

## Preserving the past for the future

Since 2016, when the University of Southampton and BC'37A (now known as BCA'37 UK) signed an agreement for the formal transfer, the Special Collections has been the home of the Association's archive collections. <https://www.basquechildren.org/reference/archives>

This Basque child refugee archive, whilst perhaps a more modest portion of the over 7 million manuscript items that now are held in the Special Collections, provide an important addition and a unique perspective to the extensive holdings relating to the refugee and transmigration experience at the University. The collections are stored in the purpose built strongrooms, maintained at the recommended British standards for the preservation of archival material.



*Member of Special Collections staff fetching archive material from the strongroom.*

Composed of papers of the Basque Children of '37 Association UK (MS 404), together with collections of individuals (MS 370) and a series of interviews of *niños vascos* conducted as part of an oral history project undertaken by the University of Southampton, the collections document an important facet of the Spanish Civil War and its consequences from the perspective of those who were at the heart of the story. Also part of the Basque collections is an online exhibition produced as part of the 'Los Niños' oral history project available via the Special Collections virtual reading room:

Catalogues of the collections can be viewed online at: <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/archives/resources/basquecollections.page>.



The work of the Special Collections is not merely to preserve the collections in its custody for the future, but to ensure that they are used. Anyone wishing to view the Basque collections can contact the Special

Collections to arrange a visit. There are no costs involved, but an appointment must be made prior to visiting. The access arrangements are set out on the Special Collections website (<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/archives/about/access.page>) or you can contact the Special Collections at the following postal address: Special Collections, Hartley Library, University of Southampton, Highfield, Southampton SO17 1BJ.

The Basque collections have been the subject of various research projects, both for students at the University of Southampton and from elsewhere, including undergraduate group projects for both history and film students, and have supported research into family history. The material features as part of sessions run by the Special Collections staff introducing students to research and collections and as part of the ongoing **Explore the Collections** programme of drop-in sessions for members of the public to meet the curators and find out more about the holdings.



*Explore the Collections event*

The University also has been delighted to support a number of events that have made use of the resources. An image from the collections was used as part of a projected art installation during the opening ceremony in Hull for its City of Culture celebrations. Southampton contributed, alongside archives in the Universities of Warwick and Swansea, to the 'Road To Freedom' art project <http://www.flamencopuntatacon.com/road-to-freedom.html>.



More recently the University lent its travelling exhibition to both Eastleigh Museum and to a commemorative event at Dartington Hall and played host to an exhibition *From Bilbao to Southampton to Salford* by the artist Claire Hignett inspired by the archive collections.



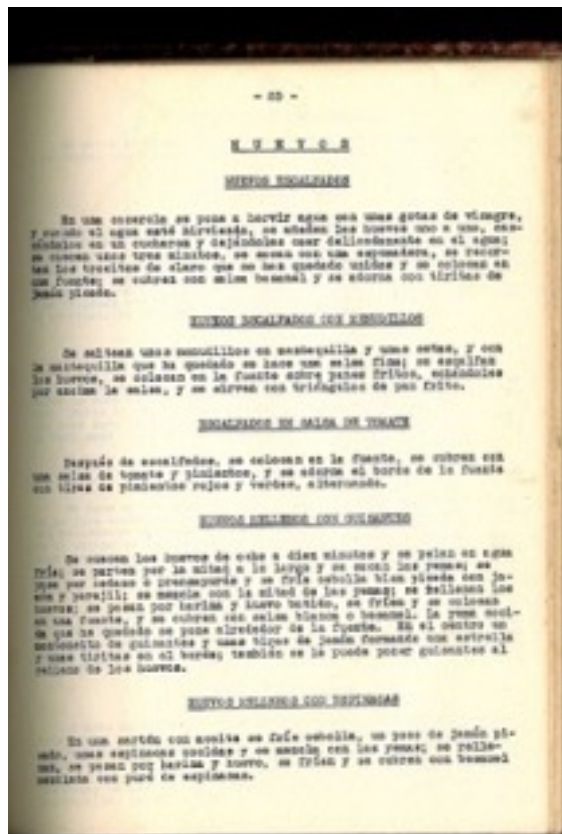
*Claire Hignett exhibition*

To ensure the long term significance of the material the Special Collections is always looking to enhance the material that it holds and so was delighted to recently receive a donation of a number of new collections telling the story of individuals. These include two photograph albums: one, Poppy Vulliamy's photograph album 1937-9 donated by Adrian Bell, the other a record of a visit in May 1987 to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the departure of the *Habana*, together with a collection of the papers of Caridad (Carito) and Marina Rodriguez Vega, amongst which is a beautifully bound typescript recipe book that reconstructs recipes from home.



Poppy Vulliamy's photograph album, donated by Adrian Bell. [MS 440/3]





Cover and page from recipe book [MS 440/1]

Special Collections would be delighted to hear from anyone who would consider donating to the University to supplement the Basque collections material relating to the history of the children, the *maestras*, the *señoritas*, the English helpers, fund raisers or childhood friends of the *niños*.

Karen Robson  
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