in a damp cellar and this much-needed work will both tackle the collection’s deterioration and open it up to researchers.

Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism in the Welsh Government, Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas said:

 “I am delighted with the news that Archives and Records Council Wales will benefit from this funding during what is proving to be a very difficult time for our cultural and heritage sector. Covid-19 will have a continuing impact on organisations across the country, and this funding will help ensure that our national record is protected and secured for the benefit of future generations.”

Archives and Records Council Wales will use their funding to develop a national strategy to locate vulnerable Welsh records and ensure that they are deposited with an established archive service.

Tower Museum Derry in Northern Ireland will use the grant to preserve the audio-visual collection of well-known Derry cameraman Vinny Cunningham. This material tells the story of the region, including sporting events, protests and interviews, and will be digitised and made publicly available for the first time.

One Scottish archive to benefit from the fund is West Dunbartonshire Archives where the grant will help preserve collections by funding the purchase of remote WiFi-enabled data loggers. These will be used to monitor the temperature and humidity of the service’s archive locations, allowing them to identify and address issues quickly.

The fund was open to both recognised collecting institutions and other archival custodians and will help them safeguard their vital records or re-home other vulnerable collections. The government grants will offset some of the practical costs of the planned interventions, such as storage, conservation, transport and expertise.

For more information about the COVID-19 Fund, more details of which archives have received funding and about the work of The National Archives, please contact The National Archives media team on 020 8392 5277 or email press@nationalarchives.gov.uk