

Calling All East Surrey Members in the London Borough of Sutton

Below is a request from Abby Matthews - Archive and Family History Centre Manager, Sutton - please reply to her at oralhistory.sutton.gov.uk

Many of us will be recording our thoughts in this unprecedented time, either as a means of making sense of the experience, or simply to record the previously unimaginable events unfolding daily. Sutton Cultural Services are calling people across the borough to consider keeping a diary of their experiences and thoughts during the COVID-19 outbreak. The contributions will be added to Sutton's borough archive collection as an important and hugely valuable record of events.

Diaries capture history in a personal, unique manner, directly reflecting daily life during ordinary – or, in this case, extraordinary – circumstances. Importantly, keeping a diary can help reduce anxiety and manage stress. It can also help one get rid of negative thoughts and can overall improve wellbeing.

The primary aim of the project, titled *The Locals: Diaries*, is to provide a simple and creative emotional outlet to participants at these difficult times, aiming at boosting their wellbeing, and, through being part of a wide community project, creating a sense of belonging. The content will provide an important historical record of this period for researchers of the future.

There is no restriction as to the format of the diary, and entries can be as short or as long as you like. One can document a single event, a day, a week, or keep an ongoing diary. Entries can include photographs, drawings, poetry or ephemeral material – they may be handwritten or digital. People can also record their thoughts and submit them as audio recordings. We also encourage group and family journals. Any way one chooses to record events and thoughts is equally valid and of great importance.

We are currently reaching out to local organisations to see how the project might fit their work and interests, aiming at involving people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds.

If you would like to get involved, please email Sutton Heritage at oralhistory.sutton.gov.uk for more information.

All best,
Abby Matthews