



# Handbook for Nominations to the UNESCO UK Memory of the World Register

2021



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



National Committee of  
the United Kingdom  
Memory of the World

**Front Gallery:** Top Left to bottom right: London County Council Bomb Damage maps (City of London Archives); Women's Suffrage Documents (Parliamentary Archives, and the Women's Library); The Eton Choir Book (Eton College); Base and Fields Reports (British Antarctic Survey); The Peniarth Manuscripts (National Library of Wales); The Commonwealth War Graves Archive (Commonwealth War Graves Commission); Sir Robert Cotton's manuscripts (British Library); Declaration of Arbroath (National Records of Scotland)

This guidance is published by the UNESCO UK Memory of the World Committee, in co-operation with the UK National Commission for UNESCO.

June 2021

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## Welcome

Thank you for considering a nomination to the UNESCO UK Memory of the World Register.

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## Glossary

Some of the terms used in this handbook have meanings particular to UNESCO and the Memory of the World Programme. They are explained below, for clarity.

**Documentary Heritage** – collective description for archives, objects, records or documents.

**Inscription** – Documentary heritage which is included on the UK Memory of the World (UKMoW) Register.

**Nomination / Nomination Form** – The documentary heritage for which you are applying to be Inscribed on the UKMoW Register / the application form for that Inscription on the UKMoW Register.

**Lodgement** – The act of submitting the nomination by signing it.

## Section 1 – UNESCO Memory of the World Programme

### An Introduction to the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme and Documentary Heritage

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Memory of the World (MoW) is a worldwide expert-led programme, which seeks to:

*help preserve, improve access to, and increase awareness of, the world's documentary heritage.*

As part of its awareness-raising brief, UNESCO runs International, Regional and National Memory of the World Registers to highlight humanity's most important documentary heritage.

Documentary heritage is defined by the MoW Programme as any item(s) which:

- Are moveable
- Consist of signs or codes, sounds and / or images
- Can be conserved (the supports are inert elements)
- Can be reproduced and replicated on different media or formats
- Are the result of a deliberate documentation process.

As such, it includes items from manuscripts to printed documents, maps to banners, audio / visual formats and digital data.

You can find more detail on UNESCO's definitions of documentary heritage in the *General Guidelines to Safeguard Documentary Heritage*, 2002, at:

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001256/125637e.pdf>.

For more information about the MoW programme, you can visit the UNESCO website, at:

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/memory-of-the-world/register/>.

### The UNESCO UK Memory of the World Register and Committee

The UNESCO UK Memory of the World (UKMoW) programme seeks to help *protect, preserve and make permanently accessible to all* the disparate and diverse documentary heritage of the United Kingdom, its Crown Dependencies (CDs) and Overseas Territories (OSTs) – hereafter referred to as the 'UK'.

Through the UKMoW Register, our aim is to champion and raise awareness of lesser-known and overlooked material of national significance, placing it alongside better-known items – e.g. Domesday Book – to truly highlight, represent and celebrate the contribution and impact of individuals, groups and communities to our collective national life.

The UNESCO UKMoW Register is one of many national MoW Registers around the world. It welcomed its first Inscriptions in 2010. The documentary heritage Inscribed on it has been judged to be of outstanding value and importance to the history and culture of the people of the United Kingdom.

New items are added to the Register on a two-year cycle. They are assessed by a volunteer committee of experts with significant and wide-ranging experience as archivists, museum curators, librarians and academics, across multiple disciplines and time periods. A list of the current members

of the UKMoW Committee can be found on the UKMoW website, at: <https://unesco.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/UK-Memory-of-the-World-Committee-Profiles.zip>

## Section 2 – General Guidance

### What can I put forward for a nomination?

**First and foremost, documentary heritage nominated for the UKMoW Register must be of national significance to the UK.**

In the context of UKMoW, **national significance** means that the documentary heritage must have **outstanding value and importance** to the understanding of the history, people and culture of the **UK as a whole**, not just one nation of the Union (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland), a Crown Dependency, or an Overseas Territory. It may, however, represent an event, scientific achievement, cultural or linguistic trait etc. particular to that place, but which is of enduring value to the whole UK. For example, The Declaration of Arbroath, the Jersey Occupation Archive, or Records of the British Antarctic Survey.

As with all UNESCO designations, Inscription on the UKMoW Register identifies remarkable exemplars. Looking at previous Inscriptions on the Register will give you an idea of the kind of documentary heritage that the Committee has considered to be worthy of Inscription in the past: <https://unesco.org.uk/portfolio/memory-of-the-world/> However, this should be approached with a certain amount of caution, as there are many, often complex, reasons why particular items or collections have been Inscribed.

### Key guidelines for nominated documentary heritage

- **ALL the nominated documentary heritage must be nationally significant** – large or small collections that include material not meeting this standard are likely to cause the nomination to be unsuccessful. Further guidance in assessing significance is laid out in the **Assessing Significance** section below.
- **It must be unique** – only original documents will be Inscribed; not replicas, surrogates or copies. Published items will only be Inscribed if they represent the only copy surviving, or the best copy (if other significantly damaged copies also survive) or if they are significantly annotated. For example, scrap books filled only with newspaper cuttings are unlikely to be eligible, unless they are both part of a wider collection of nominated material, and an exceptional case could be made for significance as inspiration. Historical telephone directories would not be eligible.
- **It must be about the UK** – only material which relates to places, the activities of, or people in the UK will be Inscribed. For example, the Gertrude Bell archive is Inscribed on the International MoW Register, but would not be eligible for the UK Register. Despite being held by a UK institution and she a British subject, Gertrude Bell's archive principally relates to her work in the Middle East.
- **The documentary heritage itself and the information it holds must be nationally significant** – for example, items written by a famous person are not inherently significant, unless the information they contain pertains directly to a nationally significant occurrence. Therefore, the diary written by Emily Davison (Suffragette) detailing her arrest and force feeding in prison is on the Register, but one relating to her everyday family life outside the cause would not be.
- **It must have defined limits** – only material listed on the nomination form (with clearly defined limits and start and end dates) will be included in any successful Inscription. Later additions or accruals to a collection will not be included in the Inscription, but must be the subject of a new nomination.

- **Keep it Simple** – One of the most important aspects of any MoW Inscription is the ability to use it as a promotional tool to help publicise your archive. The more the nominated documentary heritage stands out, the easier it is for the UK Committee to assess, as well as enabling the general public to easily understand its value and significance. While individual items, collections and ranges of items drawn from across a number of collections or institutions are able to be nominated, simple single-item Inscriptions have most impact. Examples include Domesday Book, the Death Warrant of King Charles I and the Brunel Screw Propellor Report. These act as gateway items, which can start people on their research journeys.

## Assessing Significance

### What do we mean by national significance?

National significance does not mean that the nominated documentary heritage has to relate geographically to the entirety of the UK, but rather that it should represent actions or achievements, individuals, communities or cultures, which have had a significant impact on, or have significantly contributed to, the cultural richness of the United Kingdom as a whole.

This could be in the fields of language, science, art, music, cultural practice, industry, politics etc.

Local or regional significance on its own is not enough. The documentary heritage, and the events, people and places described within it, must have a demonstratable wider impact on the wider UK's cultural heritage, and / or its loss would substantially impoverish it.

### How does the UK Committee assess national significance?

Nominations are assessed against the criteria outlined below. Strong examples are given of documentary heritage, Inscribed on the UK Register, that particularly meet each criterion.

Nominations do not have to meet all these criteria, but should show strong significance in at least two criteria for success.

- **Time** – does it evoke a particularly significant or tumultuous period in time? Times of conflict, social change or achievement are particularly characteristic of this criterion, for example: the English Civil War, the Industrial Revolution or the Second World War. Examples from the Register are The Death Warrant of King Charles I, the James Watt Papers describing the invention of the separate steam condenser, and the Jersey Occupation Archive.
- **Place** – does it highlight the features, nature or community of the place where the documentary heritage was created? The local communities that make up the UK and their distinctiveness are vital to our sense of a nation of disparate but complementary parts. Local and regional collections capture the essence of that community, and can also show how their culture, rise and fall affect the whole of the UK. Examples of this are Sirkka-Liisa Kottinen's Photography and Amber Films documentaries on industrial decline in the North East of England, or the film, 'St. Kilda, Britain's loneliest island' about the depopulation of this small island in the Outer Hebrides.
- **People** – does it illustrate a significant aspect of human social, industrial or artistic development? Does it represent a particularly significant individual, group or community? How has this development, discovery or event affected the people of the UK? Examples include: The Women's Suffrage Movement 1865 – 1928, Peterloo relief fund account book



and the WVS / WRVS Narrative Reports, which chart the work of over a million women volunteers to British society for more than half a century.

- **Subject and theme** – does it represent a particular significant intellectual development, event or achievement? This has particular synergy for scientific and industrial nominations. Examples are Brunel’s Screw Propellor report, the scientific notebooks of Thomas Faraday, which chart his work on electromagnetism, and the Tyne and Wear Shipyard collections.
- **Form and Style** – is it an outstanding, innovative or aesthetically beautiful example of its type? While art itself is not eligible for inclusion in the MoW Registers, the aesthetic value and design of documentary heritage is. Great examples of this on the Register are The Gough Map, Sirkka-Liisa Kottinen’s Photography and Amber Films, and the Eton Choir book.
- **Social / spiritual / community significance** – does it possess a living significance and emotional attachment for a community or contribute to that community’s identity and social cohesion today? This is a particularly wide-ranging criterion, which is most closely tied to identity, politics and religion. Excellent examples would be The Edinburgh and Lothian HIV / AIDS Collection, the Declaration of Arbroath and the Bill of Rights.

### What is, and is not, significant – an example

All documentary heritage is important in understanding the history of human civilisation, but while something might have deep and resounding importance to an individual, local community, or institution, it might not meet the criteria for national significance and outstanding value and importance to the UK as a whole.

To give an example:

A large collection of thousands of 19<sup>th</sup> century, predominantly studio photographs, mostly of important men from a particular county or region, would not meet the criteria for national significance because:

- The style of photographs was typical and unremarkable for the period
- Volume, in itself, is not a criterion for significance
- The people depicted had little or no impact outside their local community
- The images offer little in the way of social commentary on that place or region
- The photographs are not representative of that community as a whole
- Information contained in the photographs gives limited indication of that place or region at that time.

Compare this to the Sirkka-Liisa Kottinen’s Photography and Amber Films which were Inscribed in 2011. These are of national significance because:

- They are first-class and innovative examples of documentary photography and film making
- They capture the everyday essence of Newcastle and the North East in a period of significant decline in third quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- They bring to life and contain detail about the lives of the people featured
- They document the decline of shipbuilding and coal production, two of the most important industries in the UK up to that point.

### More guidance on significance

The UNESCO UK Memory of the World Committee has produced ‘*Seeking significance: A practical guide to identifying and articulating significance in documentary heritage*’, which can be found on the UNESCO website, at: <https://www.unesco.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Seeking-Significance.pdf>.

## How do I make a nomination?

Anyone can make a nomination. You do not need to be the owner or custodian of the documentary heritage, but you do need to gain their formal permission. There can also only be one nomination per organisation or individual in any one round of Inscriptions.

Inscription rounds are biennial (taking place every other year). The window for submitting nominations runs for seven months from the **9<sup>th</sup> June** in odd numbered years to the **31<sup>st</sup> January** the following year, e.g. 9<sup>th</sup> June 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022.

### Step one

Read the guidance in this handbook and carefully consider what documentary heritage you want to nominate and why. Then make sure you measure your choice against the assessment criteria.

### Step two

Before you start completing the form it is a requirement to call a member of the UNESCO UK Memory of the World Committee, to have an informal telephone or video chat about what you intend to nominate and why. This is a chance for you to ask any questions you may have and to get helpful feedback on your proposed nomination.

To book a call please contact either:

Justin Cavernelis-Frost	Vice-Chair	<a href="mailto:Justin.Cavernelis-Frost@rothschildandco.com">Justin.Cavernelis-Frost@rothschildandco.com</a>
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Matthew McMurray	Secretary	<a href="mailto:matthew.mcmurray@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk">matthew.mcmurray@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk</a>
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*Please note: The last date for a call to take place is 15<sup>th</sup> January in the Inscription year.*

### Step three

Using the detailed guidance in Section 3, and with reference to the case study in Section 4, complete the electronic nomination form which can be found here: <https://www.unesco.org.uk/apply-for-memory-of-the-world-2019/>.

There is no limit to the length of a completed nomination form, but if it exceeds 20 pages then you should ask yourself whether everything you have included is absolutely necessary to make the case for Inscription.

If you have any questions not answered by this handbook while completing the form, please do get in contact with the Chair or Secretary, using the details given above.

### Step four

Using the checklist at the back of this handbook, make sure that you have completed all of the relevant forms and gathered together all your supporting evidence.

### Step five

Submit all your documents electronically via e-mail to Matthew McMurray, Secretary, at: [matthew.mcmurray@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk](mailto:matthew.mcmurray@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk)

If the attachments are too large, please use a file transfer service such as WeTransfer, Dropbox<sup>TM</sup> or OneDrive to send them. You will receive an acknowledgement of receipt.

Completed nominations must be received by  
**11:59pm, 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022.**

Any nominations received after this time will not be eligible for that round of  
Inscriptions.

### **What happens next?**

Once your nomination has been submitted, it will be assessed by the full UKMoW Committee. You will be confidentially informed of either the success or failure of your nomination in the first week in May.

The public announcement of the newly Inscribed collections, and an awards ceremony, will be staged in June / July. If your documentary heritage is successfully Inscribed on the Register, you will be informed about the date and location of the awards ceremony as part of your notification in May.

### **What are the responsibilities of Inscription holders?**

Inscription is only an assessment of the significance of the documentary heritage. It is not a quality mark for the owner or custodian, or of the collections care that they provide. However, any nominated collection should have in place at least a basic plan for its care. MoW status encourages the use of professional standards of care and management for all documentary heritage collections.

Inscription on the UKMoW Register should be noted in all key documentation relating to the documentary heritage, such as catalogues and exhibition labels.

Owners or custodians of Inscribed documentary heritage are required to submit a short report every two years on the anniversary of Inscription. A template for this report will be sent to you with a reminder. It will cover physical condition, access, and the way in which the Inscription has been used during that period to benefit the documentary heritage and your organisation. This helps us make sure that the inscribed items are safe and continue to be well cared for, and also to use the UNESCO name and channels to help promote your collections and your great work. However, failure to lodge a timely report could potentially result in the UKMoW Committee removing the Inscribed documentary heritage from the Register.

Inscription holders are expected to use the Inscription in good faith and not bring the UNESCO designation into disrepute.

### **How does documentary heritage benefit from a UNESCO UKMoW Inscription?**

A UNESCO Inscription is a mark of significance for documentary heritage. Previously successful applicants have used the UNESCO UKMoW Inscription for funding applications to draw attention to the value of the heritage, or with stakeholders to gain support for the development of their wider heritage collections. You can learn more about the benefits of Inscription in 'National Value of UNESCO to the UK', published by the UK National Commission for UNESCO, at:  
[www.unesco.org.uk/national-value](http://www.unesco.org.uk/national-value)



## Section 3 – Detailed Guidance on Completing the Nomination Form

This detailed guidance should be read in conjunction with the Case Study, at Section 4, which gives a real example of a successful nomination form.

### Completing PART A – ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

#### 1. Working title of the nomination

This will be used in all subsequent documents and publicity, and is how the documentary heritage will be known and presented. It should be descriptive, but brief. A maximum of ten words is recommended.

#### 2. Summary

A concise and persuasive summary describing the documentary heritage and the reasons why it should be Inscribed on the UKMoW Register. If the nomination is successful, the summary will appear on the Register and in all relevant publicity. **This must be no more than 200 words.**

#### 3. Details of the nominator

##### 3.1 *Name of nominator*

Provide the full name of person(s) or organisation(s) making the nomination.

##### 3.2 *Relationship to the nominated documentary heritage*

Explain the nominator's background and why they are associated with the nomination. They may, for example, be a responsible officer of a library or archive that owns the documentary heritage in question, or a private individual with a research interest in the heritage.

##### 3.3 *Contact person(s)*

The name of the person the UKMoW Committee should communicate with concerning the nomination. This may be the same or different from the name in 3.1 above. For example, the nominator may be your Chief Executive or Chair, and your contact person may be your archivist or curator.

##### 3.4 *Contact details*

The full direct contact details of the contact person(s).

#### 4. Declaration of authority

This confirms that the undersigned has the authority to make the nominations. Please ensure that this section is signed and dated. If you are not the owner or custodian, you must include their written permission with the nomination, as part of the supplementary information, to be able to confirm your authority to nominate.

#### 5. Identity and description of the documentary heritage



### 5.1 *Context of the documents*

How the events, achievements, people or places described in the documentary heritage fit into their wider time, place and culture; for example, how the invention of the separate condenser sat within the wider context of developments in the Industrial Revolution. **A maximum of 200 words is recommended.**

### 5.2 *Description of the documents*

The description should be as comprehensive as possible. It should include:

- The complete name of the documentary heritage being nominated, and its dates if they are part of the name
- A physical description of the items
- An explanation of the content of the items.

Clearly explain the content. Do not assume that the assessors will automatically understand specific types of document that are being put forward. This is particularly true for specialist documents such as legal or scientific material or documents peculiar to a particular part of the UK.

### 5.3 *Inventory*

Provide a brief inventory of the contents, and, if possible, a link to any online catalogue. Detailed catalogue / guide information that is not available online should be submitted as supplementary information alongside the nomination form.

### 5.4 *Summary of provenance*

Provide a complete biographical, administrative and custodial history of the nominated items; for example:

- How, when and by whom was the heritage created
- When and how it was integrated into the holdings / responsibility of the current organisation or individual
- All previous owners and keepers, where known.

### 5.5 *Analysis or assessment of physical state and condition*

Describe the heritage's physical conditions and storage arrangements. This would include:

- Physical condition of the documentary heritage
- Media types (e.g. rag paper, film, magnetic tape, vellum, digital)
- Type of building used to store the documentary heritage
- Environmental conditions of the storage building
- Packaging used as primary enclosures for the documentary heritage.

### 5.6 *Visual documentation*

This is essential to enable the Committee to assess properly the content and significance of the nominated heritage, as we are unable to visit collections. You must supply, where possible:

- Two high-resolution (300 dpi) attractive images of the nominated documentary heritage, to be used for publicity purposes
- Digitised research copies of the content of the documentary heritage. This should consist of one or more of the following:
  - The whole document / item (when this consists of fewer than 100 pages / images, preferably supplied as a single pdf document)

- For collections exceeding 100 pages, a random sample of 10% of the nominated documentary heritage (maximum of 100 pages / images preferably supplied as a single pdf document)
- A random sample of any audio / visual content (maximum 10 items)
- Where the documentary heritage is difficult to read i.e. in script or secretary hand and / or not in modern English, a transcription / translation should be provided where possible.

If you cannot supply these, or if you have a particularly complex collection with multiple media, please seek further guidance as part of your initial conversations with a member of the Committee.

### 5.7 *Bibliography*

Where possible, please provide a maximum of three published sources that describe the documentary heritage. Where these are not digitally publicly accessible (free of charge) you should provide copies as part of the supplementary information.

### 5.8 *Recognition by other bodies*

Provide brief details of other external recognition for the heritage, such as archives service Accreditation or museum collections Designation.

## 6. Referees

Supply the details of a maximum of **three** third-party referees who can support the nomination, and who have used the nominated documentary heritage for their research. For each, please provide their name, job title (if relevant), any qualifications and basis of their authority to comment on the nomination. Please provide full contact details as well.

At least one of these referees must provide a written reference justifying the nominated documentary heritage's outstanding value and importance to the UK.

All referees will need to be available in late February / early March to speak via telephone or video call to a member of the UKMoW Committee.

The key purpose of the referees is to provide expert knowledge about the UK significance of the nominated material.

## 7. Assessment against the selection criteria

This is the most important part of the nomination. It is where you will make the explicit case for the documentary heritage being nationally significant and of outstanding value and importance to the UK. As well as following this guidance, you should refer back to **Assessing Significance** in Section 2, and use the **Case Study** in Section 4.

### 7.1 *Is authenticity established?*

Please make the case for the identity, integrity and provenance of the documentary heritage, to avoid the possibility that it is a copy, replica or forgery. This should include:

- Confirmation that the materials from which the documentary heritage is made are appropriate to the period and circumstance of its creation
- Authentication of handwriting if an autograph manuscript
- Authentication of digital data by recognised standards.

Refer back to question 5.4 *Summary of provenance* where appropriate.

Where possible, especially where the chain of custody and provenance is not definitive, steps should be taken to gain an authentication from a recognised expert.

## 7.2 *The significance of the documentary heritage to the UK, its uniqueness and irreplaceability*

Explain why or how the documentary heritage is so significant to the UK as a whole. The explanation must describe how the material itself, and the information it contains, is nationally significant in its depiction, representation or explanation of a person, event, culture or achievement etc.

A nomination will fail when a claim for significance is based on the achievements of a significant individual, but those achievements are not explicitly detailed in the nominated documentary heritage.

Consideration should also be given to:

- Its uniqueness – is it a complete one off, or is it a significant example of a common record type? If the latter, you will need to prove very strongly why this example is more significant than others.
- Whether its disappearance or the deterioration of the material would constitute a harmful impoverishment to the heritage of the UK as a whole
- Whether the document itself, or the things it describes, have created either a positive or negative significant impact, on the UK as a whole, during or since its creation.

## 7.3 *Is at least one of the following criteria met?*

The documentary heritage will be assessed against the six criteria listed below. Please also refer back to the examples in **Section 2, How does the UK Committee assess national significance?**

The nomination should meet **at least two** of these criteria, but it does not need to fulfil all the criteria. If your nominated documentary heritage does not meet a criterion, simply place 'N/A' against it. For each relevant criterion, you must give a full explanation of its relevance and significance. A simple 'Yes' or 'See above' is not sufficient.

### **A. Time**

Does the documentary heritage help us better understand a particular crucial period in history? Age or antiquity of the items are not in themselves indicators of significance, and 'modern' documents might have a better claim than ancient ones. However, enough time must have passed to enable the event or achievement to be placed in context.

### **B. Place**

Does the documentary heritage reflect the importance of place or region, including its distinctive or unique character, either still existing or lost? For example, the local environment / culture may have inspired a social, political or religious movement which went on to have a wider UK impact.

### **C. People**

Does the documentary heritage have an intrinsic association with the life and work of a person, people or cultural group who had a wider and / or major UK impact, whether positive or negative? This could be in any field from literature, science, politics, arts, religion etc., and may provide insight into society both then and now.

### **D. Subject and theme**

Does the documentary heritage represent a particular historical or intellectual development of a subject or theme? For example, this could be the invention and development of the Internet, the codification of the rules of a sport, or the effects of religious persecution.

### **E. Form and style**

Does the documentary heritage have an outstanding aesthetic, stylistic or linguistic value? Is it a unique and / or key exemplar of a type of presentation, design, custom or medium, or of a disappeared or disappearing carrier or format?

### **F. Social / spiritual / community significance**

To fulfil this criterion, the nominated documentary heritage must have living significance for people who are alive at the time of nomination. It allows a specific community to demonstrate its emotional attachment to the documentary heritage, or the way in which it contributes to that community's identity and social cohesion now. It may include spiritual or sacred values.

#### **7.4 Do any of the following issues relate to this nomination?**

Certain contextual factors will be taken into account during the assessment.

### **A. Rarity**

The content or physical nature of the nomination makes it a rare surviving example of its type or time.

### **B. Integrity**

Within the natural physical limitations of carrier survival, is the heritage complete or partial? Has it been altered or damaged?

### **C. Threat**

Is the survival of the heritage in danger? If it is secure, must vigilance be applied to maintain that security?

## **8. Legal information**

This is essential for contextual information, but does not constitute part of the key assessment criteria.

### **8.1 Owner of the documentary heritage and**

### **8.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage**

The owner and custodian of the documentary heritage may not be the same. Before a

nomination can be added to the Register, both must be identified. In the case of documentary heritage that is in several locations, or has several owners or custodians, full details of each should be included.

As per the guidance under Question 4, you will need to provide the written permissions of all owners and custodians for the nomination to be considered.

### 8.3 *Legal status*

#### 8.3.1 *Category of ownership*

For example, a private collection, registered charity, public body, commercial company, organisation or religious body.

#### 8.3.2 *Accessibility*

Describe the access available to the nominated documentary heritage.  
For example, the opening hours of your search room, who is able to visit, and / or whether digital copies are available online. If there is no access to the documentary heritage, please explain why this is so, and how you are planning to open access in the future.

#### 8.3.3 *Copyright status*

Is any or all of the documentary heritage subject to copyright? If so, please identify the copyright owners and their entitlements.

#### 8.3.4 *Responsible administration*

State who is legally responsible for safekeeping of the material, and how that responsibility is implemented.

#### 8.3.5 *Other factors*

Note any other legal issues that have a bearing on the heritage, for example, any organisation that is required by law to preserve the material.

## 9. **Management plan for the documentary heritage**

Please list any current management or collection(s) policies which cover the documentary heritage and include a copy of these with the supplementary information as part of this application.

If you do not have a management plan, or collections, access or preservation policies, please provide an explanation of why (e.g. lack of funds, facilities, skills) and also detail any day-to-day and strategic decisions you are making to manage your collections and the nominated documentary heritage specifically.

## 10. **Consultation with stakeholders**

Before submitting a nomination, ensure that you have discussed it with the relevant stakeholders, for example, custodians / owners / internal management or Trustees, and that they are in agreement with the nomination.

Consultation with a member of the UKMoW Committee is also a requirement – see **Section 2**,



## **How do I make a nomination?, Step Two, Submitting a Nomination.**

Please list those who have been consulted in connection with the nomination.

## **Completing PART B – SUBSIDIARY INFORMATION**

This information provides important contextual information to the assessors, especially if the documentary heritage is under threat, but will not affect whether the nomination merits inclusion to the UKMoW Register.

### **11. Assessment of risk**

Please briefly describe the primary risks to the safety, security and accessibility of the heritage. They might include:

- Funding and sustainability challenges
- Organisational apathy or antipathy toward the heritage
- Unsuitable buildings and / or environmental conditions.

You should also elaborate on the potential impact of the risk, and the measures being taken to minimize or remove the risk.

### **12. Assessment of preservation**

Briefly describe the preservation context for the heritage. This could include:

- Its present physical state
- Its preservation history
- A current preservation policy
- Resources available for the heritage's preservation
- The person / organisation responsible for implementing preservation.

### **13. Intended use of the Inscription**

Outline how Inscription on the UKMoW Register would be used to promote the preservation of, and access to, the documentary heritage.

Examples include:

- Exhibitions, press and publicity activity
- Priorities for digitisation or improving access
- Funding applications
- Advocacy inside and outside the organisation
- Upgrading of storage conditions
- Organisational and wider community engagement (outreach).

## **Completing PART C – LODGEMENT**

### **14. Who is the nomination lodged by?**

Please ensure this section is clearly named, signed and dated.

## ASSIGNATION OF RIGHTS FORM

This form provides the UKMoW Committee with the right to use the images supplied, in the course of its work. The UKMoW Committee will not use the images for commercial purposes without the approval of the copyright holder.

Each nomination is requested to supply two images of the nominated heritage, which will only be used if the nomination were to be successful.

## SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION (ATTACHMENTS)

The following attachments must be supplied, where they are relevant to the nomination, at the same time as the nomination:

### Inventory (Q 5.3)

Supplementary catalogue or inventory information where that is not available online, free of charge.

### Visual Documentation (Q 5.6)

- Two high-resolution (min 300 dpi) attractive images of the nominated documentary heritage, to be used for publicity purposes
- Signed Assignment of Rights form for use of these two images
- Digitised research copies of the content of the documentary Heritage (e.g. 10%, max 100 images)
- Transcription / translation for document(s) hard to read or not in standard English, if available.

### Bibliography (Q 5.7)

Copies of any bibliographic sources listed which are not available online, free of charge.

### References (Q 6)

A minimum of one written reference.

### Management Plan (Q 9)

Collection management plan, if available.

## Section 4 – Real Life Case Study – ‘I K Brunel’s Screw Propeller Report and the making of modern shipping’

The following real nomination form was submitted for the 2020 round of the UNESCO UK Memory of the World Register, and resulted in the Inscription of the Brunel Screw Propellor Report.

This is an almost perfect example of the balance of conciseness and detail, expert support and supplementary information required by the Committee to make an informed assessment of your documentary heritage. It should be read in conjunction with the detailed guidance in **Section 3**.

## UNESCO MEMORY OF THE WORLD PROGRAMME

### United Kingdom National Register

#### Nomination Form

For advice on submitting a nomination please contact the Memory of the World UK Committee Secretary (Matthew McMurray – [Matthew.McMurray@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk](mailto:Matthew.McMurray@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk)) or the Chair (Rachel Hosker – [Rachel.hosker@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Rachel.hosker@ed.ac.uk))

<b>PART A – ESSENTIAL INFORMATION</b>	
<b>1. Working title of the Nomination</b>	
	'I K Brunel's Screw Propeller Report and the making of modern shipping'
<b>2. Summary (max 200 words)</b>	
	<p>The <i>SS Great Britain</i> was launched in Bristol in 1843, construction having begun in 1839. Described as '<i>the greatest experiment since creation</i>' she was the largest ship in the world, and the first iron hulled screw propelled ocean-going steamship. Amongst the many innovations brought together by her engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel the screw propeller was the most ground-breaking and represents a pivotal moment in world maritime history. After carrying out months' worth of experiments and bringing together careful observations from experts in the field, Brunel presented his findings to the Directors of the Great Western Steamship Company in October 1840, and then in April 1841 to the British Admiralty. His arguments were so convincing that screw propulsion was readily adopted by both the British Merchant Marine and the British Royal Navy, and from there to the rest of the world. Brunel's report represents the very moment that screw propellers were shown to be more efficient than paddle wheels, which meant that future ships fitted with screw propellers could carry more cargo and at a lower cost. This single document represents a crucial moment in the evolution of maritime technology, and the development of modern shipping and the modern world.</p>
<b>3. Details of the nominator</b>	
<b>3.1 Name of nominator (person or organization)</b>	Nicholas Booth, Head of Collections, SS Great Britain Trust
<b>3.2 Relationship to the nominated documentary heritage</b>	

Member of staff (Head of Collections) at the SS Great Britain Trust, which is the owner of BRSGB-1997.008 – Report on the Screw Propeller.	
3.3	Contact person(s) Nicholas Booth
3.4	Contact details
	<i>Name</i> Nicholas Booth
	<i>Address</i> Brunel's SS Great Britain, Great Western Dockyard, Gas Ferry Road, Bristol, England, BS1 6TY.
	<i>Telephone number</i> [Redacted]
	<i>Email</i> [Redacted]
<b>4. Declaration of authority</b>	
I certify that I have the authority to nominate the documentary heritage described in this document to the UK Memory of the World Register.	
	<i>Signature</i> [Redacted]
	<i>Full name (please print)</i> Nicholas Booth
	<i>Institution (if appropriate)</i> SS Great Britain Trust
	<i>Date</i> 31st January 2020
<b>5. Identity and description of the documentary heritage</b>	
5.1	Context of the documents
<p>The <i>SS Great Britain</i> was the world's first ocean going, iron hulled, screw propelled steam ship, and represents the very cutting edge of mid-19th century technology. Her engineer, Isambard Kingdom Brunel, has been described as 'one of the most ingenious and prolific figures in engineering history' whose engineering projects have helped to shape the modern world. The report was written during the <i>SS Great Britain's</i> construction, and its impact on maritime history was huge.</p> <p>The introduction of the screw propeller meant that steamships became more efficient to operate, especially on longer distance routes. However, the most crucial advantage of the introduction of the screw propeller was the resulting reduction in engine size in steamships, and therefore the increased capacity to carry large numbers of people and more cargo. A screw steamer could carry up to three times the number of passengers compared with a paddle steamer of the same size. With the travel time across the Atlantic cut from months and weeks to 13 days, the Victorian steamship represents the pivotal moment in time when efficient global trade, information exchange and travel was made possible. The screw propeller increased the significance of this technological shift from sail to steam significantly, representing the crucial</p>	



technological milestone which enabled the transportation of vast numbers of people across the Atlantic, and enabling high volumes of trade as well as scheduled and speedy information exchange.

## 5.2. Description of the documents

BRSGB-1997.008 – Report on the Screw Propeller.

The report consists of 24 pages of off white, woven handmade paper, watermarked 'John Dewdney 1838'. It is handwritten in black ink. The pages included margins and lines to help the writer with neatness. Most of the pages have writing on one side, except for page 10, page 23 and page 24. Page 24 includes Brunel's signature on one side. The report has previously been stored folded, with the side which includes Brunel's signature as the outer page. This has led to moderate decolourisation, so the paper that was exposed is darker than other pages. The writing is still visible. The report has previously been sealed with wax (seal has been lost), which has led to some damage to the paper. The pages were previously held together with a small textile strip on one corner, although since conservation work in 2012 the report is now stored flat, and the strip has been removed and stored separately.

The majority of the report is in the hand of one of Brunel's clerks, believed to be his longest serving clerk Mr Bennett, however it includes handwritten additions, notes and corrections in pencil in Brunel's own hand. The final paragraph, which begins 'in conclusion' is in Brunel's own handwriting, and his signature appears at the bottom of this page. The report is addressed 'Gentlemen', which is how Brunel typically begins his formal reports – there are several examples of this in the *SS Great Britain's* collection.

The report was first authored by I K Brunel for the Directors of the Great Western Steamship Company and was presented to them in October 1840. Soon after the launch and early success of Brunel's first steamship, the *SS Great Western*, the Great Western Steamship Company commissioned him to engineer a second steam ship, originally a side paddled wooden ship, although Brunel soon changed the design to an iron hull. Construction had begun in Bristol by July 1839, however in July 1840 a new type of vessel visited Bristol and was inspected by Brunel – the *SS Archimedes*. This experimental vessel has a screw propeller designed by Francis Petti-Smith, and was touring the UK in order to advertise this innovation. Brunel was able to convince the shareholders of the company to stop construction of the *SS Great Britain*, and to borrow the *SS Archimedes* to carry out trials of this new technology. This report is the result of these tests and experiments, and in it Brunel proves the efficiency of the Screw Propeller compared to the paddle wheel for ship propulsion.

In the report Brunel compares paddle vessels, such as the *Great Western*, to the *Archimedes*, and includes details of size, draft, engines etc, as well as data gathered from the vessel's logbooks. He also records his own observations, and information that has been presented to him by others, however he makes clear that observations are not enough, and it is the result of experiments which has led him to the conclusion of the report – '*the facts as proved by the experiments are what I rely upon*'.

Brunel lists four perceived disadvantages of the screw propeller when compared to the paddle, and then shows why each should be dismissed in turn –

1. *'The necessity of a peculiar form of Vessel'* Brunel shows that the screw propeller does not require a special type of hull compared to existing Ocean-going ships.
2. *'the inaccessibility of the screw and liability to damage – this appears to me the objection most plausible, but I cannot say that I attach much weight to it'* – The report argues that the paddle wheels, being larger and often out of the water, are more likely to be damaged than the relatively small screw propeller which is located in a fairly protected position at the back end of the ship's hull.
3. *'the probability of its being lifted out of Water when the Ship pitches deep.'* – in rough weather the belief is that the propeller will be lifted out of the water completely when the ship pitches over a wave, and thus any vessel with screw propeller will lose power. Brunel builds the argument, based upon others' observations, that in rough weather the *Archimedes'* propeller remains within the water
4. *'the difficulty of getting up the required number of revolutions and the great defects of the mode employed in the Archimedes'* – here Brunel shows that the engines of the *Archimedes* are very inefficient, and makes suggestions for how they can be improved.

Having responded to each in turn he lists what he believes are the advantages –

1. *'a considerable saving of weight and that principally topweight.'* – A ship fitted with a screw propeller requires smaller engines and is therefore a lot lighter. Moreover, a lot of weight at the top of the hull is avoided by not having to fit the bulky side paddles, meaning that the ship is less likely to pitch (sway) in heavy seas and the sway is not exaggerated by the location of heavy weight high up in the hull.
2. *'the admitting of a better and simpler form of Vessel having greater stiffness with the same quantity of material and offering less resistance to head Wind and Seas and affording more available space within.'* – Screw propelled ships will travel more efficiently through the water, burn less coal and therefore cost less, and with the engine driving one screw propeller rather than two large paddle wheels it will take up less space, and therefore leave more space for passengers or cargo, which will in turn earn the ship's owners more money.
3. *'the operation of the screw being unaffected by the trim or the rolling of the Vessel and allowing of the free use of Sails with the capability of entirely disconnecting the Screw or of varying the multiplying motion so as to adapt the power of the Engine to the circumstance either of strong adverse Winds or scudding'* – The screw propeller works more efficiently in all weather conditions, can work well alongside sails and can be disconnected if the ship can operate under sail alone. A paddle steamer with its large superstructure (paddle boxes) makes the operating of sails much more difficult, and the paddles cannot be disconnected easily to turn freely if the ship can operate efficiently under sail alone. This makes a screw steamer more efficient and cost effective than a paddle steamer.
4. *'Perfect regularity of motion and freedom from the possibility of violent shocks to the Engines'* – the motion of the ship through the water will be smoother because there is less super structure that creates surface friction, and with no paddle wheels there will be no impact on the surface of the water, which could potentially cause shuddering and reverberate back onto paddle steamers engines.
5. *'The singularly increased power of steering given to the Vessel.'* – vessels with screw propellers will be easier to steer and easier to manoeuvre.

6. *'The great reduction in the breadth of beam'* – the ship will be narrower. Paddle steamers require paddle boxes on each side which makes them much wider – screw steamers do not require this bulky superstructure and therefore require less space in port and are easier to navigate along narrow waterways. This means more ports in the world open to a ship with propeller compared to a paddle vessel.

The report ends with Brunel strongly advising that the screw propeller be used on the ship that would be later launched as the *SS Great Britain*. He also recognises the risk that taking this ground breaking step represents – *'From all that I have said it must be evident to you Gentlemen that my opinion is strong and decided in favour of the advantage of employing the Screw in the new Ship it certainly is so. I am fully aware of the responsibility I take upon myself by giving this advice, I am also fully sensible of the large amount we have at stake and I have not forgotten the nature and the tone of the observations which have on more occasions than one been so freely made by individuals upon the course we have hitherto pursued.'*

Following the delivery of the report to the shareholders of the Great Western Steamship Company Brunel's recommendation was taken and the designs and building work for the *SS Great Britain* were switched to a screw propelled steamship.

### 5.3 Inventory

BRSGB-1997.008.01-25 – Brunel propeller adoption report to the Directors of the Great Western Steamship Company. Consists of 24 loose sheets and one Textile strip found within the document.

### 5.4 Summary of provenance

BRSGB-1997.008 – The screw propeller report was authored by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, and presented to the Directors of the Great Western Steamship Company on the 10th October 1840. It was copied out by a clerk in his office, although notes and corrections exist in Brunel's hand. It was signed by I K Brunel.

Upon I K Brunel's death on 15th September 1859 his papers and other documents were inherited by his family – at the time of his death this included his wife, Mary, his two sons, Isambard and Henry, and his daughter Florence. Mary Brunel died in 1881, his eldest son Isambard died in 1902 and his middle son Henry died in 1903. The youngest child, Florence, died in 1876, but had three children, who inherited the family papers. The report remained in the ownership of the Noble family, descendants of I K Brunel through his daughter Florence, before being put up for sale with a range of other Brunel material at Christies auction house.

The report was acquired by the SS Great Britain Trust at auction in November 1996, and accessioned into the collection in July 1997. A number of the other lots sold at the auction were purchased by the University of Bristol and added to the Universities' Brunel Collection. It has been in the Trust's possession since then.

### 5.5. Assessment and analysis of physical state

BRSGB-1997.008 is stored in the Brunel Institute, the library and museum collection centre for the SS Great Britain Trust. Its normal location is within the Archive Vault, a

purpose-built archival storeroom completed in 2010 which is BS EN 16893:2018 standard compliant. All packing material and boxes are archival quality. For conservation reasons one page from the report is displayed on a 6 month rotation basis within the Being Brunel Museum on site, a purpose-built museum building opened in March 2018.

The report was conserved in 2012 by an ICON accredited paper conservator. The whole report was humidified and pressed, and the pages were surface cleaned. Areas of damage were consolidated with lens tissue and wheat starch paste. The pages are made of high quality handmade, medium weight, off white, woven type paper, watermarked with the paper manufacturer and date – ‘John Dewdney 1838’.

The pages are all in very good condition. There is some historic damage to page 24, which was the outer most page when the report was stored folded.

## 5.6 Visual Documentation

Visual 1 – BRSGB-1997.008 – Image of the report as stored prior to conservation in 2012.

Visual 2 – BRSGB-1997.008.18 – page 18 of the report – shows handwritten annotations in Brunel’s hand, as well as a large area of crossing out.

Visual 3 – BRSGB-1997.008.24\_v – image of verso of page 24 – includes I K Brunel’s signature.

Visual 4 – BRSGB-2019.00003.05\_2 – image of a report authored by I K Brunel for the Directors of the Bristol Dock Company, dated 16th January 1836. The paper is of the same size, weave and includes margin and lines for spacing, and also is held together with a linen strip in the same method as the nominated document.

[Transcription – BRSGB 1997.008.01-25 – 26 page transcription of the whole screw propeller report].

## 5.6 Bibliography

‘Brunel: The Life and Times of Isambard Kingdom Brunel’, Buchanan, Angus – Hambledon and London, 2002

‘Brunel, the Navy and the screw propeller’ Lambert, Andrew in ‘Brunel’s Ships’ ed. Griffiths, Lambert and Walker – Chatham Publishing, London, 1999

‘The Advent of Steam. The Merchant Steamship before 1900’, Gardiner, Robert (ed.) – Conway Maritime Press, London, 1993.

## 5.7 Recognition by other bodies

All of the collections cared for by the SS Great Britain Trust have been Designated by Arts Council England. The listing information states that – ‘*Today the SS Great Britain Trust Collection, based in the Brunel Institute alongside the SS Great Britain, is central to the study of three major national and international themes: the development of Victorian maritime technology and the rise of the British mercantile marine; the history*

*of nineteenth century emigration; and particularly the work of Isambard Kingdom Brunel.’ Brunel’s screw propeller report is crucial to the understanding of ‘the development of Victorian Maritime technology and the rise of the British mercantile marine’ and one of the most important objects in the collection that relate to ‘the work of Isambard Kingdom Brunel’.*

The *SS Great Britain* herself, which the report was written about, is part of the UK’s ‘National Historic Fleet’ – certificate number 76. Her listing states she ‘*was the largest iron vessel ever built, the largest ship in the world, the first large screw-propelled ship, and the first trans-continental vessel to be designed to operate to a timetable*’.

## 6. Referees

### Referee 1

Professor Andrew Lambert, Laughton Professor of Naval History, Kings College London. Professor Lambert is an internationally acknowledged expert on the subject of 19th century Maritime history.

<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/people/professor-andrew-lambert>

[Email Redacted]

[Phone Redacted]

[Address Redacted]

### Referee 2

Dr Stephen Brindle, Senior Properties Historian, English Heritage Trust. Dr Brindle is a noted authority on the life and work of Isambard Kingdom Brunel. His publications include *Paddington Station: its History and Architecture* (2004, 2013); *Brunel, The Man who Built the World* (2005).

[Linked in profile Redacted]

[Email Redacted]

[Phone Redacted]

[Address Redacted]

### Referee 3

N/A

## 7. Assessment against the selection criteria

### 7.1 Is authenticity established?

The Screw Propeller Report is the original copy of the report which Brunel presented to the Directors of the Great Western Steamship Company, at a meeting held in Bristol on the 10th October 1840. The report was based upon his experiments and observations on the screw propeller on the *SS Archimedes*, an experimental steamer constructed in 1839 designed only for coastal waters, and comparing it to the paddle wheels on his first ship the *SS Great Western*, the first purpose built Ocean going steamship. A version of the report was then presented to the British Board of the Admiralty in April 1841.

The report is handwritten, on hand made, woven paper of very high quality, watermarked with the manufacturer and year – ‘John Dewdney 1838’. The paper matches that used in other similar reports, such as the example shown in Visual 4 – BRSGB-2019.00003.05 ‘*Report written by IK Brunel to the Directors of the Bristol Dock Co., 1836-01-16*’. The handwriting in most of the report is believed to belong to Mr



Bennet, I K Brunel's longest serving clerk. It is annotated in pencil, with corrections and notes, in Brunel's handwriting. The final paragraph, the conclusion of the report, is written in Brunel's handwriting, and it is signed.

Upon I K Brunel's death on 15th September 1859 his papers and other documents were inherited by his family – at the time of his death this included his wife, Mary, his two sons, Isambard and Henry, and his daughter Florence. Mary Brunel died in 1881, his eldest son Isambard died in 1902 and his middle son Henry died in 1903. The youngest child, Florence, died in 1876, but had three children, who inherited the family papers.

The reverse of page 21 includes a handwritten note '*October 1841 Report on adoption of the Screw Propeller*', however the handwriting is different from the rest of the report, and is a later addition, presumably by a family member, and is the incorrect date. The report can be shown to date from October 1840, rather than 1841, for several reasons.

1. The final two paragraphs, beginning with '*in conclusion...*' are in Brunel's hand, and represent the final addition to the report. They are not neatly copied out like the rest of the report, and suggests that Brunel was writing the conclusion once the rest of the report had been completed. This conclusion was presented to the Great Western Steamship Company Directors, and then the British Admiralty, along with the rest of the report.
2. The report includes hand written notes and additions in Brunel's hand, for example '*end here*' after a section on the perceived objections to the screw propeller.
3. The hand written report includes an error, where three paragraphs have been copied out twice. The second instance has been crossed out. This suggests that the report is a draft and has being copied out from a rough document or set of notes, and not a completed final report, which would have been circulated to the company Directors.

## 7.2 Is U.K. significance, uniqueness and irreplaceability established?

Brunel's screw propeller report is unique in the UK. No other example of a hand written version of the screw propeller report survives. The notes, corrections and last paragraph in Brunel's hand make this document unique. The immediacy of Brunel's annotations and handwriting included in the report creates an indisputable link to the engineer and his essential contribution to the technological advances which impacted the development of the Victorian merchant marine so significantly.

Brunel's screw propeller report changed the history of maritime shipping – both within the UK, and across the world. Initially the work was carried out for the Great Western Steamship Company, and the had the direct effect of changing the design of the *SS Great Britain* in Bristol – originally planned as a side paddle steamship, she was instead launched as the world's first screw propelled ocean going steamship. The *SS Great Britain* was at the time was called '*the greatest experiment since creation*', and has since been named '*the grandmother of all modern shipping*'. All modern ships can trace their design and engineering development from this one vessel launched in Bristol on the 19th July 1843.

The effects of the report were also felt within the Admiralty, the British Government Department that managed Naval affairs, which requested Brunel report to them directly on the outcome of his work. Brunel's own account of this meeting survives, quoted in *'The Life of Isambard Kingdom Brunel, Civil Engineer'* by Isambard Brunel (Jr), 1870 –

*'I attended the Board: Lord Minto [First Lord of the Admiralty] stated that he wished a complete experiment to be made on the applicability of the screw to Government boats, and he proposed to place the conduct of the experiments in my hands as a professional man'*

Following on this appointment Brunel worked with the Engineering Company 'Messer Maudsley and Field' to design an engine for the Royal Navy's first screw propelled ship – *HMS Rattler* was launched in April 1843 (three months before the *SS Great Britain*) and under a series of trials Brunel was able to show that the screw propeller was indeed much more efficient than paddle wheels. Famously the culmination of the trials occurred in April 1845 when a very public *'tug of war'* was held between *HMS Rattler* and a side paddled steamship, *HMS Alecto*.

The success of these trials led to the Royal Navy to introduce screw steamships, and indeed modify existing vessels – both *HMS Terror* and *HMS Erebus* which participated in the Franklin Expedition, which left Greenwich in May 1845, were modified to include steam engines and screw propellers. By 1859 74% of steam vessels in the Royal Navy were fitted with a screw propeller.

The success of the Admiralty trials, and the successful early voyages of the *SS Great Britain*, led to screw propellers being the preferred form of propulsion for merchant steam ships, first in Britain and then around the world. On 8 August 1855 the House of Commons report *'A Return...of the whole of the Steam Vessels Registered in the United Kingdom on or before the 1st day of January 1855'* showed that of the 1480 Steamships in registered in the UK 272, or 18.4%, were fitted with screw propellers. In 1870, the year when the amount of tonnage for steamships entering and leaving British ports first overtook the tonnage of sailing vessels in the UK the number had risen to 1432 vessels out of a total of 2955, or 48.5%.

This early adoption of screw propelled steam ships, alongside other innovations such as metal hulls, gave the British merchant marine an unparalleled advantage compared to other nationalities at the time. The introduction of the screw propeller made steam ships more fuel efficient and would require less crew than sailing ships, thus making them cheaper to run, while the increased cargo area compared to a paddle wheeled steam ship (a result of the removal of a large engine powering two paddle wheels rather than one screw propeller) meant increased carrying capacity. The British merchant marine used these advantages to build up its share on world trade.

### 7.3 Is at least one of the following criteria met?

#### 7.3.1 Time

The mid-19th century was time of great technological and industrial innovation, which helped to form the modern world as we know it today. The document puts forward perfectly encapsulate this time period – the screw propeller report marks a precise moment in time when a new, ground breaking innovation was shown to be more efficient than a previous technology, and led to its adoption across the world. Modern shipping continues to use this technology today. More

immediately it was adopted by the British Admiralty in 1841, an organisation that was instrumental in shaping Britain and the British Empire in the 19th Century.

The reign of Queen Victoria began in 1837, four years before the document was written. Her time on the throne was characterised by huge changes to the UK and the world –when Victoria became Queen it could take people and information weeks or even months to cross the Atlantic. When she died ships could carry out the same journey in under 6 days, and information could travel the width of the ocean in minutes, along one of ten transatlantic cables. The earliest of these cables was laid by Brunel’s third and final ship, the *SS Great Eastern*, which was fitted with a screw propeller. This report was a key moment in the development of faster more efficient vessels, and hugely evocative of Victorian Britain and the Industrial Revolution.

The author of the report, Isambard Kingdom Brunel, is the subject of one of the defining images of the Victorian period – a photograph of I K Brunel, taken by the photographer Robert Howlett, standing in front of the launch chains of his later ship the *SS Great Eastern*.

### 7.3.2 Place

The document was written and authored at Brunel’s offices in Duke Street, London – the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Building now occupies the site. Its location in Westminster places it at the heart of what was then the largest city in the world, at a time when the British Empire was expanding and exerting huge influence on the development of the rest of the world. London was at the heart of the British Empire, the centre of world trade and banking, the nerve centre for decision making which affected the rest of the world through the imperial network of trade and communication.

London was also the centre of the maritime world – the Admiralty based in Greenwich controlled the largest and most powerful navy in history, which the merchant marine were overseen by the London based Board of Trade which controlled vessel registration, building standards, standards for passenger vessels and labour/employment conditions. Today the UN body that oversees world shipping, the International Maritime Organisation, continues to be based in London.

In addition the Institution of Civil Engineers, which I K Brunel was an active member, was located just a few streets away. This body was the first professional body for engineers in the UK and played a major role in the development of the engineering profession. Brunel’s screw propeller report, written in London, presented first in Bristol but with a world wide impact, perfectly encapsulates the cities impact on the wider world.

### 7.3.3 People

The Screw Propeller Report was authored by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, one of the most important engineers of the 19th Century. LTC Rolt, in his 1957 biography *‘Isambard Kingdom Brunel’* described him as *‘one of the greatest figures of the Industrial Revolution, [who] changed the face of the English landscape with his groundbreaking designs and ingenious constructions’*. A more recent biographer, Stephen Brindle, says *‘Isambard Kingdom Brunel remains one of the most inspiring and compelling figures of the 19th Century’*. A true engineering polymath, his

began at the age of just 19 working on the Thames Tunnel between Wapping and Rotherhithe (now used by the London Overground) and ended with the construction of the innovative Saltash Bridge between Devon and Cornwall, and the *SS Great Eastern* – for 40 years the largest ship ever built. Sir Kenneth Branagh starred as I K Brunel in the opening ceremony of the London 2012 Olympics, and in 2002 he was voted the second ‘*greatest ever Briton*’ in a BBC poll.

The subject of the report marks not only a major advance in shipping technology, but also had wide ranging impact on the movement of people globally. The decision to develop and use a propeller system to move steam ships across the Atlantic was a signal moment in human demography. Prior to the *SS Great Britain*’s maiden voyage in 1845, all steamships on the Atlantic – of which there were very few – used paddle wheels at their sides, which were driven by huge internal mechanisms that limited their internal space. As such, whilst steamships offered fast and predictable crossings, they had limited use. By using a propeller, the engine space inside a ship could be confined low in its holds, freeing up its internal capacity, a point of critical potential. Within five years of Brunel deploying the propeller in the *SS Great Britain*, minimized engine designs and maximized internal space had been perfected, and screw propelled ships could carry hundreds of people at a time on fast, safe crossings. This transformed human global mobility, in particular the great migration across the Atlantic. Not only did the capacity to move people quickly and safely increase, but the very high cost of building propeller-driven steamships caused the shipping companies to actively seek out new sources of business. New areas of Europe, such as Central Europe, Scandinavia and southern Europe, were increasingly opened up to the market, and migrants from these areas moved in huge numbers to North America. As such, screw propeller technology was crucial in making long-distance migration pervasive in 19th century European society. Its speed, safety, and constant search for custom allowed seasonal migration strategies to be extended throughout the Atlantic rim, creating a vast and dynamic labour exchange throughout the Atlantic World, whilst permanently relocating tens of millions of people from Europe to North and South America. As a technical innovation, the history of human mobility was profoundly shaped by the timing and deployment of this maritime innovation.

#### 7.3.4 *Subject and theme*

The documentary heritage that appears in this nomination for the UK Memory of the World Register represents a key moment in the history of shipping and its technological evolution. The screw powered steamship enabled global travel, trade and communication to an unprecedented extent. The technology which was developed at the centre of the British empire, extends the reach of Victorian imperial power and enables more efficient and frequent communication and trade with the imperial periphery. The effects of British imperial rule, trade, movement of people, and communication are still relevant to this day and the steamship was the one piece of technology which enabled this global reach and impact. By its very nature, maritime history and the technological development of the steamship connects numerous aspects of Victorian history which reverberate and are relevant today and feed into our understanding of the global world we live in.

The report was authored by I K Brunel for the Directors of the Great Western Steamship Company, and was presented to them in October 1840. Soon after the

<p>launch and early success of the <i>SS Great Western</i> the Great Western Steamship Company commissioned Brunel to design a second steam ship, originally a side paddled wooden ship, although Brunel soon changed the design to an iron hull. Construction had begun in Bristol by July 1839, again in partnership with William Patterson. However, in July 1840 a new type of vessel visited Bristol and was inspected by Brunel – the <i>SS Archimedes</i>. This experimental vessel has a screw propeller designed by Francis Petti-Smith, and was touring the UK in order to advertise this innovation. Brunel was able to convince the shareholders of the company to stop construction of the <i>SS Great Britain</i>, and to borrow the <i>SS Archimedes</i> to carry out trials of this new technology. This report is the result of these tests and experiments, and in it Brunel proves the efficiency of the Screw Propeller compared to the paddle wheel for ship propulsion.</p>	
7.3.5	<i>Form and style</i>
N/A	
7.3.6	<i>Social / spiritual / community significance</i>
N/A	
7.4 Do any of the following issues relate to this nomination?	
7.4.1	<i>Rarity</i>
<p>I K Brunel's screw propeller report is a unique survival. The report is the original document Brunel presented in October 1840, and includes his hand written notes and 'in conclusion' final paragraph. No other handwritten version of the report survives.</p>	
7.4.2	<i>Integrity</i>
<p>The screw propeller report is complete and still retains the original linen that held the pages together.</p>	
7.4.3	<i>Threat</i>
<p>There is no known threat to the document.</p>	
<b>8. Legal information</b>	
8.1 Owner of the documentary heritage	
<i>Name</i>	
SS Great Britain Trust	
<i>Address</i>	
Brunel's <i>SS Great Britain</i> , Great Western Dockyard, Gas Ferry Road, Bristol, England, BS1 6TY	
<i>Telephone and email address</i>	
[Phone and e-mail Redacted]	
8.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage (name and contact details if different from the owner)	
<i>Name</i>	
N/A	
<i>Address</i>	

N/A	
<i>Telephone and email address</i>	
N/A	
8.3 Legal status	
8.3.1	<i>Category of ownership</i>
Public Organisation – the SS Great Britain Trust is a Charitable Organisation.	
8.3.2	<i>Accessibility</i>
<p>The material is available to be viewed by anyone for free at the Brunel Institute, at Brunel’s <i>SS Great Britain</i> in Bristol. Normal opening times are 10 – 4.30 Tuesday – Friday and the first two Saturday of the month. Readers are required to show a piece of ID so they can be signed in before seeing the material. However, it is possible to organise a research visit outside the usual opening hours. The collections team that provides access to the collection includes a specialist Maritime Curator who can provide access and detailed contextual information to visitors. The Trust’s collection is not yet available online, although work is underway to make it available.</p>	
8.3.3	<i>Copyright status</i>
<p>The report is dated to October 1840, and it was written by Isambard Kingdom Brunel. It was subsequently published in 1870 as an appendix in ‘<i>The Life of Isambard Kingdom Brunel, Civil Engineer</i>’ by Isambard Brunel (I K Brunel’s eldest son).</p> <p>As the author is known, but the work is not a literary, dramatic or musical work, a photograph or an engraving, and so the copyright expired 70 years after the death of the author. I K Brunel died on 15th September 1859, and so copyright expired in 1929.</p>	
8.3.4	<i>Responsible administration</i>
<p>The SS Great Britain Trust is legally responsible for the safe keeping of the material. The Trust is a Registered Charity with the following charitable goals –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>To acquire, transport, rebuild, restore, and fit out the SS Great Britain and to preserve the same for all time for the benefit of the public as a ship of historic interest and to place the same upon public display.</i></li> <li>2. <i>To increase the sum of public knowledge and to promote the study of maritime &amp; industrial engineering &amp; science, maritime archaeology &amp; social history and the life and works of I K Brunel and his historic context and significance in the modern world. To collect in any manner whatsoever, preserve, make accessible as a museum artefacts and specimens that demonstrate and reflect a tangible link with the past and present of maritime &amp; industrial engineering &amp; science, and maritime archaeology &amp; history, for the benefit of the public.</i></li> </ol> <p>The Trust employs a dedicated Collections Team, over seen by the Director the Brunel Institute.</p>	
8.3.5	<i>Other factors</i>
None known.	



## 9. Is there a current management plan for this documentary heritage?

There is no dedicated management plan for this particular documentary heritage. The below policies and procedures cover the collection as a whole, with includes the report.

Please find attached copies of the current SS Great Britain Trust's 'Collections Care and Conservation Policy' and 'Collections Care Procedures'. Both documents were approved in November 2015, updated in January 2020, and are due for full review in December 2020.

Please also find attached a copy of the SS Great Britain Trust's 'Collections Development Policy', approved in November 2015, updated in July 2017, and due for renewal in December 2020.

## 10. Consultation with stakeholders

Nicholas Booth has exchanged emails and a telephone call with Matthew McMurray, the Memory of the World UK Committee Secretary.

Hannah Lowry, Archivist and Special Collections Manager at the University of Bristol, has been consulted as the University owns the 'Brunel Collection', which is on long term loan to the SS Great Britain Trust.

## PART B – SUBSIDIARY INFORMATION

### 11. Assessment of risk

The documentary heritage is considered to be at low risk in terms of future survival or accessibility. The SS Great Britain Trust has been in existence for 50 years, and is in good financial health. The report is stored within the Archive Vault in the Brunel Institute, a purpose built facility opened in 2010. The storage conditions are excellent, exceeding current sector standards for storage and conservation and security conditions are high. The Brunel Institutes operates an open public access policy – anyone can come and request to see anything from the collection at any time (during opening hours) and staff will make the material available immediately. There is no requirement to pre-book.

### 12. Assessment of preservation

The report consists of 24 pages of off white, woven handmade paper. The report has previously been stored folded, with the side which includes Brunel's signature as the outer page. This has led to moderate decolourisation, so the paper that was exposed is darker than other pages. The writing is still visible. The report has previously been sealed with wax (seal has been lost), which has led to some damage to the paper.

The report was conserved in 2012 by an ICON accredited paper conservator. The whole report was humidified and pressed, and the pages were surface cleaned. Areas of damage were consolidated with lens tissue and wheat starch paste. A specially made conservation grade box was created at this point, and has been used for storage of the



report since that date. The report's normal location is in the archive vault, a purpose built museum store room completed in 2010 which is BS EN 16893:2018 standard compliant.

The SS Great Britain Trust employs a dedicated Collections Team, all of whom hold professional qualifications relating to museums and collections care, led by Nicholas Booth as Head of Collections. There is an in-house conservation budget to cover required work, and the team also apply for external grant as and when required.

### 13. Intended use of the Inscription

Inscription on the UK Memory of the World Register would represent a major recognition of the importance of the document cared for by the SS Great Britain Trust, and more widely reflect positively on the collection as a whole. Currently one of the pages from the report are on display within the 'Being Brunel Museum' on the *SS Great Britain's* site – their display labels would be updated to include their inscription information. We anticipate a strong local interest from the people and media organisations within Bristol, and the material would be used as a special event and focus of public engagement activity in the Brunel Institute Library. It would represent a major outcome for the Trust, and would be used as example of best practice and collections care with internal and external stakeholders. In addition 2020 marks the 50th anniversary of the return of the *SS Great Britain* to Bristol – there are several major events and planned to mark this anniversary, and the inscription would provide a major opportunity to advertise and advocate for the collection in our Golden anniversary year.

## PART C – LODGEMENT

### 14. This nomination is lodged by

Name – please print  
Nicholas Booth

Signature  
[Redacted]

Date  
31st January 2020

## UNITED KINGDOM MEMORY OF THE WORLD REGISTER

### ASSIGNATION OF RIGHTS

Name of organization:

SS Great Britain Trust

Description of nominated item or collection:

BRSGB-1997.008.01-25 – Brunel propeller adoption report to the Directors of the Great Western Steamship Company. Consists of 24 loose sheets and one Textile strip found within the document

I hereby grant to the United Kingdom Memory of the World Committee the non-exclusive right to use free of charge any and all of the material supplied by me in any medium in association with the submission of the above nominated item or collection for inclusion in the United Kingdom Memory of the World Register, including the right to copy the material and to issue and communicate the material to the public, for the purposes of disseminating information about, promoting or supporting the United Kingdom Memory of the World Register and programme.

Provided that acknowledgement of the source is given as follows:

Courtesy of the SS Great Britain Trust

I agree that the United Kingdom Memory of the World Committee may license others to use the material on the same terms.

I confirm that I have authority to assign these rights and indemnify the United Kingdom Memory of the World Committee and its members against any loss or damage arising from my having supplied infringing material or made a false declaration.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020 \_\_\_\_\_

Position within the organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Head of Collections \_\_\_\_\_

Note: in the case of joint nominations each party to the nomination must provide a separate assignation in respect of the material supplied by them.

## SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION (ATTACHMENTS)

Please ensure that you have provided the following additional information

Supporting information	Attached?
A minimum of one written reference	Yes
Supplementary catalogue or inventory information, if necessary	N/A
Images, if they help to illustrate the nomination	Yes
Collection management plan if available – see <a href="#">Collections Care and Conservation Policy</a> , <a href="#">Collections Care procedure</a> , <a href="#">Collection Development Policy</a> .	Yes
Two images for promotional use by UKMoW if the nomination is successful, in either a JPEG or TIFF format, at 300 dpi	Yes
Signed Assignment of Rights form for promotional use of these images	Yes

## Section 5 – Checklist

### Checklist for nominations to the UK Memory of the World Register

<b>Preparation</b>	
Review the Handbook for potential nominations	
Identify documentary heritage to nominate	
Speak to a UKMoW Committee Member	
Identify and contact referees	
Organise images	
<b>Nomination form</b>	
Complete all sections of the nomination form	
Sign nomination form at Section 4 (Declaration of authority) and Section 14 (Lodgement)	
Assignment of Rights Form completed and signed (or an equivalent provided by the copyright holder of the images)	
<b>Attachments</b>	
Inventory (Q 5.3) Supplementary catalogue or inventory information where that is not available online for free	
Visual Documentation (Q 5.6) Two high resolution (300 dpi) attractive images of the nominated documentary heritage, to be used for publicity purposes	
Signed Assignment of Rights form for use of these two images	
Digitised research copies of the content of the documentary Heritage (10%, max 100 images)	
Transcription / translation where the document(s) is hard to read or not in standard English, if available	
Bibliography (Q 5.7) Copies of any bibliographic sources listed which are not available online free of charge	
References (Q 6) A minimum of one written reference	
Management plan (Q 9) Collection management plan, if available	