



# **South West Heritage Trust**

**Invitation to Tender**

**Digitisation of the Isca Photographic Archive**

**May 2025**

## The Isca Photographic Collection: Digitisation Brief

### Introduction

The South West Heritage Trust is seeking to award a contract to digitise and create accompanying metadata for c. 24,000 historic acetate images created by the Exeter photographer Henry Wykes.

### Background

The South West Heritage Trust was founded in 2014 as an independent charity for Somerset and Devon. We are a regional organisation using museum, archive and landscape collections to support the delivery of heritage services to the diverse communities we serve. We care for 3 million museum objects and are also responsible for 10 million archives that tell the stories of Somerset and Devon.

Our vision is to 'celebrate and protect our rich heritage, helping everyone to enjoy it now and in the future.' That vision guides us in three key objectives:

**Supporting People and Communities:** We will support, empower and enrich people and communities

**Protecting Our Heritage:** We will preserve, protect and enhance our heritage, keeping it safe and accessible now and in future

**Making an Impact:** We will be enterprising, innovative and influential, and stand up for the heritage of Devon and Somerset

### Project Outline

The Isca Photographic Collection includes a particularly rich visual record of the destruction wrought by the Exeter Blitz, and the post-war reconstruction of the bomb-damaged city. It offers a special opportunity to tell the story of Exeter's ruination and renewal during the 2025 commemorations of the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

The collection consists of c.24,000 acetate negatives depicting the social and industrial life of Exeter and its citizens between 1920 and 1960, mostly taken by commercial photographer Henry Wykes. Alongside the negatives are contemporaneous fragile glass-plate negatives, photographic prints and associated business registers.

The acetate images are suffering from vinegar syndrome and the project is a race against time to digitise these unique photographs before the syndrome destroys the images. This project will save the rich information contained in these images for future generations, opening up this hidden collection for people to enjoy and to learn more about Britain's communities and industrial past. The overarching project is to rescue the negatives by digitisation and cataloguing, followed by a series of engagement outputs celebrating both



the salvage project and the work and career of Henry Wykes. This will include static, online and travelling exhibitions, volunteer involvement, and community activities.

The project will run from October 2024 to April 2026, with a Project Officer in place to drive the activities between April 2025 and April 2026.

### **Requirements**

- Collect the negatives from their current location, Devon Heritage Centre, Great Moor House, Heron Way, Sowton, Exeter, EX2 7NL
- Digitise each image to a resolution of 300ppi with 16-bit pixel depth (or greater, to be discussed with the successful applicant)
- Create metadata for each image. Each negative is held in a glassine type sleeve onto which the original photographer wrote a negative number and sometimes a name or place. The filename will be made up of the reference code for the collection, which is ISC/, followed by the negative number. Any additional information on the glassine sleeve or on the negative itself must be captured as metadata, e.g. place name, or name of person pictured in the image.
- Return the images on mirrored hard drives to the Devon Heritage Centre, Great Moor House, Heron Way, Sowton, Exeter, EX2 7NL
- You will dispose of the original negatives appropriately once the client has checked the returned digital images and given permission.
- A small sample of negatives will be returned to the client for use as examples during the project.

### **Timescales**

In order to meet the overall timescales of the project the work will need to be completed between July to October 2025. We are very concerned about the rapid degradation of the images, and now that we have the funding in place we are keen for the work to be completed as soon as possible.

### **Tender Documents**

Prospective contractors should provide the following information with their tenders:

- Summary of the proposed work programme and any assumptions.
- Details of similar projects undertaken within the last three to five years.
- Key staff who will undertake the work and summary of relevant experience.

Project costs

- A total cost for the work with VAT separately specified.

#### Additional information

- A statement to indicate how you will ensure the contract is completed in the event of unforeseen problems such as health issues or competing contracts.
- Please feel free to submit former examples of work that you think might support your tender.

#### **Tender Evaluation**

Tenders will be evaluated using the following criteria and weightings:

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| • Most economically advantageous – cost and benefit    | 25% |
| • Availability at specified start date and throughout  | 25% |
| • Ability to meet completion date in good time         | 25% |
| • Reliability, previous experience and / or references | 25% |

#### **Budget**

The maximum budget available for this work is £72,000 + VAT. Payment will be released once the mirrored-hard drives have been returned and the images have been checked by staff from the South West Heritage Trust.

#### **Deadline**

The deadline for tenders to be submitted is 4pm on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> June. All applicants will be contacted during the following week.

#### **Contact**

We welcome potential suppliers wishing to view the extent and condition of the collection before submitting their tender. Visits can be arranged, and tenders for consideration should be directed to the Project Officer, Kitty Vega at [kitty.vega@swheritage.org.uk](mailto:kitty.vega@swheritage.org.uk)