

Research guide to Chief Docks Manager records held in the Port of London Authority Archive

About the records

The Port of London Authority (PLA) Archive contains 414 folders consisting of various records created by or in the possession of the Chief Docks Manager when the records were transferred for preservation. The Port of London Authority (1909–) oversees the River Thames from Teddington Lock to Gravesend and at its formation in 1909 subsumed the roles and responsibilities of its predecessor dock companies such as the East and West India Dock Company and the London and St Katherine Dock Company. The records in this series include memorandums, correspondence, meeting minutes and notes, documents, maps, plans, reports, bulletins, and notices, among other materials.



'Bulk Wine Installation, India and Millwall Docks: c 1970', image id: 324402 © PLA collection/Museum of London. The import of, installation of containers for and storage of bulk wine is featured several times in the records in this series, although this photograph is not part of the series.

The Chief Docks Manager was a senior member of PLA staff who managed the Docks Manager of each of the PLA Docks, London and St Katherine's Docks, King George V Docks, Royal Victoria Docks, Royal Albert Docks, India and Millwall Docks, Tilbury Docks, and Surrey Commercial Docks. The Chief Docks Manager was aided by their departmental staff; assistants and secretaries, and as a senior member of staff was involved in many important decisions. The records of the Chief Docks Manager provide an intriguing insight into the history of the PLA and its docks, the history of London and its residents, especially the history of how east London imported and exported tens of thousands tons of goods during the twentieth century including tobacco, livestock, sugar, and how the docklands was re-developed during the latter half of the twentieth century.

Topics featured in this series include

- Changes to wages
- Import and export of goods
- Budgets
- Ways to improve dock working
- Provision of training for staff members
- Acquisition and repair of machinery
- Provision of amenities for staff members
- Some matters to do with personnel
- The sale of PLA assets and modernisation during the 1970s when many of the Docks closed and the role of the PLA transformed.

Accessing the records

Records can be accessed, with an appointment, at the Museum of London Docklands. Unfortunately, the archive catalogue is not available online and is not currently available to researchers.

Some records are closed due to adherence to General Data Protection Regulations (2017) and Data Protection Act (2018). If you are enquiring about information concerning a living individual, are the individual in question or are acting on their behalf, please submit a Subject Access Request. Guidance on how to do this will be provided upon request.

If you would like to learn more about the archive, enquire about records in this series or would like to discuss accessing these records please see [Port and River Archive | Museum of London](#)

We receive a high volume of enquiries and aim to answer them within 20 working days; however this may increase if the service is busy. We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause.