



the national archives

Spring 2006

RecordKeeping

Inside

Inspiring schools in Yorkshire
The National Preservation Office

Records Management

The changing face of records management
Operational Selection Policies

Archives

National Fairground Archive
Royal Opera House
Parliamentary Archives' online catalogue

For all those interested
in archives and records



Contents

TNA update

- 4 Self-assessment for local authority archive services
- 5 The National Archives distributes £200,000 to tackle cataloguing backlogs
- 5 Document Lifecycle Management Forum meeting
- 6 A Free Gift from the Access to Archives programme
- 7 Selection Policies For All
- 8 RecordKeeping Survey

RecordKeeping news

- 9 Victorian Voices
- 10 National Council on Archives' Conference 2006
- 11 New NHS Code of Practice for Records Management
- 12 Archives Alive! Inspiring schools in Yorkshire
- 16 Portcullis: a new gateway to the Parliamentary Archives
- 19 Preservation: the future of our collections

Case studies

- 22 Natalie Ceeney: The changing face of records management
- 25 National Fairground Archive
- 29 Accessibility Matters: Hampshire Record Office
- 32 Royal Opera House
- 37 Records Management in Government: how far have we come in 50 years?

Standards and guidance

- 39 Freedom of Information: looking back on the first year
- 42 Mind the Gap report
- 43 Bridging the knowledge gap: AIIM Europe
- 45 Recently released useful publications

Contacts

- 46 Contacts and staff news

Cover photo:

Clowns at rest, Winship's Circus, Dursley (Gloucestershire), July 1957,
The National Fairground Archive (NFA) © Lionel Bathe Collection, NFA

Note from the Editor

Welcome to another edition of *RecordKeeping* magazine.

I am delighted to be taking on the role of editor following the departure of Mary Wills, who has now moved to Birkbeck College.

Included in this issue are two free posters promoting the Access to Archives (AZA) programme.

Thank you to all those who took part in our *RecordKeeping* Survey, the winner of the competition is announced in The National Archives (TNA) Update, results of the survey will feature in the next issue. Our front cover comes from The National Fairground Archive, one of our case studies articles we hope you enjoy. We are also delighted to bring you articles from The Royal Opera House and Hampshire Record Office.

In TNA Update Howard Davies explains the new Operational Selection Policies whilst elsewhere we announce the recipients of the Pilgrim Trust and Esmée Fairbairn Foundation grants to tackle

cataloguing backlogs. Records management is featured throughout this issue both at TNA and throughout the archival community. We examine developments of records management in the last 50 years and the new information management training programmes from ALLM Europe. The *Mind the gap* report on digital preservation is also explained as is the new NHS Code of Practice.

In the field of education we report on the *Archives Alive! Inspiring schools in Yorkshire* projects which support learning in schools and reproduce an extract by Madelaine Stone from the Holy Trinity Lamorbey Primary School, winner of the *Victorian Voices* competition for 7-11 year olds run by the Archive Awareness Campaign. Elsewhere we hear about the work of the National Preservation Office and look at *Portcullis*, the new online catalogue from the Parliamentary Archives.

Thank you for reading and as ever, please get in touch with any comment or ideas.

Catherine Guggiari
Editor
recordkeeping@nationalarchives.gov.uk

RecordKeeping is split into sections. *TNA Update* will give you news on our work and projects; *RecordKeeping news* contains information from the archives and records world; *Case studies* are practical examples of specific projects; and *Standards and guidance* will update you on the latest best practice.

We aim to publish *RecordKeeping* quarterly.

1
See page 16



2
See page 27



3
See page 32



TNA update

Self-assessment for local authority archive services in England and Wales

Readers will be aware that The National Archives (TNA) plans to supplement its inspection regime by piloting a self-assessment process in local authority archive services in England and Wales during 2006.

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Nick Kingsley

We view this as the first tentative step towards developing an accreditation scheme for archive services that would parallel the scheme for museums run by Museums Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), although it is likely to be several years before we are able to extend the scheme to other types of archives.

At the core of the process will be a rather extensive questionnaire that we plan to ask every local authority archive service in England & Wales to complete by mid July. The questionnaire will cover all aspects of archive service work that are reflected in the TNA Standard for Record Repositories and Framework of Standards, but not records management. It is divided into four sections – Governance and Staffing; Documentation of Collections; Access Services; and Buildings, Security and Environment. The National Archives will score the questionnaires, and may need to ask follow-up questions in some instances.

The results will be reported to the Self-Assessment Panel, along with a commentary highlighting any results that appear inconsistent with existing knowledge of the

repositories concerned, and the Panel will have the power to moderate the scores if it sees fit. We are also exploring with MLA's regional agencies the possibility that they might also offer an independent commentary on the results. The Panel's other main task will be to group the scores into four bands in a form of star-rating system: approximately 10% of the highest scoring repositories will be awarded three stars, while approximately 10% of the lowest scoring repositories will receive no stars: the remaining repositories will be roughly evenly divided into one star and two star services.

The detailed results for each repository will be communicated to the head of service, and there will be an opportunity for repositories to appeal if they feel they have not been fairly evaluated. In this pilot year, it is not intended to publish the scores or banding of repositories, but in future years it is intended that this will be part of the process. At the end of the year, we will review the self-assessment process with MLA and the Audit Commission, and we hope that in future years the self-assessment score for English repositories will be adopted as a

performance indicator for Comprehensive Performance Assessment, in the same way as museum accreditation is for museum services.

The Self-Assessment Panel, which is central to the administration of the scheme, is composed of representatives of the MLA Partnership (Justin Cavernelis-Frost and Kathy Gee), the Association of Chief Archivists in Local Government (Bruce Jackson), the National Council on Archives Public Services Quality Group (Deborah Jenkins), and CyMAL-Museums Libraries and Archives Wales (Mary Ellis), along with Andy Rowley and myself from TNA. Any queries about the self-assessment process should be directed to me at nick.kingsley@nationalarchives.gov.uk.

Nick Kingsley
Head of National Advisory Services
The National Archives



The National Archives distributes £200,000 to tackle cataloguing backlogs

In a new scheme, funded by the Pilgrim Trust and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, The National Archives distributed £200,000 worth of grants last month to tackle cataloguing backlogs. The scheme was piloted in Scotland, London and the North West. The programme was administered by TNA on behalf of the two funding trusts. Decisions on the award of grants was made by an independent panel.

Panel Membership:

- Georgina Nayler (Pilgrim Trust, Chair)
- Isobel Siddons (ALM London)
- Ian Hill (National Archives of Scotland)
- Chris Chadwick (MLA North West)
- Lisa Broadest (West Yorkshire Archive Service, Wakefield)
- Helen Langley (Bodleian Library, Oxford)
- Sheila Hingley (Durham University Library & Archives)

- Chris Webb (Borthwick Institute, University of York)
- Heather Forbes (Gloucestershire Record Office)

In attendance:

- Nicholas Kingsley (The National Archives, Programme Manager)

It is hoped that the programme will be extended in future years so that other areas across the UK will be covered. 70 applications for a total of £1.3million were received, clearly demonstrating the level of need for projects of this type. Although many worthwhile projects could not be funded we are delighted to announce the following applicants were successful.

- Ayrshire Archives (£15,000): Ayrshire burghs archives
- Bishopsgate Library, London (£25,000): George Howell archive

- Cumbria RO, Whitehaven (£18,880): British Steel archive
- Dundee University Archives (£12,600): hospital, asylum and medical school records
- East Dunbartonshire Archives (£22,379): Lion Foundry Co. Ltd.
- Glasgow Caledonian University (£20,000): Scottish TUC archive
- Lambeth Palace Library (£8,383): papers of Archbishop William Temple
- Lancashire RO, Preston (£21,000): Kenyon family papers
- Library & Museum of Freemasonry, London (£13,000): correspondence with masonic lodges in the Americas
- Manchester Cathedral Archives (£11,698): 19th century estate records
- St Bartholomew's Hospital Archives, London (£26,300): City and Hackney Hospitals and the Alexandra Hospital.

Document Lifecycle Management Forum Meeting

Vienna, 4-5 April 2006

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The report on archives in the enlarged European Union on the TNA website

The National Archives (TNA) representatives contributed to the biannual members' meeting of the DLM (Document Lifecycle Management) Forum in the first week of April.

The meeting was hosted by the Austrian Staatsarchiv (State Archives). It was attended by representatives from most of the EU national archives, from the European Commission and from academic institutions, software companies and information management consultants from across the European Union.

In addition to being a well established forum on electronic document and records management (EDRM), digital preservation and relevant training, this DLM Forum meeting started to take forward the action placed on it

from the recommendation of the Council of EU Culture Ministers in November 2005. In particular it has been asked to further interdisciplinary cooperation on electronic records and archives, and to update and extend the MoReq (model requirements for the management of electronic records) project.

Nick Kingsley of TNA chaired the Forum. The main themes of the meeting were:

- integration of EDRM into overall user services,
- the impacts of legislation and standards in the areas of authenticity of records (particularly authentication by electronic signatures) and in digital preservation,
- and developing a version 2 of MoReq as a de facto standard.

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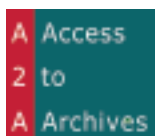


The recommendation of the Council of EU Culture Ministers in November 2005 was reported in full in the *RecordKeeping* Winter 2006 edition and may be referenced at <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/interactivity/europe/report.htm>

The existing version of MoReq may be found at <http://europa.eu.int/idabc/en/document/2631/5585>

A free gift from the Access to Archives programme (A2A) to accompany *RecordKeeping*, Spring 2006

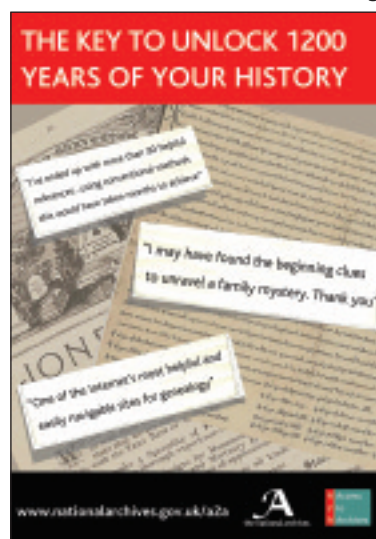
3
A2A posters



We hope you enjoy the two new A2A posters. They are intended to remind researchers what an invaluable resource A2A offers. Each poster focuses on a different aspect of what researchers love about A2A – its strength as a resource for family historians and the broad range of material accessible through the catalogues.

The Key to Unlock 1200 years of your history

The A2A mailbox regularly gets thank you notes from researchers. They want to let us know how much they appreciate having access to many different archives through one search screen. A large number of Archive users are genealogists and they find the A2A database contains excellent resources for investigating family history. We thought we'd share a few of their messages, in the hope that they might inspire others to try out A2A.

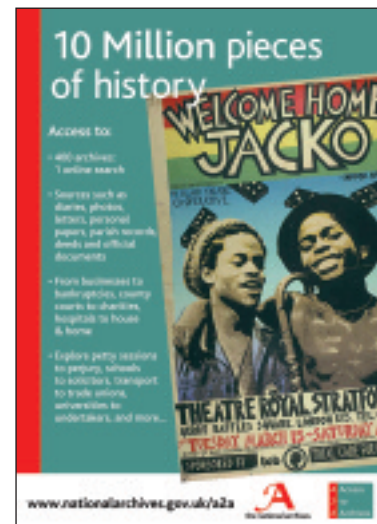


We have taken quotes from some grateful researchers and displayed them over examples of typically diverse archival sources: an Anglo-Saxon charter from Ilminster dating from 995, by permission of the Somerset Archive and Record Service and a twentieth century advertisement for Jones Brothers' Memorial, Tomb and Gravestone Works, now looked after by Shropshire Archives.

10 million pieces of history

This poster reminds researchers about the diversity of A2A: the range of subjects, variety of archives and wealth of sources all available through one website. The chosen documents come from two very different collections: an image from the Black Theatre Co-operative's production of *Welcome Home Jacko* shows one of our most modern collections whilst the Quarter Session examination dating from 1724, by kind permission of Lancashire Record Office, will be familiar to many as a typical example of the many public records drawn together through the *Places of Deposit* project.

A2A continues to hit targets for both funders and the Archives sector. One of the Heritage Lottery Fund's goals is to ensure that the benefits of its projects are spread to the widest possible audience. The Access to Archives programme has proved very successful in increasing access to catalogues online. The A2A website, supported by TNA, now allows cross-searching of records in over 400 repositories.



The recent NCA report 'Giving Value: Funding Priorities for UK Archives 2005-2010' identified key areas of importance within the sector. A2A delivers particularly strongly in 'Online Access' and 'Engaging New Audiences'. The current phase of the programme, *Archives 4 All*, will build on these strengths through a new wave of projects with cataloguing and community involvement.

Don't forget that A2A is still growing. It's worth checking the website regularly to find out what new content has been added: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a

Monica Halpin
Regional Liaison Coordinator
Access to Archives
monica.halpin@nationalarchives.gov.uk

Selection Policies For All: the advent of generic Operational Selection Policies for use across government

A new type of Operational Selection Policy (OSP) has been added to the suite of documents giving guidance to staff appraising public records across government – and for the first time they address types of records found commonly in most government departments.

4
TNA's
Operational
Selection
Policies web
page

Since March 2000, when the first OSP was issued by the Public Record Office (the groundbreaking work set out selection criteria to be applied to the records of the Department of the Environment, 1970-1979), a team of dedicated staff in The National Archives, often working with staff in government departments, have been producing on average six new OSPs per year.

Progressively, these have spread across wide areas of government record creation, and they have provided advice and guidance to selection reviewers considering the documents before them as to which records are appropriate for preservation in The National Archives.

In doing so, they fulfil a promise made in the Acquisition Policy. Each one has been published after a public consultation exercise, to ensure that the criteria that have been developed meet the needs of the research community. One of the most important values of the OSP is that it opens up the whole process of selecting records to public scrutiny by setting out the specific criteria to be used.

The total number of OSPs now stands at 40, and they cover subjects from recreational use of the countryside to corporate insolvency records, and bodies from the Criminal Cases Review Commission to the Security Service. In the last financial year,

slightly over 40% of the metrage of records accessioned into The National Archives were ones selected according to criteria in OSPs – a rise from the previous year when the figure was just under 25%. That doesn't mean that the rest of the accessioned records do not meet our Acquisition Policy criteria, rather that they have not yet been covered by OSPs. You can find a full list of the OSPs, plus links to the texts, at http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/selection/osp_intro.htm.

Generic OSPs

The most recently published OSPs are rather different in character from those that went before, in that they are generic in quality, covering the sorts of records which will be found in most if not all government departments. It is intended that these policies should be used by departmental reviewers to assign disposal criteria to whole swathes of records, in whatever format, avoiding the need for painstaking file-by-file review. For departments that already have Electronic Record Management systems in place, they will be able to assign automatic disposal to parts of their business classification schemes covering these common functions.

For those yet to implement or currently designing their electronic file plans, they will be able to construct the plans to support the



records which merit permanent preservation, and to dispose of others in a timely fashion.

There are five of these new generic OSPs. The one with the broadest application is OSP 38, *Records of Internal Administration*, which covers the common housekeeping functions from personnel and finance to IT and physical security. It identifies lead departments which had a role in establishing service-wide policy and practice for these functions, and whose records will merit more extensive preservation, allowing the records showing how those central policies were implemented locally to be disposed of as soon as they cease to be of administrative use.

OSP 35, *Board and Committee Records*, identifies what type of record merits preservation, and for what type of committee or board. When applied to some of the more specialised administrative agencies that do not create policy records, it

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is possible that ensuring the preservation of key committee records as outlined in this OSP will satisfy all the requirements for preservation under the Public Records Act.

OSP 36, *Publications and Grey Literature*, is a very welcome addition to TNA guidance, and brings clarity to the previously uncertain question of where government publications should be preserved. It was developed in collaboration with the British Library and shows clearly which publications are appropriate to The National Archives, and which to the British Library.

Of slightly narrower and more specific application are OSPs 37 and 39, dealing with *Freedom of Information Act Records* and *Inspection Records* respectively. These variously clarify which of the new stream of records being created in the application of the Freedom of Information Act in public record bodies covered by the Act merit preservation; and the appropriate selection criteria for records produced as a result of inspections carried out by a range of public record bodies.

Most of these new OSPs include a decision tree to simplify the decision making process. It is hoped that they will provide a useful tool to enable departmental reviewers to deal quickly, effectively and confidently with large volumes of records, be they paper or electronic. Ideally they should be used in a strategic way to deal with whole categories of records once and for all, but they can also be used on a one off basis where particular issues in these areas arise. Staff can contact their client managers for further advice and guidance if needs be.

Future OSPs

We do intend to produce further generic OSPs, alongside the more traditional ones. While OSP 36 has established criteria for the published output of government science and research, the background records, such as laboratory notebooks and documentation required to reproduce experiments, could be covered by a generic OSP and work is ongoing to produce one. Other areas which might be covered in the coming year's programme are departmental legal and legislation

records and records on the drafting and implementation of EU regulations and directives. If reviewers have ideas as to areas of records that they would like to see covered by a generic OSP, I would be very glad to hear from them. After all, the point of these OSPs is that they should be useful tools for reviewers, so the more they match your needs, the better!

Howard Davies
Head of Inspection and Client Management Unit

RecordKeeping Survey News

Many thanks to all of you who took the time and trouble to complete our *RecordKeeping* magazine survey which featured in our last issue. The results have proved very interesting! A full report on the survey will feature in the next edition. In the meantime, congratulations to Claire Park of Cumbria County

Council who not only lives in a beautiful part of the world but was also the winner of the survey prize draw. Your prize is on its way Claire.

John Wood
Customer Relationship Manager
The National Archives

RecordKeeping news

Archives Awareness Campaign – Victorian Voices

Rosa Hielson was convicted of stealing in Lambeth, South London in 1873 and sentenced to one month's hard labour and four year's 'Reformatory'. 130 years later, her crime and her punishment, along with the experiences of many other Victorian children, have been brought to life by schoolchildren across the UK.

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Winner
Madeline
Stone with
David Lammy
and Ruth
Savage, the
National
Council on
Archives' Policy
and
Development
Officer
(courtesy of the
Wellcome Trust)

Rosa's criminal record was one of 60 archive sources which have provided inspiration for over one thousand 7-11 year olds who have taken part in 'Victorian Voices', a short story competition run by Archive Awareness Campaign. Schoolchildren across the UK used Victorian source material as their inspiration to write a short story about a Victorian child's experience of work, school, illness, death, crime and so on. More than 40 schools took part in the competition, putting hundreds of children in contact with archives.

A panel of judges, including the historian Tristram Hunt, journalist Edward Stourton, children's author Adele Geras and explorer Benedict Allen, chose winners from hundreds of entries. They reported a very high standard of entries and were impressed by all of the creativity displayed. Adele Geras said, "It is hugely important that children have access to material that demonstrates so vividly the immediacy of the past. With an archive all the letters, accounts, pictures and so forth are there in front of you. Voices from long ago speak clearly and directly to us,

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decades and even centuries later. Archives are the real time-machines."

The winners were announced at an awards ceremony hosted by the Wellcome Trust in London in March. Culture Minister, David Lammy, presented the awards to the overall winner from the younger category, Sally Moss from Goosewell Primary School, and the overall winner from the older category, Madeline Stone from the Holy Trinity Lamorbey

Primary School. The winning pupils and schools received Usborne books and Adobe software.

To find out more about Archive Awareness Campaign, future plans and details of how you can get involved, please visit www.archiveawareness.com or contact Ruth Savage, ruth.savage@nationalarchives.gov.uk

Read an extract from Madeline's story on page 10:

Rosa's Story

I can't remember the date of that terrible day but I remember all that happened. I had forgotten to plump my mistress's bed pillows on her bed the night before and she had a most uncomfortable night. The next morning her anger was unleashed on me and I had an excessive beating and was forbidden any food, not even scraps. By the time evening came I was so hungry I was willing to

do almost anything for just a bowl of gruel. By the time the next evening came I felt I had to do something about my hunger pangs.

I collected my weekly pay (1 shilling) and crept down the staircase, my heart pounding under my corset and my head spinning. If I got caught I would be thrown out on my ear for disobeying my mistresses' orders and would have to live on the streets once again. Stealing, begging and scavenging. But I fought against my feelings

and stepped out of the door, still looking behind me. As I reached the market place, I sighed a relief-filled sigh. I had completed the first stage and now had to buy the food and get back. As I approached the bakers stall I felt in my pocket for my shilling, but it wasn't there! I had come so far and yet to lose my money! The bread was right in front of me, and I felt nobody needed it more than I... Oh why did I take it?

Evidence of our Value – Our Value as Evidence

National Council on Archives' (NCA) Conference 2006

How can archives better collect and use evidence of their value, and how can they employ their value as evidence?

The 2006 NCA Conference, *Evidence of our Value – our Value as Evidence*, which took place on 21 February, addressed this subject from a variety of angles. Chaired throughout by the NCA Chairman, Jonathan Pepler, County Archivist of Cheshire, the day began with a Keynote Address from Dr Pat Thane, Leverhulme Professor of Contemporary British History at the University of London. Her address tackled some of the current issues affecting all individuals and institutions engaged in historical research at a number of levels, and set the tone of serious debate for the day.

She was followed by Rebecca Simor, Project Manager of BBC Factual and Learning, who spoke about "Mass Impact– Who Do You Think You Are?": a phenomenon well known to archivists around the

country. Her presentation contained some very interesting and useful figures describing the audience of the first two series of *WDYTIA?* (as it is affectionately known), and those who attended the accompanying Family History days organised by BBC local radio.

Standing in for one of two speakers who had to drop out at short notice, Louise Ray gave an "Introduction to *Giving Value*" the NCA report outlining funding priorities for UK archives, 2005–2010.

After lunch, Simon Matty from MLA spoke about "Making the Case – Demonstrating the Value of Archives to our Political Masters". He covered ground that John Holden would have considered if he had not been unable to attend the day, clearly presenting current thinking on the three strands of the concept of public value.

Dr Dennis Wheeler from the University of Sunderland gave a very thought-provoking example of

the wide range of applications for archive material in "Using naval archives for studying climatic change", demonstrating the importance of archives to scientific research of global value and importance.

In "Archives and Criminology", Professor David Wilson, of the University of Central England, gave a number of examples of the use and misuse of power in and around archives and their collections. A plenary session provoked some lively debate and brought a fascinating day to a close.

The presentations are available on the NCA website at www.ncaonline.org.uk/about_nca/conf_2006

Ruth Savage
Policy and Development Officer
National Council on Archives

New NHS Code of Practice for Records Management

On 30 March, the Department of Health issued its new publication *Records management: NHS Code of Practice (270422/1&2)*. This was compiled by a working party with representatives from the Department of Health, the National Health Service (NHS) and the Health Archives Group, with input from many other organisations, including The National Archives (TNA). It replaces several previous health service circulars on the subject, including HSC1999/053, 1998/217 and 1998/153 and is being circulated to Chief Executives and Chairs of NHS organisations around the country.

Part 1 of the Code covers obligations and responsibilities within the NHS, the development of policy and strategy, and retention and disposal arrangements. There are also useful annexes listing further sources of information and a summary of relevant legislation and standards. Part 2 contains a revised schedule giving minimum retention periods for both administrative and patient records, including guidance on historical retention.

The new Code is likely to have a considerable impact on those archive services dealing with NHS records, both inside and outside the NHS, and its appearance may offer a useful opportunity for places of

deposit to establish or improve links with local health service organisations, and to review processes for the appraisal and transfer of their records.

The Code is available on-line in the publications and statistics section of the Department of Health web-site at:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidanceArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4131747&chk=tMmN39

or in hard copy from:

DH Publications Orderline
PO Box 777
London SE1 6XH

Telephone: 0870 155 54 55
Fax: 0162 372 45 24

For more information, contact Kevin Mulley, TNA National Advisory Services
kmulley@nationalarchives.gov.uk
or Graham Stanley, Client Manager TNA Department of Health
GStanley@nationalarchives.gov.uk



Archives Alive!

Inspiring schools in Yorkshire

Looking at what your local archive service and local studies library have to offer to support learning in schools is probably not at the top of every teacher's agenda. Most teachers are far too busy to spend hours undertaking historical research, no matter how interesting a prospect this may be.

However, what if that research was already undertaken? What if schools could print out or view original documents such as letters, maps, diaries, trade directories, wills, trial transcripts, census extracts, log books and a whole host of historical photographs – the very stuff of your services – right there in class? And what if that material was accompanied by creative and engaging interpretive ideas to support teaching and learning across the curriculum? Wouldn't that be a brilliant way to dispel the notion that archive services are "not for the likes of us"? OFSTED has indicated that there is a weakness in the teaching of local history in schools, so there is plenty of scope – archivists are needed.

Through ICT you can make young learners aware that records exist, that they are conserved, collected, accessible, challenging, relevant, absorbing, and even enjoyable. Pupils are discovering what archive services have to offer. Not something every teenager, let alone primary school child, spends much time contemplating. Now young learners can access primary sources without having to make an appointment. Let's get real here: normally you wouldn't get teenagers going anywhere near a record office. They are unlikely to have a clue what it is for a start

and, if they do have an inkling, they are pretty unlikely to be tempted to pop in. Why should they? What exactly is in there for them? It isn't always obvious.

So, if you do decide to go down the school's route, what do *you* get out of it? Well, you don't have to have a nervous breakdown worrying about how your documents are being handled for a start. It's not the real thing of course, but ICT is about as good as it gets. Done well it's a great motivator for learning...it's cool too. But ICT is not the only way and documents can be great starting points for creative arts, science and maths projects, for example. The important thing is you are reaching out and beginning to understand the needs of a whole new audience. You are exploring new ways to make your collections accessible and breaking down some barriers on the way.

Museums, Libraries and Archives (MLA) Yorkshire has been actively supporting new education initiatives undertaken by archive and local studies services across the region. Through Archives Alive! *Inspiring schools in Yorkshire* a number of ground-breaking projects have been developed. Strategic Commissioning and Content Creation funding, advice, encouragement, partnership

working, teacher placements and maybe even a little cajoling here and there have reaped dividends!

It hasn't all been a bed of roses but there isn't a single service that regrets the undertaking. Quite the contrary – there's enthusiasm to carry on exploring proactive approaches to education and certainly no intention to quit this quiet revolution. Maybe it's not going to be so quiet in the future either. Services do need to get the message out so that schools know what specific resources are on offer. There are a number of ways MLA Yorkshire is helping to promote archive education for schools.

First of all we have been promoting services by joining forces with Museums Alive! *Inspiring schools in Yorkshire* to produce a high quality publication showing what is available to support the National Curriculum in Museums, Archives and Local Studies across the region. This publication is initially being rolled out to non-participating schools in Yorkshire with the enticement of a free school visit, including transport costs, to the first schools to apply for funding. We worked with a York based marketing company called Stone Soup to produce and market an effective and professional publication. The archival content highlighted some of the innovative

Year 9 pupils at Manor School, York taking part in the dramatisation of the trial and interrogation of Guy Fawkes and his fellow conspirators. Photo by Porl Medlock was taken at the Castle Museum in York.

projects that have been undertaken in the region, with the help of MLA Yorkshire funding and support.

As a result of this work there is growing evidence that young learners are indeed discovering archives and local studies. They are finding that records have value and a purpose and – heaven knows – might even be interesting. Teenagers in Dewsbury declared archives to be 'cool'. Meanwhile Year 8 pupils in York have been relishing palaeography classes to interpret 17th century text to find out how Guy Fawkes and his fellow conspirators were interrogated. This is exciting stuff!

Archive Services and Local Studies libraries in Yorkshire are helping young learners to access primary sources, often through e-learning, but not exclusively so. The internet, CDROMs and DVDs offer great opportunities to bring unique records to an ever wider audience. Clearly Yorkshire record offices are not the only services in the country to embrace new technologies. But maybe they are in the vanguard of this drive to get the information into schools, to start to think proactively of the needs of teachers and to work in partnership to make things happen.

Eventually it is envisaged that resources will be posted on the My Learning website. This new site is still being developed but is being promoted as a one-stop-shop for teachers. Site visitors can see, at the click of a mouse, what is available in their area to support the National Curriculum in museums, galleries, libraries and archives, and download resources at the same time. The site has streaming audio. It will also show short video clips and allow site visitors to access and print out resources of sufficiently high quality for use in the classroom. This project is being led by the Hub museums in Yorkshire and will be launched at Cartwright Hall, Bradford on 19 June this year. It is hoped that there will be links from existing archive education websites to the My Learning website.

Here are some of the education projects undertaken in Yorkshire within the last twelve months:



North Yorkshire County Record Office (NYCRO) has been very busy working on four different projects. One of these was *George Cayley: Father of Flight*, which led to practical balloon building and glider flying activities held with Northallerton College and The Dales Special school. Cayley's ground breaking study of aeronautics led him to invent, construct and test a manned glider 100 years before the Wright brothers' first powered flight. This project tapped into a rich seam of resources at NYCRO, the Royal Aeronautical Society and the Yorkshire Air Museum. It supported science, technology, engineering and maths at Key Stage 4

Then there's *Reaching the Teacher*. This cross curricular CD-Rom has been distributed to 600 plus schools across North Yorkshire. With a commitment to opening up the archives, this unique resource links to work schemes, case studies and archival information. There are

around 150 digitised archival documents on a CD produced in partnership with teachers. A favourite within the *Reaching the Teacher* resource is a series of mug shots from a 19th century charge book to match to original police descriptions and a '*Fitting the punishment to meet the crime*' classroom activity.

Soup for the Soup Kitchen is another cross curricular NYCRO resource. Working with three seconded teachers to produce a CD-Rom of resources and supporting the Healthy Schools initiative, *Soup for the Soup Kitchen* promises to be less than appetising. Resources may include workhouse diet sheets – now there's an interesting prospect for food technology practical lessons. Or how about discovering the rations dished out to prisoners? Or why not find out about the wartime diet, when the nation's health and rationing were right at the top of the agenda? All this is

3
Through the Eyes of a Child is a Strategic Commissioning and Content Creation project (funded by MLA Yorkshire) undertaken by Huddersfield Local Studies library. Image of Boothroyd Lane School, Dewsbury, c.1900 (Kirklees Digital Archive)



spot-on for today's concern with a healthy diet and the records will forge all sorts of connections with today's fare.

By way of contrast, there's *Changing the Picture*. Thirsk and Bedale museums, North Yorkshire County Council Local Studies Service and NYCRO are working together to digitise archival, library and museum collections to create a new learning resource for local schools. The UNNETIE website (www2.northyorks.gov.uk/unnetie/) will be the catalyst for a dynamic interpretation of resources designed to engage young learners. *Changing the Picture* supports history, citizenship and geography Key Stages 1-3. It will be available in August 2006 and will explore urban and rural North Yorkshire in the 19th and 20th centuries.

This term has seen a real challenge for pupils at Manor School, York. A group of Year 9 gifted and talented students worked with York City Archives to dramatise *The Interrogation and trial of Guy Fawkes and his fellow conspirators*. Guy Fawkes was a local lad of

course. The performances took place at the school and also in the cell at the Castle Museum. Manor School is a specialist technology college in the performing arts. Pupils learnt about the Gunpowder Plot from original source material. They read and made sense of early 17th century English and acted the parts of historical figures using the language of the day. As part of their preparation they thoroughly enjoyed working with Sarah Costley from York City Archives. Sarah introduced them to palaeography and she also devised the script. The resulting DVD of resources will be sent to local schools.

Teachers from Manor School spoke enthusiastically about the Guy Fawkes experience at a special training day for museum and archive educators at York Art Gallery. This Museums and Archives Alive! training day provided an excellent opportunity to develop ideas for partnership working, to find out about 'warts and all' archive education experiences and to hear from serving teachers the importance of giving young

learners the opportunity to explore – and to be challenged by – primary and secondary sources. Together the teachers gave a clear and inspirational picture of the importance of archive education in schools today.

Another York City Archives project, *The Home Front* supported History and English at Key Stages 2 and 3. York Museums Trust and York City Archives worked in partnership with a story teller. They took archives and artefacts into at least 15 schools, reaching over 1000 children, as part of the 60th anniversary commemorations of the end of World War II.

In Sheffield the Archive Service and Local Studies Library have worked together with a freelance researcher, Robin Fielder, to select resources to explore *Life at different levels of society in Victorian Sheffield*. Teacher placements (brokered by the local Business Education Partnership) from a local primary and secondary school have developed associated interpretive classroom activities. These will be made available as

e-learning resources in Sheffield and beyond. Teachers will be piloting the resource before it is officially launched and distributed to schools in Sheffield.

Through the Eyes of a Child is a Key Stage 2 History project which explores what it was like to be a child growing up in Victorian Huddersfield. Here Huddersfield Local Studies Library is working with teachers to develop a resource that will bring the unfamiliar world of a child living in Victorian Huddersfield into the classroom today. The researcher is a serving primary school teacher who is so enthusiastic about the project that she is working on Saturdays and in school holidays to develop an accessible, relevant and engaging e-learning resource with plenty of opportunity to explore

original documents and images plus ideas for associated activities in class.

The results will be published on West Yorkshire Archive Service's www.nowthen.org. This website already has a wealth of resources to support a local study of Victorian Dewsbury and Batley.

MLA Yorkshire is keen to develop the potential for archive services, museum services, schools and other agencies to work together. Partnership working will continue to be the focus for Strategic Commissioning funding streams in 2006/7. This funding will enable partners to develop resources around the themes of social justice, citizenship and the abolition of slavery. Archives and Local Studies in Yorkshire will of course have a

wealth of potential material to support these themes. All that's needed is a dash of creativity and a real commitment to partnership working so as to develop unique learning resources for young learners in our region.

Jennie Forrester
Archive Education Development Officer
MLA Yorkshire
jennie.forrester@mlayorkshire.org
.uk

4
From the Through the Eyes of a Child project. Boating Lake, Greenhead Park, Huddersfield, c.1895 (Kirklees Digital Archive)



Portcullis: a new gateway to the Parliamentary Archives

Portcullis is the online catalogue of the Parliamentary Archives. Available on the web at www.portcullis.parliament.uk, it has transformed access to the 200 record collections held at the Houses of Parliament.

Portcullis took five years to create. It contains 470,000 descriptions covering the three million records held at Westminster since 1497. Over 700 separate finding aids, previously only available in the public search room and almost all on paper, were incorporated into the catalogue, which is now available to the public 24 hours a day. At the same time, many descriptions were enhanced with administrative and departmental histories which explain how and why the records were created, and what their purpose was. Two-thirds of the Archives' online users are from overseas so *Portcullis* enables users across the world to search its holdings, and then order records in advance of their visit to London, or to order copies to be sent to them by post or email.

records in pursuit of their research. Already, *Portcullis* is allowing the Archives to cater for ten times the number of users than it can accommodate at Westminster on a daily basis, and this figure looks set to grow when the general Parliamentary website undergoes a major overhaul in 2006 to improve its search engines and personalisation facilities.

Some of what has been achieved at Parliament will be familiar to users of The National Archives' (TNA) online catalogue. *Portcullis* uses a new alpha-numeric referencing system for the records which is not so different from that used at TNA. This was in fact one of the major challenges of the project: almost alone amongst

English archives, the Parliamentary Archives rarely used unique reference numbers to identify its holdings which were instead ordered by date and series. The re-referencing and consequent relisting and relabelling of holdings was the biggest logistical headache of the project. It nevertheless needed to be done, both to open up the records for much more efficient searching and also to allow online access.

Another key aim of the project was to create a catalogue for the Archives which would for the first time conform to international standards on archival description and be indexed by persons, corporate bodies and subject for pooling with other archive data in

5
Finding aids to Parliament's records have come a long way since the first one – the 'Short Calendar' of the early 17th century

Portcullis is just one of the products of the Archives' automation project. In addition to the online catalogue, behind the scenes new automated systems for recording shelf locations in the Victoria Tower repository, enquiry tracking and invoicing production have been introduced, soon to be followed by electronic user registration and online document ordering in the Archives' Westminster search room. In future, digital images of records will be attached to catalogue descriptions: the aim is to create a virtual search room where all our users will be able to access key

5



Details of these 63,000 original acts of Parliament dating back to 1497 are all available on *Portcullis* and via Access to Archives.

a national network. Parliament was involved in Access to Archives (A2A) from an early stage, and in total it contributed five key catalogues (www.a2a.org.uk): those of all acts of Parliament since 1497, substantial quantities of unprinted Parliamentary papers laid on the table of both Houses, and in one of the first A2A projects to be undertaken, the Lloyd George Papers and the Bonar Law Papers went online as well. This data is all reproduced on *Portcullis*.

However, there are some differences compared with TNA's catalogue. The most obvious one is that the system used to hold the data in Parliament is CALM, rather than a bespoke system. Also the data is not partly held in Encoded Archival Description (EAD) as at Kew, but EAD can be imported and exported from the system, and the Archives has been at the forefront of ensuring that CALM is developed in a way to allow for the creation of truly platform-independent data in the future. In terms of how the data was converted, there were also differences of approach at Parliament. While TNA had made extensive use of external contractors for the keying of hard-copy data into electronic form, the data at Parliament was generally so complex and sub-standard that much of it had to be converted in-house by a series of temporary typists overseen by the retrospective conversion team editors.

7 *Portcullis* has been available to the public on the web for over a year.

7



Portcullis went live in the Archives' search room in June 2003, followed by a web launch in December 2004. Its success was recognised when it became a finalist in the 2005 e-government awards and feedback from users has been very encouraging:

- 'Very impressed with *Portcullis* archive index – makes searching for records so much easier'

- 'I should perhaps bring it to your attention that [printed] item (a) appears to be a unique surviving copy. It is not recorded in ESTC and I have never located a copy in a search of almost forty years'

- '*Portcullis* deserves a 5-star rating – the new systematic structure makes it much easier to establish what has survived,

Raising Portcullis: Some Facts and Figures

- No of paper and electronic finding aids converted: 700
- No of records described: around 3 million
- No of entries on catalogue: 470,000
- No of series created: 2577
- No of name authority files: 569
- Largest fonds: House of Lords
- Archivists employed: 9
- Typists employed: 14
- Volunteers used: 27
- Typists' average speed: 90wpm over 5.5 years
- Quantity of records disposed of after appraisal: 250m
- No of entries contributed to Access to Archives: 100,000
- No of florescent marker pens emptied during preparation of lists for Access to Archives: 40
- Last record to be added before end of project: Death Warrant of Charles I, 1649 (HL/PO/JO/10/1/297A)

how documents relate to one another, and substantially clarifies Maurice Bond's Guide to the Records of Parliament.'

As well as meeting the original objectives for the project, there have also been some significant spin-off benefits. During the course of the project, a great deal of duplicate, ephemeral or non-parliamentary material was appraised and destroyed. This freed 250m of shelving in the Victoria Tower repository and also informed a new collection and acquisition policy. Identifying display material for exhibitions and VIP visits has been made immensely easier and quicker. It has been possible to perform a stocktake for the first time now that locations are tied to reference numbers, and in turn this shelf audit identified records which had never been catalogued before (these form the basis of a further project known as *Portcullis II* which began in April 2006). With transparent details of holdings online before January 2005 the ability to meet the requirements of Freedom of Information was greatly enhanced. Enquiries to the Archives have risen by 20% and continue to do so. In short, *Portcullis* has become an online gateway to the rich holdings of the Parliamentary Archives.



8

The team in 2004 (from left): Fiona Johnson, Nick White, Colin Rudkin, Caroline Shenton, Martin Robson Riley, Katie Cassell, Monica Halpin, Louise Todd, and Clair Boluski

Caroline Shenton
Assistant Clerk of the Records
Parliamentary Archives

Preservation: the future of our collections

Archives are in the business of preserving evidence. The documents that record our past and our future history must be preserved for the benefit of users now and in the future. This material, which is part of our heritage, or forms a long-term record of our life and work, must be maintained and supported.

Strategy to sustain this material has taken different forms over the years, depending on technology, available funding and the role taken by national and regional bodies. The National Preservation Office (NPO) formulated some principles for such a strategy in 2001 (see www.bl.uk/services/npo/npo.html).

Among these was the need to assess the state of preservation of collections, to address priorities and to ensure appropriate training in best practice.

The first of these needs was covered by a programme of preservation surveys managed by the NPO in a large number of individual UK libraries and archives between 2001 and 2005. The method used was the NPO's Preservation Assessment Survey (PAS), which obtains a reliable snapshot picture of the state of preservation of a library collection or archive holdings by examining the preservation environment and condition of a sample of approximately 400 items. The collected data from 97 of these surveys has now been aggregated and the results published as *Knowing the Need* in February 2006, to give a picture of how well collections are cared for, and where strengths and weaknesses lie.

These surveys represent an estimated population of 28 million items. Statistically reliable data have impact even if merely confirming what we already think we know and provide a firm basis on which to take action. Some basic common perceptions are confirmed by the NPO survey data – disaster plans are not always in place, and many volumes have damaged bindings. However, the database structure we have devised allows more sophisticated analysis and indicates some distinct areas of priority.

Our picture of preservation need covers both archives and libraries. It includes data from local authority archives and special repositories, academic and public libraries and special libraries which are neither local authority-run nor part of an

academic institution. We have data from all the English regions, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. However, we did not include public library lending stock and undergraduate student collections since they are generally not intended for long-term retention. Higher education institution special collections are included, as are public library local history and special collections.

The state of preservation in UK archives

The surveys have demonstrated that although much of the material in collections surveyed is in good or fair condition there is a significant proportion (13%) which is unstable, actively deteriorating or vulnerable to damage if used. A

How does it work? The Preservation Assessment Survey

The survey model works as follows:

- Users identify a sample of 400 items selected at random or systematically from a library or archive, or one or more of its collections. The sample is always 400 (or as close as possible), whatever the size of the collection.
- They complete a short questionnaire for each item in the sample. Part one is a 'tick box' form, asking questions relating to the preservation of the item—access, use, accommodation, condition and usability, value and importance. Part two requires an assessment of the condition of the item and the types of damage it may show.
- Information from the forms is keyboarded into an Access™ database.
- Data is returned to the NPO for the generation of reports

number of key preservation practices are widely absent. The situation must be improved in order to minimise risk to collections, prevent deterioration in the future and redress damage which has already occurred.

The key issues are:

- Environmental monitoring and control (58% of material in archives has inadequate monitoring and control)
- Storage (28% of archive material is in poor storage)
- Surface dirt (50% of all material has surface dirt – potential food for pests and moulds and bad for the collection’s public image)
- Disaster planning (34% of archive material is not covered by a written plan)
- Damage to bindings (46% of all bindings are damaged)
- Surrogacy (archives would like to see 54% of their holdings available in surrogate form, either microfilm or digital, yet only 7% of archive material currently has a surrogate)

In general, archives have better environmental monitoring, storage and disaster planning than libraries, but they have more unstable material than libraries, and the majority of material in archives is in ‘fair’ condition, whereas in libraries the majority is in ‘good’ condition. The difference in condition may be attributable to the nature of archival holdings, and this finding serves to emphasise the need for good preservation practice.

The disparity between the amount of material which currently has a surrogate, and the amount which archivists would wish to have is very marked. We also found that many items which have surrogates are still heavily used, indicating that the surrogates are not used – perhaps because they are not of sufficient quality, or their existence is not publicised. This issue requires some teasing out and seems to be a particular concern for archives given the desire to create surrogates on a large scale.

At the institutional level, the following are the most urgent issues:

- Housekeeping measures—cleaning, packaging
- Disaster planning
- Conservation
- Better storage
- Environmental monitoring and control

At a more strategic level, the findings suggest that action to address the need should focus on:

- Reducing the amount of material in unstable condition
- Improving building quality
- Identifying and implementing the most appropriate methods for retarding or correcting the development of brittle paper
- Ensuring there is an appropriately skilled workforce in both preservation and conservation

It is instructive to compare the NPO survey results with the Heritage Health Index Report for United States collections published by Heritage Preservation and the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Using a different methodology – a questionnaire survey, and covering a wide range of types of institution- archives, libraries, historical societies, museums and scientific collections, the results were nevertheless broadly similar. Major weaknesses were found in accommodation and storage, environmental management, disaster planning and budgetary issues. All conspire to constitute a ‘public trust at risk’. The universality of these preservation issues confirms the need to make them a focus for constructive effort and for funding.

Using the findings within the institution

The survey method was designed as a practical tool to enable institutions to plan and prioritise

their own preservation and conservation activities, and to support applications for funding for particular collections or preservation projects.

We surveyed users to find out how they have applied their survey reports within their organisation. We found that the statistics have been used in a wide range of scenarios. These included:

- Developing and steering planning and policy
- Identifying problem areas of storage
- Managing and justifying resource requirements – staff or budgets
- Influencing/educating senior managers and external contacts
- Identifying the need for regional funding and collaboration
- Supporting bids for internal and external funding
- Setting and meeting conservation targets
- Continuity (managing staff changes)
- Following up a whole-collection survey with a detailed examination of problem areas

Funding bodies, such as the Heritage Lottery Fund, the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust, and the Wellcome Trust’s Research Resources in Medical History, generally require an overview of the state of preservation of a collection in order to assess the benefit of the funding proposal submitted to them. Use of PAS data has been successful: for example, it has been reported that small grants to purchase specific shelving or conservation equipment have been received, that a number of larger conservation treatment grants have been achieved, and ongoing funding for part time staffing to support activities such as repackaging has been achieved. Data from the

These are some of the comments made by users on the positive outcomes from the Preservation Assessment Survey.

- “.....document provides solid foundation to build on”
- “.....increased awareness of preservation activities”
- “.....identified a need for a specific preservation budget”
- “.....reinforced our own understanding”
- “.....assisted in targeting collections for preservation, digitisation and conservation activity by highlighting problems and enabling us to assess the most cost effective approach to having the greatest impact on the greatest number of items”



reports is being used to support applications to the Heritage Lottery Fund. We know that in at least one case survey reports have been a critical factor in obtaining government approval and funding for a new archive repository.

Using the findings for strategy

The NPO's programme has identified aspects of preservation which could and should be improved. Much can be achieved by individual institutions and through local cooperation. Collaborative local or regional action could address many of the local requirements by implementing:

- Shared stores
- Shared disaster response arrangements
- Shared access to conservation expertise
- Shared purchase and distribution of equipment and supplies
- Training in best practice

In other areas only concerted action and funding, possibly at a national level, is likely to create viable initiatives, such as mass deacidification and large-scale collaborative storage.

Future developments: 'Meeting the Need'

Now that we know the preservation need, we must move towards meeting that need in a consistent manner. Capacity, skills and funding are needed to sustain collections for the future. The NPO will be working with a range of partners to encourage and participate in debate to develop the necessary strategies.

The NPO's own work will respond to the needs defined through the survey programme. The office's overall aim is to provide an

independent focus for preservation management practitioners and organisations caring for library and archive materials throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland. Our key goals for 2005-8 are:

- To enable cultural heritage agencies and organisations develop strategies for the preservation of cultural heritage assets in museums, libraries and archives through the development and promotion of preservation management tools
- To provide enquiry and information services for individuals and organisations caring for collections throughout the UK and Ireland
- To provide preservation management training opportunities for individuals and organisations caring for collections throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland

We will continue to offer preservation survey services both to individual institutions and to regional or sectoral groups of libraries and archives. The data received will continue to be added to the national database and we will continue to publish update reports.

As part of our information service we publish introductory leaflets on a range of preservation topics (see www.bl.uk/services/npo/publication/sleaf.html). New titles will emphasise the themes highlighted by the survey results: Cleaning books and documents was published in October 2005; we are planning titles on environmental monitoring and control and disaster planning in 2005-6.

Our training programme will follow the same lines, focusing on the areas of need highlighted by our survey findings. How clean are your books?, a one-day course addressing issues of surface dirt, was first offered in late 2005, repeated in January 2006 and will run again in June. Preservation for access is a well-established introduction to preservation management which runs twice yearly. Further training days on environmental management and disaster planning are being developed.

Our information service will be strengthened by a partnership with MDA, formerly the Museums Documentation Association, ICON, the Institute of Conservation and MLA, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, under the banner of Collections Link. A single website and enquiry point will receive, answer or redirect enquiries relating to all aspects of collection management, including library preservation. The NPO's information resources will be accessible through this website. We anticipate that Collections Link, due to be launched in Spring 2006, will allow us to reach new audiences and to give our users easy access to other relevant material.

Evidence-based preservation

To conclude, the best basis for dealing with a multi-faceted issue like preservation is firm evidence of the nature and extent of that problem. Piecemeal activity may not hit the target, or may not even know what the target is. We know now that considerable amounts of material are at risk unless preservation practice is improved, and that collaboration and investment are needed. Working from the 'big picture' helps us to demonstrate that we are planning consistently and constructively, on the basis of firm evidence. This holds true for individual institutions and for the future of all the nation's collections.

Further information

Alison Walker and Julia Foster, *Knowing the need. A report on the emerging picture of preservation need in libraries and archives in the UK*, London: National Preservation Office, 2006. Available as download from www.bl.uk/npo or in hard copy on request from the NPO.

A public trust at risk. The heritage health index report on the state of America's collections, Washington: Heritage Preservation, 2005, is available from www.heritagehealthindex.org

Alison Walker
Head, National Preservation Office

Case studies

With increasing dependency on computers in government, business and private lives, improving levels of IT literacy, and in particular the explosion in the use of the Internet, users have new and increased expectations of what is available and possible. The web has evolved into perhaps the single most dominant communication channel in the world. With the development of more widely available broadband services the "Google generation" expects immediate access to accurate information through fast, reliable search engines.

The changing face of records management

A recent survey of media consumption has suggested that that over half of written communication is by e-mail, 29% by text message and just 13% by pen and paper! We have certainly come a long way since Ken Olson (President and Founder of Digital Equipment Corporation) made the observation in 1977 that there was "no reason why anybody would want a computer in their home". With the majority focused on creation and access to information the role of the records manager is becoming more challenging and vital in ensuring this information is created in a managed environment.

Against the backdrop of this technological change, there have been a number of accelerators that have also thrown the profession of records management into the spotlight. The Freedom of Information Act (2000) and the Environmental Information Regulations (2005) now provide the public with increased rights in relation to access to information. In the United States there have been some high profile cases when the mismanagement of records has been highlighted. The Enron/Anderson scandal and more recently the ruling against the investment bank Morgan Stanley, have increased pressures to demonstrate effective governance and diligence, and have renewed interests generally in good records management compliance. The former case leading to the US Accounting Industry Reform Act of 2002 (initially known as the Sarbanes-Oxley Act) has now led to greater standardisation of records management practices. At home, the Victoria Climbié, Bichard and

Hutton inquiries have either recommended the improvement of records management procedures or highlighted the need for good records management procedures to be in place to deliver information requested by the inquiry.

Within this changing environment, the remit and role of record managers has had to evolve and grow. With complex laws such as privacy, copyright and data protection as well as other relevant legislation impacting on the sector, specialist knowledge is required to understand the legal status of records. They are required to evaluate records management procedures, develop business cases for change, while adapting to rapidly evolving and changing IT processes. On top of this record managers often have to champion the benefits of e-investment when integrating sophisticated electronic records management systems into common work practices.

The implications for managing the records of an organisation differ across sectors. There are now increasing pressures on the public sector from Central Government not only to move towards more and more information being available online, but also to obtain value for money from e-investment. The main focus of the e-government drive is to improve public services through the exploitation of new technology, which will enable better sharing of information across the public sector, leading to more 'joined up' government. Shared services has emerged as a key area of focus for public sector organisations, looking to reduce cost efficiencies in their

operations and improve service delivery to their citizens.

However, while the will may be there among organisations to create and manage records in the digital environment, record managers struggle to have the support of the whole organisation. If we are to do it effectively we need long-term strategies in corporate plans, as well as total buy in from managers and the resources to train staff. Records management needs to be recognised as a key corporate activity, as important to an organisation as HR or Estates, not just an add-on. Moving to electronic records management systems is not just about installing new software. It is fundamentally about changing how an organisation works and how it will operate and deliver its services in the future.

As we know, born digital records are extremely vulnerable to technological change – they will not survive unless there are systems to back up the information regularly and to migrate them to new software. This is a much more complex and labour-intensive process than is necessary for the permanent preservation of paper. We all know that if a paper record is protected and stored on a shelf in fairly good conditions it will probably be there in a hundred years time. Putting a disk on a shelf can almost guarantee it will be completely unreadable in just 10 years. A process of continuing and active management of born digital records is therefore essential.

As a proportion of electronic records will go on to be selected for permanent preservation we need to be having the dialogue across disciplines now about the best method to manage electronic records in the long-term. This is good business sense too as for the public sector to be accountable, many electronic records will have to be retained in the long term irrespective of their archival value in order for organisations to be able to function effectively and fulfill its corporate obligations. It makes sense for authorities to exploit the new technology being designed for long term archival preservation when seeking ways to manage their

corporate information over long periods of time.

The variety and sophistication of the many formats of born-digital records, such as interactivity, present issues while they are being stored for their legal lifecycle, leaving aside the implications of selecting for permanent preservation. The National Archives is tackling the issues of managing and preserving the interactive qualities of records. We are now receiving more dynamic, interactive, multimedia content especially from Public Inquiries. Recent examples include the inquiry into the events of Bloody Sunday and the sinking of the Marchioness. As both featured virtual reality models in a format not compatible with delivery over the web, TNA has successfully migrated these complex digital objects to web based technologies.

Issues such as the separation of content, format and medium, ease of manipulation, and complexity which are so much a feature of digital information, together with the absence of any clear distinction between the concept of an 'original' and a 'copy' all require us to rethink our accepted understanding of what constitutes an authentic record, and to develop new methods for defining and describing these new types of content. Our greater challenge is making governing bodies understand the complexities of managing new media and so provide the resources for us to do the job properly.

Since 1995 The National Archives has been at the forefront of national initiatives to address the challenges posed by the transition from records on traditional media to those, which are 'born digital'. In partnership with other bodies across the UK, we have developed a series of programmes and projects to support electronic records management within government and since 2003 increasingly across the wider public sector. This has included the internationally recognised functional requirements for ERMS, and guidance on email, business classification schemes and long-term sustainability.

Our award winning Digital Archive



(developed in 2003) is already allowing us to collect and securely store born-digital public records, and our Electronic Records Online system (EROL) is now delivering these records to our users over the Web. Through the National Digital Archive of Datasets (NDAD) we've developed increasingly sophisticated approaches to delivering dataset records in a form, which can easily be manipulated and reused.

Our Seamless Flow Programme involves the creation of a seamless flow of digital records from creation in Government departments, to preservation in the archives, through to delivery on the web. Without this innovative and ambitious programme, many records could have been lost to the nation forever. As part of this programme, we have recently launched our global search facility, which will help us to provide the user with a seamless portal experience, presenting the results in a single web page.

The National Archives takes a close interest in the progress made by public authorities to acquire and implement a variety of technical solutions and has identified a number of concerns and issues in relation to records management and in particular the problems associated with born digital records. Some of these revolve around purely technical matters

arising from complex integrations and the management of relationships between clients, integrators and EDRM software suppliers. The overall cost of EDRM integration and implementation is also a factor here. Other concerns revolve around the effectiveness of change management processes in promoting behavioural changes amongst the users to secure buy-in and an informed level of use. This has identified a need to enhance the usability of such systems for end users, as well as to ensure that the 'systems' approach is more explicitly rooted in a wider context of good information governance within organisations.

Many of the challenges we are facing are common to archives throughout the world, and therefore the most effective response will require international co-operation. The National Archives is playing a key role in international archival and records management matters and benefits in this capacity, from our expert teams who advise on the records of central government, local and public authorities, as well as private archives in the United Kingdom.

Specifically we're keen to continue working with organisations like the International Council on Archives on the development of new professional standards. Standards are critical to merging and analysing e-content data from disparate sources. We are continuing to work with electronic publishers, systems vendors, software developers and other public sector organisations on e-content initiatives that establish needed standards. As users access us across many different boundaries, it is important that The National Archives is seen as an effective standard-bearer and advocate at the international level.

The National Archives has also worked with the International Records Management Trust (IRMT) on projects such as Evidence-Based Governance in the Electronic Age which aims to mainstream records management as a cornerstone of the global development agenda. At the same time, we are continuing to be a member and key contributor to the DLM Forum,

which is developing MoReq2 and establishing a pan European testing regime. And on top of this we want to do more. We are currently in the process of creating a new 'Information Strategy' team to give dedicated focus to work around the future management of electronic records and to ensure we constantly stay ahead of the game.

Over the past few years we've learned a lot of lessons. Our focus to date has been to get the basics right, and ensure that processes are in place for the capture of electronic records. The time is right now to take a dual track approach – namely to continue to implement good electronic records management practice and systems within organisations whilst simultaneously looking forward to ask "what have we learned, and what will the next generation of technology allow?" TNA is now seeking to foster strategic partnerships with key stakeholders (including major government departments and professional bodies such as the Society of Archivists and the Records Management Society) and others within the public sector and the software industry to address this ambitious agenda and to explore the potential for shared services and infrastructures capable of delivering the new functionality.

However, whilst acknowledging the real achievements made by the records management community within both the public and private sectors to manage the transition to a reliance on digitally held information, the acquisition and implementation of electronic records management applications has highlighted how much more needs to be done.

The National Archives has a key role in moving beyond what has been seen as our traditional role of keeping records towards showing why they have real, tangible benefits for the UK as a whole. Businesses and increasingly government need to be convinced that good records management actually helps them. Perhaps the strongest arguments for effective management are the efficiencies and more effective knowledge management (particularly in

response to urgent enquiries or disasters), which can be gained by having the right information available at the right time. The other arguments that have proved very effective are those highlighting the risks of getting this wrong – the Soham case being a powerful example. The aerospace, pharmaceutical and similar highly regulated industries which need to preserve records for the medium to long term have understood the benefits of good records management systems for many years so much can be learned from these organisations.

There have been significant achievements within the records management community but, given the pace of change of the digital revolution there is still a lot of work in relation to the future direction of the profession. It is important that the role of records management continues to be integrated and embedded into the workflow and overall strategic business of the organisation. Records management is not merely about meeting legislative, regulatory and administrative needs - it adds significant value too. As the nature of business changes, records managers are presented with opportunities to demonstrate how to evolve with it and contribute to raising its profile. There are key opportunities for record managers to show how organisations can use their own records to create knowledge and credentialise business activities, capturing the evidence of expertise directly and creating knowledge.

Clearly record managers need to have a good understanding of what is current and of the vital, important and peripheral information within an organisation. For this reason alone, they are perhaps closer to the 'intellectual capital' of an organisation than anyone else. This has all led to a rise in awareness of the role of the records manager and a greater flurry of activity in a wider auditorium. It's certainly a good time to be a records manager.

Natalie Ceeney
Chief Executive
The National Archives

The National Fairground Archive

The National Fairground Archive (NFA) is a unique collection of photographs, archival, and audio-visual material covering all aspects of the life and culture of travelling showpeople. Housed in the University of Sheffield Library, the NFA is now in its 12th year of existence.

The NFA was inaugurated in 1994 by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sheffield, with the support of the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain and Fairground Association of Great Britain. Under the stewardship of Dr Vanessa Toulmin, the NFA quickly grew in size and stature, both as a scholarly research resource and as a lifeline to the fairground enthusiast community which contributes so much to it.

The fairground has been an integral part of popular entertainment in this country for over eight centuries. Each week more than 150 fairs are held from March

through to October. The UK's largest travelling fair – Hull Fair – attracts one million visitors in the week of the fair, amounting to one quarter of the annual visitor total to the city. Cinema, boxing, bingo and darts all have their origins in the travelling fairground. However, until the NFA was established there was no single body to sustain and support academic and public interest in our rich fairground culture, to preserve its heritage, and to provide a sound basis for the community interest and research of future generations.

Materials

The NFA contains over 5,000 monographs, 100,000 photographs, 10,000 items of ephemera, over 300 specialist periodicals (including a complete set of *World's Fair* newspaper) and rare audio-visual material. The context of this material includes personal collections from showland and circus families, as well as material donated from enthusiasts – photographs and accompanying notebooks.

All material is assessed for conservation, with any necessary procedures undertaken within a timescale dictated by available budgets at the time. Conserved material is catalogued and made accessible in the NFA itself – currently a single room in the

lower depths of the Library. Books and journals are catalogued onto the University of Sheffield Library on-line catalogue, whilst photographs are digitised and made available through a networked database.

User base and access

The NFA has a broad base of user groups, expanding all the time, as interest in cultural history (and particularly 19th century entertainment) continues to grow.

The most easily identified user groups include the show-families, fairground (and transport) enthusiasts, model-makers, local historians, family historians and circus enthusiasts. All of the aforementioned user groups have differing expectations of the emphasis and level of service offered by the NFA, and part of our ongoing work is to understand and respond to these expectations. Meeting expectations whilst being realistic and practical in running the archive is a balance we are constantly trying to achieve.

Less predictable (and so more exciting) users come from commercial environments and increasingly from academic institutions. The fact that fairgrounds have ushered in various key cultural activities (for example, cinema) means that as these

2
A delicate handbill for a Tom Thumb performance. This rare item dates from 1846 and is part of the growing collection of material documenting exhibitionism and performance around the subject of human oddities and curios



3

Florence Shufflebottom in full costume for the family's 1950s Rifle Show, an image that typically indicates the rapid changes constantly underway in the fairground

subjects get approval for serious study, more academics turn to NFA resources. Similarly the fairground itself is now seen as a hot-bed of cultural 're-appropriation' and 'immediacy' with key cultural themes, icons and moods reflected in the content and presentation of the rides and associated artefacts. A subject such as fairground art is ever-evolving on the fairground, and forms a mirror to popular culture, and so the NFA strives to capture this aspect both visually (through photographs) and theoretically (through dedicated articles on our website).

Another key area of new research is around 19th century entertainment and the difficult subject of 'freak shows', particularly the public interest in the extreme and bizarre. The NFA has worked closely with pioneering artists such as Matt Fraser in carefully unwrapping this intertwined history between showmanship and the popularisation of difference. On a slightly less contentious level, the NFA works with forward thinking artists who are using the spectacle of the fairground as a basis for bold, new art works. Recent examples include Marisa Carnesky's touring Ghost Train and Brendan

Walker's attempts to understand and document the emotion of thrill.

Access to the NFA is by appointment only, a policy dictated at present by the limited work space we have. Any potential visitors usually discusses their research subject and how the NFA can help, enabling us to prepare any material, and for the user to have a clearer expectation of what to find. This process of 'tempering expectations' has recently gained credence through the rapid rise of family historians turning to the fairground in their endeavours to secure a complete family tree. The impossibility of providing the specific information requested by most family historians has meant that the NFA has recently developed dedicated web pages to navigate researchers through this popular subject. This avoids the frustrating atmosphere of a user turning up expecting to find all references to an ancestor, when in fact there is very little (often nothing) immediately available.

Digital Strategies

A successful digitisation project commenced under Heritage

3



Lottery funding in May 1999, creating posts for new members of staff to work alongside Dr Toulmin. The brief of this initial project was to digitise photographic material, and to create a digital database to support the work. Progress with digitisation was rapid, and the (eventual) development of the database software was completed in-house with a University based consultant, after a commercial package had led to some problems (not least the company going in to liquidation). The developed database is DublinCore compliant with additional indexing developed by NFA staff to describe the core aspects of an image relating to the fairground. The software is written in XML and is housed on an internal server such that access to the catalogue is only available at University network points.

The second stage of digitisation was funded by the Pilgrim Trust, with a project commencing in July 2001. This continued the work of the initial HLF project, and also allowed us to create a selective image portal for access across the whole internet, taking the number of digitised images up to around

4

Billy Smart entertaining his grandchildren in the 1960s. The Smart Family collection is a valuable insight into the life of the travelling circus

4



Bird Family, Norwich, 1939 – The family collections from show-people convey the full dynamic of the travelling tradition, and an ideal reference source for both family historians and cultural researchers

the 75,000 mark. As more photographs were digitised then the knowledge base derived from the subject content became 'tighter' allowing us to achieve new capabilities. Firstly, it meant that suspect duplicate images could be quickly identified and weeded out through cross-referencing available data, and secondly it paved the way for a knowledge transfer project in partnership with the Health and Safety Executive (see below).

Digital preservation remains at the forefront of the NFA, and we are aware of the changing recommendations in this area with recent publications such as the Digital Preservation Coalition's *Mind The Gap* document. Future plans to digitise ephemera and large posters and plans are underway, with grant applications at an initial stage.

Partnership Work

The NFA has worked towards various successful partnerships, and sees this as an effective strategy to move forward in terms of profile and sustainability. The Mitchell and Kenyon Project involved a partnership with the British Film Institute (BFI) to identify, contextualise and distribute the pioneering films made by Mitchell and Kenyon. These films contain some of the earliest footage of 'everyday life' – tram rides, football matches, parades, factory gates – all commissioned by showmen to be recorded and then presented (commercially) at local fairgrounds. The intrinsic social value of the footage has led to a very well-received series on BBC television, augmented by a full tour that took in local presentations as well as subject specific presentations (for example rugby and football presentations).

An ongoing knowledge transfer partnership exists between the NFA and Health and Safety Executive (HSE). This partnership grew out of the wealth and consistency of information that came together through the creation of our digital database, allowing the HSE to have an up-to-date chronology and 'blueprint' of all fairground machinery in the UK.



This allows the HSE to be more proactive in fairground safety, as well as maintaining good information control in an increasingly sensationalised media bubble. The delivery of this knowledge transfer project is now entirely web-based, allowing resources to be accessed by HSE workers out in the field.

The NFA is also active in the Concordat agreement between the University of Sheffield and the British Library, collaborating on various projects at an advisory level.

Outreach

The Hull Fair Project, completed in October 2005, was the latest in a series of dedicated outreach projects from within the NFA. This project was funded through the Heritage Lottery Fund, and involved a partnership with Hull Library Services and the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain, to bring together the memories and experiences of the local people of Hull and the associated showmen in recalling Hull Fair. The project involved a series of local workshops and follow up interviews, with an evolving website that recorded interviews and artefacts. The culmination of the project included a DVD to be networked through the local libraries of Hull. The success of the project, and the practical skills learnt, has meant that the NFA will take a similar

methodology to other Yorkshire fairs in the near future.

Other outreach work is split between the various user communities. The NFA constantly develops its website, with new articles that reflect both the material we receive and the research we undertake. As an archive dedicated to research, partly through its own staff and partly through encouraging users to undertake research, the website is seen as the forcing ground for this activity. Users are encouraged to get involved with feeding back on both the overall content of our output as well as the specifics regarding accuracy of historical findings, ideas, etc.

Outreach work to the general public also includes numerous exhibitions designed for local fairs, and contributions to a wide variety of journals and television / radio programmes. Specialist user groups are catered for with specific articles and regular talks, ranging from presentations to local history groups through to mechanical engineering appreciation societies. Finally the academic community is well served through the NFA's involvement with academic journals such as *Early Popular Visual Culture* and *Living Pictures*, and the regular *Visual Delights* conferences.

Education

The 'Pleasurelands' exhibition

toured three major galleries between 2003 and 2005, the result of a major collaboration between the NFA and Sheffield Museums Trust. The driving force for this exhibition was education and interactivity, using the history and spectacle of the fairground as a constant theme. All three galleries enjoyed a healthy flow of visitors from differing demographic groups to those usually associated with visiting exhibitions, seen as a positive aspect for all concerned.

Educational outreach work is a priority for 2006, with the NFA undertaking a pilot project to create e-learning materials for dissemination in schools. The approach will include tackling distinct curriculum 'chunks' and adding a fairground theme, as well as creating a more familiar 'learning journey' which cuts across various curriculum areas. The initial pilot project will be based around forces and mechanics in fairground ride design.

Sustainability

The NFA is in the enviable position of having its staffing and resource needs met by the University of Sheffield Library. The budget for new materials and their associated conservation has to be generated by commissioned NFA outreach work, such as supplying images and working towards television and radio programmes.

The issue of sustainability in terms of growth and relevance is complex to model and predict. At present the NFA is developing and refining clear policies in collection development and purpose, underlining our commitment to operate as a research facility. The onset of eBay means potential donations might now be directed elsewhere, whilst the growth in dedicated fairground websites means a clear strategy is needed in archiving these new resources. As with other archives that work with a subject that has a parallel

movement of enthusiasts, collectors and list-makers, the NFA attempts to set a path that has clear objectives whilst trying to keep the various user groups 'on side'. High-street digital flexibility increasingly means users expect cheap and plentiful photographs from the NFA's resources in order to augment their own personal collections, and this isn't something we are geared up for. The NFA hopes to address some of these issues in a short conference for Archives Awareness Week, and welcomes any contributions.

Ian Trowell
Collections Manager
National Fairground Archive

About the author – Working alongside Dr Vanessa Toulmin, Ian has developed the digital collections and website, and is currently managing various ongoing projects. Ian has a background in both photographic archives and as a fairground enthusiast.

6
The Pleasurelands Exhibition extended the educational aspects of the NFA by bringing together knowledge and artefacts, and presenting them in an exciting museum/gallery space (copyright Chris Calow)



Accessibility Matters

How Hampshire Record Office is working towards making its service more accessible for users with disabilities.

I was initially asked to write this article with the encouraging words from a National Archives' report that "Hampshire Record Office provides excellent facilities for the disabled". Whilst it is gratifying to receive praise, none of us at Hampshire Record Office (HRO) is at all complacent. There is much which still could be done and which we would like to do, if we had additional resources, to make our service more accessible and welcoming to those with particular needs. This article will attempt to explain a 'work in progress' and will describe measures we have taken to facilitate access for all.

HRO inhabits a relatively modern building. How much harder it would have been to make our former premises, a converted nineteenth century Gothic church, physically accessible to the same extent! We have witnessed at first hand the difficulties which some of our colleagues have had in trying to achieve accessibility in converted older buildings, especially where there is the problem of listed building status taking precedence over the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA).

The HRO building was planned and built between 1991 and 1993, taking accessibility issues into account. In view of this I think some of us falsely assumed that we would have little to do as the various DDA deadlines loomed closer. In fact this was entirely misplaced. An access audit, arranged via Hampshire County Council's Property Services, highlighted a number of improvements which were

required; indeed some of these remain outstanding. So whilst we were caught 'napping' to some extent, we were also impressed to discover how very much higher the accessibility standards have become in the relatively short time since HRO opened in its current premises.

HRO is also fortunate in that it is managed by a local authority. All local authorities are required not only to comply with DDA, but also to promote it. Hampshire County Council is a 'two ticks' employer and in addition prides itself on its four-star rating in the Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment. One aspect of maintaining this ranking is the need to embrace new legislation pro-actively. Benefiting from this positive approach, HRO was able to use corporate expertise – and corporate funding – for some of its improvements.

Physical access

One great improvement was the installation of automation to our front door and to the doors between our reception and searchroom. This enables wheelchair-users – and in fact non wheelchair-users – to enter the building without having to manoeuvre through the extremely heavy, albeit stylish, glass doors. At about the same time as these alterations were made, our reception was refurbished to make it more accessible and welcoming. This meant that we could introduce a reception desk with a low level top so that visitors in wheelchairs could sign in.

Another improvement, coincidentally at the same time, altered our so-called accessible toilet (actually sited on the top floor of the building and accessible only by lift and subsequently by careful negotiation of a corner). This was made slightly more accessible by removal of an awkward interior door and the installation of an emergency pull-cord.

The site layout of HRO means it has only been possible to provide accessible parking places at the back of the building. In addition, in view of our proximity to the railway station, a barrier has always been necessary to prevent unauthorised parking. The former manually-operated barrier was awkward and heavy to move so we have installed an automated barrier to facilitate much easier access from this side of the building. Visitors using the accessible parking enter the building by the rear entrance, which is not ideal, but they are met and welcomed there by staff. They are contacted via an intercom at the back door which is linked to our reception at the front of the office, and this has recently been lowered so that wheelchair users – and children – can now reach the bell more easily.

The advice of our architects and access auditor was supplemented by further consultation, especially with colleagues in other record offices and our own users. We have a representative on our Customer Liaison Group with the specific remit of accessibility issues and in autumn 2005, we were scrutinised by a 'mystery shopper' from one of



7

The reception desk with lowered worktop. The automatic door is shown at the back of the photograph

the three record offices with which we benchmark our services (Surrey, West Sussex and Dorset). This person contacted us with specific accessibility questions in order to test both our facilities and our staff knowledge and attitudes. I am glad to say that we passed this test.

We have also taken on board the comments of visitors in wheelchairs, and this consultation has led to a number of quite minor but significant improvements which perhaps we might not otherwise have thought of. Improvements have included the provision of ramps to allow access to the balconies, the installation of mirrors and a timer-delay on the lift doors to allow easier negotiation into and out of the public lifts, with the added provision of a radio link in case of difficulty. We have also revisited the time needed for wheelchair users to access remoter parts of the building, especially when arriving at the back door. We have purchased a microform reader with motorised winder to aid those with arthritic problems and have made more obviously available the *Access to Winchester* guide, which outlines access arrangements in other public places in the city. The financial situation has not yet permitted us to buy a rise-fall table for the searchroom but we are hoping to remedy this in our plans for its refurbishment if and when we integrate with the library's local studies service (anticipated to happen in 2007).

Sensory impairments

Given that the average age of our searchroom population is, like many record offices, at the upper end of the scale, we would like to address the issues relating to visual impairment more than we have so far been able to. We have one text-enhancement machine, a variety of different lenses for our microfilm and microfiche viewers, and we offer leaflets and other printed material in a variety of formats. We hope soon to introduce specialist software, such as Supernova, which would make such a difference to computer-users with visual impairment.

Installed in 1993, our signage uses lettering which is much smaller than would be recommended today and we have not yet been able to change this, although it has been identified as necessary by the access auditor and will be changed when the budget permits, and possibly as plans for the integration with the local studies service progress. However where we make in-house labels such as those for our public lockers, and for our lists and other finding-aids, we have tried to make them more prominent and striking, with accessibility in mind. We use CALM 2000 for cataloguing and at an early stage, the style and size of font was changed for clarity.

For the future, we are considering the possible application of audio description, following an excellent

workshop session at a recent 'Equalities Fair'. Audio description is now common in theatres and becoming more so at art and museum exhibitions; HRO would like to introduce it for major exhibitions, with the usual caveat that this can only happen when the budget allows. One idea which is also under consideration and which we hope would bring enjoyment to a variety of users, especially those who find reading documents difficult for whatever reason, is the dramatisation or public readings of extracts from the archives.

For those who wear hearing aids, we operate hearing loops at all the main public service points in the office; we also have a portable loop which we use when we visit other locations and when needed within the office where a fixed loop is not available. Of course a number of users with minor hearing impairment do not necessarily wear hearing aids. Our corporate links have enabled access to a text phone. But welcoming customers with hearing impairment is an area where specialist staff training has been particularly invaluable.

Staff input

All our staff have been trained in general disability awareness, which we have made mandatory, and we have written staff guidelines to remind staff and to induct new staff in our policy and practice in this area. The guidelines are constantly reviewed and updated in the light of increasing knowledge, especially when staff return from training with good ideas or have new ideas as a direct result of talking to customers. New user sessions have been held regularly since 2004, as an introduction to the service for those who have never visited HRO previously; they have indirectly also informed our staff of where improvements might be desirable.

Some staff have had training in specific aspects of disability awareness, notably in providing a service for those with learning difficulties, and in working alongside people without basic literacy and numeracy skills. Linked to this, and again made available via the County Council, HRO has

access to Language Line, whereby translators can be available at the end of a phone line so that our staff can understand those who cannot communicate verbally in English.

Staff training has also led to some ingenious but low-tech improvements in the searchroom. Customer service staff have taken a real interest in and responsibility for making their part of the service accessible and have often developed sensible solutions where they have seen a need.

One example of this is the clip that one of the Senior Archives Assistants recently developed for use by searchers who come in with walking sticks. The clip enables the stick to be kept more conveniently, avoiding the need for the user to bend down to pick it up from the floor; the clip also prevents any health and safety incidents that might otherwise occur.

Another improvement that took place as a direct result of staff thoughtfulness was the decision to place the most popular books in the searchroom library at a height more appropriate to wheelchair users. Similarly we have placed a sign near the vending machine

explaining where to find staff to help, as the machine itself is awkwardly high for those in wheelchairs. Magnifying sheets, formerly only available for sale at reception, have now been made available for loan within the searchroom itself, and we have a notice to hand announcing an emergency situation so that all are aware of the need to evacuate even if they cannot hear the bell. These are very simple and cheap solutions but it is often these small changes that have made the biggest difference.

Virtual/remote access

We have tried to keep in mind those users who may not be able to visit HRO at all. Like many record offices, we are beginning to use digitisation to make our services and collections more accessible. We have always included access information on our website but now there is a page specifically dedicated to this, and we are on the brink of including a virtual tour of HRO there. For some years, we have made copies of archives available in museum resource rooms and libraries and this access was increased as a result of the 'Wider Access to Historic Film Project' whereby

video copies of archive film were compiled for issue via the library service. For the first time, this meant that we could provide archive film directly to the housebound.

This has been supplemented by the provision of reminiscence boxes for use with the elderly in homes, and talks in care homes which have brought the archives to life for those who may not be able to make a personal visit. About 90% of our archive catalogue is now available online (via CALM), again reaching people who may never have set foot in the office at all. In March 2005, we completed Hampshire Photographic Project with the assistance of Heritage Lottery funding, whereby 10,000 photographs not only from HRO but also from local societies, museums and libraries around the county, were digitised and made available online.

Conclusion

HRO has certainly been fortunate in the support it has received from the County Council in terms of finance, expertise and training both in the creation of the present building and the improvements made as a result of the more recent Access Audit. But in our experience, the single most important aspect of the provision of accessible services has been staff engagement in the process, which has been demonstrated in so many ways. Providing accessible services is key to what local record offices are about and at HRO this is a team effort, which I am glad to say was endorsed by the renewal of its Charter Mark for the third time in late 2005.

I will end this article as I began it by saying that we are aware that there is much more to be done. We continue in our quest to make our services fully accessible and look forward to developing further ideas for improvement.

Gill Rushton
Assistant County Archivist
Hampshire Record Office



Royal Opera House Collections

The Royal Opera House Collections contain a rich variety of material dating back to 1732, when the first Theatre Royal opened on the site, and chart the continuous history of one of the most important theatres in the capital, and of Britain's leading international ballet and opera companies – The Royal Ballet, The Royal Opera, Birmingham Royal Ballet (1946-1991).

9
Costume worn by Margot Fonteyn as Princess Aurora in *The Sleeping Beauty*, 1968.

The Archives were formally established in the late 1960s, administered by The Friends of Covent Garden. At that time the Archives consisted largely of records of performances – programmes, photographs and prints, posters and playbills, press cuttings and some designs. Since the late 1970s the Archives has expanded to cover all aspects of the theatre's history and now includes sound and video recordings, costumes, accessories and props, as well as business and production records. In 1999 the Archives became part of the Department of Education and Access, and in 2004 embarked on an exciting and ambitious project to open up access to the Collections. The title of the department has recently changed to Royal Opera House Collections, to reflect more accurately the range of materials housed here.

The Collections provide the corporate memory of the organisation, as well as the physical memory of its performance history. The Collections grow as material from each season's productions is passed to the department. The majority of material comes to the Collection as a direct result of the work of the House, but material is also acquired through bequest, on loan

9

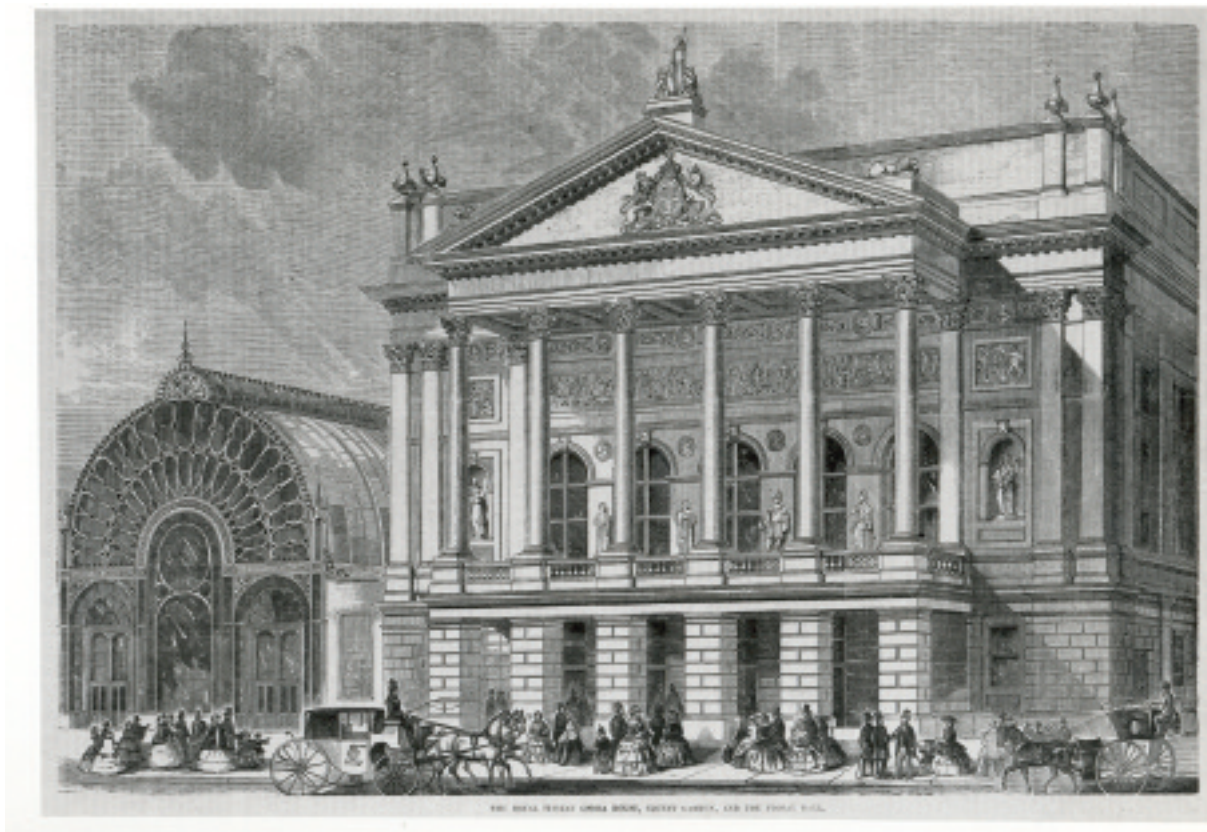


or by purchase. One of the major aspects of the Collection is its comprehensive nature. It records not only performance information, who did what when and with whom, but also production

information covering not only what productions looked like but how they were achieved. In addition, administrative and business records chart the growth of the organisation, different management

10
 Black and white
 print from the
*Illustrated
 London News*
 showing the
 present theatre
 which opened
 on 15 May
 1858

10



styles and the way that it has operated over the years.

Performances are recorded in a variety of media. Playbills date from the 1750s, with almost complete runs from the 1800s onwards. The poster collection has some examples from the 19th century, but is most comprehensive from 1910 onwards. There are more than one million photographs covering all aspects of the theatre's history – the performances on stage, changes to the building in particular the recent development of the Covent Garden site, Gala performances with visiting dignitaries, staff and audiences. Press cuttings form a huge and invaluable resource, and an ever expanding one.

The Music Collection dates in detail from the mid-19th century, when the second Covent Garden Theatre became the Royal Italian Opera. This music offers a comprehensive record of the working life of a 19th century opera house, including as it does prompters scores, vocal scores for principal singers such as Giulia Grisi, her partner Mario, Adelina Patti etc. It was amongst this music that an American musicologist discovered an otherwise unrecorded

cabaletta from Verdi's *I Masnadieri*, which has since been incorporated in the critical edition of the full score. Several of the scores for operas by Meyerbeer, including *Les Huguenots*, include notes and alterations in Meyerbeer's autograph, indicated the composer's involvement in the staging of his works in London.

The Music Collection continues to grow with, in the post-1946 period, the addition of Staff Director's scores and scores from both the ballet and opera stage

11



management departments. So we have not only a record of how the music is being interpreted but also how the stage directions differed from production to production and revival to revival.

Our costume collection is one of the most comprehensive of theatre costume held anywhere. Dame Eva Turner donated all her costumes to the Royal Opera House and is the most significant for a singer of the 1920s/30s in the country. It includes hand-printed silk dresses for *Aida*, velvet cloaks with silver filigree decorations for Wagnerian roles, and a stunning turquoise velvet tailcoat and top hat for *Tosca*. Amongst the 5000 plus items in the costume collection are the costumes worn by Maria Callas for her first and last performances at Covent Garden, some two dozen costumes representing Margot Fonteyn's career with The Royal Ballet, costumes worn by principals and by the chorus and corps de ballet, examples of works designed by great artists and theatre designers, and all magnificent representations of the outstanding craftsmanship of the production departments at the Royal Opera House. We have recently received a

11
 No Smoking
 sign from the
 1930s that was
 attached to the
 door leading to
 the orchestra
 pit, removed
 prior to
 development of
 the Royal Opera
 House in 1997.

generous grant from the Clothworker's Guild to assist with the rehousing of the costume collection.

Location and use

The Collection is divided between the Royal Opera House site and various off-site stores. The office is situated in the Royal Opera House building, where there is space for one researcher desk. The on-site store contains material used on a daily basis – photographs, programmes, press cuttings, negatives and colour transparencies – plus some of the more valuable collections – the design collection, prints and drawings. The costumes and accessories are in commercial storage in Dover, en route to the costume conservator in Deal. Paper records and the audio-visual collection, furniture and architectural salvage are stored at the University of London depository library, also in Kent. The Music Collection is stored in Smithfield in central London.

Since the Royal Opera House reopened in 1999, there has been increased opportunity for exhibition work in the public areas of the House. This is a very popular aspect of the department's work and is currently the only way that items from the Collections can be viewed by the general public. The exhibitions are open, free of charge, Monday-Saturday from 10.00 - 15.30.

Enquiries are answered by letter, phone and email, and visitors engaged in specific research are accommodated in the Archive Office. External enquiries come from the usual range of researchers, from academics and musicologists, practitioners and other performing arts companies to genealogists. The nature of both the research being undertaken and of the primary source material means that researchers are often with us for an extended period of time eg Meredith Daneman who wrote the recent biography of Margot Fonteyn, Sir Ludovic Kennedy researching a biography of Moira Shearer, Daniel Snowman researching a cultural history of opera. In-house enquiries come from virtually all departments



within the Royal Opera House, in particular Press and Marketing, Publications, Production Wardrobe, Model Room, Wigs and Hats and Jewellery, Contracts and Personnel. Some of these come at extremely short notice as departments such as Press are responding to external enquiries, or Production Departments experience a sudden crisis.

Opening up Access

In January 2004 the Royal Opera House launched an ambitious project to build the Royal Opera House Collections as a national heritage collection of ballet and opera material based on the work of the Royal Opera House and its Companies – for public access, international reference, and to exploit its educational and creative potential. The project has been set up to open up the Royal Opera House Collections to as wide and diverse an audience as possible, as part of one of our core purposes : promoting appreciation of ballet and opera.

The project has various strands which include :

1. Catalogue and performance database

This represents the foundation stone of the project and provides the framework to catalogue and open up the Royal Opera House

Collections. Records have historically been held on card indexes, Access databases and other stand alone systems. Full catalogue implementation will bring immediate benefits to internal and to selected external researchers, they will be able to search material (and if digital images are available view thumbnails). At present research can only be undertaken with extensive support from the Archives team.

Implementation of the Performance Database will enable online access to facts and figures about performances and performers, addressing a significant proportion of the enquiries currently received.

Adlib Museum, Archive and Library Cataloguing software was purchased in March 2004. Two cataloguers have been employed since April 2004 and have entered 15,000 records. 6,000 of these have digital images attached to them.

Adlib are currently refining work on the Performance Database, which has been written for the Royal Opera House. It is the most comprehensive database of performance information in use by a performing organization and will enable searching of all programme information. It will link to the catalogue allowing searching across all information.

Two Data Processors have been employed since May 2005 and have entered information on more than 750 works performed by the Royal Opera House Companies and visiting companies to all Royal Opera House venues. They are now entering production information, starting in 1946 when the theatre reopened following the end of the War.

The next step is to develop web-access to the performance database and selected areas of the catalogue with a view to having on-line access to parts of the catalogue and performance database as part of The Royal Ballet's 75th anniversary season which commences in May 2006 and The Royal Opera's 60th anniversary in 2006/07.

12
Cover of Souvenir Programme for the 1912 season of opera and ballet at the Royal Opera House, featuring a design by Léon Bakst for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes.

Wardrobe copies of designs by Jean-Denis Malclès for the Jester and Cinderella in Frederick Ashton's ballet Cinderella 1948. The wardrobe copies have fabric swatches attached.

2. Online press room

Using Adlib, a faster, easier and more cost effective way to access digital stills and press releases for both internal and external users has been developed. It will avoid duplicated storage for digital files, and enable press materials to be managed as part of the Royal Opera House Collections, stored and described according to the same rules. The Press Offices are already cataloguing in Adlib, and launch of the Online Press Room for external use is expected to take place in 2006.

3. Housing the Collection

Most work to date has focused on moving towards online access to the Collection. We know, from other's experiences, that online access will increase demand for physical access and that options for housing the collection need to be considered, to meet that demand. We also need to improve current facilities in order to safeguard the materials in the Collection. We have been working with external consultants to address these issues.

4. Audience strategy

External consultants also undertook work to assess the potential interest in access to the Royal Opera House Collections. This work took the form of interviews with visitors to the Theatre Museum, also in Covent Garden, and telephone interviews with a selection of Royal Opera House Mailing List members and Friends of Covent Garden. The results of this research reinforced the need for a Heritage Access Manager for the Collections. Working within the Collections department but closely with the Education Managers, the Heritage Access Manager will devise projects and educational materials that will aim to extend the cultural and



ethnic diversity of our audiences, broaden experiences of the Collections and optimize its educational and creative potential. An appointment was made in February 2006.

5. Touring exhibition programme

Working with the Education Departments and ROH2, the Exhibitions Manager is creating a programme of touring exhibitions to accompany projects as part of

the On the Road initiative of the Royal Opera House. These exhibitions will either be versions of the exhibitions seen in the Royal Opera House, or created to reflect the work being undertaken as part of On the Road. The first touring exhibition is a photographic record of *Timecode*. The exhibition on the War Years, seen at the Royal Opera House in June/July 2005 as part of Veteran's Commemorations, will tour in 2006. This will include a "voice box", to record people's experiences of seeing the Sadler's Wells Ballet during the War, or visiting the Royal Opera House as a dance hall.

6. Digital exhibitions

The ROH website is one way to reach audiences for the Royal

Opera House Collections quickly via engaging 'digital exhibitions' and provision of the Performance Database online.

The audience and editorial strategy for online access to the Collection is being developed as part of the overall Royal Opera House web-site policy. In the short term, however, immediate audience impact can be achieved through public online access to the performance database and a series of digital exhibitions based around individual productions, themes (e.g. The Royal Ballet 75th anniversary) and educational projects.

7. Digitisation programme

Extending the range and number of available digital materials is fundamental to the access programme and to the long term preservation of the Royal Opera House Collections. We have planned a digitisation programme for the next 12 to 15 months to provide a solid base for the project and to preserve more vulnerable material. Two high specification scanners have been purchased, and the cataloguers have exclusive use of one, adding images to the catalogue records on a regular basis. Collections staff will use the second scanner for processing photographic orders that are currently sent to a commercial bureau for scanning. Images scanned as part of the day to day work of the Collections will therefore be added to the digital collection immediately and continuously, ensuring digital images are stored at the correct resolution and catalogued with the appropriate information.

8. Digital Asset Management System

A specification has been prepared for the storage and management of digital material drawn from a variety of sources. This material includes digital images currently on the Royal Opera House network, digital material being created by the Press Office and Archive, high definition recordings being made by the new Media department, the conversion of audio visual material

from The Royal Ballet Video Archive, the Staff Directors Opera Rehearsal Videos and the Archive audio-visual collection.

Royal Opera House is looking at the most cost effective way of storing and managing this material, using Adlib to record information about the newly created material and converting existing catalogue information, and the most efficient and secure ways of making the material available internally and to selected external users via the network.

Conclusion

The current investment in the Royal Opera House Collections has provided us with a strong base from which to plan and begin to implement strategies to open up access to the wealth of materials housed here. The new cataloguing system has been a major step in enabling us not only to manage the Collections but also to create efficiencies in the ways that we

work with other Royal Opera House departments. The introduction of 'devolved' cataloguing has introduced standards for recording information about materials as they are being created and ensures a more logical transfer of materials and information to the Collections.

The project has helped us to identify areas where we need to build and expand our work, and has provided us with the framework to carry this work forward. It is a hugely exciting time for the Department which has allowed us to work on projects that will provide benefits for the Royal Opera House as a whole. It also provides us with the strategies to engage with a wider and more diverse audience outside the House, and to make a positive and proactive contribution to the cultural life of the country.

Francesca Franchi
Head of Royal Opera House Collections

14
Repacking accessories as part of the tri-annual costume condition check.

14



Records Management in Government: how far have we come in 50 years?

A personal view – Kelvin Smith, Records Management and Cataloguing Department (RMCD), The National Archives.

Fifty years ago – on 17 May 1956, to be precise – a directive went out to all government departments, authorising them each to appoint a Departmental Record Officer. This was the result of the report of the Grigg Committee on Departmental Records (1954) and anticipated the passing of the Public Records Act (1958). So, how far have we come in those fifty years?

There are five areas where there have been significant changes but also where, in some cases, things have not changed or have come full circle:

Buildings

The headquarters of the Public Record Office (now The National Archives) was in Chancery Lane. It was a purpose-built repository for the public records, opened in 1851 and comprising cellular storage. The racking was made of iron, the shelves were slate and there was no air conditioning (if it was hot, the windows were opened; if it was cold, the radiators were turned up). Some of the slate shelves, incidentally, have been used in the paving around the Kew building. The building was full of character, but not the most comfortable in which to work.

Generally the Public Record Office (PRO) was seen as a dusty, old institution, mainly visited by lawyers and academics. The concept of popular history did not enter our heads. This is the area of biggest change – The National

Archives (TNA) now has a very high profile, has frequent media events and has an active education programme. Groups of children round the Chancery Lane building would have been unthinkable (although, ironically, the building is now part of the library of King's College, London University, and is daily full of students).

The Office had two other buildings in the 1950s – at Ashridge and Hayes (see articles in previous editions of *RecordKeeping*).

Ashridge was used to store records selected for permanent preservation; Hayes was mainly for records awaiting appraisal. There were reading room facilities at Ashridge but the usual way to consult documents was for them to be produced (at three days' notice) at Chancery Lane. TNA provides a similar service for records now kept at the facility in Cheshire.

Appraisal and review

As far as records management is concerned, the expression was hardly used until the 1980s but Grigg, and particularly the setting up of a specialised unit in the Management Personnel Office of the Cabinet Office, changed all that. Grigg has had its critics over the years but at the time it shoved record keeping into the 20th century. Its main legacy is the introduction of a dual review system, still used on paper records today. It was much more structured

than what went before and comprised two examinations of records – a First Review five years after documents cease to be of active use (the "business review") and a Second Review of the surviving documents when they are twenty five years old (the "historical review"). The system was accompanied by formal transfer documentation – draft lists, transfer form (the "Blue Form") – and included specific instructions on the preparation of records for transfer (much more emphasis is now given to preservation of the archives). The documentation is still required but is now provided via electronic templates.

Cataloguing

Government departments still produce draft lists of selected records under the guidance and supervision of staff in RMCD. Prior to the 1990s this was a meticulous operation – ensuring that the standard information (reference, dates, description and former reference) – were properly and neatly aligned on the page, using correct spacing and specific indentation. Many of these paper lists are still used by the public in the readers' enquiry room. In 1992 we tried our hand at automating the system and came up with DRUID (Departmental Record User Information Database). This helped to join up the operations of review and listing to a certain extent, and for several years many government departments found it a useful tool. Paper lists were supplemented in



15
Top left:
Ashridge
Bottom left:
Hayes
Right: Chancery
Lane

the 1990s by our electronic catalogue (PROCAT), which was able to provide more detailed and easier searching of the archives. It has been modified over the years and is now simply known as The Catalogue. From the users perspective this has perhaps been the greatest change over the fifty years; searching the records has never been easier.

Electronic records

The 1990s was a very busy decade for the PRO. It was then that we seriously began to confront the issue of electronic records. It was an interesting debate at the time as to whether we were late in starting this. There was some indication that large collections of magnetic tape from 1970s mainframe computers were stored in various places and could not be read by current equipment; there was also the feeling that many computer records (if not all) had been printed to paper, although how meaningful the print-outs were was open to question.

First there was NDAD – the UK National Digital Archive of Datasets. The Archive continues to acquire, preserve and make available selected records in this form. Then there was the EROS project (Electronic Records in Office Systems). This was cutting edge

stuff at the time (at least in the UK) and the project produced several useful leaflet and guidelines. Very soon, however, it was overtaken by the *Modernising Government agenda* (1999) and all the subsequent work that PRO and TNA have undertaken in functional requirements for electronic records management systems, testing and toolkits.

In the area of electronic information it is interesting to look at how TNA's website has developed over the years. The original does not now seem very user-friendly. For records managers there have been some changes in this respect but the huge amount of information available means that even the latest site presents difficulties. In order to overcome these RMCD has produced CDs of advice and guidance, which focus on records management and provide a finding aid to particular categories of information. A very useful facility which was introduced recently and which is now undergoing redevelopment is the RM Forum – an electronic discussion forum for departmental record officers and other records managers.

The role of TNA in Government

Organisationally the staff of PRO/TNA has increased from 200

to nearly 500 in 50 years. Somehow we survived all those government initiatives over the years – cutting civil service numbers, decentralisation, public expenditure cuts and so on. The enhancement in staffing is a reflection of the higher profile that the organisation has achieved over the period. Until the 1990s (that decade again!) we were very conscious of our statutory responsibilities; we did not get too involved in issues surrounding current and semi-current records, other than those which resulted directly from appraisal and selection. That all changed in 1997 with the publication of the Scoping Study on Records Storage and Records Management. This made two key recommendations for PRO/TNA:

- It should adopt a more overt role in leading government departments on records management issues
- It should raise the profile of records management generally

1997 was also the year of the publication of the White Paper *Your Right to Know*, which led to the passing of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. That, above all else in recent years, has had the greatest effect on records management in government. This is the period during which TNA stopped being (in the words of a departmental record colleague) 'overly polite' and started getting things done. We are now beginning to influence key players in government.

So, the answer to the question posed at the beginning of this article must be "a hell of a long way". When I joined the PRO the most sophisticated piece of equipment was the typewriter. Now, of course, the computer has become a way of life and access to information so much easier and quicker. It is hard to keep up sometimes but, while I look back fifty years with affection, I would rather be operating in the current environment.

Kelvin Smith
Records Management and
Cataloguing Department
The National Archives

Standards and guidance

Freedom of Information access to closed records: looking back on the first year



2005 was the first full year of operation for the Freedom of Information Act 2000. It brought many new aspects to our operations at The National Archives (TNA) and, one year on, it is interesting to reflect on the changes that have taken place. We faced certain challenges at the beginning of 2005, some very similar to those faced by other public authorities and some unique to TNA, this article discusses how we decided to deal with those challenges and what the outcomes were.

Freedom of Information (FOI) fundamentally altered the way in which the public could ask for and access information. This meant that Public Authorities such as The National Archives had a number of new responsibilities that included the obligation to grant access to information contained within closed records unless, after careful consideration, we decided it was necessary to apply one of the exemptions to access set out in the Act. The Records Management and Cataloguing Department undertook this new responsibility.

The Freedom of Information Act clearly set out certain consultation processes that we were required to follow when reviewing such records. These processes are unique to TNA. Under section 66 of the

Act – which sets out specific provisions for the treatment of records in TNA – before coming to a decision about whether to release or withhold the record we were required to consult the 'responsible authority' for the record in question (this usually means the department who originally transferred the record to us or its functional successor). This had to be done within the 20-day time period required by the Act, although in some cases we could claim an extra 10 days. When we were considering applying certain 'qualified' exemptions the responsible authority for the record was required to take a public interest test. This meant that they had to decide if, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in withholding the

information outweighed the public interest in releasing it. Fortunately this did not have to be done within twenty days but within 'reasonable time'. When this test was carried out in historical records (over 30 years old) the Responsible Authority was also required to consult with the Advisory Council about their decision.

For most public authorities the 20-day timescale was tight enough, but we had these extra consultation processes to go through. A temporary unit was set up within the department to manage these requests. This meant that we were reliant on the kindness of staff who let us 'borrow' them for short periods. The department already dealt with these responsible authorities as

government departments who transferred records to us but now we had a whole new relationship that required us to successfully consult with them within twenty days. We also had to deal with the public directly for the first time. Almost immediately FOI came into force it was clear that we were one of the government departments receiving the highest number of FOI requests. One of the results of this was that it was decided that a permanent FOI Unit with dedicated staff was necessary, so we faced two further challenges, dealing with a high volume of requests and establishing a new Unit within the Records Management and Cataloguing Department.

From the start we made a number of decisions about the direction of the Unit which would help us face these challenges, we needed to have clear, streamlined processes in order to minimise the amount of time it took to process requests within TNA which still enabled us to make good decisions. What we couldn't control completely was the consultation with the responsible authority. We were required to consult with them but had no power to make them respond. In many cases they would not even see the records. We had to convince them of our ability to make good decisions and make them feel involved in the process. Thinking strategically about how we were communicating with them would be key to success. We also needed to communicate proactively with colleagues across TNA so they understood the role of the new Unit and, in regard to the general public, ensure our correspondence with the public was managed and developed so it was clear and easy to understand.

The fact that we were an archive dealing with older archival material combined with the fact that under the FOI Act exemptions have 'expiry dates' (most exemptions cannot be applied after the record is 30 years old and some cease to apply after 40, 60 or 100 years) meant that we had to adapt current FOI advice to take into account the age of the documents we were dealing with and the fact

that most information loses sensitivity with age. We quickly built up expertise in this field and this proved to be a great advantage in terms of our consultation with Responsible Authorities. We were able to promote our knowledge of Freedom of information in relation to historical records, which was a good basis on which to build our reputation both internally and externally. Part of this involved devising training days, which were run by members of the Unit for the people we consulted. These helped them understand how we were applying exemptions and the considerations needed for historical information. All our training received very positive feedback and helped to raise our profile.

We engaged in a number of different activities, which helped to build up the responsible authority's confidence in our decisions. Because our contacts in other government departments were more often records managers than the main FOI staff we were the focal point for a new community, which we supported by starting a 'section 66 support group' to allow people to discuss their experiences of the process. In response to feedback that our contacts wanted to find out more about us we introduced an FOI Unit newsletter *FOI Matters*. One of its main aims was to provide people with useful information about how section 66 operated and how we were applying exemptions to historical records.

The Advisory Council had to take on a new consultation role in relation to public interest tests. This required regular meetings or panels of three members to advise on the application of the public interest test. To ensure the process ran smoothly the Unit attended a scheduled slot at Advisory Council Meetings and provided guidelines so the Council were fully apprised or their new role. We also addressed any concerns they raised during the course of this work. As a new Unit we were careful to keep the rest of our Records Management and Cataloguing Department updated on our relationship with government departments and our application of



FOI, as this has an impact on their own dealings with government departments and their discussions with departments on applying FOI Exemptions to documents that were to be transferred.

All these efforts helped make the Unit a success both in terms of achieving openness and meeting statutory deadlines. In 2005 the Unit answered over 2500 requests for closed records. We have been able to release all the information requested in 68% of cases and in a further 7% of cases we have been able to make some of the information requested available by redacting or taking out exempt information. We have performed well against the statutory deadlines in meeting 98% of FOI requests within the timings proscribed.

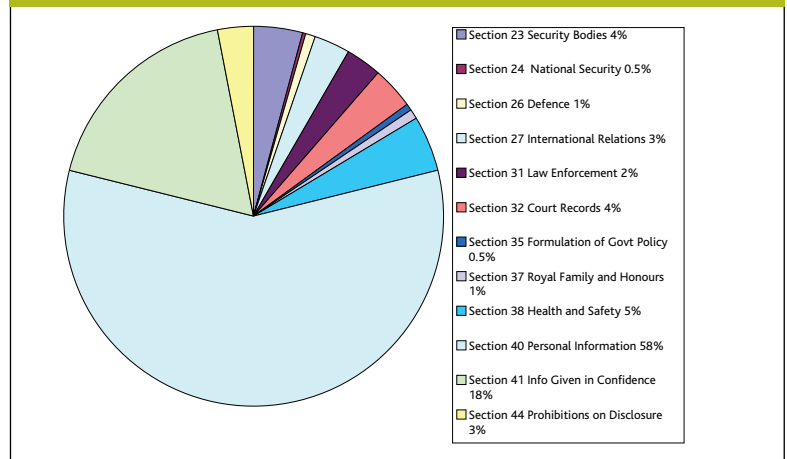
During the year a clearer picture of who was using FOI for what purposes developed. Requestors interested in family and personal information were our biggest group of requestors and requests from journalists and academics accounted for about 10% of our total requests. In terms of who was requesting information under FOI the applicants seem to broadly reflect the make-up of the users of our other services - files are mainly requested for family or personal research, student dissertations or local history.

Home Office files were overwhelmingly the most popular comprising 38% of all FOI requests to closed documents. The HO 144 and HO 405 series contain a large number of files about the naturalisation of aliens and these are extremely popular with family historians. The bulk of the rest of the requests were fairly evenly spread across departments such as the Health and Safety Executive, Ministry of Defence and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. As stated above in three quarters of all cases we were able to release some or all of the information requests but where we did apply exemptions section 40 was applied in 58% of cases, section 41 in 18% and section 38 in 5%. These are all exemptions relating in the main to personal information or protecting individual's health and safety or information that was given in confidence. Exemptions strictly relating to the business of government such as section 32, court records or section 27, international relations were usually applied less than 4% of the time. This reflects the type of files being requested. This information is represented in the pie charts provided.

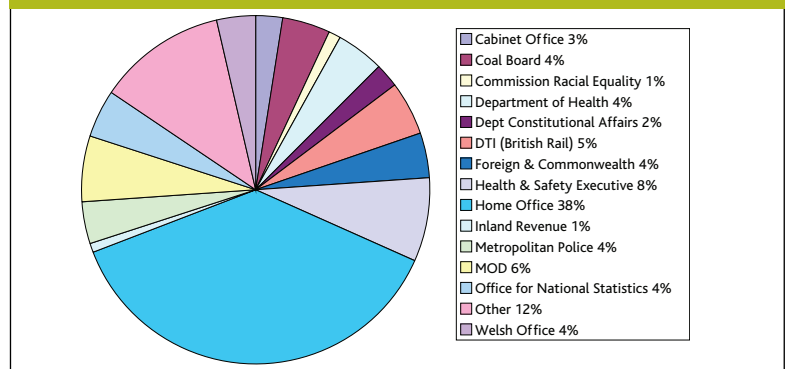
Overall we have achieved excellent results in 2005 and this is attributable to the hard work of staff in the Unit and the support of colleagues across TNA. However, we are still keen to improve our performance wherever possible. In November we published a review of the Unit, which endorsed our current processes and identified a number of key areas to improve on in the future. At the beginning of 2006 volumes of work increased dramatically as the graph shows. However this has since settled down and now we have a fully staffed and knowledgeable unit, and contacts who fully understand how we make our decisions and how the consultation process works. We are confident we can look forward to continuing success in the coming year.

Rose Ashley
Freedom of Information Unit
The National Archives

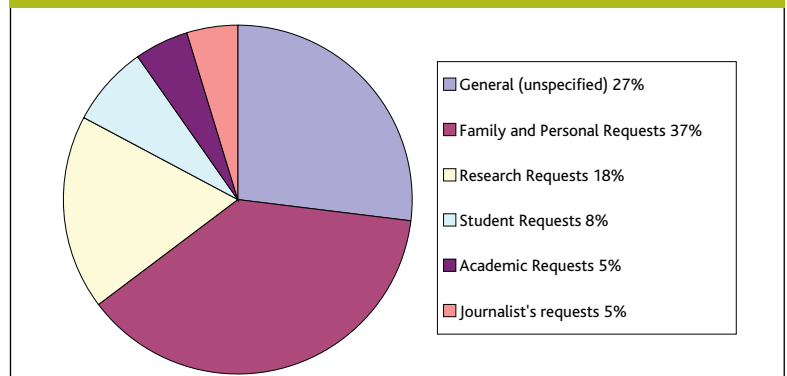
Exemptions applied when closing a file by percentage in 2005



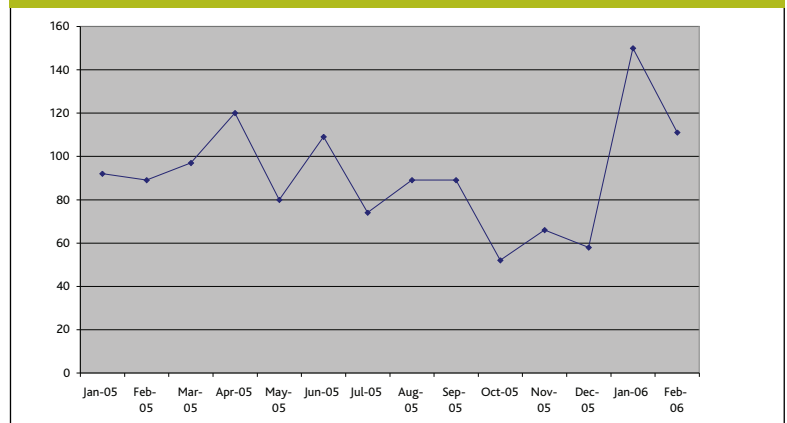
Requests by department consulted: breakdown by percentage for 2005



Percentage of requests by type of user, average for first month of each quarter in 2005



Number of requests received for first 15 days of each month, Jan 2005 to Feb 2006



Mind the gap

2
The *Mind the gap* report

Mind the gap, a 'state of the nation' report on digital preservation in the UK, was launched at the House of Commons on 15 February 2006. The report, published by the Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC), reveals that, despite a very high level of awareness of the risks and potential economic penalties arising from the loss or degradation of digital resources, less than 20% of the UK organisations surveyed have a strategy in place to address these risks. With the release of the report, the DPC aims to help government, public institutions and private companies translate that high awareness into concerted action.

The risks of digital data loss have been highlighted in a number of high profile cases. In the US, Morgan Stanley were recently fined more than \$1 billion by the Securities and Exchange Commission as a result of their failure to preserve and make available electronic documents required by the courts. They are currently facing a further fine of over \$10 million, specifically for failing to preserve email documents. The data tapes from the 1975 Viking Lander mission to Mars were recently discovered to have deteriorated despite careful storage; the formats used could also no longer be decoded, and scientists have had to rely on the original paper printouts instead. The BBC's 1986 Domesday project is another example of the fragile nature of digital material. Designed to capture a picture of Britain in 1986, the collection of photographs, maps and statistical information was recorded onto 30cm laserdiscs. But less than 20 years on, the laserdiscs and player are obsolete. The data was only rescued thanks to a major effort by specialists sponsored by The National Archives (TNA).

The DPC, of which TNA is a founder member, is a cross-sectoral membership organisation dedicated to securing the preservation of digital resources in the UK. The report surveyed digital preservation practice in government bodies, archives, museums, libraries, education, scientific research organisations, pharmaceutical, environmental, nuclear, engineering, publishing and financial institutions. It reveals that, while awareness of the risks of data loss is now widespread, there is still disturbingly little concrete action being taken to address these risks. Many respondents see the loss of digital data as a common and, in many cases, inevitable process, with more than 70% saying data had already been lost in their organisations. Awareness of the potential economic and cultural costs is high – 60% of respondents said that their organizations could lose out financially, and 87% recognised that corporate memory and key cultural materials were at risk. Although there are indications that these risks are beginning to be recognized at a corporate level, with 52% of the organisations surveyed indicating a management commitment to digital preservation, this has yet to translate into practical measures – a mere 18% of respondents had a digital preservation strategy in place.

According to the report, the principal risks to digital material are: the deterioration of the storage medium; obsolescence of hardware, software or file format; and failure to preserve crucial documentation. Based on the results of the survey, the report identifies 18 core needs and a series of recommendations to address them, aimed at

organisations, government, and funding bodies. These include:

- Raising awareness of digital preservation issues, particularly amongst data creators.
- Helping organisations to identify and manage their digital assets (55% of respondents to the survey do not know what digital material they hold).
- Including long-term preservation costs in project funding.

The report, *Mind the gap: assessing digital preservation needs in the UK*, was launched by Andrew Stott, Deputy Chief Information Officer and Head of Service Transformation at the e-Government Unit, at a reception at the House of Commons, which was attended by key figures from government and the cultural and academic sectors. In his opening remarks, Mr Stott acknowledged the leading role which The National Archives is already playing in addressing the issues identified by the report, both within central Government and the wider archival community. These activities include the Seamless Flow programme, facilitating the sustainability of government records for business purposes, support for digital preservation in the regions, and a range of collaborative research projects.

A PDF version of the report is available from:
<http://www.dpconline.org/docs/reports/uknamindthegap.pdf>

Adrian Brown
Head of Digital Preservation
The National Archives



Bridging the Knowledge Gap: an update on AIIM Europe and new information management training programmes

For over 60 years, AIIM has been the leading non-profit organisation focused on helping users to understand the challenges associated with managing documents, content, records, and business processes. I will in this article explain in more detail the services we provide with special focus on the new training programmes.

AIIM started in the US as the National Microfilm Association in 1945, but have since then grown with the industry. Today, AIIM is international in scope, independent, implementation-focused and is the international authority on Enterprise Content Management (ECM) - the tools and technologies used to capture, manage, store, preserve, and deliver content and documents in support of business processes. ECM enables four key business drivers: Continuity, Collaboration, Compliance, and Costs. As the representative of the entire ECM industry – including users, suppliers, and the channel – AIIM acts as the industry's intermediary. Our European members are supported from our office in Worcester.

A specific service AIIM provides is support to the Document Lifecycle Management (DLM) Forum and its MoReq (Model requirements for the management of electronic records) Working Group by running the DLM Forum Secretariat and member services.

As a neutral and unbiased source of information, AIIM serves the needs

of its members and the industry through the following activities:

- *Market Education:* AIIM provides events and information services that help users specify, select, and deploy ECM solutions to solve organisation problems.
- *Peer Networking:* AIIM creates opportunities that allow users, suppliers, consultants, and the channel to engage and connect with one another, through chapters, networking groups, programmes, partnerships, and the internet.
- *Profession Development:* AIIM provides an educational roadmap for the industry.
- *Industry Advocacy:* AIIM acts as the voice of the ECM Industry in key standards organisations, with the media, and with government decision-makers.
- *Membership:* through year-round support, AIIM offers several types of membership to suit user needs. We have in total more than 12,000 members across Europe.

One of our largest events in the UK is the annual AIIM Roadshow that includes educational seminars, discussion roundtables, advice centres and a full exhibition of document management and ECM solutions. The 2006 Roadshow visits Edinburgh, Manchester, Coventry, Bristol and London in May. See www.aiimroadshow.org.uk.

New training programmes for managing records and information

Organisations are drowning in email, electronic documents and paper, and we at AIIM have seen a great need for education and training. AIIM therefore started a project to define the global best practices for managing content, documents, records and business processes from our more than 50,000 members across the world, and then to incorporate this in new certificate programmes for Enterprise Content Management (ECM) and Electronic Records Management (ERM). ECM is about managing your information assets. It is a framework which enables the management of information assets

across an organisation, and ties in with platforms and programmes. This could be Electronic Document Management, Electronic Records Management, Workflow / Business Process Management, Collaboration, Web Content Management, or Digital Asset Management. These training programmes help business and government end-users world-wide with learning the Why?, What?, and How? of ECM and ERM, thus arming them with the tools necessary to comply with business and government regulations, prepare for legal requirements, decrease time inefficiencies, and prevent unnecessary spending.

Working with Cornwell Management Consulting Plc, and vetted by North American and European Education Advisory Groups consisting of leading end-users, suppliers, consultants and analysts, the content describes how organisations can take control over their information assets. The ECM Certificate Programme covers the strategies, tools, and technologies used to capture, manage, store, preserve, and deliver information in support of business processes, and the ERM Certificate Programme explores records management in relation to the business needs of all types of organisations, both in the public and private sector, embracing all records, but with a particular emphasis on electronic records.

The AIIM Education Advisory Group consists of representatives from the US and Europe, who have defined and reviewed the programme content. Examples of members are Adobe, Booz Allen Hamilton, Canon, Cornwell Management Consultants, CreditSuisseFirstBoston, EMC Documentum, FBI, FileNet, Gartner, GlaxoSmithKline, Hummingbird, JPMorgan Chase, Kent State University, NHS National Services Scotland, Ricoh, Open Text, Ovum, SAP, Stellent, The Cabinet Office of UK, The National Archives of UK, Tower Software, US District Courts, PwC, and Xerox Global Services.

Each training programme has the following components:

- *The Strategy workshop ("Why ECM or ERM?")*, 1 day executive



awareness in-person workshop Attendees will learn the business drivers, best practices, concepts, information lifecycle, business implications, and how ECM and ERM can support information management challenges.

- *The Practitioner programme ("What is ECM or ERM?")*, online training modules or in-person training class Attendees will learn where content resides, sources of information, different ways of delivering content, why search and retrieval are important, what legislation, standards, and regulations affect an organisation, and security and controls you need to have in place.
- *The Specialist programme ("How to implement ECM or ERM?")*, online training modules or in-person training class Attendees will learn to identify organisational responsibilities, develop a business case, identify business requirements and change management, questions to ask a vendor, and what decisions will impact your ECM or ERM implementation.
- *The Master programme ("Putting it all together")*, 4 day in-person training class Covers the main elements from the Strategy, Practitioner, and Specialist programmes, plus shows attendees how to implement ECM and ERM through case study exercises.

Attendees will be awarded the AIIM Practitioner, Specialist or Master designation after passing the online exam (and case study exercise for the Master designation). These are new AIIM standards for industry professionalism and knowledge. The exams are available via the internet; these must be passed within three months of attending or accessing the training courses.

We at AIIM know that these certificate programmes will rapidly become the industry standard for Enterprise Content Management and Electronic Records Management education and training. You will soon see designations for ECM and ERM in request for proposals, required job skills, business cards, email footers, company presentations, and, as a way to document a person or organisation's ECM and ERM knowledge.

The programme is designed for Business Managers, IT Managers, Compliance Officers, Archivists, Librarians, Risk Managers, Records Managers, and Information Managers, as well as for solution providers, sales consultants, project managers, and technical staff.

Through attending this programme, participants will be able to consolidate their current position and standing, as well as prepare for future career development to a more senior role in the management and development of an organisation's records and information management strategy. For more information, please see www.aiim.org/training

Atle Skjekkeland is Vice President of AIIM International. He is well known in the industry as a thought leader and industry expert in Enterprise Content Management. He is also globally responsible for AIIM Training and Education Services.

Atle is also a director of the DLM Forum, which is a European Commission initiative for the National Archives in Europe. He can be reached at askjekkeland@aiim.org

Recently released useful publications

Publications from The National Archives

Complying with the Records management code: evaluation workbook and methodology

This evaluation workbook assists public authorities in assessing conformance of their record management systems to the Code of Practice on the Management of Records, issued under section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 often referred to as the Records Management Code. <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/electronicrecords/code.htm>

Functional Requirements for the Sustainability of Electronic Records

These requirements have been developed in response to the need of Departments and Agencies in central government and authorities in the wider UK public sector to retain access to electronic records for extended periods. They follow on from the four volumes of *Generic requirements for the sustainability of electronic records* published by The National Archives in 2003. http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/electronicrecords/reqs_sustain.htm

Custodial Policy for Digital Records

The main thrust of the Policy is to confirm the roles and responsibilities of The National Archives and Government Departments to take care of the records in changing technological circumstances. This duty derives from the Public Records Act 1958. <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/custody/>

Operational Selection Policies

Two retention schedules have been updated:
2. Personnel Records

3. Accounting Records
<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/advice/schedules.htm>

Publications from other organisations

Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) – Reflecting on the past and looking to the future: The Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade in the British Empire.

This is a joint publication by DCMS and the Home Office looking at past and current issues surrounding slavery in the context of the 2007 Bicentenary, outlining the Government's commitment to supporting the Bicentenary. www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/

Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) – Sustainable Development Action Plan.

This document sets out DCMS plans to implement sustainable development within the department and among our Non Departmental Public Bodies. www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/

Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) - Working Together - Local authorities and DCMS

Working Together is an collaboration between the DCMS and the Local Government Authority offering comprehensive guidance to councillors on delivery of public services around culture and sport. www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/

Department of Health – Records Management: NHS Code of Practice (270422/1&2).

The Code covers obligations and responsibilities within the NHS, the development of policy and strategy, retention and disposal arrangements and a revised schedule giving minimum retention periods for both administrative and patient records, including guidance on historical retention. http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidanceArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4131747&chk=tMmN39

Digital Preservation Coalition - Mind the gap: assessing digital preservation needs in the UK.

A 'state of the nation' report on digital preservation in the UK. It reveals that despite a very high level of awareness of the risks and potential economic penalties arising from the loss or degradation of digital resources, less than 20% of the UK organisations surveyed have a strategy in place to address these risks. <http://www.dpconline.org/graphics/index.html>

Routledge - Guide to British Political Archives.

Updated version of Chris Cook's *Sources in British Political History* covering the period from 1945 the volume covers the papers of individuals and organisations and includes both papers held by archives and libraries and also those remaining in private hands.

Chandos – Managing Archives Foundations, principles and practice, by Caroline Williams, Up-to-date practical guide to archives management.

Contacts

Contacts and staff news

Staff changes

National Advisory Services:

Rachel Bell has left The National Archives for a fast-stream post at the Home Office. **Mary Wills** has left to work on a research project at Birkbeck College.

We wish them well in their new jobs.

Contacts

Tel: 020 8876 3444 (followed by staff extension)
Fax: 020 8392 5286

**All staff email addresses are of the format
firstname.lastname@nationalarchives.gov.uk**

National Advisory Services

General enquiries to nas@nationalarchives.gov.uk

Katie Woolf, Communications and Advocacy Manager x 2380

Advice on places of deposit and public records

Including disposal, legislation, standards for storage and access:
Andrew Rowley, Head of Archive Inspection Services x 5318

Advice on non-public records

Including standards for storage of and access to private archives, advice to grant awarding bodies, sales monitoring and liaison with regional archive councils and regional agencies:
Norman James, Director of HMC Advisory services x 2615

Regional archival liaison

Scotland	–	Alex Ritchie
Wales	–	Michelle Kingston
Eastern Region	–	Anthony Smith
South East Region	–	Melinda Haunton
Yorkshire and the Humber Region	–	Amy Warner
North West and Northern Ireland	–	Norman James
East Midlands and West Midlands	–	Liz Hart
North East Region	–	Catherine Guggiari
South West Region	–	James Travers
London	–	Rosie Logiudice

Electronic Records Management

General enquiries to e-records@nationalarchives.gov.uk

Ian Macfarlane, Head of Electronic Records Management Development Unit x 5366

Records Management outside central government

Enquiries to rmadvisory@nationalarchives.gov.uk

Advice on developing effective information and records management systems for paper and electronic records:
Richard Blake, Head of Records Management Advisory Service x 5208

Records management in government departments

Enquiries to records.management@nationalarchives.gov.uk

Meg Sweet, Head of Records Management Department x 5315

Kelvin Smith, Head of Cataloguing and Accessions Unit x 2303

Howard Davies, Head of Inspection and Client Management Unit x 5340

Malcolm Todd, Project Manager: Sustainability of electronic records x 5340

Stuart Abraham, Access Manager x 5346

Key contacts in other National Archives departments

Information legislation

- Advice on Freedom of Information and its impact on records management and archives
 - Information on proposed records and archives legislation
 - Guidance on data protection and its impact on records management and archives
- Susan Healy, Head of Information Policy and Legislation x 2305

Digital Preservation issues

Enquiries to digital-archive@nationalarchives.gov.uk

Adrian Brown, Head of Archive Services and Digital Preservation x 5257

Conservation and preservation of traditional materials

Enquiries to conservation-preservation@nationalarchives.gov.uk

Copyright and intellectual property issues

Tim Padfield, Copyright & Policy Manager x 5381

Advisory Council on national records and archives

Tim Padfield, Secretary x 5381

Archives awareness initiatives

Ruth Savage, Policy Development Officer x 5376

Education, learning and access, schools and universities

Tom O'Leary, Head of Education & Interpretation Department x 5298

Academic publications and development of material for the higher education and lifelong learning sectors

Vanessa Carr, Head of Department Research, Knowledge & Academic Services x 5224

The Catalogue and Archives 4 All

Louise Craven, Archival Catalogue Programme Manager x 5232

£2.00

Tel: 020 8876 3444
Fax: 020 8392 5286
Email: recordkeeping@nationalarchives.gov.uk
The National Archives Kew Surrey TW9 4DU
www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/services/recordkeeping.htm


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