**A Guide to Finding UK General Election Ephemera**

**UK General Elections at LSE Library**

LSE Library has focused on collecting ephemera relating to UK General Elections since its founding. This includes campaigning leaflets, posters, election addressees, and party manifestoes. Whilst extensive these collections are not complete, and they have been donated to the Library either by individuals sending them to us, or (more recently) the Library writing to candidates and political parties at the time of General Elections to solicit donations of campaign material.

**How to find the material?**   
  
UK General Election ephemera is spread across lot of different collections across the archives and special collections at LSE Library. You will therefore need to do several searches on the archives and main Library catalogues to identify it all. Each election year has been catalogued at different levels of detail, and in many cases you will need to come look through a box in order to identify if we have any leaflets from a particular candidate or political party.

**UK General Elections 1800s - 1944**

To find material relating to General Elections that took place from 1800s until 1944, follow these two steps:

* Head to the [archives catalogue](https://archives.lse.ac.uk/Advanced.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog). In the “Any Text” field, type **“General Election\*”** and in the “Date” field type **1800s**. Click “Search”. You will find looking through the results a lot of material, for example [Conservative Party handbills for the 1880 General Election.](https://archives.lse.ac.uk/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=COLL+MISC+0653)
* For published material, head to the [main Library search](https://www.lse.ac.uk/library). In the search box, type the name of a candidate, political party, or election year, e.g. **Robert Peel** and click “Search”. Then, change the-drop down menu from “Everything” to “LSE Library Collections” and click “Search”. Then, along the list of filters on the right-hand side, under “Location” click the location “Archives special”, and then “Search”. This will find material such as [the Tamworth manifesto](https://librarysearch.lse.ac.uk/permalink/44LSE_INST/1n1upld/alma99100423010302021).

**UK General Elections 1945 – Present Day**

For most of the elections that took place during this period, there will be a specific collection that relates to that election year. This will usually be a collection of donated campaigning leaflets compiled by the Library. Here is a list of the reference numbers for these collections:

**1945:** COLL MISC 0723

**1950:** GENERAL ELECTION 1950

**1955:** COLL MISC 0321

**1959:** COLL MISC 0370

**1964:** COLL MISC 0401

**1966:** COLL MISC 0405

**1970:** COLL MISC 0711

**1974:** COLL MISC 0672

**1979:** COLL MISC 0719

**1983:** COLL MISC 0692

**1987:** COLL MISC 1987

**1992:** GENERAL ELECTION 1992

**1997:** GENERAL ELECTION 1997

**2001:** GENERAL ELECTION 2001

**2005:** GENERAL ELECTION 2005

**2010:** GE2010

**2017:** GE2017

**2019:** GE2019

* To locate these collections, head to the [archives catalogue](https://archives.lse.ac.uk/Advanced.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog)
* Where it says “Ref No”, type the reference number for the election year you are interested in by referring to the above list. For example, if you are interested in the 1997 General Election, type **GENERAL ELECTION 1997** and click “Search”. This will bring you to [the catalogue record for that particular collection](https://archives.lse.ac.uk/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=GENERAL+ELECTION+1997&pos=1). Once at that link, click the hyperlink “GENERAL ELECTION 1997” which appears next to “Ref No”, and you will see how the collection is organised.
* Material relating to the 1997 General Election will not only appear in that collection; we have the archives of many other individuals and organisations who will have material in their records that relates to the 1997 General Election.
* Therefore as well as doing the above, head to [the archives catalogue](https://archives.lse.ac.uk/Advanced.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog). Where it says “Any Text”, type **“General Election 1997”** and click search. You will find material for example within the archives of the Green Party, The Child Poverty Action Group, UKIP, and many more.
* For other published material such as manifestoes, head to the [main Library search](https://www.lse.ac.uk/library). In the search box, type the name of a candidate, political party, and / or election year, e.g. **Labour Party Manifesto 1997** and click “Search”. Then, change the-drop down menu from “Everything” to “LSE Library Collections” and click “search”. Here he will locate the Labour Party’s 997 manifesto [*New Labour : because Britain deserves better*](https://librarysearch.lse.ac.uk/permalink/44LSE_INST/1f110cn/alma9941727810302021).

We are currently collecting for the General Election 2024 / 2025! Please save your campaign leaflets and send them to the Library: [library.enquiries@lse.ac.uk](mailto:library.enquiries@lse.ac.uk)

**Other Elections and Referendums**

Although not routinely collected, here is a sample of some collections of ephemera relating to referendums, local and other elections:

**1907 London County Council Election**

Reference number**:** COLL MISC 0840  
 Digitised and available here: <https://lse-atom.arkivum.net/uklse-dl1po01001004>

**1951 French General Election**

Reference number:COLL MISC 1094

**1975 UK referendum on membership of the Common Market**

Reference number: COLL MISC 0876  
 Digitised and available here:

[https://lse-atom.arkivum.net/uklse-dl1er01](https://lse-atom.arkivum.net/uklse-dl1er01 1979)

**1979 First European Elections**

Reference Number: COLL MISC 1135

**2016 UK referendum on membership of the European Union**

Reference number:COLL MISC 1253  
 Digitised and available here: <https://lse-atom.arkivum.net/uklse-dl1er01>

**2016 and 2021 London mayor elections** Manifestos available here: <https://lse-atom.arkivum.net/uklse-as1el01>

**Other UK collections of Election Ephemera**

* John Jonson Collection of Printed Ephemera: <https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/collections-and-resources/special-collections/catalogues/johnson>
* University of Strathclyde: <https://guides.lib.strath.ac.uk/archives/electionephemera>
* Welsh Political ephemera Collection: <https://archives.library.wales/index.php/welsh-political-ephemera-collection-2>

**How do I access these collections?**

Our archives and special collections are open to everybody. You’ll need to register as a visitor and book a space in the Reading Room – please see our [Access archives and special collections webpages](https://www.lse.ac.uk/library/using-the-library/access-archives-and-special-collections) for more information. For any queries, please contact [library.enquiries@lse.ac.uk](mailto:library.enquiries@lse.ac.uk)