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Abbas de Courm[er]c. xvij. Willelmus Loureb.
Abbas de Cruland. xvij. Willelmus Aldein.

Listening to the Past, Speaking to the Future



Report of the Archives Task Force



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Foreword



The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) was invited by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to establish the Archives Task Force to: "...carry out an in-depth analysis and review of the state of the UK's unique and diverse archives."

During its deliberations, the Task Force held eight meetings and consulted over 700 people and organisations to gather opinion from those working within archives and from groups and individuals working independently (often voluntarily) to create, maintain and interpret archival collections on every topic imaginable. In addition, the Task Force received evidence from a wide range of experts and active archive users.

We have found a rich and diverse tapestry of archive activities, exploring, revealing and underpinning the histories of these Islands and, equally important, preserving the present for the future. The commitment of the archives profession to what they do and the passion of those using archival records for research, for business, to support a programme of learning or for personal interest have encouraged the Task Force to make very clear recommendations for widening access to new audiences. Archives have something for everyone and we believe our primary duty is to present the means to help every student, every would-be family historian, and every community group wishing to celebrate and record its own history and culture to benefit from this unique store of knowledge.

We therefore propose in our report a major new initiative to help people from all parts of the population to access archives more easily and to enable archives to play a greater role in education. Our plan is for an Archives Gateway, an electronic pathway and guide which will open up the whole archives world to wider use. The Gateway will identify and map public, private, business and community archives and allow users of all ages to find the collections or content they seek quickly and easily.

Our report also includes detailed recommendations on ways to modernise public sector archives and to develop the skill sets and expertise of professional archivists in all areas. The Archives Task Force believes this report could help transform our archives and revolutionise the way they are accessed and used.

I am grateful to all members of the Task Force for their unflagging energy and commitment to achieving a report which could make a real impact. Thanks, too, go to the team at MLA who undertook the data gathering and pulled the findings together. Special thanks to the individuals, groups and organisations who contributed time, passion and wisdom to the compilation of this report.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark Wood". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Mark Wood
Chair, Archives Task Force

Executive Summary and Recommendations

4

It is an ambition of the Task Force that the collections in the UK's archives are readily accessible to everyone.

Our archives contain unique resources covering every aspect of the UK's history (along with links to other nations and cultures), its interests, its business life and its creativity. Collectively these resources include something that is of interest to everyone: the school child, the student, the researcher, the family or village historian, the individual seeking evidence of their identity or rights and the citizen wishing to explore almost any topic or interest.

It is not overstating the importance of archives to suggest that without their existence there would be no real sense of history, whether of the last ten years or the last thousand years. Archives have always been the mainstay of traditional scholarship and represent the raw material that enables the scholar or researcher to analyse, compare and interpret.

Archival records are also evidential components of the official record and are therefore essential to understanding the processes of decision-making and governance. Preserving and managing these records has a long and honourable history. This role has become increasingly important to public life as the Freedom of Information Act, the Data Protection Act, the demands of electronic records management and increasing media scrutiny of government have brought new responsibilities to all public authorities for the care of archives and current administrative records.

Today, the importance of archives to the historical and the public record remains no less relevant in a world of increasing media and communication channels.

Findings

One of the immediate positive results of the commissioning of the Archives Task Force by government was that it has provided a forum for a complete debate about archives in the UK. This has stimulated not only a consultation exercise of a size and comprehensiveness that the domain has never seen before but a bringing together of key figures who have been able openly to debate the issues which will set the agenda for UK archives for a decade to come. Although our report is presented to government and key policymakers, all who care about the UK's unique archives will be interested in developing our findings and recommendations.

During the course of its work, the Task Force has explored the condition of the nation's archival collections, their use and scope and their preparedness to respond to the growing importance of public accountability, burgeoning digital media and the rapidly growing number of people exploring their family histories and identities, many of them from outside the UK.



Archives need the tools for the job – given the necessary resources, they can deliver on outreach and stewardship and access.

Wide consultation has taken the form of written submissions, presentations at three oral evidence hearings and meetings in the nine English regions, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Over 700 people and organisations expressed their views. The evidence considered extended well beyond the boundaries of publicly-funded collections and the recommendations of this report embrace the educational and research value of access to the widest range of collections, recognising, of course, the confidentiality of business and personal records.

We have been greatly impressed by the commitment and energy of those working in archives and we support strongly the need for documentation standards, appropriate storage, security, conservation and a skilled workforce. Forceful arguments have been presented concerning the need for long-term investment to preserve and improve accessibility of collections and to ensure that the demands of digital media particularly can be managed effectively. We recognise that further development cannot come without change in the management and co-ordination of, and further sustained investment in, archives and archival collections.

We have been equally impressed by the growing interest in personal identity and sense of place that is attracting more and more people to explore their heritage and frequently encouraging them to create their own archival resources. We must not forget that the archival record is at once the voice of the past and the means by which we speak to the future. This exploration of personal history and identity should be the right of every citizen.

Vision

It is an ambition of the Task Force that the collections in the UK's archives are readily accessible to everyone. Delivering effective, universal access calls for new strategies and techniques that will engage those who currently benefit least from this archival heritage: the non-specialist individual, community groups, and the student in school. We are certain that with the commitment of the archives domain, placing access as the highest priority and with the support of funding bodies, rapid progress will be possible.

While there are no simple or short-term fixes to make this a reality, the Task Force is very clear on the steps that must be taken to direct investment and culture change over the next three years to deliver what we believe is an exciting and challenging vision:

“An archival heritage unlocked and made open to all citizens in a way that engages them and empowers them to use archives for personal, community, social and economic benefit.”

Delivering the Vision

We propose in our report new ways for users to access archive content. Our aim is to unlock our vast archival heritage and also to demonstrate how the archive domain can support specific public service targets through social, educational and economic impact. At a time of pressure on public expenditure, long-term sustainability will come from engaging as many people as possible with the archival heritage whether for leisure, learning, personal development, business or community involvement.

Access to All

The Task Force proposes the use of information and communications technologies to create a new “Archives Gateway” that will bring about a step change in the accessibility of services and collections. The work already done by The National Archives, the National Council on Archives and others shows how these virtual pathways can bring new people to archival resources and we believe from our wide consultation that there is considerable support from all sides to take another big step forward.

The Archives Gateway would be an all-purpose entry point for people seeking archive material, guiding them via zones and categories to the material they need. It will be a means of engaging private, commercial and community archives and offering a way for them to make their collections more accessible.

The Archives Gateway will also be closely linked to MLA-led initiatives under the “Investing in Knowledge” banner to create electronic links between schools and the digitised collections of our museums and libraries. The “Knowledge Web” aims to put use of museum, library and archive resources at the heart of the country’s 21st century learning agenda. It is possible that at least some of the funding necessary to create our exciting vision could be met by the Lottery distributors that have previously supported programmes such as EnrichUK¹ and A2A². A three-year programme is proposed that will build technical infrastructure, deliver training, enable digitisation and encourage the creation of support services for various categories of archive user. This programme is described in detail in Chapter 3.

Recommendation One

Create a digital Gateway to UK Archives that will give everyone the opportunity to participate in the archival heritage.

Archive Development Programme

In relation to modernisation, audience development and capacity building, the Task Force believes that there is small chance of significant increases in funding locally or nationally in the present economic climate. We therefore suggest that innovation, action, research and advocacy should be stimulated using what we are calling an Archive Development Programme. Bringing in support from national agencies in England, and private sector sponsors, this could include bids to government departments and devolved administrations in the home nations for specific projects such as education and learning, social inclusion and volunteering. The Task Force believes that a budget of between £500,000 and £1 million a year for three years would have a significant impact on service development and capacity. The scope of activities that could be covered by the proposed Archive Development Programme is described in Chapters 4 and 5.

Six high-level recommendations with associated actions are presented that could be supported by the Archive Development Programme, or by external funding where it can be achieved:

Recommendation Two

Position UK archives as key contributors to local, regional and national social and economic objectives.

Recommendation Three

Release the potential of archives to enrich and enhance teaching and learning and contribute to raising standards in education.

Recommendation Four

Increase community participation in UK archive activities with particular focus on engaging hard-to-reach communities.

Recommendation Five

Encourage business, private and specialist archives to develop as integrated component parts of our national heritage.

Recommendation Six

Encourage the creation and sustainability of moving image, sound, photographic and digital archives through support for relevant strategies.

Recommendation Seven

Put in place a programme to modernise service management and improve workforce development opportunities.

Managing Implementation of the Strategy

We have been fortunate to gain UK-wide support for the Task Force. We believe this gives a powerful message to all policy makers and stakeholders since it demonstrates a commitment to the future across a wide spectrum of different circumstances and histories. We recognise, however, that professional support in the production of a blueprint for future development will need to be strengthened by gaining political and financial support from all parts of the UK.

Most importantly in the short term, there will need to be the means to manage a national programme of development, which co-ordinates activity in all four home nations. Our final recommendation, therefore, addresses steps towards the creation of a suitable forum to co-ordinate work on the Gateway to Archives and the proposed Archive Development Programme. Strategic co-ordination between all four home nations will ensure the Archive Development Programme is put to most effective use to transform UK archives. Proposals for co-ordination and development are presented in Chapter 6.

Recommendation Eight

Agreement should be sought from the four home nations of the UK on the creation of the forum that will co-ordinate the development of the recommendations of this report.

1. EnrichUK is the portal to a collection of 150 sites supported by the New Opportunities Fund. The collection ranges across culture, history, social and economic development, science and art as well as offering regional and national 'sense of place' websites from England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. www.enrichuk.net
2. A2A: the Access to Archives programme, co-ordinated by The National Archives. The database now contains more than six million catalogue entries describing archives held in 340 record offices, libraries and other repositories throughout England. www.a2a.org.uk

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the Task Force.
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and stakeholders.

The Power to Change Lives

‘Archives provide the bedrock for our understanding of the past. They show us, and future generations, how we came to be what we are as a nation, a community or an individual.’ Vic Gray, Archives Task Force Member





1 The Importance of Archives

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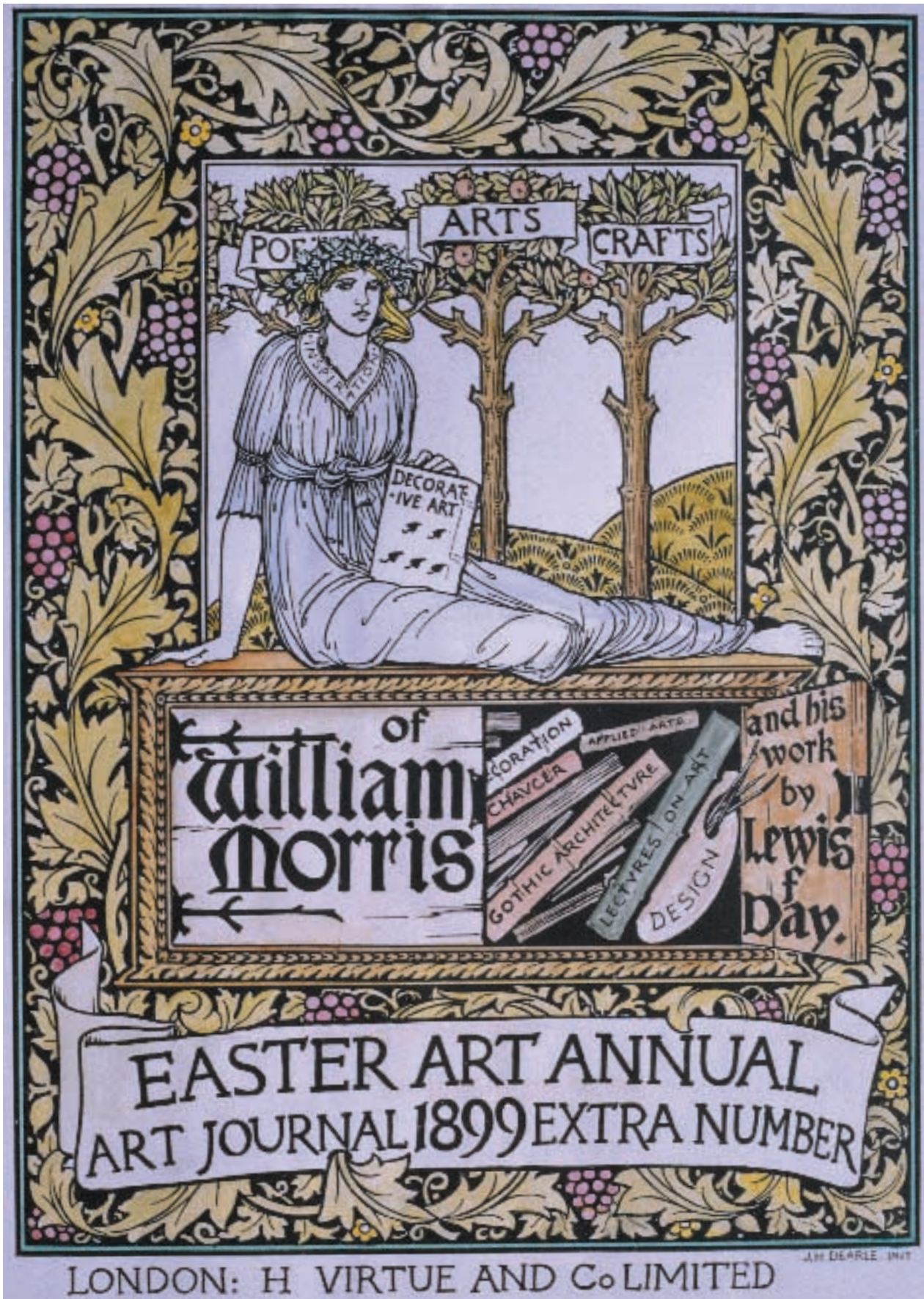
The archival record is ... the direct, uninterpreted and authentic voice of the past.

The history of the United Kingdom is the history of people and places, made up of great events that affect everyone and small events that mould the lives of individuals and communities. Through books we see people, places and events woven together, exploring and interpreting relationships. Exhibits in museums and galleries give physical insights into those events, those people, those places.

The archival record is different. It is the direct, uninterpreted and authentic voice of the past: the primary evidence of what people did and what they thought; the look of places and events recorded through images – both still and moving; life's beginnings and life's endings; the growth and decline of industries and the ebbs and flows of communities and cultures. The archival record is the foundation on which are built all our histories, with their many and varied voices. We may hear the voice of the Lord Protector of England and the voice of a Ranter side by side; or the voice of the captain of industry and the worker on the factory floor: the same event from very different points of view.

It is not overstating the importance of archives to suggest that without their existence there would not be any real sense of history whether of the last ten years or the last thousand years. Archives have always been the mainstay of traditional scholarship and represent the raw material that enables the scholar or researcher to analyse, compare and interpret.

Archival records fulfil another unique role. They can be the evidential components of the public record and are therefore essential to understanding the processes of decision making and governance. Preserving and managing these records has a long and honourable history that is now visible in the work of the UK's national archival services and the network of local record offices, and specialist archives. This role has become increasingly important to public life as new responsibilities to all public authorities for the care of archives and current records have emerged. The Freedom of Information Act, the Data Protection Act, the demands of electronic records management and increasing media scrutiny of government have brought fresh challenges. This importance has been





Archives can play a critical role in formal education at all levels, and in lifelong learning both as the subject of learning and as a learning tool.

brought into focus with the evidence presented to the Hutton Inquiry, embracing electronic information (such as emails) and written information (such as personal diaries), as well as oral testimony.

Such events highlight a paradox that has always faced the professions in archival and records management. The wider world has little interest in records until something is needed – as evidence of proof, for research or indeed just for interest. Yet unless the preservation and management of increasing numbers of items in various media is continuously sustained (whether through statutory requirements or voluntary responsibility) the available evidence of past events will be no more than a random patchwork of haphazard facts. Many people who hold archive collections do not recognise what they do as being archival. These can include the passionate amateur and community groups whose diverse collections can provide the focus to bring people together as part of a vibrant multi-faceted UK community. In many ways it is this ‘invisibility paradox’ that is the key challenge of the Task Force and of those who will deliver the recommendations that the Task Force proposes.

Archives, of course, are much more than a quiet haunt for the solitary researcher that the popular stereotype once suggested. Moving image, sound and photographic archives, are growing as innovative dimensions in the recording and preservation of our history. Many of these collections have used technological solutions to enable mass audiences to access the resources as more and more people decide to explore their own identity and history, or to add a sense of history to their relationship with the place that they inhabit. The global interest in family history attracts millions of virtual visitors to The National Archives’ website to explore online census data.

In one way or another archives and records management underpin the work of all organisations, whether for commercial interests or public accountability, for interest or to encourage wider understanding of our place in society and in the rest of the world. And yet, until recently, for the majority of the people of the UK, the significance of archives and the richness they contain has remained no more than a footnote in the histories told in books, in class

or on the television. Changing this perception and helping archives to fulfil effectively broader social functions has been the purpose of the Task Force.

Our vision is of an archival heritage unlocked and made open to all citizens in a way that engages them and empowers them to use archives for personal, community, social and economic benefit.

In one way or another archives and records management underpin the work of all organisations.

2 The Findings of the Task Force

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The focus on users has been a thread running through the consultation process and the shaping of our vision for a 21st century archive service.

The connections between archives and the individual, the community and the nation have been integral to the thinking of the Task Force. The focus on users has been a thread running through the consultation process and the shaping of our vision for a 21st century archive service. A better understanding of the needs, expectations and attitudes of current and future generations of users must direct the future development of UK archives.

During the course of its work, the Task Force has explored the condition of the nation's archival collections, their use and scope and their preparedness for the radical changes that they can expect to face in the coming years. The growing importance of public accountability, burgeoning digital media, the rapid growth in the numbers of people exploring their own identities and histories, and the need to improve public services and facilities for archival material are just some of the demands to be addressed.

Wide consultation has taken the form of written submissions, presentations at three oral evidence hearings and meetings in the nine English regions, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Over 700 people and organisations expressed their views. We have considered evidence from all types of archives (Appendix C contains details of those consulted). It is clear to us that the requirements to preserve and look after the historical record need to be balanced with the overwhelming benefits of increased access. The evidence considered by the Task Force extends well beyond the boundaries of publicly-funded collections and it is clear that there will be occasions within business, specialist and private archives where accessibility will have to be balanced with the requirements of confidentiality of business or personal records. However, there has been support expressed from many quarters that while acknowledging those constraints, the recommendations of this report should embrace the educational and research value of access to the widest range of collections.

Before moving to propose strategy for future action it is important to summarise clearly what are the major opportunities and threats that the Task Force has identified during the progress of its work.



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Demand

The growing interest in personal identity and sense of place is attracting more and more people to explore their heritage and frequently encouraging them to create their own archival resources that might then add to our archival heritage.

We have been impressed by the enjoyment and inspiration that people have gained from their discoveries: from learning about themselves, their past and their place within the wider community; of the pride in creating and maintaining collections without thought to cost or time involved. We have met and heard of many people whose lives have been changed for the better by the experience. This exploration of personal history and identity should be the right of every citizen.

The increasing global interest in local and family history has already been cited and there is no doubt that more and more people will seek the means to learn more about themselves, their families and their homes. It is now a phenomenon reflected in the broadcast and print media and in the explosion of dedicated web-sites. We have been impressed by the social impact made by some of the community archives that we have seen and we believe that there is a great opportunity to encourage this sort of activity. Joining together people with shared interests, identities or histories can be empowering, can help them to gain confidence in their own identities and can support citizenship where the people are disenfranchised or disadvantaged in some way.

There is thus current demand that many archives can hardly meet, an ever-expanding list of priorities for archive services, growing demand from active groups and individuals and a latent demand of unknown (but large) proportions that could, if met, help to achieve key government targets for social inclusion and learning.

Supply

Public archives are well-established through the work of the national archive services, local authority-run record offices, local studies libraries, universities and further education institutions, and the records management services of public organisations. Legislation lays statutory obligations upon some archives although in most cases record-keeping continues to be a voluntary commitment rather than a duty. It is clear that the lack of a common statutory framework militates against consistency across the country especially in terms of the level of investment made by local authorities. As a result, many collections are not adequately catalogued to make them accessible; many premises are not appropriate for their current needs; higher levels of demand could not be satisfied without additional resources and the weaker services are not well placed to respond to the challenging opportunities set out in this report.

Private archival collections are held by countless individuals, societies and organisations. There is also the growth in moving image, sound and photographic archives, many operating as commercial enterprises. The diversity and the priorities of private interest produce a complex mixture that will not lend itself to a simple set of actions for greater co-ordination or for sharing. Indeed, where commercial or self-interest is concerned it may be quite inappropriate to expect any form of public access. On the other hand, many private archives provide public access to parts of their collections, which may provide opportunities to develop further controlled access to non-sensitive items or to develop materials to support a range of learning and social outcomes.

Funding of archives varies across this landscape. Major public funders of services are local authorities, universities, national archive institutions (funded by central and devolved governments) and the Lottery distributors. We believe that to realise the Task Force vision archives will require significant and sustained investment in the longer term. If the public sector is constrained by resources the private sector shares the common need for investment to ensure that collections of potential public interest are



The exploration of personal history and identity should be the right of every citizen.



Our approach has been to develop and propose strategies that can secure impact in the short to medium term to unlock longer-term benefit.

cared for properly and this element of our national heritage is safeguarded for the future.

Moreover all parts of the supply side need adequate support in terms of standards and professional advice. The national archive services in England and Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland already provide considerable support but greater co-ordination will be called for if there is to be increased sharing to meet new demands for archival records of all types, both private and public.

Developing a Strategic Response

Progress on addressing the issues that we have identified (investment needs, domain capacity to respond to changing demands, quality assurance, the benefits of greater integration and co-ordination across archives of all types, innovation and the broader impact that the archives could have on people's lives) depends on recognising what is possible in terms of funding and of capacity at any given time. The Task Force is very well aware that there is currently considerable pressure to resist increased public expenditure without clear evidence to show that new initiatives will help to deliver specific public sector targets. Our approach has been to develop and propose strategies that can secure impact in the short to medium term to unlock longer-term benefit.

The key for archives is the unique value of their collections and the latent demand for what archives can offer to everyone. This represents a powerful opportunity to catch the attention of policymakers especially when set alongside the successful examples of service innovation using information and communications technologies to widen access to services.

At the end of Chapter 1 we stated our vision for the archives domain:

“An archival heritage unlocked and made open to all citizens in a way that engages them and empowers them to use archives for personal, community, social and economic benefit.”

We believe that by focusing on action to advance this vision, real progress can be achieved and significant social value delivered. Long term sustainability will come from engaging as many people as possible with the archival heritage whether for leisure, learning, personal development, business use or community activism. We cannot stress too highly that our recommendations are designed to achieve effective and sustainable access to our national archival heritage wherever it may be, not simply to raise awareness of archives and their services.

Delivering effective, universal access calls for new strategies and techniques that will engage individuals and communities, new skills and service priorities for those working in archives and, of course, additional resources to ensure that they are fit for purpose. However, we are certain that with the commitment of archive workers and archive owners, placing access as the highest priority, the support of funding bodies, partnership and leadership, rapid progress will be possible. We have identified many examples where imaginative approaches to access and innovative responses to popular interests have made it possible for far wider access to services than traditional routes can make possible. Commercial internet-based genealogical services, the work of The National Archives to support the curriculum through the Learning Curve website³ and the co-operative work of public archives to share electronic catalogue records are all examples of where it has been possible to innovate without changing the underlying infrastructure.

While there are no simple or short-term fixes to make this a reality, in the following chapters, the Task Force sets out ways to direct investment and development over the next three years.

3. The National Archives' Learning Curve is an on-line teaching resource, structured to tie in with the History National Curriculum from Key Stages 2 to 5. The Learning Curve contains a varied range of original sources including documents, photographs, film and sound recordings. www.learningcurve.pro.gov.uk

A Strategy for Action

‘The Archives Task Force cannot solve problems but it can describe them and set out routes to solve them.’

22

Dame Stella Rimington, Archives Task Force member





3 Access for All: a Gateway to UK Archives

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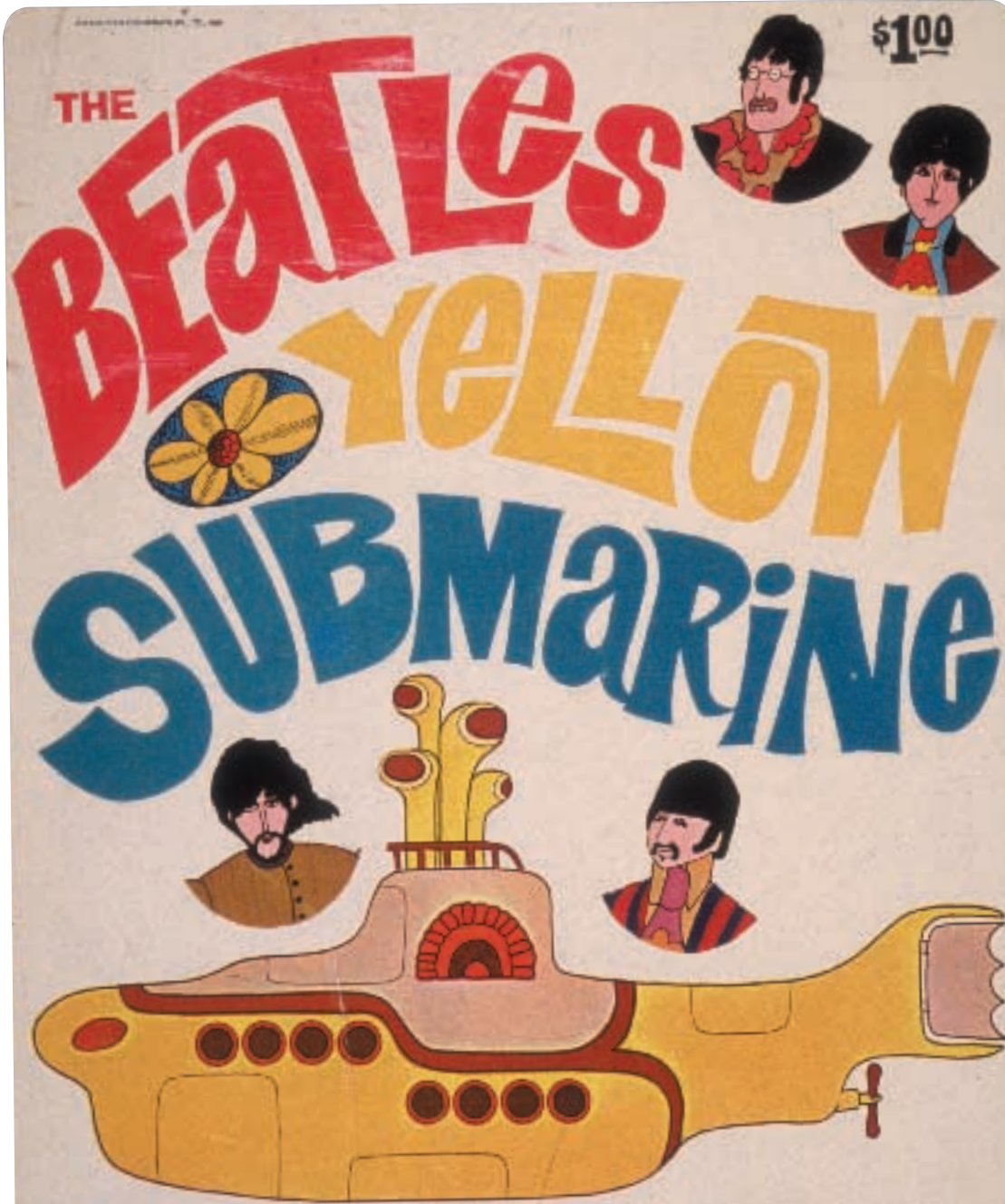
The Archives Gateway will create easy access for all to a treasure house of knowledge.

The archives domain has led the way in developing innovative approaches to maximising the potential of digital networking to deliver real service benefits to all. (Appendix B gives further details of significant activities to widen access to archive collections). The boom in personal interest research, including family history and community history, is phenomenal. Research shows that many users want images of archive material relating to their interests, and archivists across the UK have responded to the internet explosion by trying to put as much content online as possible. All these resources must be brought together to create a spectacularly impressive research resource, by linking them together and making them cross-searchable, delivering information in a variety of ways which the users want.

The proposal in this chapter builds on the findings of a working group established by the Task Force to look at electronic networking issues. Representation included MLA, The National Archives, the National Archives of Scotland, the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, The Joint Information Services Committee and the National Council on Archives. Building on concepts championed by the National Council on Archives and others, the working group and its partners have developed a programme of work called Linking Arms that will form the core element of the Archives Task Force recommendation for the creation of a digital Gateway to lead users of all ages to discover the rich source of knowledge that is the archives of the UK. We have called this the 'Archives Gateway.'

The Archives Gateway will create easy access for all to a treasure house of knowledge. It will lead users through one route to documents, photographs, moving images, sound and oral history recordings illustrating and explaining the life of our nations from earliest times to the present day. The Gateway will gather for the user all the material relating to a specific topic, person or place and from whatever institution contains relevant material.

Our vision is much more than a route to listings of archival records. Significant increases in access to archival records will call in many cases for the creation of digital versions



\$1.00

20

POP-OUT ART DECORATIONS

They're wild, weird, wonderful—but nice, The Yellow Submarine itself... John, Paul, George and Ringo in their new gear... Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band... the Blue Meanie... the Apple Bonker... the Boob... the Snapping Turtle Turk... and more, more, more of the fantastic characters featured in the smash hit movie. Twenty amazing, amusing decorations, printed on special art board in dazzling full color—fun for the family, a delightful gift for a friend. Brighten up your home in the mod mood. Have a pop-out party. Arrange them on a wall, mount them on books, wastebaskets, luggage, whatever. Stand them on a shelf. Make mobiles. It's easy, and fun for young and old. So out out for Pepperland—your fun-cruise on the Yellow Submarine starts here!

of original documents. Digitisation offers new and exciting ways for people to learn, and attract new audiences to the collections of archives, libraries and museums. The British Library's work to put digital copies of historical documents such as Magna Carta and Beowulf online, The National Archives' online censuses, and the New Opportunities Fund's EnrichUK digitisation programme are excellent examples of how traditionally restricted resources have been made available to global audiences. Prioritisation and co-ordination of digitisation needs will be part of our archives development programme.

At the heart of the Archives Gateway will be the digitised signposting and content drawn from archives all over the country either supplied directly or by linkages to existing specialised sources already developed on the web. To encourage take-up use of this content 'services' will be designed to meet a variety of particular user needs, and allow archives to be mediated to meet the requirements of specific users or enquirers. The Archives Gateway is thus a tool to link material and creates context and meaning for enquirers, whether they are a schoolchild, student, local historian, business user or someone reconstructing their family tree.

Promoting Heritage and Culture

Culturenet Cymru is a new body funded by the Welsh Assembly Government and based at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth. It is working to promote Welsh heritage and culture, on the domestic scene and globally via the internet, and to support formal and informal learning. Its work embraces the arts, heritage, sport, tourism and education. The Culturenet Cymru website (www.culturenetcymru.com) provides information in Welsh and English.

Culturenet Cymru has taken over management of Gathering the Jewels, a People's Network project funded by NOF-Digitise that aims to make Wales's cultural resources available online. It brings together for the first time the collections held in Welsh museums, libraries, galleries and record offices.



Culturenet Cymru is using the internet to make accessible all collections held in Welsh museums, libraries and archives

As part of its programme, Culturenet Cymru recently ran the biggest ever online poll in Wales, '100 Welsh Heroes' (won by the firebrand socialist and 'father of the NHS' Aneurin Bevan). It organises family history days to help people trace their family trees, and the digitisation of important Welsh books that are out of print and difficult to locate. During 2004 Culturenet Cymru is running a seminar series on the use of ICT in the culture and heritage sectors in Wales.

The Task Force believes that there is a large pool of people who want to be more than passive users of archives that have been assembled and looked after by professionals. They want to participate in the creation and gathering of collections themselves. This may be on a comparatively modest scale, or community-based, but the Task Force is convinced that such groups have much to offer and can enhance the richness of archives for all. We believe that part of the Archives Gateway should be theirs to develop as they think appropriate, and if they wish, register their collections. For example, connecting the postcard collector on Orkney to the collections of the National Archives of Scotland may add a new dimension to a great, historic collection.

We firmly believe that creating the Archives Gateway will be a stimulus and focus for the development of a coordinated resource of a wide range of archives – moving images, sound, amateur video, music and photographs. Potentially, there are many people keen to develop archives that are especially relevant to modern times. We have heard from those already involved how 'belonging'

to the family of archives nationwide can help them coordinate activities, enhance access to users and take better care of their collections. The Archives Gateway will draw them into the fold to the wider benefit of everybody.

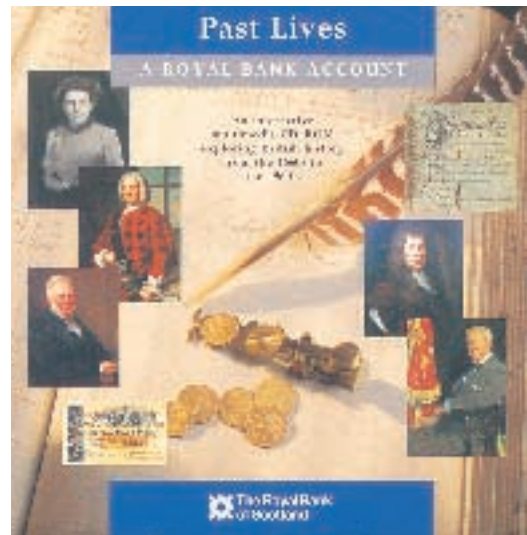
Services could be developed in a number of ways. A 'start here' service might provide a basic introduction to archives and their use and provide links to key websites as the Task Force believes that the Archives Gateway should try to accommodate the needs of all potential users. Some archive websites can only be fully used by those who already have a sophisticated understanding of archives – what they are, how they have come into existence, what they contain, how to search them. 'Start here' might also contain advice on how to form an archive and basic preventative conservation advice for those wanting to know how better to care for their own records.

Curriculum could feature easy-to-follow teaching materials to enable teachers to integrate archival records into all areas of the curriculum. It will describe how schools can engage with their local archive services and how schools can encourage children to work with members of the community to create their own archives and then register them on the Archives Gateway. School work based on archival records may link into several parts of the curriculum (not just history) and stimulate comprehension, analysis and writing skills.

The interactive nature of the Archives Gateway will empower students and their teachers to create school archive collections that are relevant to their own lives and localities. It will provide a practical opportunity to demonstrate the relevance of archives to learning and curriculum-based studies and promote the use and understanding of archives as well as the development of information literacy.

Opening up a 'Knowledge Bank'

The Royal Bank of Scotland Group holds a nationally important collection of documents relating to the activities of its constituent banks over three and a half centuries. For over a decade, the Royal Bank's archivists have



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worked with teachers and other education professionals to make this heritage accessible to schoolchildren through a range of teaching resources.

All the historical information, images and documents and the downloadable materials on the Royal Bank's website derive from its archives and heritage (www.rbs.co.uk/Group_Information/Memory_Bank/Our_Teaching_Resources/default.htm). They support the teaching of national curriculum subject areas: in Scotland, environmental studies and business management, and in England and Wales, Key Stage 2 and 3 history.

Through its Understand Finance programme, the Royal Bank encourages secondary school pupils to learn how to manage their personal finances by providing first-class teaching materials and by supporting teachers' continuous professional development.

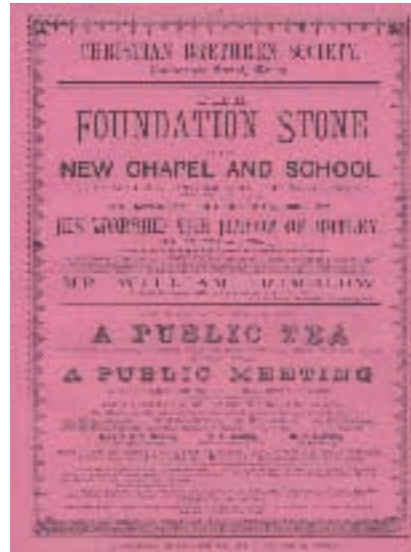
Past Lives: A Royal Bank Account is an interactive CD-ROM that draws on the bank's archive collections to support the teaching of British history from the 1660s to the 1960s. It was developed in association with the former Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum. In 1998 a copy of Past Lives was distributed to every British school attended by 9 to 14 year-olds.

Digital resources are complementary to, and not a replacement for, access to first-hand experiences with archival materials. The excitement for some students in

working with the real materials cannot be underestimated, and can potentially be provided through the existing network of local authority archives. Specialist repositories are also well placed to provide diverse content for teaching materials to engage teachers and thereby young users. Innovative content and projects are already being delivered by a number of archive services through the provision of in-service training, teachers' packs, homework clubs, outreach activities, targeted projects and visits. Building on this investment and releasing the learning potential of the UK's archives will require advocating the role of archives in teaching programmes with educators and teachers.

Engaging teachers and lecturers in the selection and interpretation process provides opportunities for continuing professional development. Raising awareness of archives as a teaching tool to trainee teachers is crucial, as is establishing partnerships with schools and other institutions in order to trial resource packs and teaching sessions. To maximise the learning and education potential of archives will require the establishment of a programme of advocacy, information and training to raise awareness among teaching staff of the potential of archival material to support the curriculum.

A community archives service should be focused very strongly around community use and identity as well as individual users and lifelong learning. It will become a major vehicle to push forward the part that archives can play in promoting social inclusion, citizenship and social justice by using the examples in archives to illuminate contemporary issues. It will be a place where keepers and managers of community-based collections of documents, photographs, and moving image and sound recordings draw attention to their archives and where users will be able to search through linked and cross-related content sets. Interactive facilities will guide and help people to record their stories and memories. Those interested in the archives of particular communities will find them all electronically co-located. The Task Force wishes to engage with grassroots history and its under-resourcing by inviting those involved to share their experiences, their enthusiasms, their histories and the digitised content of their collections in community archives.



Commanet, the community archive network serves as a record of cultural history. Photo: Batley Community Archive

Engaging Creative Communities

Commanet was set up in 2000 to enable communities to create their own archives and publish these in digital form. Using basic IT equipment and COMMA, an easy-to-use software package, groups can digitise and store photographic and video images, text and oral narratives.

These databases are published in CD-ROM and on the Commanet website (www.commanet.org). More than 200 projects are underway in the UK, mostly funded through the Lottery Awards for All scheme and based in community centres, schools, libraries and museums. These projects are successful both in terms of sustainability and in attracting people who might not usually get involved with formal cultural institutions.

The idea for COMMA and Commanet grew out of a local history project in Batley, West Yorkshire, where teacher Chris Levack assembled a photocopy archive of 5,000 family photos brought in by local people. COMMA software was developed by Polkaville, a local software co-operative.

Public bodies are increasingly using community archives to engage with local communities. Examples include projects run by the Children's Society, the National Railway Museum, Norfolk Adult Education Department and CHIN (Canadian Heritage Information Network). Despite its success, Commanet remains a voluntary organisation, run by a small core team with no direct public funding.

Community archives is the place where people of all ages can register their own archive in an electronic catalogue which will link them to like collections; a place where information from the content within the Archives Gateway (and beyond) can be brigaded under topic areas and interpreted or mediated by expert historians, geographers, scientists and archivists to produce learning packages targeted at (researched) needs; a place to convert information into more useful knowledge packets.

The exchange of information on notice boards and the interface and interaction with the public sector part of the archives will – the Task Force believes – open up opportunities for greater awareness of the potential of the widest range of records, new thinking on how these resources can be harnessed for public benefit and partnerships to identify common priorities and seek new sources of funding. There are models of good practice upon which to build, such as The National Archives-led Moving Here⁴, and there are many other local examples. It will be important to co-ordinate activities such as the local authority provision catering for local studies, the national archival institutions' provisions for family history and genealogy studies, and the increasing development of community-based archives as cultural learning resources that can help to sustain cultural diversity. Services could be added or developed in response to demand or available material and resources. The Archives Gateway is an entirely flexible concept.

It is the view of the Task Force that two specialist services should be established at the outset. Business Park will address two clear archival needs: to create a focal point for business archives and to offer the opportunity to engage with the business community. A continuing problem in the UK – a legacy from previous centuries – has been the reluctance to acknowledge the role that commerce and industry play in supporting and developing the fabric of society. However, the archival records of organisations could provide useful learning resources to explain to the rising generation the role of business past and present. Business Park will also be the place where business archives can register themselves and publish information about their collections and communicate with each other virtually, sharing information. Business Park will foster

links with public archives and key customer constituencies such as schools.

Tourist Central will help develop and encourage the growing ancestry tourism business by offering guidance to overseas visitors on how best to prepare for a family history visit to the United Kingdom and how best to plan their time while they are here. It will enable tourist authorities to assemble family history content which will help potential visitors plan their trips as ancestry tourism continues to be a growth point within the tourist industry.

All Just a Click Away: the Gateway to UK Archives ...

- Content storehouse, navigation tool, electronic map
- One-stop shop for archival knowledge and advice
- Virtual world where the local community archive will stand shoulder to shoulder with national archives collections
- Rich content for study, work, hobbies, family history or location and communities
- Major agent for 21st century learning using the Knowledge Web and virtual learning environments to link to teachers and students
- Curriculum, project work, lifelong learning support for children and families
- Prepare for visits to the source material in archives and records offices
- Foster citizenship and community identity through a growing fabric of community groups and archives.
- Celebrate cultural diversity and cultural histories to be valued and respected
- Grow new genres of archive – sound archives, digital, film, video archives – and enable electronic communities of interest and expertise to develop
- Museums, Libraries and Archives Council in partnership with key stakeholder agencies
- Cost-effective solution utilising existing infrastructure and personnel where possible

The Wider Digital Environment

We must make quite clear why we believe that the first priority is access to archival records, and not the identification of particular archival institutions. Anyone involved in the creation of digital resources and services or using them will be well aware that searching for information and knowledge no longer begins with the identification of a particular institution, whether archive, library or museum. A simple search using an internet commercial search engine soon demonstrates the rich diversity of institutions and individuals offering information, whether good, bad or indifferent.

Given the wide distribution of resources that may only be related by the needs of a particular user, an important task of the Archives Gateway will be to focus on subject and relevance. For the searcher new to a subject, it is only at the point where the search is refined to a small number of digital objects, or collection signposts, that they may need to be aware of the institution that holds the archive, object or collection. For maximum accessibility, this practical reality must underpin the design of Archives Gateway and will align it within the broader development framework for networked information services. It will not, of course, exclude the direct, institutional approach of the purposive researcher.

The ambition is to make easily available for the first time in one place access to collections of documents, moving images, sound and oral history recordings, photographs, digital records, objects, books and other documents explaining the histories, cultures and creativity which together make up the picture of the nation, past and present. This ambition already underpins the development of the Linking Arms work programme, the EnrichUK project and most recently the work of the national Common Information Environment Group in which MLA and The National Archives share membership with Higher and Further Education, the National Health Service, the British Library, the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (Becta), The Stationery Office, Culture Online and the e-Science Core Programme. The Gateway to Archives would build on all the developmental work already done within the archives domain and fits into

both the Common Information Environment Group's proposed technical specification and its planned outcomes.

The approach meets all the requirements we have defined for the Archives Gateway. It is specifically intended to gather resources from a variety of sources on the basis of what is the best fit for the user. Thus the first-time searcher need not know about archives generally or specifically to obtain useful information as part of a search. Most importantly the system makes it possible to widen the range of content and 'sharpen' searches much more than conventional search engines are able to do. This means that it is possible to present archival resources to a range of existing online services and thus add value to them at marginal cost. Examples of this might be the increased availability of archival information through educational assets such as Curriculum Online or tourism services such as VisitBritain.com. There would be mutual benefit since wider audiences would be reached through the marketing and development activities of other service providers while those providers would have the richness of the archival heritage available to them.

Given the emerging umbrella framework of the Common Information Environment Group it is possible for investment in the Archives Gateway to be focused in a number of critical areas that will bring rapid benefits to potential users and to the archive services themselves. These areas are:

- Connecting all publicly-funded archives to broadband and providing appropriate hardware and training in use if required (could use the MLA People's Network development programme model)
- Market studies to establish priorities for user demand and identify potential partners
- Programmes to digitise archival documents focused on popular themes and topics (could be based on the EnrichUK model)
- Programmes to signpost significant collections through appropriate description
- New services, for example, learning packages for the purposive archival resource user, learning resources



It is possible to present archival resources to a range of existing online services and thus add value to them at marginal cost.

for formal education, packages to support particular communities of interest

Programmes already exist that could encompass these areas and there is no new fundamental research or development required to implement them. Thus, given the necessary investment, programme start up will be very rapid.

Looking Forward to the Knowledge Web

MLA is implementing a campaign of advocacy (Investing in Knowledge) that includes within it a proposal to use the Common Information Environment approach to create seamless access to the collections and services of museums, libraries and archives in the way that is proposed for archival collections within the Archives Gateway. This proposal – the Knowledge Web – if successful, will offer to everyone an amazing storehouse of knowledge of all types. Programmes such as the creation of technical infrastructure and digitisation will call for new investment, but within the existing work programme of MLA there is the potential to pilot user environments and undertake the planning and programme development that will be necessary. The Task Force therefore believes that while success will only come from broad support across the whole of the domain and beyond, through partnership collaboration, MLA and The National Archives must lead jointly the planning and implementation of the Gateway.

The Archives Gateway would bring to the Knowledge Web the means to enable users to search for the material relating to a specific place, person, topic etc. and bring it together for the user without their needing to know the prior existence of archives, and to enable those resources to be integrated with others from museums and libraries. Users can search from school, home or through the People's Network terminals in libraries.

Of course, the Task Force's vision is not simply one of several reservoirs of raw information. The rounded

programme of development proposed by the Knowledge Web offers much more, creating user environments designed to match particular styles of searching and learning, providing context and meaning for the enquirer whether schoolchild, student, local historian, business person or someone exploring their own interests. The whole purpose is to match the right resources to the searchers' particular needs without their need to know about supply mechanisms. Providing that search mechanisms are sufficiently flexible and sophisticated, it is only once the resources have been presented to the user that it matters where the information has come from. We are convinced that as richer, more relevant information is provided and more digital surrogates are created, many users will become more purposive in their behaviour and wish to explore more deeply.

How will this be Implemented?

It is certain that much of this will be done in partnership between the archives community and others. For, example, services to support education will be developed within the context of Curriculum Online and other learning projects. And partnerships will certainly help long-term sustainability through funding and a sense of ownership by the particular partnership mix. However, to enable the Archives Gateway to become a reality will require strong leadership, commitment from all parts of the archives domain and tangible support from stakeholders and funders in the UK.

There will of course be technical challenges. The National Archives and the National Council on Archives are already investigating how best to link together the existing professional networks. Much of the necessary knowledge is already out there and ready to be tapped for the benefit of archives and their users. It requires only the marshalling of that knowledge to meet those needs.

Recommendation One

Create a Gateway to UK Archives which would give everyone the opportunity to participate in the archival heritage (see also Appendix B: Archive networking developments to date).

Action 1

The creation of technical infrastructure within archives

- Connecting publicly-funded archives to the internet through broadband
- Information and communications technology training for archive workers
- Agree technical standards for the Gateway

Action 2

Market studies to establish priorities for user demand and identify potential partners

Action 3

Programmes to digitise archival documents focused on popular themes and topics

Action 4

Programmes to signpost significant collections through collection level description

Action 5

New services for the archival user, for example, packages to support particular communities of interest (children, students, tourists and businesses)

Much of the necessary knowledge is already out there and ready to be tapped for the benefit of archives and their users.

4. Moving Here funded through the New Opportunities Fund Digitise strand of the People's Network programme. It is a database of digitised photographs, maps, objects, documents and audio items from 30 local and national archives, museums and libraries which record migration experiences of the last 200 years. www.movinghere.org.uk

4 Developing Archives and Audiences

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Archives are a source of creativity for writers, designers, architects, film-makers and school children. They support the creative economy by providing a source of inspiration.

However sophisticated the Archives Gateway is in attracting people to use and explore our archival heritage, it will only ever be as good as the various services, organisations, groups and individuals providing the raw material and the professional support. That fact is certainly true in the presentation of material for those searching for information remotely, where they will need trusted and skilled help to gain confidence and long-term benefit, but it is just as true of the physical collections of archives.

The Archives Gateway is a user-friendly means of entering the world of the archive, but the enthusiast may want to visit the collections at some stage. Moreover, if we are to build a network that is able to capture the present for the future, we believe it is essential that the network embrace collections of all types and, where necessary, positive action is taken to encourage the creation of centres where new media can be preserved safely and made accessible to potential users.

This chapter will address these issues by looking at awareness raising, highlight the economic value of archives and records management activity (including commercial activities), analyse how archives can be supported to stimulate learning opportunities, and identify a number of particular collection-types that will require specific positive support actions.

Advocacy for Archives and Profile Raising

A review of the position of archives in the UK must emphasise the issue of their perception within the political and wider public profile. Despite the issues of citizens' rights, community identity and the potential for education and life-long learning they contain, archives have so far largely failed to win the attention of politicians and policy makers. For example, a comparison of political and policy profile demonstrates that archives are the least well-known domain within the sector supported by MLA and similar results are found in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. While profile-raising work has been carried out by bodies such as the National Council on Archives, and in England,



the Regional Agencies for museums, libraries and archives and the network of Regional Archive Councils, the Task Force proposes that further profile-raising and advocacy programmes should be developed to ensure that the UK's archival inheritance is better understood by policymakers. This could form a component of a marketing and advocacy plan that could co-ordinate the promotion of the domain within wider programmes of action, such as MLA's Investing in Knowledge campaign.

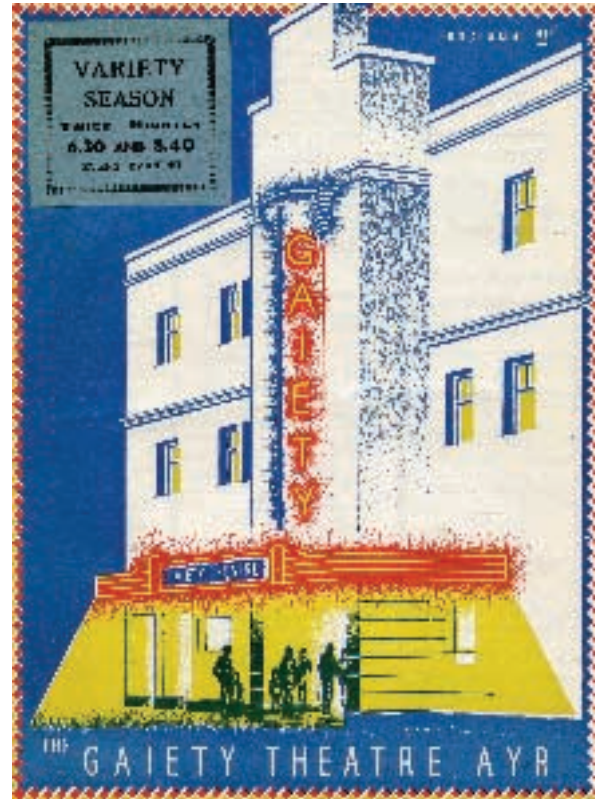
Campaigns such as the successful 2003 Archive Awareness Month are welcome in that they represent new and imaginative ways of trying to tackle this issue. However lessons from individual initiatives should now be fed into a strategic review out of which should be developed a Marketing Plan for archives in the UK.

Promoting Awareness Month

Led by The National Council on Archives, Archive Awareness Month in September 2003 was the first co-ordinated effort by the archives domain to address its low public profile. Its main objectives were to raise awareness of how archives are relevant today, and to encourage non-users to participate in events.

Under a national marketing campaign on the theme of "Love and Hate", more than 475 events took place, from the Highlands to Penzance, from Cork to Lowestoft, involving more than 200 organisations. The key message, conveyed by the strapline "Everyone has a history and we've got a bit of yours", was that archives are open, accessible and have something to offer everyone.

Archive Awareness month was a real success. Evaluation revealed that over 41% of participants had never visited an archive before, and 40% thought that the event had changed their perception of archives. After attending a Writing a Parish History workshop at Salford Diocesan Archives, one new archive user commented, "There is a very human dimension to archives. It is about people and it is for people."



This Gaiety Theatre Programme was displayed at Ayrshire Archives as part of the 'Archives on Stage' exhibition. Photo: Ayrshire Archives

Economic Development

Creativity

Archives are a source of creativity for writers, designers, architects, film-makers and school children. They support the creative economy by providing a source of inspiration. Material derived from archives have inspired designers in the production of textiles, carpets, wallpapers and other furnishings. Each year millions of people experience the richness of UK audio-visual and other archive collections through presentations and educational work and through the incorporation of film footage and archival images into television programmes. These collections provide knowledge and entertainment and touch people's lives in cinemas, classrooms, community centres, art centres, universities, museums, libraries, on television and on the internet.

Regeneration and Renewal

A continuing problem in attracting new audiences to archives is the condition and location of building stock. Often buildings are old and in poor condition, which can

create an unappealing impression, and often offer poor facilities for effective stewardship of collections. Whilst recognising the significant investment made by some local authorities in archives over the past ten years (for example the recent Essex Record Office), current levels of support by those responsible for managing local services must be maintained. An overall uplift in core funding would radically transform UK archives. As an aspirational goal, capital investment in the order of £30–£50 million for upgrades of premises over the next five to ten years would revitalise archives for all.

Increasingly, new archive buildings, may be funded by grant support from the Heritage Lottery Fund or by local authorities. Many have been developed in partnership with other public services such as museums, exhibition spaces, cafes and meeting rooms. The locations of these centres are acting as a catalyst for renewal in areas of regeneration and can provide opportunities for employment, training and learning for local people. Good examples include the Surrey History Centre, Norfolk Record Office (and the East Anglian Film Archive), The Women's Library and the Yorkshire Film Archive (sharing accommodation with The College of York St. John, a higher education learning centre). The 2001 Survey of Visitors to British Archives by the Public Services Quality Group found that for 87% of users, visiting the archive was their main purpose for visiting an area, and while there 29% ate out locally, 36% used local shops and services and 18% visited other places of interest, supporting local economic growth.

Developing IT Training

Over the last 25 years, Glasgow University Archive Services (GUAS) has been involved with various government-funded initiatives to provide a range of IT training opportunities. These have largely been aimed at local unemployed people, including university graduates, who can benefit from new skills learned in a workplace environment.

A recent development centres on the University of Glasgow's in-house Universal Training Solutions team, which provides facilities for ECDL (European Computer



IT training opportunities at Glasgow University Archives Service are helping unemployed people back into work

Driving Licence) training. By creating work placements for students who have completed their ECDL course, GUAS provides a career stepping-stone from basic IT training to archives work.

So far, through 15 work placements, the scheme has led to three graduates becoming archivists. Angie Thomson comments, "The GUAS placement has allowed me to change my career path in a direction that I knew I wanted to go but could not see how to get there."

The scheme also benefits GUAS by bringing new talent into the archives services. Says Director of GUAS, Lesley Richmond, "We can provide the training and experience that people require to apply for professional training opportunities, while the archives profession gains new recruits who bring 'real' experience of record creation and management."

Tourism

As the UK's sixth largest industry, tourism is a crucial component of the country's economy. VisitBritain, the organisation that markets Britain to the rest of the world, estimates that the volume of inbound tourism will increase by 3.3 per cent in 2004, taking the total number of visitors to 25.5 million. The value of inbound tourism is forecast to grow in 2004 to £12.3 billion.



An interest in the past transcends social boundaries: in this respect archives are socially inclusive institutions.

The Archives Gateway ... could play an important part in any campaign to promote the attractions of the UK as a heritage tourist destination.

The ancestral tourism market has local, regional and national potential. Family History is one of the fastest growing recreational interests in the world and is in the top five of the most popular topics for internet searching. Many people have a strong urge to visit the places where their ancestors lived, and research has emphasised the importance in the visitor experience of visiting places of origin and the excitement of touching original documents. Ancestral tourism has been recognised as a significant niche market, and one with growth potential for both public and commercial sectors. Archives have responded by developing websites such as ScotlandsPeople.gov.uk, the official government source of genealogical data for Scotland, to support these needs.

Archives have a central role to play in the development of this market, attracting overseas visitors, and improving the quality of visitor experience. The Archives Gateway, with easy access to all kinds of archives will be certain to encourage greater ancestry tourism, and provide additional opportunities to attract new visitors and new investment. It could play an important part in any campaign to promote the attractions of the UK as a heritage tourist destination. In Scotland, genealogical tourism is recognised as an important contributor to local economic growth and in Northern Ireland it is being seen as an area for rapid development.

Commercial Activities

There is evidence that many archives work to turn their collections to commercial advantage, to generate income. Enterprise activities such as paid research services, publishing, the sale of books, images (through image libraries) and related historical and heritage merchandise have all been successfully used for income generation. Large-scale operations such as those run by The National Trust have developed this into a thriving business. The National Archives has developed highly sophisticated corporate and commercial activities, ranging from image and brand licensing to publishing, retailing and venue hire. Commercial film archives and national and regional film and television archives have raised revenue through sales of copies of images and footage to the media.

We suggest that all archives must be encouraged to explore appropriate opportunities to enhance visitor experiences and to create much-needed income.

Commercial opportunity has also been realised through the development of paid-for online services. A number of publicly funded and run archives have taken the view that cost recovery and profit should be achieved for such extra services. Customer research shows that the market (largely composed of 'leisure' family historians) expects and is willing to pay for such services. There is much commercial competition for services specifically tailored for this market (e.g. www.ancestry.com), and within this context, charged services provided by the public sector represent a fair deal to the user, whilst boosting revenue for the service.

Many of these developments have taken place in larger institutions. We recognise that for other institutions there will be barriers to the development of such added-value services, such as:

- Capacity: small archives (often run on a shoestring budget with one or two staff) are unable to devote time to such schemes and initiatives
- Cost: high initial outlay and start-up costs are beyond the reach of many archives
Planning constraints: Archives are unable to plan
- long-term; e.g. local authorities want to see immediate returns on investment rather than longer-term five year returns
- Incentive: there is often little incentive for archives to generate income as financial regulations mean that income earned does not accrue directly to the service. Charities also face particular issues over income generation activities.

Archives need to be supported to explore these issues and partnership is a solution to overcoming these barriers. One model might be to establish a Business Development Forum to encourage innovation, share expertise and formulate partnerships for service delivery.

Information Management

We strongly believe that records managers and archivists across the UK are making a real difference to business economy and efficiency by managing information effectively, and ensuring businesses meet their legislative record-keeping obligations. Records management programmes (dealing with the creation, maintenance, use and disposal of records and making the information they contain available in support of day-to-day business) make sound fiscal sense in both the private and public sector. This is essential with the growing complexity of digital information where the risk of long-term loss is real. A recent report from AXA Insurance suggests 80% of businesses affected by a major incident never reopen or cease trading within 18 months. Effective back-up plans to preserve business data can ensure that business is up and running again within hours.

Recommendation Two

Position UK archives as key contributors to national, social and economic objectives.

Action 1

Create a UK Archives Strategic Marketing Plan as the means of co-ordinating the promotion of and developing audiences for archives

Action 2

Co-ordinate a programme of evidence gathering on archives and their contribution to local, regional and national, social and economic objectives (to be used as part of the wider advocacy campaign for archives)

Action 3

Develop a programme of advocacy to promote the value of archives in support of the social and learning agendas and to develop professional awareness

Action 4

Establish a Business Development Group for innovation and partnership to assist archives to maximize commercial opportunities



Hampshire Record Office Educational Service is making archives more accessible to adults and children through practical activities

Learning and Social Inclusion

Archives – like museums and libraries – can provide resources and stimulation for personal development through education and learning. People can draw inspiration from material in archives and use it to help them with formal or informal learning or enjoy an absorbing recreational interest. Every visit paid by the one and a half million people who visit archives each year is a learning experience, whatever their age or level of educational attainment. Each venture into the mass of documents or images is a personally-structured research journey, in which the user learns how to assemble, analyse and interpret evidence; getting to grips with new ways of living and thinking.

Archives have a valuable contribution to make in enriching the national curriculum – studying history is a significant work area for key stage 2 students. Archives can help to understand local communities and provide both teachers and pupils with a sense of place within their local area and within history. An example of good practice in this area can be found in Gloucestershire Record Office where a CD-Rom (funded through the Department for Education and Skills Museums and Galleries Education Programme) has been developed and piloted to support the study of local history. Archives can be used to help groups at risk of social exclusion by offering unusual but imaginative routes to engagement with their lives and the wider community, and can provide innovative and creative content for basic skills work with both children and adults. Archives clearly have much to offer and tools such as the MLA's Inspiring

Learning for All framework can be used to transform the way in which archives engage users in learning.

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Boosting Basic Skills

Hampshire Record Office is looking at how its work can contribute to adult basic skills provision. It runs regular 'beginners' sessions for people new to using archives, as well as education workshops for schools and colleges. It has also been involved in projects aimed at improving access to archival materials, including Landlord to Labourer (an Access to Archives project) and the Wider Access to Film project, based on Wessex Film and Sound Archive.

The beginners sessions were set up following requests from user groups. They provide guidance on using the record office's services, and show how archives can help to improve adult literacy. Introductory sessions explore family and local history, using original archival materials. The sessions help to develop writing, reading, search and research skills. Education Officer David Bond comments, "We wouldn't necessarily think that we're teaching basic skills, but in reality we are."

Can working with archives inspire adults to improve their basic literacy skills? "Absolutely," says David Bond, "because the documents relate to real people, they're quite often stories people can look at and stories that have a relevance today." Hampshire Record Office is developing its support for adult basic skills by making links with adult and family learning providers.

Interaction with local archives has provided positive experiences for young people in raising personal aspirations and developing the value of their local environment. Local and community archives act as a stimulus for understanding personal heritage in the context of their locality. Projects such as the Black History Project run by Lambeth Archives have been designed to dispel stereotypical views of black people and to foster interest and pride among local communities.



Westminster City Archives hold records of diverse cultural history, such as this Indian Army victory march in 1919. Photo: City of Westminster Archives Centre

Raising Cultural Awareness

Westminster City Archives wanted to fill a gap in the history of Westminster over the past 500 years by gathering material relating to the district's black community. Community organisations collaborated on a lively programme of events under the banner "Celebrating the Black Presence in Westminster 1500–2000."

The project produced learning resources, including resource packs, a CD-ROM and an online exhibition, which were circulated free to all Westminster schools, libraries and community centres. A programme of events for Black History Month included school visits to the Archives Centre and outreach visits by the Archive Education Officer. There were events at libraries and community centres, seminars for employers and adult education classes.

The project addressed concerns about how black people are represented in the media, in school and in society. It emphasised positive images of black people and helped to establish new links between the archives and black communities. A report on the project concluded that schools welcomed the "high-quality and useful resources" it created and noted that, "The local relevance of the sources seemed to be particularly important, providing

information that teachers did not previously have access to and a highly motivating factor for the children."

Another significant area for archives is in enabling teachers to maintain specialist subject knowledge as part of their continuing professional development. Such benefits touch objectives of organisations such as the Department for Education and Skills (formal education, lifelong learning, adult basic skills, personal development) and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (social exclusion, neighbourhood renewal) and the aspirations and policies of the devolved administrations. It is therefore important for action to be taken to raise awareness within those organisations about the value of the work of archives and also to inform archive professionals of the importance of developing their services to engage with these social agendas.

Recommendation Three

Release the potential of archives to enrich and enhance teaching and learning and contribute to raising standards in education.

Action 1

Work with stakeholders to develop programmes that will raise awareness of the value of 'hands on' experience of the archival heritage. Engage teachers in the processes of interpretation to maintain and develop specialist subject knowledge.

Action 2

Develop learning resources for formal education.

Connecting with Communities

Using archives to study the history of a community, or a community group creating a record of their lives and environments are both ways that can help people come together. Some archive services have long-established programmes of community development work. We have found clear examples of good practice, for example, the London Metropolitan Archives has a long tradition of working with the Jewish community in London to preserve and celebrate its heritage and many archives support



This young Protestant football team played against their Catholic neighbours, despite a divided community. Photo: Star of the Seas, under 15s, Twinbrook, including Bobby Sands

Black History Month with a creative and diverse range of activities. Work by Commanet, and The Linking Arms Community Access to Archives Project are developing our understanding of this important area of work. The Task Force firmly believes that such initiatives should be a priority for publicly-funded services.

Community Archives

Community archives are hard to define. The Task Force has found evidence of geographical, cultural and thematic communities of interest. The growth of community archives has been an important development in recent years, and has part stemmed from a desire by individuals and groups to record and share culturally diverse experiences and stories. This grassroots movement is an expression of the often strongly felt need to celebrate, record, and rebuild the sense of community in our lives today. The creation of such collections which can contain photographs, moving images, ephemera, personal documents and papers and oral history contributes to the making of local or community history itself and adds a new and rich source to the work of publicly-funded archive services.

Contributing to Community Cohesion

The ability of Commanet projects (see page 28) to give a new slant to local heritage and bring people together is illustrated by Twinbrook Community Archive, based on a nationalist housing estate in Belfast. Here volunteer archivists have garnered a wealth of material relating to both Protestant and Catholic community memory.

Founder member of the Twinbrook archive, John McPhillips, sees it as a resource for helping young people to understand their area's history, in particular the sectarian conflict that has shaped it since the early 1970s. Despite the difficulties of overcoming this history of conflict, there are hopes that community archiving could help to heal divided communities. At the Ulster People's College, Karen McCartney provides support for Commanet groups in Northern Ireland. She envisages a future role for Commanet in "building up community confidence and building up networks through which people can share stories."

Internationally, there's widespread interest in what Commanet offers to divided or isolated communities. A project in Cyprus is using COMMA software to promote reconciliation between Greek and Turkish communities. The Canadian Heritage Information Network is using a version of COMMA software to enable 500 voluntary museums to create on-line 'exhibits' for the Virtual Museum of Canada.

The Task Force wants to encourage the growth of such collections. This is a 'bottom up' movement that will embed the importance of archives in the minds of many and help create one of the most dynamic elements in the Archives Gateway. The Task Force is fully committed to the principle that the resources in community archival collections should be accessible to everyone, and that archives in the community are as important to society as those in public collections.

We therefore propose the establishment of a network of regional Community Archive Liaison Officers to encourage individual and community management participation and promote the sharing of expertise, skills and enthusiasm with the professional sector, and develop appropriate approaches to access. There is much that the professional archival community can give in terms of knowledge and understanding of practical technical and historical issues and much that can be mutually gained through partnerships between the wider community, community archives and the established archive domain.



Nicky Sugar with students from the Royal Free Hospital School in 2000.
Photo: Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust

Recommendation Four

Increase community participation in UK archive activities with particular focus on engaging hard-to-reach communities.

Action 1

Investigate the establishment of, and pilot Community Archive Liaison Officers to support the development of community archives and foster links between existing archives and record offices and the wider community.

Developing Collections for the 21st Century

Business, Private and Specialist Archives

Where constraints of confidentiality and legal regulation allow, many businesses, private sector and other specialist organisations make their archives available to the public for study without receiving any public funding. The Task Force welcomes this participation as organisations outside the public and government domain are a rich source of archival material. For example, changes in UK businesses over the last thirty years have put many records at risk and these are an increasingly important part of our archival heritage. The Task Force recognises and values business and specialist archives, including moving image and sound archives, as an integral part of the culture, heritage and information assets of the UK and wishes to see these

archives strengthened. It acknowledges the potential for greater involvement of the business sector and the potential for linking businesses to schools enabling students to explore how organisations impact on the community and on the economy.

Supporting Classroom Learning

Long stays in hospital can be miserable for children, not only because they're missing home but also through their separation from school life. Using the hospital's own collections of documents, photographs, registers and uniforms, archive staff at London's Royal Free Hospital devised a programme of history lessons for the children's ward school.

The Royal Free's archivist Nicky Sugar helped teachers to develop lesson plans including literacy and numeracy elements. Classes were held in the wards and, for children well enough to go there, at the hospital's archive centre. Lessons were punctuated by 'detective tasks', in which children used the archives and artefacts to make their own discoveries.

Children learned useful skills, and archive and teaching staff saw how the archive could be used in new ways. Nicky Sugar said, "I was keen to make links between the archive and the community, and I realised that it's not very often that you have a school and an archive under the same roof ... It was a difficult group, because of all the different needs the children had, but we could see it helping to give them new confidence." There are plans for a new series of lessons in 2004.

Connecting Corporate Memories

BT's Connected Earth project, launched in 2002, represents a unique collaboration between the corporate, public and independent heritage sectors. It shows how creative solutions to providing access to a physical collection – in this case the collection of telecommunications artefacts amassed by BT and its predecessors – can combine the traditional strengths of



Children at Brampton Manor School, East London, try the Education Centre on BT's Connected Earth for themselves. Photo: BT Archives

archival and museum displays with the new possibilities opened up by information technology.

The project was developed following the closure of the former BT Museum at Blackfriars, London – which attracted only 26,000 visitors each year. Under Connected Earth, the Museum's 40,000 artefacts were distributed among nine museums around the UK with existing 'communications' collections, to widen access beyond those able to visit London. BT is funding new galleries at seven of these sites.

A parallel major strand of BT's £6 million investment in Connected Earth is the creation of a web-based virtual museum (www.connected-earth.com), which contains thousands of images with accompanying information. www.connected-earth.com showcases BT's archive and artefact collections, arranging them in themes or 'journeys', through which users can follow the story of human communications from the earliest times to the digital age. The website provides multimedia resources including film clips, oral history interviews, games and educational projects linked to the different national curriculum key stages. Most importantly, it is available at any time to anyone anywhere in the world who has internet access.

Connected Earth is managed by BT's corporate memory team, which also has responsibility for the company's archive collections. BT continues to maintain its archives in-house, and BT Archives has begun the major task of integrating the former BT Museum's documentary collections. By investing in the maintenance of its artefact collection within national museums, while retaining responsibility for the company's important archival information assets in-house, BT believes Connected Earth represents a model for the responsible management and future preservation of a corporate heritage collection within a secure, sustainable framework.

"Connected Earth represents an unrivalled opportunity to support the government drive to increase access to our heritage collections, combining two of BT's greatest strengths – our long history with our technical innovation and excellence."

David Hay, Head of Corporate Memory, BT

The Task Force supports the development of inclusive strategies for specialist, business and private archives to promote access, ensure effective stewardship of collections, and ensure that all archives are engaged in archive domain initiatives where appropriate. The strategies must be developed collaboratively with the strong engagement of the owners of the private archives. The Task Force endorses the creation of environments (such as informal fora and e-networks) for owners and custodians of publicly-accessible specialist archives to empower such archives and to share experience. This approach could inform the development of strategies for business, private and specialist archives.

Preserving and Developing Private Collections

There are many smaller archives which have come into being for a variety of reasons. Many of these collections receive high standards of care and remain in-situ precisely because their owners regard them as being worthy of



The new Yorkshire Film Archive premises are part of the Foundation Learning Centre, York

preservation, and are motivated by a belief that it is important to preserve and share these historical assets. However, we recognize that even the best arrangements may not be stable in the long term if they are dependent on one generation of a family or the continued profitability of a business. The owners of private archives are free to do with them as they will and this material remains at risk. Other collections are at risk because they are not recognised as such by their holding bodies (whose principal objective may be entirely unrelated to their accumulation of archives), or because their holding bodies no longer wish to retain them and there is no obvious alternative home for them.

One option might be for private institutional owners of archives (specialist repositories) who make them available for study in the public interest to be eligible in certain circumstances for funding incentives/tax concessions to assist them in the care and maintenance of their holdings to professional standards and in the provision of access facilities. The recent Goodison Review of tax treatment for collections donated to the nation includes a number of suggestions which would improve the management of such transfers in the future.

The Task Force suggests that it is essential that the rescue role of key archive organisations such as the British Records Association, The National Cataloguing Unit for the Archives of Contemporary Scientists, (based at the University of Bath), The Business Archives Council and The Business Archives Council of Scotland be further strengthened. The Task Force strongly advocates collaboration and partnership between such agencies and the Heritage Lottery Fund, The National Archives, the British Library, national museums, the Regional Agencies for museums, libraries and archives and devolved administrations, to develop activities such as surveys of vulnerable collections (for example those relating to

scientists, architects, archaeological archive collections, and medical collections) and the capacity to respond to threats to collections at risk.

Recommendation Five

Encourage business, private and specialist archives to develop as integrated component parts of our heritage.

Action 1

Develop national strategies for business, private and specialist archives.

Action 2

Support the creation of learning tools helping bridge the gap between formal education and the business world.

Action 3

Investigate financial and/or tax incentives to support private institutional archives that are made available for public study.

Action 4

Create mechanisms for rapid response to threats to collections at risk.

Action 5

Create environments to bring together businesses, private owners and specialist archives to support preservation and development of such collections.

Moving Image and Sound Archives

Concurrently with the work of the Task Force a UK-wide Audiovisual Archives Strategy has been developed. The strategy (led by the Film Archive Forum and the British Library Sound Archive, and funded by MLA)⁵ is a blueprint for audiovisual archival development across the UK. The strategy concludes that because of a lack of public policies designed to provide a strategic framework for the development and sustainability of the audiovisual archive sector, it has not benefited from the same kind of public investment in its preservation, documentation and its availability to the public.

The Archives Task Force supports the key recommendations of the Strategy. Audiovisual archives and stakeholders should come together to develop an



The Bangladeshi Youth and Cultural Shomiti learn how to record interviews to chart the history of their community at the East Midlands Oral History Archive

audiovisual archive forum, to develop funding, communicate best practice and advocate for this sector of the archives domain, and work closely with national archive bodies across the UK. In addition a framework for institutional provision should be created in which national, regional and local responsibilities are defined in relation to each other and to ensure comprehensive coverage for sound and moving image archive activity throughout the UK.

Recording People's Histories

The East Midlands Oral History Archive (EMOHA) is a partnership between the Centre for Urban History at the University of Leicester, Leicestershire County Council and Leicester City Museums and Library Services. Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the project has established the first large-scale oral history archive for Leicestershire & Rutland. As well as bringing together more than 20 existing collections, it has generated new oral history recordings through its own programme of interviewing.

In October 2003 EMOHA ran an oral history training day for a group of 11 to 14 year-olds from the Bangladeshi Youth and Cultural Shomiti. The young people were introduced to the use of recording equipment and taught how to structure oral history interviews. "What they wanted to do," says Research and Outreach Officer Colin Hyde, "was to come up with questions they could ask the elders in the Bangladeshi community about how coming to Britain had changed things for them. I was pretty impressed by their list."

The services provided by EMOHA include advice, training and support for community groups, museums and heritage organisations, students and other individuals who are interested in developing their own projects. Recordings are deposited in the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland.

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Digital Archives

At virtually every stage of the Task Force's investigations, archivists, records managers and users have told of the challenges of digital preservation to make sure that the records of today, created in digital form (and often existing only in digital form), will be preserved for future generations like their paper predecessors. This is a challenge of great importance if we are to be able to call to account in the future those who make decisions on our behalf or who take actions that affect our own lives and those of our children. The Task Force welcomes the work of The National Archives, (which is leading the way on developing electronic records management activities), the Digital Preservation Coalition and Regional Agencies for museums, libraries and archives, which are working together to co-ordinate approaches to address these issues, including proposals for pilot projects within the English regions. It is clear that archives cannot address these alone, and only through partnerships will sustainable solutions be found and implemented.

Recommendation Six

Encourage the creation and sustainability of moving image, sound, photographic and digital archives through support for relevant strategies.

Action 1

Support the implementation the UK Audiovisual Archives Strategy developed by the Audiovisual Archive Strategy Steering Group.

Action 2

Encourage regional partnership strategies for the sustainable management and preservation of digital records.

5 Modernisation and Workforce Development

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It is not just a question of financial investment but an intellectual investment that will require significant re-evaluation of attitudes, perceptions and priorities.

Extensive consultation by the Task Force has identified significant areas for development – modernisation, education and learning, sustainability and participation – to achieve the vision of an archival heritage fully revealed and open to all citizens. This will require targeted and strategic investment to make a real long-term difference to services for users and to the care of the UK’s archival heritage. It is not just a question of financial investment but an intellectual investment that will require significant re-evaluation of professional attitudes, perceptions and priorities.

This will mark a new way of working, new ways of delivering services and new ways of user involvement. It is a challenge that many in the archive domain are already championing through innovative and creative projects. The Regional Agencies for museums, libraries and archives, the Regional Archive Councils, the Scottish Council on Archives and the Archives Council Wales have all made significant contributions to progress.

Challenges

Archives, as organisations that are in the business of collecting and preserving the records of the past in perpetuity, must themselves possess stability and viability. Stewardship, which encompasses collections management, preservation and conservation, cataloguing and documentation, building management and standards, is the cornerstone on which access to the UK’s unique and diverse cultural, historic and information resources rests. Good collections management ensures that the archival inheritance remains physically and intellectually accessible for current and future generations.

Detailed research⁶ by the archives domain and consultation by the Task Force have identified significant areas of under-investment in the UK public sector archives. Under-investment in the infrastructure has resulted in inadequate buildings, poor public facilities to study and use archives, large backlogs of uncatalogued (and therefore inaccessible) collections, limited capacity for outreach activities and commercial growth, and poor opportunities for staff development.

ON HER THEIR LIVES DEPEND

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The Task Force is confident that creating the Archives Gateway will be an important step towards addressing these issues by raising awareness and expectations among archive workers and users, and by demonstrating the demand for archive services to funders. The search resources of the Archives Gateway will help to encourage greater accessibility as new connections and opportunities are revealed.

Modernisation is the key to creating the capacity that will be needed to ensure that:

- users can access catalogue entries, digitised images, contextual information and individual learning paths through the Archives Gateway;
- onsite public services meet the expectations of 21st century users and complement user-focused technological developments;
- a properly skilled workforce is in place to provide the content for the Archives Gateway and services and provide onsite and outreach services;
- collections are appropriately preserved and conserved so that users now and in the future can understand their own history and identity.

The Task Force's seventh recommendation therefore proposes a programme of work that will address the most significant concerns. Building on work by national archive institutions and agencies, archive agencies in the home nations and in England, Regional Agencies for museums, libraries and archives and Regional Archive Councils, we are confident that this will lay the foundations for long-term improvement and transformation within all archives.

Four action lines have been identified that should form the basis of a modernisation programme over the next three years:

- 1 Creation of Centres of Expertise to share skills and advice;
- 2 Quality assurance and continuous improvement in stewardship;
- 3 Encouraging volunteering;
- 4 Developing the UK archives and records management workforce.

Centres of Expertise

MLA is already involved in reviewing the need for professional advisory services both nationally across England and within the nine English regions. Working through national institutions, the Regional Agencies for museums, libraries and archives and the Regional Museum Hubs, options are being considered for advisory services to support professional needs. However, it is already apparent that centres of excellence and expertise can help significantly to reduce disparities between the largest and the smallest institutions, the publicly funded and the voluntary and the lack of technical skills that exist in many places. Centres of Expertise can operate on different levels. While most of the Task Force's debate has been about a regional focus, it is evident that there is potential for the larger, publicly-funded services to foster and support their smaller, private and voluntary neighbours, and informally many already do.

The Task Force endorses this approach and proposes that further research is undertaken to establish the mechanisms and funding models that would need to be put in place for such Centres of Expertise to be effective. It has identified a range of roles that might be fulfilled at a different scale of operation:

- Conservation: a minority of archives are now able to sustain in-house conservation facilities. There is also a skills shortage in trained conservators.
- Electronic archiving: there are few services at regional level able to meet the issues and problems surrounding the archiving of electronically held records. There is both a skills shortage and a lack of good practice to emulate.
- Photographic/micrographic/scanning services: a small minority of archives have in-house studio facilities for microfilming, photography and scanning. In most other archives this work is either put out to commercial suppliers or is not undertaken at all.
- Social inclusion activities: activities are scattered thinly, and are locally generated according to resource availability.
- Educational activity: a small minority of services enjoy the benefit of a post specifically focused on developing educational work.

- Cataloguing: this has traditionally been the core skill of archivists, the heart of their training yet there has been a lack of capacity to meet the demand.
- Training: maximizing opportunities for training and continuous professional development through the co-ordination of programmes, mentoring and secondments at national level.
- Business Development: archives need to be encouraged to explore the commercial dimensions of their activities.

Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement

While the Task Force is committed to advocating investment in the Archives Gateway and the digital content at its heart, it does not mean that onsite archive services and the essential role of stewardship can be neglected. These activities will continue to be vital as there is still a need to develop access locally and to create more content for the Archives Gateway from the vast wealth of uncatalogued records. More people will be engaged with the nation's archives electronically but rising numbers will still wish to visit archives in person and consult original documents, view films and listen to oral history recordings. Onsite user facilities will continue to be an essential component of the pattern of provision for the future.

A determined effort should be made to raise and maintain standards in all publicly-funded archives. It is essential that every effort is made to improve, and ensure adequate investment in, documentation and conservation and preservation activities. Investment of £8 million a year by those responsible for archive services over the next five to ten years would significantly improve the legacy of cataloguing needs and protect collections at risk.

Put quite simply, improved access depends on a commitment to effective stewardship. Without the successful balancing of access and preservation needs many unique resources could be lost to future generations. This is particularly true in the preservation of records that were 'born digital', where new approaches to selection, management and preservation will be required.



Tenzing and Hillary on their successful Everest expedition of 1953, images of which are archived by the Royal Geographical Society

Unlocking Our Achievements

Unlocking the Archives is a £7.2 million project run by the Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers (RGS-IBG). Supported by a £5.04 million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, it aims to preserve and catalogue material in the huge archive holdings of RGS-IBG, and to create much wider access to them. The project also has a strong educational dimension.

From summer 2004, Unlocking the Archives will provide public access to the Society's heritage collection of books, maps, photographs, documents and artefacts spanning 170 years. This collection covers geography and geographical research, British exploration and a wealth of material relevant to understanding contemporary multi-cultural Britain. To develop the project's educational potential, a heritage education officer was appointed in July 2003.

Unlocking the Archives is the first capital project by a non-government funded specialist archive and learned society that combines the retroconversion of a catalogue with the provision of high-quality storage, public access and new educational services. The combination of the Society's in-house educational and curatorial experience, and the expert knowledge of its 14,000 Fellows, will create a unique opportunity to open up its nationally important archive collections.



Archives ought to be fertile ground for the active involvement of volunteers. Users and archivists share an enthusiasm which crosses professional boundaries.

Recommendation Seven

Put in place a programme to modernise service management and improve workforce development opportunities.

Action 1

Investigate the establishment of Centres of archival Expertise within the English Regions to provide support to local archives and spread good practice and to collaborate with the devolved administrations to co-ordinate work in this area.

Action 2

Create a quality assurance framework so that national standards for collections care and exploitation are implemented as widely as possible.

Action 3

Support innovative, collaborative approaches to developing a national strategy to address backlogs in cataloguing.

Action 4

Undertake further research into the future use of volunteers in archival collections through pilot projects.

Action 5

National agencies across the whole of the UK should explore the feasibility of an integrated training and development framework.

Encouraging Volunteering

Active citizenship has become an increasingly important measure of the health of society in the UK today, and a major contributor to social capital. To be willing to participate in civic activity, informally volunteer to help a neighbour or other citizen, or to give time formally to an organisation are all seen as positive contributions to the common good. Volunteering is a significant part of active citizenship and has been given high status by the government. Volunteers are active in all areas of life, and all decision makers need to be volunteer-friendly and also volunteering-literate; that is, aware of ways that their actions and decisions may affect community and voluntary activity.

The Task Force has found that volunteers are an under-used resource in archives and record offices, and has identified volunteering as an important area for development across the archives domain. Archives ought to be fertile ground for the active involvement of volunteers. Users and archivists share an enthusiasm for the material which crosses professional boundaries.

Many archive organisations are making excellent use of volunteers, for example at The National Archives where volunteers help with events and cataloguing. The internet has made an exponential difference to the capacity of volunteers to contribute on the family history front. Volunteers are active in The Federation of Family History Societies and local Family History Societies which lead the way in the archives sector in this field. It is our belief that if archive services are appropriately accommodated and resourced, volunteers can be a wholly positive resource.

A Willingness To Engage

Lancashire Record Office is the base for a group of more than 30 regular volunteers known as the Will Flatteners, who have been working for more than 15 years on a project to make Lancashire's wills more accessible. By the end of 2004, when the project is due to be completed, they will have worked their way through 1,557 boxes of wills, carefully unrolling the documents, putting them into new labelled folders.

Since 1988 the record office has been running the Probate Conservation Programme on wills proved between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries at the Chester and Richmond Archdeaconry Courts. Many fascinating wills and inventories have been uncovered, and have been used in exhibitions and researched for articles. An important aspect of the project was the creation of new indexes to some of the wills by a team at the University of Central Lancashire in Preston.

County Archivist Bruce Jackson explains how the project began as a conservation exercise but has "far exceeded our expectations." He says that, "The benefits have been



Volunteers known as Will Flatteners use their time and skills to make archived wills more accessible to the public through practical storage. Photo: Lancashire County Council Corporate Communications

enormous, cutting production times for these documents, finding strays, creating more comprehensive and accurate indexes and preparing the records for microfilming. A huge thank you is due to our volunteers.”

Developing the Workforce

The UK is fortunate to have an advanced professional archives domain which is respected and admired worldwide. However it is clear from the evidence collected during our consultation that there are many concerns about recruitment and retention of staff and developing an appropriate workforce in the future. These concerns are reflected in the research about workforce in the heritage sector and the archives domain, notably the Joint National Council on Archives/MLA Archives Workforce Study⁷. There can be very little doubt that the creation of a well educated, diverse, strongly motivated and appropriately trained workforce at all levels is essential to the implementation and achievement of the recommendations in this report.

The need for a training infrastructure for the archives and records management workforce is UK-wide although current courses exist only in England and Wales. The demographics of the future workforce indicate that new people, new patterns of working and new ways of training and development will be required.

Within England, MLA has led the creation of a workforce development strategy for the museums, libraries and archives sector and this will provide a mechanism for increased partnership working. The creation of one or more Sector Skills Councils that will include the needs of the archives workforce should also provide additional approaches to training and development. Recent research has indicated that there is a market for a course in Scotland from both potential students and employers. As a result, a new archive course will be launched later this year in Scotland. There is currently no archive course in Northern Ireland.

Supporting Staff in the Workplace

Working together with library colleagues, Lincolnshire Heritage Services has implemented a staff training programme that enables staff to develop in their current positions and to move on to higher posts within and outside the county council. The scheme has been effective in helping junior staff to gain higher-grade posts in the archive and museum sectors.

The programme includes heritage NVQs and management training at various levels. Formal training is provided in the context of a development plan for each individual. Lincolnshire's NVQ centre (co-ordinated from the county archives) is now supported by the East Midlands Hub, and a centre administrator will be appointed to enable it to move forward at a regional level.

Says Stephanie Gilluly, Area Service Manager, Archives and Conservation, “Whilst valuing the training offered on university courses, we recognise that not everyone has access to university or college-based professional qualifications. By focusing on staff development and by basing training in the workplace, we get the benefit of people's increasing skills, and they have the chance of real career progression.” The scheme has the potential to provide training across the domains, enriching the workplace experience of staff and enabling more people to pursue museum, archive and library careers.



Lincolnshire Heritage Services staff event at Church Farm Museum, collecting memories and copying community photographs

The responsibility for creating and delivering a workforce training and development strategy must rest with all domain stakeholders – employers, higher education training providers and funders, professional bodies and organisations, and commercial trainers – and must have a user focus. The Task Force recommends that a programme is established to modernise service management and improve workforce development opportunities. To support work in this area, the Task Force has drafted a Training Framework designed to address three key needs: the shortage of applicants with appropriate skills for jobs in archives and records management; the recognition that there is a growing mismatch between the skills required and the skills that can be taught by the university archives schools in the confines of a one-year masters or diploma programme; and the changing skills needed to deal effectively with documentation and records management. The framework below offers a stratified level approach which would permit professional progress.

- Level A is training designed for and directed at unqualified assistants and other clerical members of staff.
- Level B encompasses training for those recruits to undergraduate course.
- Level C provision at the initial postgraduate level as at present, but with the expectation that more flexible modes of study will continue to emerge (such as distance and open learning and schemes permitting a greater degree of specialisation).
- Level D training is a programme to support continuous professional development leading to higher qualification.
- Level E training for strategic managers in the sector probably leading to a doctoral qualification.

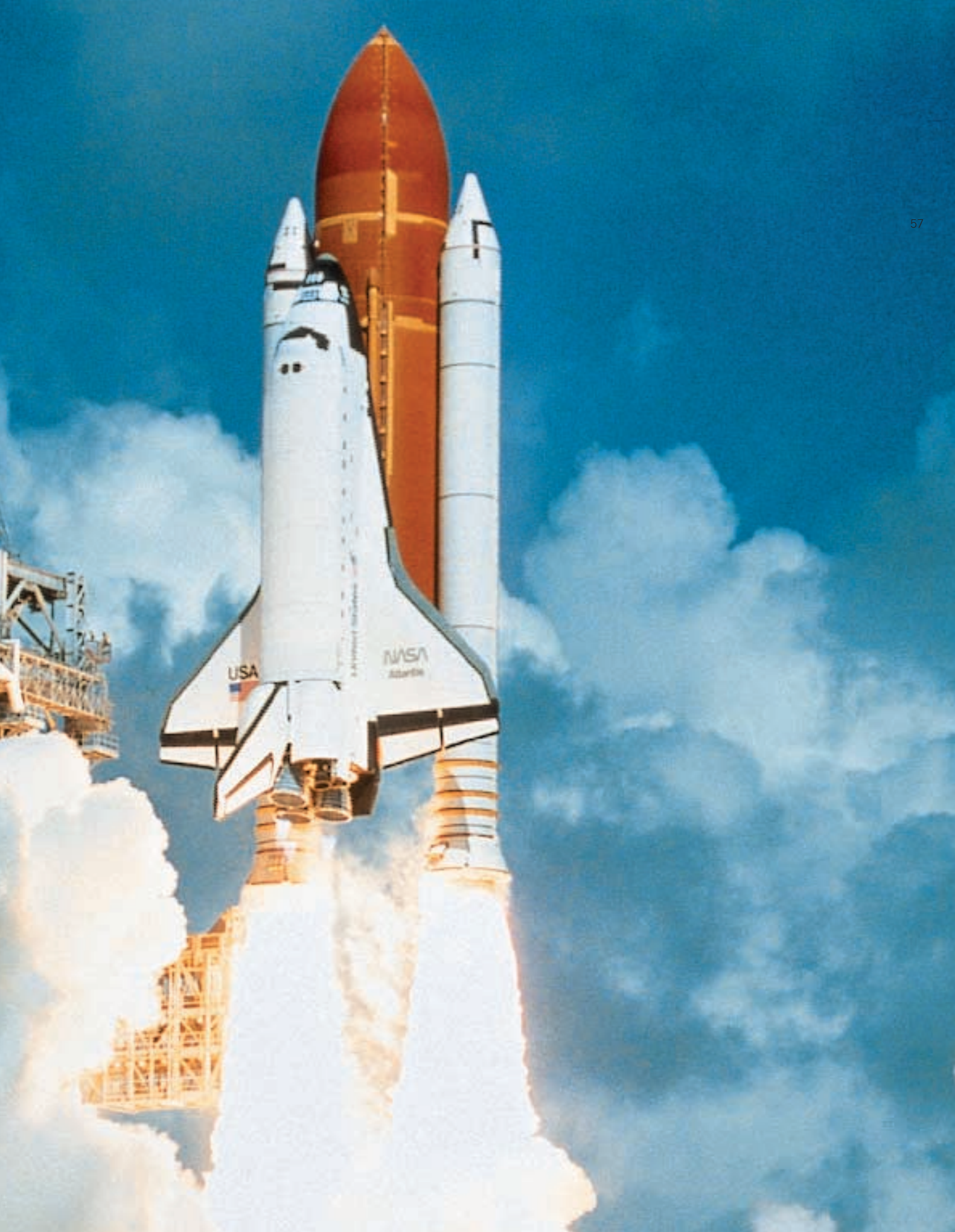
5. Established in 1987, the Film Archive Forum represents all of the public sector film and television archives which care for the UK's moving image heritage. Hidden Treasures: the UK Audiovisual Archive Strategic Framework will be published in March 2004
6. Our shared past: An Archival Domesday and Our Shared Past: Developing 21st Century Archive Services (Phases One and Two of a mapping survey of English local authority archives), Archival Mapping Project Board (Public Record Office), 1997–2001
The Archival Mapping Project for Wales (Mapping Surveys of Welsh Local Authority Archives Services), Welsh Archival Mapping Project Board, 1996–2000
An Archival Account of Scotland (A mapping survey of Scottish archives) Archive Services in Scotland Mapping Project Board, 2000
The Missing Link (A survey of specialist archive repositories in England) Missing Link Project Board/Society of Archivist, 2002
Surveys of Visitors to British Archives, Public Services Quality Group, 1998, 1999, 2001, 2002
Archives at the Millennium, The Twenty-eighth report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts 1991–1999, Historical Manuscripts Commission, 1999
7. This study was funded by MLA and conducted by the National Council on Archives and the University of Sheffield. The aim of the study is to provide the archives domain with information about key workforce issues and make recommendations for improvements. It is published online as Annex G to the Archives Task Force report. www.mla.gov.uk

The UK is fortunate to have an advanced professional archives domain which is respected and admired worldwide.

Funding, Recommendations, Next Steps

‘Partnership and co-ordination are the way forward – they are the keys to creating strong, successful services.’





6 Next Steps for Action and Delivery

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Our urgent task is to enable archives to deliver value to all citizens in ways that will enrich their lives.

We have covered a broad landscape of actions in this report to present significant challenges to all those working in archives and records management, funding bodies and key stakeholders across the whole of the UK. While the archives domain has a long and honourable history as an engine of discovery and research we made clear at the beginning that our urgent task is to enable the domain to deliver value to all citizens in ways that will enrich their lives and help them to understand better the community of which they are a part.

To give credibility to the arguments and proposals that have been made it is vital not merely to recommend broad areas for possible action, but to indicate how the recommendations and actions might be given momentum towards delivery. Such momentum invariably depends on two factors – co-ordination and funding. At the start of this report emphasis was placed on the real benefit of being able to take a UK-wide view of the future roles and priorities for archival collections, not least because the value of archival collections and the use made of them transcends boundaries. The commitment of all four home nations to work towards developing the strategies outlined in this report lends significant weight to the recommendations that have been made. Moving from UK strategy to UK implementation brings new challenges.

Within the public domain archival policy and funding are both devolved functions. There is no doubt that there has been support from each of the home nations to participate in the work of the Task Force. However, we must recognise that there will need to be significant emphasis on on-going consultation between all interested parties: funding departments in the four countries and strategic partners. Moreover, where UK-wide programmes are planned, it will be necessary to build funding portfolios supplied from a range of sources. All of these requirements place emphasis on formalising as soon as possible what has been successful, as well as developing informal mechanisms of co-operation, collaboration and communication.

The Inter-Departmental Archives Committee⁸ (which produced the Government Policy on Archives and its Action Plan) embraces the national archive services of all



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crucis.

cecos illuminavit. **vs** Disputit.
dedit pauperibus iudicia eius ma-
nec in seculum seculi. **Diaco.**

Danobis q̄sumus omnim-
potens deus utique
nidrum fluminas exti-
guere. qui beato laurentio tu-
buiti tormentorum suorum i-
cendia superavit. **p̄ xpm̄ domi-**



four countries. Through MLA, a Home Countries Forum has been set up under the auspices of the four departments responsible for culture in the home nations. Given that these groups are already meeting, it should not be necessary to look further to find ways of ensuring that informal co-operation extends to formal agreements on the allocation of funding that will be required to enable a number of the recommendations in this report. The Task Force therefore proposes as a final recommendation:

Recommendation Eight

Agreement should be sought from the four home nations of the UK on the forum that will co-ordinate the development of the recommendations on this report.

Our strategy for funding calls for investment over three years to deliver the Gateway. The proposed Archive Development Programme will look at other areas of development and other sources of investment. The strategy will highlight ways in which archives are assisting broader government agendas and will focus on the need for sustainable funding commitments. There are some areas of development, modernisation and capacity building where external funding beyond the Archives Development Programme may be achievable, for example, Lottery support for volunteering programmes, and these should be pursued through the UK-wide forum.

There have been a number of key developments in archives while the Task Force has been sitting. Government proposals for regional assemblies and re-organisation of regional government will present fresh challenges and opportunities. In England, The National Archives has been charged with developing proposals for new archival legislation that could make a great difference locally, regionally and nationally in tackling a number of the issues we have identified.

We summarise briefly in the following tables the recommendations and actions that have been detailed in the report. We give indications of levels of expenditure across three years, but these will obviously depend on priorities for action yet to be agreed between the administrations of the four home nations. Our strategy must be seen as the first step of a long-term programme to

guide future local, regional and national investment in archives to unlock our shared archival heritage to all citizens in a way that engages them and empowers them to use archives for personal, community, social and economic benefit.

8. The Inter-Departmental Archives Committee is chaired by the Chief Executive of The National Archives, and brings together representatives of national archive services, the home nations, central government departments and key archive stakeholders.

Our strategy must be seen as the first step of a long-term programme to guide future investment in archives.

Preliminary Budget – Projects 2004–07

Recommendation One

Create an Archive Gateway which will give everyone the opportunity to participate in the archival heritage (see also Appendix B: Archive networking developments to date).

Action 1

The creation of technical infrastructure within archives.

- Connecting publicly-funded archives to the Internet through broadband
- Information and communications technology training for archive workers
- Agree technical standards for the Gateway

Management

MLA/The National Archives to lead jointly the programme through the Archive Forum

Funding Sources

Lottery; joint working with the Common Information

Environment Group £3,800,000

Action 2

Market studies to establish priorities for user demand and identify potential partners.

Management

Members of the Archive Forum, National Council on Archives

Funding Sources

Lottery; Archive Development Programme £200,000

Action 3

Programmes to digitise archival documents focused on popular themes and topics.

Management

Members of the Archive Forum

Funding Sources

Lottery; joint working with Common Information

Environment Group £3,000,000

Action 4

Programmes to signpost significant collections through collection level description.

Management

Members of the Archive Forum

Funding Sources

Lottery £1,000,000

Action 5

New services for the archival user, for example, packages to support particular communities of interest (children, students, tourists and businesses).

Management

Members of the Archive Forum

Funding Sources

Lottery; Dept. for Education & Skills £2,000,000

Total Recommendation One £10,000,000

Recommendation Two

Position UK archives as key contributors to local, regional and national social and economic objectives.

Action 1

Create a UK Archives Strategic Marketing Plan as the means of co-ordinating the promotion of archives and developing audiences.

Management

Members of the Archive Forum; National Council on Archives

Funding Sources

Archives Development Programme £100,000

Action 2

Co-ordinate a programme of evidence gathering on archives and their contribution to local, regional and national, social and economic objectives (to be used as part of the wider advocacy campaign for archives).

Management

Members of the Archive Forum; National Council on Archives;

Regional Agencies for museums, libraries and archives

Funding Sources

Archives Development Programme £50,000

Action 3

Develop a programme of advocacy to promote the value of archives in support of the social and learning agendas and to develop professional awareness.

Management

Members of the Archive Forum; National Council on Archives;

Regional Agencies for museums, libraries and archives

Funding Sources

Archives Development Programme £100,000

Action 4

Establish a Business Development Group for innovation and partnership to assist archives to maximize commercial opportunities.

Management

Members of the Archive Forum; National Council on Archives;
Regional Agencies for museums, libraries and archives

Funding Sources

Archives Development Programme £10,000

Total Recommendation Two £260,000

Recommendation Three

Release the potential of archives to enrich and enhance teaching and learning and contribute to raising standards in education.

Action 1

Work with stakeholders to develop programmes that will raise awareness of the value of 'hands on' experience of the archival heritage. Engage teachers in the processes of interpretation to maintain and develop specialist subject knowledge.

Management

Members of the Archive Forum; National Council on Archives;
Dept. for Education & Skills; Dept for Culture, Media and Sport

Funding Sources

Archive Development Programme; Dept. for Education & Skills £150,000

Action 2

Develop learning resources for formal education.

Management

Members of the Archive Forum; National Council on Archives;
Dept. for Education & Skills

Funding Sources

Archive Development Programme; Dept. for Education & Skills £150,000

Total Recommendation Three £300,000

Recommendation Four

Increase community participation in UK archive activities with particular focus on engaging hard-to-reach communities.

Action 1

Investigate the establishment of, and pilot Community Archive Liaison Officers to support the development of community archives and foster links between existing archives and record offices and the wider community.

Management

Members of the Archive Forum; National Council on Archives; Regional Agencies for museums, libraries and archives

Funding Sources

Archives Development Programme	£300,000
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Total Recommendation Four	£300,000
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Recommendation Five

Encourage business, private and specialist archives to develop as integrated component parts of our heritage.

Action 1

Develop national strategies for business, private and specialist archives.

Management

Members of the Archive Forum; National Council on Archives; Business Archive Council; Business Archive Council (Scotland); Film Archive Forum

Funding Sources

Archive Development Programme; private sponsorship	£50,000
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Action 2

Support the creation of learning tools helping bridge the gap between formal education and the business world.

Management

Members of the Archive Forum; Dept. for Education & Skills; Business Archive Council; Business Archive Council (Scotland)

Funding Sources

Archive Development Programme; Dept. for Education & Skills; private sponsorship	£200,000
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Action 3

Investigate financial and/or tax incentives to support private institutional archives that are made available for public study.

Management

Members of the Archive Forum; Dept. for Education & Skills; Business Archive Council; Business Archive Council (Scotland)

Funding Sources

Archive Development Programme; Dept. for Education & Skills; Private sponsorship £20,000

Action 4

Create mechanisms for rapid response to threats to collections at risk.

Management

Members of the Archive Forum; National Council on Archives; Dept. for Education & Skills; Business Archive Council; Business Archive Council (Scotland)

Funding Sources

Archive Development Programme; Dept. for Education & Skills; private sponsorship £20,000

Action 5

Create environments to bring together businesses, private owners and specialist archives to support preservation and development of such collections .

Management

Members of the Archive Forum; National Council on Archives; business, private and specialist archives

Funding Sources

Archive Development Programme £10,000

Total Recommendation Five £300,000

Recommendation Six

Encourage the creation and sustainability of moving image, sound, photographic and digital archives through support for relevant strategies.

Action 1

Support the implementation of the UK Audiovisual Archives Strategy that has been developed by the Audiovisual Archive Strategy Steering Group

Management

Members of the Archive Forum; National Council on Archives; Film Archive Forum, Film Council

Funding Sources

Archive Development Programme; private sponsorship £50,000

Action 2

Encourage regional partnership strategies for the sustainable management and preservation of digital records.

Management

Members of the Archive Forum; National Council on Archives; Regional Agencies for museums, libraries and archives; Digital Preservation Coalition

Funding Sources

Archive Development Programme; private sponsorship £50,000

Total Recommendation Six

£100,000

Recommendation Seven

Put in place a programme to modernise service management and improve workforce development opportunities.

Action 1

Investigate the establishment of Centres of Expertise for archives within the English Regions to provide support to local archives and spread good practice and to collaborate with the devolved administrations to co-ordinate work in this area.

Management

Members of the Archive Forum; Regional Agencies for museums, libraries and archives

Funding Sources

Archive Development Programme £200,000

Action 2

Create a quality assurance framework so that national standards for collections care and exploitation are implemented as widely as possible.

Management

Members of the Archive Forum

Funding Sources

Archive Development Programme £50,000

Action 3

Support innovative, collaborative approaches to developing a national strategy to address backlogs in cataloguing

Management

Members of the Archive Forum

Funding Sources

Archive Development Programme £50,000

Action 4

Undertake further research into the future use of volunteers in archival collections through pilot projects.

Management

Members of the Archive Forum; National Council on Archives;
Regional Agencies for museums, libraries and archives

Funding Sources

Archive Development Programme; Lottery £300,000

Action 5

National agencies across the whole of the UK should explore the feasibility of an integrated training and development framework.

Management

Members of the Archive Forum; Sector Skills Councils

Funding Sources

Archive Development Programme; Dept. for Education & Skills £100,000

Total Recommendation Seven £700,000

Recommendation Eight

Agreement should be sought from the four home nations of the UK on the forum that will co-ordinate the development of the recommendations on this report.

Management

All relevant partners and organisations within the UK

Funding Sources

As appropriate £N/A

Archives have something for everyone and we believe our primary duty is to present the means to help everyone ... to benefit from this knowledge.

Appendices

‘An archival heritage unlocked and made open to all citizens in a way that engages them and empowers them to use archives for personal, community, social and economic benefit.’ *A Vision for the UK’s Archives*





A Archives in 2004

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The Breadth and Diversity of UK Archives

“Archives are the documents created in the normal course of the life of an institution or individual in order for them to function, and as such provide an historical record.”⁹

In the last fifty years there has been a significant expansion in the amount of archival material held in the UK. In parallel, there has been a continuing increase in the number of people using archival collections, fuelled in large measure by the growth of interest in family and local history. In the UK, there are over one and a half million visits each year to archives, and over 75% of those visitors do so for private or personal research. Many are first time visitors, and many more millions access archives virtually. The use of archival material has never been more popular.

The sheer range and diversity of UK archive collections is astonishing. The Archives Task Force has found that, put quite simply, archives are everywhere.

Archive Facts and Figures

People

- 853,742 people visiting local authority archives in England and Wales in 2001/02
- Over 300,000 people visited the sites of The National Archives in 2002/03
- Over 12,500 people visited the search rooms of the National Archives of Scotland in 2002/03
- Over 15,000 people visited the search rooms of the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland in 2002/03
- 195 groups (4,309 teachers, pupils and students) participating in educational workshops on-site or via videoconferencing at The National Archives
- Nearly 58% of archive users are aged 55 and above
- 5% of archive users are aged below 24
- An estimated 98% of archive users are white
- Over 1,830 members of the Society of Archivists (total membership)
- Over 650 members of the Records Management Society

Places

- MLA estimates that there are 2,150 archives across the UK
- Over 500 people employed by The National Archives
- 1,249 people employed in local authority archives in England and Wales as at March 2002
- 15.5 archive education officers employed in local authority archives in England and Wales

Participation

- There are over 200 Community Archive Groups in the UK community archives network
- There are 387,000 members of the Federation of Family History Societies and the Scottish Association of Family History Societies
- There are approximately 420,000 members of Local History Societies
- There are an estimated 2.1 million readers of history periodicals
- There were 559 history programmes broadcast by the BBC in 2002, and 3 million viewers is the average viewing audience for history programmes on BBC1 and BBC2
- OfTel estimates that 12.5 million UK homes are now connected to the internet

Online demand

- 85 million information requests handled by The National Archives websites 2002/03 www.nationalarchives.gov.uk
- 2.85 million searches and 5.95 million catalogue downloads since the launch of the Access to Archives (A2A) programme in 2001 www.a2a.org.uk
- 700,000 visitors to the www.scottishdocuments.com website 2002/03
- 100,000 visitors per week to the BBC History website www.bbc.co.uk/history/
- 18,000 visitors per month to the website of the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland

Motivation

- 63% of archive users' main reason for visiting archives is for personal leisure/recreation
- 11% of archive users' main reason for visiting archives is for non-leisure personal or family business
- 16% of archive users' main reason for visiting archives is for formal education purposes
- 10% of archive users' main reason for visiting archives is for work in connection with their employment

Funding

- £160 million awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund to "Documentary Heritage" projects 1994–2003, including:
 - £10 million for new record offices in Surrey, Norfolk and Devon
 - £5.3 million to save and digitise newspaper holdings through NEWSPLAN
 - £3 million to the Scottish Archive Network
 - £2.5 million to support Access to Archives in England
 - £350,000 to the online Archive Network Wales
- £16 million on average awarded annually by the Heritage Lottery Fund to "Documentary Heritage" projects from 1994–2003
- £43.4 million total recorded expenditure of local authority archives in England 2002/03
- £38.3 million gross expenditure of The National Archives in 2002/03
- £10.3 million gross expenditure of the National Archives of Scotland 2002/03
- £8 million awarded to Regional Agencies for museums, libraries and archives by MLA in 2003/04
- £3.9 million total recorded expenditure of local authority archives in Wales 2002/03
- £3.3 million total expenditure of the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland 2002/03

9. British Archives, *A Guide to Archive Resources in the United Kingdom*, Foster & Sheppard, 4th edition Palgrave, 2002

Examples of Archive Types Across the UK

Some examples of each type of archive are included here.

National archives

The National Archives, The National Archives of Scotland, the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland.

Records held

Public records of government departments agencies and bodies; private and semi-private collections of public figures and officials; significant map, plan and photograph collections; official printed material (The National Archives of Scotland and the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland also hold private and business collections).

National institutions

The British Library, The British Library Sound Archive, The BBC, The Parliamentary Archives, The National Film and Television Archive.

Records held

Manuscripts, files, maps, plans, prints, photographs printed material, departmental files, oral history collections, digital records, audiovisual archives created or received by the institution.

National/regional museums and galleries

National Gallery, Natural History Museum, Imperial War Museum, National Railway Museum, York, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

Records held

Manuscripts, maps, plans, prints, photographs, printed material, departmental records, audiovisual archives relating to particular collections.

Central government departments, agencies and bodies

Home Office, Ordnance Survey, UK Hydrographic Office.
Records held

Current and semi-current records created or received in the conduct of official business. e.g. departmental files and digital records, electronic datasets, printed material, maps, plans, photographs. Archives retained for administrative use.

Local authority run archives, local history and local studies services

London Metropolitan Archives, Gloucestershire County Record Office, Sheffield Archives, West Sussex Record Office, Islington Archives, Glasgow City Archives, Glamorgan Record Office.

Records held

Official, unofficial private and business records relating to a particular geographical location: e.g. local government and related records; public records; ecclesiastical records; legal records (e.g. quarter sessions); estate, family and manorial records, business records (e.g. solicitors, estate and land agents, architects, retailers, publicans records); industrial and manufacturing records; records of voluntary organisations, clubs, societies and charities, antiquarian and manuscript collections.

Higher Education sector

Cambridge University, Durham University, North London University, Queen's University Belfast, University of Dundee, University of Wales, Swansea colleges of further education, schools.

Records held

Records, archives and manuscripts acquired or donated to the holding institution e.g. private papers, printed material manuscripts, deposited public records, maps, plans, prints, sound recordings, audiovisual archives, digital records.

Audiovisual archives

North West Film Archive, Media Archive of Central England, National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales, Scottish Screen Archives.

Records held

Moving image and sound archives relating to a particular region or geographical location, posters, prints and ephemera.

Specialist repositories

Charities, historic houses, hospitals, Medical/scientific organisations, professional bodies/learned institutions, religious institutions.

Records held

Holdings extremely rich and varied e.g. Canterbury Cathedral Archives: records of Dean and chapter of Canterbury, parish records, Royal College of Surgeons: papers of surgeons and the history of surgery, Oxfordshire Health Archives: National Health Service records, paintings, prints, History of Advertising Trust: poster, campaign and business records, NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children): charity records.

Business archives

BT, Marks & Spencer, Rothschilds, Harrods, Unilever, Barclays, The Guardian, AstraZeneca.

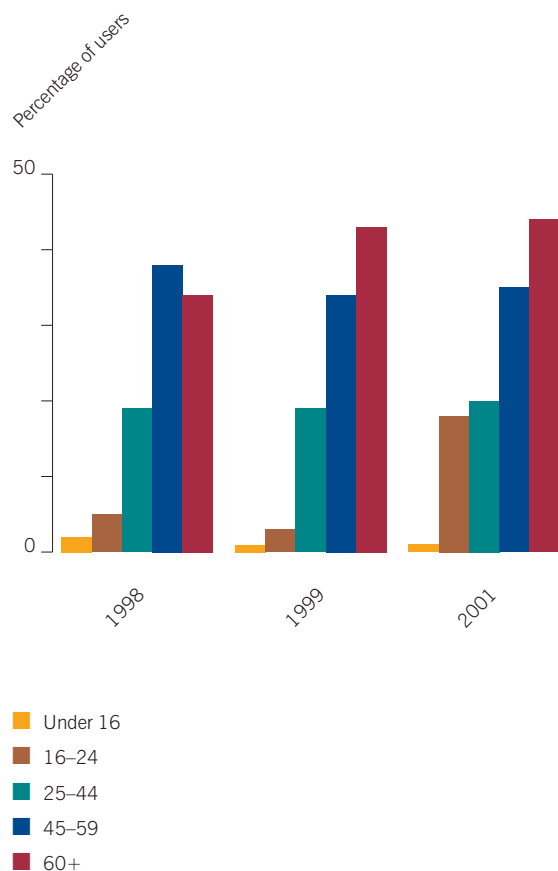
Records held

Company trading and historical records. Holdings extremely rich and varied, including manuscript material files, correspondence, maps, plans, drawings, artwork, moving images, sound, photographs, digital records and objects and artefacts.

Archive Users – Age Profile

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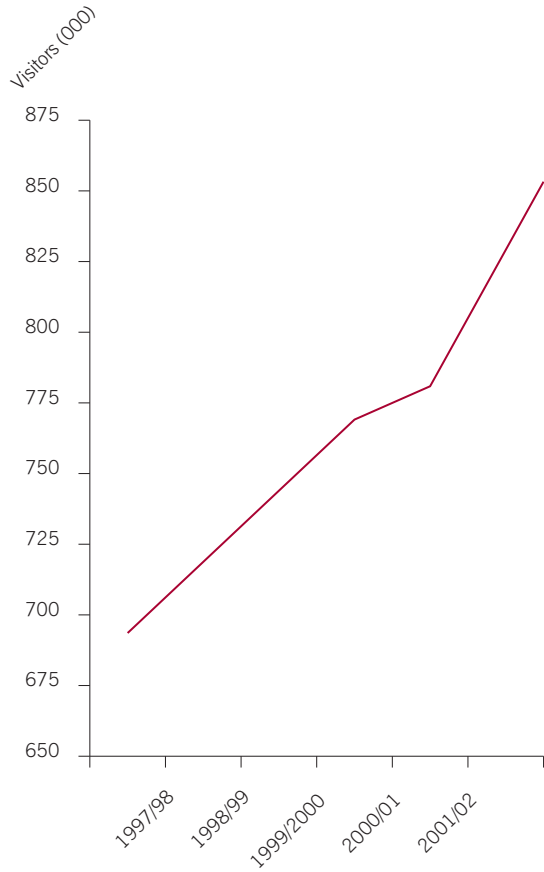
National Survey of Visitors to British Archives¹



1. Since 1998, the Public Services Quality Group has organised and co-ordinated the National Survey of Visitors to British Archives. 134 archive services across the UK took part in 2002 and 11,899 survey forms were returned. Each survey has used a core of similar questions designed to understand the profile of archive users and gauge their views on the services provided.

Trends in Archive Visitor Numbers

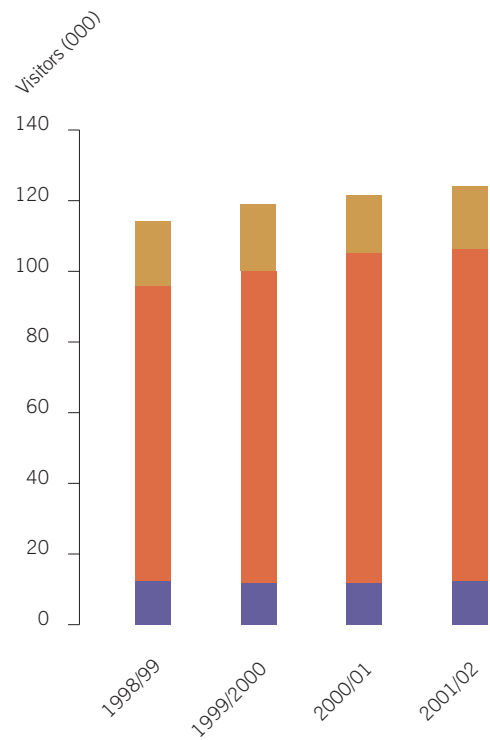
1997–2002



— Number of readers (visitors)

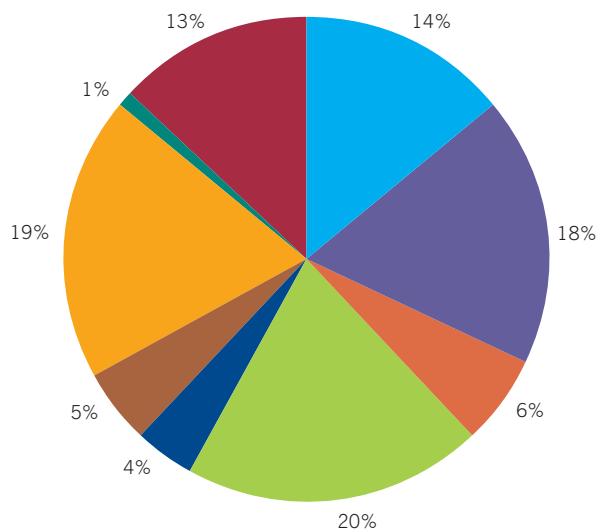
Archive Users

at The National Archives, the National Archives of Scotland and the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland



■ Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
■ The National Archives
■ National Archives of Scotland

Diversity of UK Archives



- Local authority¹
- University, education
- Religious
- Museum and gallery
- Charity and charitable
- Business and company
- Medical, private and independent
- Moving image and sound
- Community archives

1. Local authority archives make up 14% of archives by number of institutions, but hold a greater number of collections and employ the largest number of archivists of any sector.

DATA SOURCES

1. Annual Report and Accounts of the Society of Archivists, 2003, Society of Archivists, 2004
2. Annual Report of the Keeper of the Records of Scotland 2002/03, The National Archives of Scotland, 2002
3. Annual Report of the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland 2002/03, The Stationery Office, 2003
4. Archive Statistics and Estimates 2002/03, Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, 2002
5. Archives Task Force Evidence Commission, evidence supplied by: The Heritage Lottery Fund
The Records Management Society of Great Britain
6. Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy Archive Statistics and Estimates: Commentary 2002/03, Jackson B and Pick G, Public Services Quality Group, 2003
7. History meets the Future: Annual report of the National Archives, 2002–2003, The Stationery Office, 2003
8. National Survey of Visitors to British Archives, Public Services Quality Group, 2002
9. The Secondary Impact of Archives, Kenyon, J, MLA, 2003
10. Websites:
Access to archives: www.a2a.org.uk
Commanet: www.commanet.org.uk
National Archives (Historical Manuscripts Commission), ARCHON: www.hmc.gov.uk/archon
Public Services Quality Group: www.pro.gov.uk/archives/psqg

B Archive Networking Achievements to Date

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a2a

The Access to Archives programme, co-ordinated by The National Archives. The database now contains more than 6 million catalogue entries describing archives held in 340 record offices, libraries and other repositories throughout England.

www.a2a.org.uk

Archives Hub

A national gateway to descriptions of archives in UK universities and colleges, funded by the Joint Information Systems Committee.

www.archiveshub.ac.uk

Archives Network Wales

A project to create a web resource to allow easy searching of the collections of documents held by record offices, universities, museums and libraries in Wales, co-ordinated by the Archives Council Wales and the National Library of Wales, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

www.archivesnetworkwales.info/anw

ARCHON

ARCHON is an online information gateway for archivists in the UK and users of manuscript sources for British history. It is hosted and maintained by The National Archives (HMC). The ARCHON Directory includes contact details for record repositories in the United Kingdom and also for institutions elsewhere in the world which have substantial collections of manuscripts noted under the indexes to the National Register of Archives. The ARCHON Portal is a reference point for information about archival resources and projects that are planned, ongoing or completed.

A wide range of initiatives are covered such as the national archive network, online finding aids, standards for archival care and description, preservation and conservation and surveying and mapping collections.

www.hmc.gov.uk/archon/archon

Commanet

Community archives are collections of still and video images, text and oral narratives that have been captured using specially developed comma software and basic IT equipment. They are fully searchable databases that serve as a record of communities' cultural heritage and

are published as local CD-ROMs and on the internet. Commanet is a charity that promotes and supports community archives through advice and training, sells the comma software, promotes community archives on its website and co-ordinates projects across the UK and worldwide.
www.commanet.org.uk

Culture Online

Culture Online is an initiative to increase access to, and participation in, arts and culture. It brings together cultural organisations with cutting-edge technical providers to create projects that will delight adults and children of all ages and backgrounds. Examples of Culture Online projects involving archival resource include Stagework, which brings together information about UK performing arts collections and institutions and Headline History, a series of virtual newspapers from specific periods in history, from the Roman Gazette to the Victorian Times, to match areas of the National Curriculum.
www.cultureonline.gov.uk

eCATNI

The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland Electronic Catalogue for Northern Ireland Project, funded from the Service Modernisation budget of the Northern Ireland Executive Programme Fund. The project aims to create a comprehensive and accurate set of electronic information available to the public, on-site and via the Internet.

Enrich UK

The gateway to a lottery-funded collection of 150 sites supported by the New Opportunities Fund. The collection ranges across culture, history, social and economic development, science and art as well as offering regional and national 'sense of place' websites from England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.
www.enrichuk.net

HEIRNET

The Historic environment Information Resources network was formed by a group of organisations with an interest in information relating to archaeology and the historic environment. HEIRNET enables access to Historic Environment Information Resources for conservation,

research, learning and general interest.
www.britarch.ac.uk/HEIRNET/index.html

Learning Curve

The National Archives' Learning Curve is an online teaching resource, structured to tie in with the History National Curriculum from Key Stages 2 to 5. The Learning Curve contains a varied range of original sources including documents, photographs, and film and sound recordings.
www.learningcurve.pro.gov.uk

Linking Arms

The pan-archives Linking Arms Initiative (co-ordinated by The National Archives and the National Council on Archives) has three components: technical, to enable interoperability between all strands of the UK on-line archives and websites established by community groups; community based, developing links with community groups of all kinds, and content based as indicated by user and impact studies. Linking Arms will bring together official and unofficial archives, private and community archives, including for example videos, digital and sound recording and film footage. It will also invite people to contribute their own history – or that of their family or community – to that ever-growing documentary heritage of our lives and to the ever-evolving national archive. Additionally, access to digitized documents will enable people to search, find and keep documents of their own heritage.

NDAD

The National Digital archive of Datasets is part of The National Archives and is based at the University of London Computing Centre. It preserves and provides online access to archived digital data and documents from UK central government departments.
www.ndad.ulcc.ac.uk

NRA

The National Register of Archives. These electronic indexes, maintained by The National Archives, give summary descriptions of the major archives in the UK and elsewhere known to be of importance to British history (excluding records of government).
www.hmc.gov.uk/nra

People's Network

The People's Network is a project which has connected all public libraries to the internet, as part of the government's commitment to give everyone in the UK the opportunity to get online. Lottery-funded by the New Opportunities Fund and managed by The Council for Museums, Libraries and Archives, more than 4,000 library centres have been created through the initiative. The Project included a £50 million Digitisation of Learning Materials Programme (also known as the NOF-digitise programme).
www.peoplesnetwork.gov.uk

Examples of NOF-digitise projects involving archives:

Port Cities

A partnership of websites giving access to the collections contributed by heritage organisation in five key maritime cities around the UK – Bristol, Hartlepool, Liverpool, London and Southampton archives.
www.portcities.org.uk

Moving Here

A database of digitised photographs, maps, objects, documents and audio items from 30 local and national archives, museums and libraries which record migration experiences of the last 200 years. Its partners include The National Archives, the New Opportunities Fund and the National Grid for Learning.
www.movinghere.org.uk

PROCAT

The National Archives on-line catalogue of the archives of central government, courts of law and other national bodies. Contains over 9 million searchable items.
www.pro.gov.uk/catalogues

Research Support Libraries Programme

A national initiative (1999–2002), funded by the four higher education funding bodies, to bring together both traditional and new forms of access to archive and library information.
www.rslp.ac.uk

Examples of projects involving significant archival material include:

A Mine of Information: cataloguing the South Wales coalfield

A cross-sectoral project managed by the University of Wales Swansea to improve access to research resources relating to the South Wales Coalfield by creating online catalogue records for archives and printed books.
www.mineofinfo.ac.uk

Aim25

An online networking project, between institutions bordered by the M25.
www.aim25.ac.uk

CASBAH

Identifying and mapping research resources for Caribbean Studies and the history of Black and Asian people in Britain.
www.casbah.ac.uk

Charles Booth Online Archive

Free desk-top access to guides, digitised images and maps from the Booth archive collections at the London School of Economics and Political Science and the University of London Library.
www.lse.ac.uk/booth

Charting The Nation

Widening access to maps of Scotland and associated archives (1590–1740) – a collaborative digital imaging and cataloguing project to provide on-line access to maps of Scotland and their associated archives dating from 1550–1740.
www.images.lib.ed.ac.uk/chartingthenation

GASHE: the gateway to archives of Scottish higher education

An integrated gateway to Higher Education Institutions' records, unlocking outstanding collections of archives and related materials in differing media, covering a vast chronological breadth and across a diverse range of institutions.
www.gashe.ac.uk

Genesis: developing access to women's history sources in the British Isles

A mapping initiative, based at The Women's Library in London, to identify and develop access to women's history sources in the British Isles.

www.genesis.ac.uk

Mapping Research Resources in Wales

A database of research level collections housed in Welsh higher education institutions, the National Library of Wales, and special and local collections.

www.mappingwales.ac.uk

OASIS

Online access to the index of archaeological investigations Based at the University of York.

www.ads.ahds.ac.uk

Papers of Twentieth Century British Scientists

Co-ordinated through the National Cataloguing Unit for the Archives of Contemporary Scientists to catalogue the archives of five British scientists of exceptional importance.

www.bath.ac.uk/ncuacs/rs1p

RASCAL

Research and special collections available locally in Northern Ireland.

www.rascal.ac.uk

Researcher's Guide Online

Developed by the British Universities Film & Video Council, this online resource has entries on over 550 film, television, radio and related documentation collections in the UK and Ireland. It features national and regional archives as well as libraries and collections held by local authorities, museums, institutions of further and higher education, industrial companies and private individuals.

www.bufvc.ac.uk

The Drawn Evidence

Scotland's development through its architectural archives from industrialisation to the millennium 1780–2000.

Based at the University of Dundee.

www.drawnevidence.ac.uk

Yorkshire Quaker Heritage

A project to survey and map Quaker archives and book collections held by archives and libraries in Yorkshire.

www.hull.ac.uk/lib/archives/quaker

SCAN

Scottish Archive Network is a collaborative programme for online access to catalogues of archives in Scotland. Its partners are the National Archives of Scotland, the Heritage Lottery Fund, and the Genealogical Society of Utah. The project aims to revolutionise access to Scotland's archives by providing a single electronic catalogue to the holdings of more than 50 Scottish archives. To preserve fragile historical records and improve their accessibility the project digitises records on a huge scale.

www.scan.org.uk

www.scottishhandwriting.com

www.scottishdocuments.com

SCRAN

Scottish Cultural Resources Network is the award winning learning image website with access to quality images, sounds, movies and learning resources. There are over 300,000 images from Scottish museums, galleries and archives.

www.scran.ac.uk

C Acknowledgements

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This report would not have been possible without the contributions of over 700 people, who gave freely of their time to share their views on how the UK archive and records management domains could be developed with the Archives Task Force. This is one of the most comprehensive consultations with the archives and records management domains for over 50 years, and the Task Force is grateful to everyone who participated in, and contributed to, the process.

Members of the Archives Task Force

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The Archives Task Force undertook a programme of detailed research and consultation. Much of this evidence has been gathered together and is freely downloadable from the MLA website: www.mla.gov.uk

Contextual papers

- A Archives Task Force Methodology
- B Note on the Archives Task Force and the devolved administrations

Supporting research

- C Select bibliography, research and case studies
- D Non-Archive Users Survey: Omnibus Study (MORI)
- E Towards a Better Understanding of non-users (Sabin-Samuels)
- F Secondary Impact of Archives: indicators and trends (Janet Kenyon)
- G Archives Workforce Study (National Council on Archives/University of Sheffield/MLA)
- H On-line media coverage of archives 1999–2003 (Emily Mealey)

Consultation evidence

- I Summary report of the Archives Task Force consultation programme

IMAGE CREDITS

(Unless presented earlier)

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