



TfL Corporate Archives Research Guides

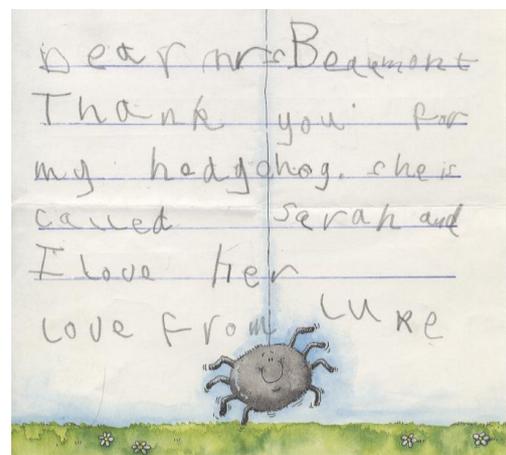
Research Guide No 43: Lost Property Office

The London Transport Lost Property Office (LPO) at 200 Baker Street is well-known to millions of people, either through personal experience, or because of its appearances in films and books. Sherlock Holmes lived just down the road at 221b Baker Street and the LPO's property tracking system is called 'SHERLOCK'. The LPO occupies part of the ground floor of Chiltern Court, a handsome block of 180 private apartments, designed by Charles W. Clark, and built by the Metropolitan Railway for sale to those of its customers who needed to live in some style in central London. H.G. Wells and Arnold Bennett were early residents of these apartments. A prospectus was issued in 1931 (LT002013/110) and correspondence with residents can be found in the Archives collections.

The LPO was centralised at its Baker Street site after the formation of the London Passenger Transport Board (LPTB) in 1933 (evidenced in LT000495/004). Prior to this, the subject of lost property in all of London's public transport (including taxis) was conducted under the supervision of the Metropolitan Police (evidenced in LT002013/153). The LPO has been the sole responsibility of Transport for London (TfL) since 2000, and is obliged to operate under Parliamentary rules and regulations.

The Corporate Archives is in custody of extensive records dealing with the bare facts and figures of lost property claimed by owners, and the money raised by sale of unclaimed items. Normally, property is held for 3 months, after which it is sold at auction.

Amongst the facts and figures there are human interest stories too. LT000014/082 has lots of correspondence between the LPO and customers dating between 1948 and 1965, and there is much interesting individual



LT002013/006

Departmental minutes, annual reports and other administrative matters are dealt with in a number of files: LT000415/002, LT000552/023, LT802/024, LT972/001, LT1027/24, LT1227/336, LT1268/001, LT1331/65, and LT1942/002.

If you would like to know more, or would like to book an appointment to view any of the above items, please contact the TfL Corporate Archives at corporatearchives@tfl.gov.uk

TfL publishes information on lost property on our website. This can be used to gather an idea of the scale of their operations, as well as the various categories of items they handle - <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/lost-property-office-transparency-data.pdf>