

**U DX43**

**Papers of the Sun Fire Office,  
Hull and district**

**1804-1924**

**Historical Background:**

The Sun Fire Office owes its origins to the multifarious trading activities of Charles Povey, who was born about 1652. Povey spent his early years writing and had two spells in prison for writing material opposed to the reign of James II. By the turn of the century he was involved in the coal trade and inventions to do with that trade. He continued to write, in 1701 producing 'The unhappiness of England as to its trade by sea and land truly stated'. Always a man of novel ideas, this piece suggested the setting up of four hospitals of industry holding a total of 6000 poor people who would be gainfully employed through the scheme. He made a brief excursion into religious writing and by 1705 was situated at the Traders' Exchange House in Hatton Garden. From here he floated a commercial agency and began life and fire insurance schemes. The life insurance scheme collapsed but in 1710 the Exchange House Fire Office for Goods, or Sun Fire Office was established. The Sun Fire Office became very successful, in the early days running its own fire-fighting services, with horse-drawn wooden engines complete with hoses. In 1838 the Sun Fire Office bought St Batholomew's church and properties in Threadneedle Street, ironically because the Royal Exchange had been destroyed by fire.

Although Povey's initial insurance business was confined to London it was quickly extended to other cities and towns in England including Hull. The collection offers a wealth of material on the operation of fire insurance in Hull throughout the whole nineteenth century as well as a mass of detail about local businesses, their owners, locations and insured values.

Povey's association with the company was short-lived though in 1733 he wrote 'The secret history of the Sun Fire Office'. He remained a man of schemes and causes until his death in 1743.

**Custodial history:**

Donated by Miss P.E.M. Ridgway

**Description:**

This collection comprises 17 policy books for Hull and district between the years 1804 and 1924 and the premium book for 1867 to 1915.

**Extent:** 18 volumes

**Access conditions:**

Access will be granted to any accredited reader

U DX43/1	Policy Book - Hull and district 1 volume	1804-1818
U DX43/2	Policy Book - Hull and district Including account with Christopher Bolton of Hull, 1825-1840 1 volume	1818-1831

Hull History Centre: Papers of the Sun Fire Office, Hull and district

U DX43/3	Policy Book - Hull and district 1 volume	1831-1837
U DX43/4	Policy Book - Hull and district 1 volume	1837-1842
U DX43/5	Policy Book - Hull and district 1 volume	1843-1847
U DX43/6	Policy Book - Hull and district 1 volume	1847-1852
U DX43/7	Policy Book - Hull and district 1 volume	1852-1855
U DX43/8	Policy Book - Hull and district 1 volume	1855-1860
U DX43/9	Policy Book - Hull and district 1 volume	1860-1865
U DX43/10	Policy Book - Hull and district 1 volume	1865-1869
U DX43/11	Policy Book - Hull and district 1 volume	1869-1877
U DX43/12	Policy Book - Hull and district 1 volume	1877-1893
U DX43/13	Policy Book - Hull and district 1 volume	1893-1902
U DX43/14	Policy Book - Hull and district 1 volume	1902-1904
U DX43/15	Policy Book - Hull and district 1 volume	1904-1912
U DX43/16	Policy Book - Hull and district 1 volume	1912-1919
U DX43/17	Policy Book - Hull and district 1 volume	1919-1924
U DX43/18	Premium Book - Hull and district 1 volume	1867-1915