



The National Archives

Press release

10 November 2009

ARCHIVES TAKE FLIGHT

Today sees the launch of the Archive Awareness www.archiveawareness.com *Take Flight* campaign to celebrate local links with manmade flights and the movement of people.

It focuses on a wide variety of archival work in economic and industrial history, the impact of movements of people, innovation, ideas, engineering and science-from the literal to the obscure.

Geoff Pick, Chairman of the National Council on Archives, said:

“Take Flight is an imaginative theme open to wide interpretation. As well as commemorating industrial, innovative and scientific developments across the country, we are especially celebrating this year local links with aviation, the flight of people around the world and even ‘flights of fancy’.

Throughout the autumn and winter archives across the country have teamed up with local groups and communities to highlight their rich and diverse heritage in air travel, migration, human endeavour and much more.

Think of American explorers Robert Peary and Matthew Henson becoming the first men to reach the North Pole 100 years ago, the first non-stop transatlantic flight 90 years ago or even the first scheduled UK airmail 75 years ago. Other celebrations include the 40th anniversary of the first manned moon landing, 40 years of Women's Liberation as well as the 25th anniversary of Virgin Atlantic's first flight to New York.

Angela Owusu, Archive Awareness Campaign Officer, said:

“Everyone has a history and archives have got a bit of yours! The Archive Awareness Campaign offers something for everyone and gives people a unique chance to play detective and reinterpret the past themselves. Diverse events are being held all over, from exhibitions to talks, discovery tours and even a chance to speak to an aviation hero from WWI in person!”

Log onto www.archiveawareness.com/events and

- Learn about the Women's Liberation Movement in Britain. The Women's Library will be running an exhibition *Ms Understood: Women's Liberation in 1970s Britain* to illustrate its impact on women's lives.
- Find out about Manchester's aviation heroes.
- Discover the story of the pioneering female aviator from Tunbridge Wells whose dog Wendy frequently accompanied her on her flights!
- Visit the British Geological Survey and find out about Darwin, moon landings and beyond.
- Finally, why not pop into a workshop in Warwickshire where family historian Jennifer Cranfield will help you find where your ancestors travelled within the UK and beyond.

– Ends –

For further details, spokespeople or images on Archive Awareness Campaign, please contact **Angela Owusu** on **0208 392 5237** or email

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Notes to Editors

- Archive Awareness is spearheaded by the National Council on Archives (www.ncaonline.org.uk) and funded by The National Archives (www.nationalarchives.gov.uk) and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (www.mla.gov.uk).

- Archive Awareness Campaign www.archiveawareness.com is an ongoing celebration of all kinds of fascinating archive treasures. It celebrates and promotes local and national archives. Throughout the year archives across the country open their doors to showcase history, hold open days and present workshops to help the public discover a piece of their own history.
- AAC's new website launches today at www.archiveawareness.com

Examples of *Take Flight* events (spokespeople from each event available)

- An archive display at the **Museum of Science and Industry** from October until November will tell the story of local aviation hero Jack Alcock. It will also look at the celebrations held after Captain Jack Alcock and Lieutenant Arthur Whitten Brown became the first men to fly non-stop across the Atlantic Ocean www.mosi.org.uk
- **Tyne and Wear** will be holding an exhibition of Aerial photographs of the city until 30 November www.twmuseums.org.uk
- **Kent Libraries and Archives** have organised a series of activities and events around the theme. This will also link in with key Kent aviation anniversaries and high profile public events this year i.e. Sky Sheppey on the Isle of Sheppey, Bleriot 2009 in Dover and 'Margate's Big Event' www.kent.gov.uk
- An exhibition at **Sutton Local Studies & Archives Centre** focuses on the arrival of the Basque refugee children in Carshalton in August 1937 www.sutton.gov.uk
- On Saturday 28 November, William Spencer, Principal Records Specialist - Military, Maritime & Transport at the National Archives will give a talk at **Centre for Kentish Studies** Open day about tracing people who served in the air force including the RAF and the RFC, but also about the WRAF and even the Air Transport Auxiliary www.kent.gov.uk
- On 14 January 2010 Bruno Derrick Records Specialist - Maritime and Transport at **The National Archives** in London will give a talk on migration of the Welsh to Patagonia. It will focus on mass migration and will use sources such as the Census and passenger lists/Board of Trade records/Colonial records www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

Many more archives will be holding events to tie in with this year's theme. To find out what is on in an area near you, see the AAC website - www.archiveawareness.com/events/

- **Archive Facts:**
 - There are over 2000 archives in the UK
 - Local archives in England and Wales had around 907,000 reader visits in total and 11.7m websites visits (2006 - 07).
 - From April 1994 to 31 March 2008 Heritage Lottery Funding has awarded over £270m to over 890 archive and library projects.
 - According to the MLA report Taking Part (http://www.mla.gov.uk/resources/assets/T/Taking_Part_11721.pdf), 6% of the

population visited an archive in a given year (2005/6, the most recent report). 13% have accessed an archive online or in person.

- In 2007, over 99% of visitors to archives surveyed agreed that archives play an important role in “preserving our culture and heritage”. Over 97% also agreed archives have an important role in providing opportunities for learning. PSQG Survey 2007: http://www.nca.org.uk/materials/psqg_national_report_2007.pdf
- Programmes such as *Who Do You Think You Are?* have helped to boost audience interest in archives and family history.
- There are about 69,500 cubic metres of archival holdings (not including record management holdings) in local authority archives in England and Wales (CIPFA stats 2006 - 07).
- The National Archives annual survey of archive collecting noted over 3400 significant additions to UK archive holdings in 2008 alone. [Accessions to Repositories 2008]
- The commercial digital sites Findmypast.com and Ancestry.co.uk alone have 650million and 820million individual records online. [from their websites] This is estimated to be less than 1% of archives in England and Wales.