

CREATED

FOUND

DETECTED

EXPLORE YOUR ARCHIVE

CAMPAIGN TOOLKIT

**02 GETTING HEARD**

EXPLORED

UNEARTHED

LEARNT

DISCOVERED

CELEBRATED

CONNECTED

IMAGINED

REVEALED

## Positioning and key messages

### Explore Your Archive

'Exploration' and 'discovery' are themes that are synonymous with archives. People who use archives are 'discovering' and 'exploring' all the time and the words evoke a feeling of adventure, of a journey, of being inspired. At the same time, the words are not misleading; people will not get instant gratification from archives – exploring involves an investment of time and interest.

Archives enable people to bring stories to life. We want people to be inspired by the untold stories in archives and to make the connection between archives and the stories that have already been brought to life.

We want people to be surprised by what's inside archives, amazed by what they could uncover and inspired to find out more.

This is why Explore Your Archive is the message sitting at the heart of our campaign.

### Key messages

We have developed a series of key messages to use across all content, whether that's press releases, posters or when you need to describe the campaign to someone.

There are messages that are relevant for everyone, and ones that are specifically for people who are already engaged with archives.

The messages can be tailored and used in copy when communicating to people about the campaign. You can use a selection of these – whichever are most relevant to you.

#### For everyone:

- Visiting an archive can take you on an adventure – you may end up discovering much more than you imagined
- Archives enable all of us to discover the stories, the facts, the places and the people that are at the heart of our communities
- Archives are full of fascinating content to read, touch and explore. And most of it isn't available from Google. Take time to explore archives – you'll be amazed to find what lies within
- Whether you're interested in fashion, sport, food or UFOs, there will be something to inspire you in archives. Visit [www.exploreyourarchive.org](http://www.exploreyourarchive.org) to find out more
- While only a small percentage of material held in archives is available online, there is now the ability to sit in your home and do basic searching – particularly of 'births, marriages and deaths'
- Even if you choose not to visit an archive, you can take pride and comfort that archives hold unique and vital records which underpin education, heritage, business and identity
- Archives are amazing because without them we wouldn't know if summer is the 'hottest on record', we wouldn't have such historically rich novels and films, we wouldn't know about the lives of our significant artists, and we wouldn't be able to revisit controversial and compelling legal cases from years gone by  
*[These are just examples – you can create your own examples that are relevant to your archive]*
- To find out more about archives, and how you can start your own adventure visit [www.exploreyourarchive.org](http://www.exploreyourarchive.org)

#### For people already engaged with archives:

- Help inspire people to discover the amazing stories hidden within archives
- Share your stories of discovery will help others to understand the importance of archives to all of us
- Bring archives alive by helping us inspire others to discover more

## Getting buy in and support

**You may need the buy in and support internally within your organisation or a sister/umbrella organisation – this could be a senior member of staff who says whether or not something can go ahead, or perhaps a press, digital or events team within the council or for your museum, university or business.**

This may not be something that you need advice or help on, but here are a few pointers for getting people on board to help and for successful collaborative working.

### Time

Make sure to allow plenty of time – people are more likely to say ‘no’ if they feel that the timing is too tight or that it clashes with something else that’s already going on. Contact the relevant person/team with as much notice as feasibly possible to outline the Explore Your Archive campaign, what it is that you would like to do to be part of it, why it is worthwhile for you and them, and (if applicable) how they can help you.

When it comes to press, digital or events teams, the sooner you can get something into their planning calendar, the better. This will allow them to plan other communications around this campaign or even weave it in to something they’re already doing. Similarly, some media outlets work quite far in advance and so media teams/press officers will want to be able to allow for long lead times and plan accordingly.

### Make a strong case

It’s worth giving some thought to how you might justify being involved in the campaign and why it is important to you and to them. It may be that you can demonstrate how being involved can help them with other internal priorities around visitor numbers or raising awareness within your sector or local community.

For a press team, it may be that the campaign can be aligned to some existing communication objectives and therefore support the work that they are doing. Work with them collaboratively on the idea and the tone as much as possible (while keeping in mind our overarching campaign key messages).

Essentially you want to make it as easy as possible for them to say ‘yes’, so if you can align it to one of their specific goals or desires, then that will help your case. Enthusiasm goes a long way, too.

### Keep people in the loop

Try to avoid any surprises – keep people informed along the way as to the idea, how it’s shaping up, what the plans are and so on.

It may be that you’re very much on your own, and so instead of needing help getting support, you need some tips on how to do it yourself. We’ve included some thoughts later in this toolkit about how to go about contacting local/specialist media should this be something that you would pick up ([see page 4 for more](#)).

We’re here too, if you need advice or want to talk things through with someone, please contact:

[exploreyourarchive@nationalarchives.gov.uk](mailto:exploreyourarchive@nationalarchives.gov.uk)

or

[ara@archives.org.uk](mailto:ara@archives.org.uk)

## Ambassadors

There are two levels of potential ambassadors. One is anyone who is already engaged with archives and uses your archive regularly, the other is someone of note who has either discovered something significant in your archive, or is more well-known for their connection to your archive i.e. your specialism/your business/your area.

### Making the most of current archive enthusiasts

People who use archives genuinely treasure them – make the most of your network of keen archive users where possible. You could invite people to get involved in helping you pull together the contents of the box. If you're low on resource and time, this could be a great way to engage with schools, families and young people.

### Higher level ambassadors

Has someone used your archive to discover something particularly interesting? We're looking for people who can be a 'voice' to support archives and how important they are.

How you go about approaching this individual will depend on whether you've had contact before. As a general rule, we would recommend contacting the individual with a clear and succinct summary of the campaign, what we're trying to do, why we'd like them to be involved, and how they can help.

In terms of how ambassadors can help, you might want to consider asking them to do one or more of the following:

- Provide a quote of support – why archives are important and what they discovered in your archive
- If they're on Twitter, tweet an agreed message of support during your event
- Take part in media activity – undertake interviews with journalists to talk about their connection to archives (you/your press team or the The National Archives team would arrange these, depending on if the ambassador is of wider interest beyond local or specialist media)
- Make an audio recording of a short extract from your archive that is connected to your Story Box theme/topic (perhaps a pertinent verse, extract from a journal etc), and also see if the ambassador is prepared to do public readings in your archive or in the area
- Be filmed for a short video clip for your website/The National Archives' website, explaining why archives are so valuable and what they've discovered in your archive

### National ambassadors

On a national level, we're going to recruit ambassadors who have used archives and can talk about the benefits of archives from a particular viewpoint (e.g. novelists, costume designers, food historians, scientists etc). We'll be trying to place these people, their stories and why they support the campaign in relevant national and consumer media.

If you have good connections with people who you think might be relevant for national media, or know if someone famous has used your archive, please do let us know so that we can work with you and factor that in to our national media activity.

## Suggested channels to raise awareness of the Explore Your Archive campaign

Here are some of the ways that you can shout about your Story Box, as well as some tips. Hopefully, you are interested in making a Story Box and have a great idea up your sleeve.

You may already know a lot of this, but we've included our thoughts, just in case it's helpful.

### Making use of your channels of communication

Make use of what you already have. This will help to spread the word, but it may not necessarily help you to reach new audiences, so be aware of who you are talking to – for example, you may want to use key messages for 'people who are already aware of archives' in your newsletter, but broaden the messaging when it comes to the website or any posters.

### Your website, newsletter etc

It's likely that you'll want to drive people to your website to give them more information. Here are some things that you could do:

- Create a special page within your site
- Sign-post people to a blog post
- Include some info as a 'news item' on the home page
- Send out some information in your newsletter in the build up – it might be worth doing one piece a few months in advance to invite keen archive users to help with ideas for an upcoming campaign and then another a week or two in advance of the campaign to say more about the Story Box, what's in it and to invite people to come and explore it (either randomly or at an event – more on the latter, below)

### Social media

If you have corporate social media channels, here are some suggestions on what to do and timings. It may be that most of this is second nature to you but we've included some pointers for reference.

#### Twitter:

- Start tweeting about the launch a month before to spark interest in your followers and let them know it's coming. Perhaps at first you could only give away hints or clues about your campaign to sustain interest and suspense
- Over the next few weeks, let your followers know what is happening, and how they can be involved. Adding scanned pictures or documents to your tweets will help bring them to life and will act as a teaser of what can be found in the archives
- Engage with your followers, either by asking questions or replying to their posts. If someone is interested in something that you have more info on in your archive, let them know what you have and how they can find out more
- If you have good contacts with influential people on Twitter, such as local MPs, journalists or community leaders, why not ask them to tweet about the launch, or to re-tweet one of your posts. This means that the message will also reach their followers

- If you're holding an event (more about this below) in the week leading up to the launch tweet on a daily basis to remind your followers that the event is happening. Where possible include practical details such as timings and location, or direct people to your website for more information
- Remember to use the campaign's hashtags in your tweets wherever possible, as this will tie them into activities taking place in other archives, as well as the national campaign. These hashtags will be set out in our social media plan, available on the [Explore Your Archive](#) web pages
- Invite people to share their experiences and what they've discovered in your archive and retweet what people say

#### Facebook:

- The nature of Facebook means you can engage with your audience in a more interactive way than on Twitter. A month before the launch, start asking your users about their engagement with your archive:
  - What have they discovered?
  - How often do they explore archives?
 This will help generate a conversation about the value of archives
- Begin adding photos and scans of documents to illustrate what people can find in your archive. Try to use as many 'hidden gems' as possible – the more shocking or surprising an artefact, the more engaging. Posting links to news articles where the research behind the story would not have been possible without the archives is also a good idea

- Two weeks before the launch, announce your theme on Facebook, and use the same teasers as on Twitter to spark interest. Engage your audience by asking questions about their personal experience with your theme, for example – Do you think the outfits on Downton Abbey are authentic? Did you have a relative who served during WWI?
- If you're holding an event, create an event on Facebook and invite all your followers to attend. As the launch approaches, this will remind them that the activity is taking place, and will allow them to share the event details with their friends or family
- Remember, your followers on Facebook are already likely to be users of your archive, and so this is a great way to use to recruit volunteers or local ambassadors. Post regular updates on how people can get involved

### Instagram:

Instagram is an app that enables its users to take and share pictures and videos. Any visual content earmarked for social media promotion could be primarily shared on Instagram, and linked to other social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. Instagram is the fastest growing social network in the world, with over 500 million monthly active users. Instagram offers some top tips for organisations using the platform:

- Identify the main types of content that you wish to focus on in your Instagram profile – these should be visually interesting, and offer a glimpse of your archive that may not ordinarily be easily seen (for example, pictures taken behind the scenes)
- Follow other Instagram users who look as if they would fit your customer profile, and they may well follow you back
- Add plenty of relevant hashtags to every image you post to maximise your reach (use our daily hashtag plan and always include **#explorearchives**)
- Try reaching out to well-known figures by tagging them in a post. If a celebrity has visited your archive or attended an event, make sure you get a photo and tag them in the ensuing post

### Online forums:

- There are lots of specialist online forums out there that might be interested in the contents of your Story Box. If you do engage with these do be transparent about who you are and don't 'hard sell' – just share information about the what you're doing as part of the campaign, why they might be interested and invite people to find out more

### Posters and leaflets

We have created brand guidelines for the campaign (in the tools and templates section of this document) – if you want to create your own posters or leaflets, please do follow this in order for us all to create a sense of cohesion around the campaign. If you have any questions, contact:

[exploreyourarchive@nationalarchives.gov.uk](mailto:exploreyourarchive@nationalarchives.gov.uk)

We've also created some generic posters and logos for the campaign, which you can have printed.

You can use the flexible campaign logo sizes for digital, professional print and internal design purposes.

You can download resources for your campaign from the [Explore Your Archive](#) web pages.

### Engaging with your media

This is one of the best ways of reaching a new audience and we strongly encourage you to talk to journalists about the campaign, your involvement in it, and your Story Box.

Depending on what kind of archive you are, you will have different 'core' media targets. Local, county and borough archives will want to be talking to local media, university archives will probably want to talk to education media as well as local media, business archives may want to approach business media as well as media local to the archive, and so on.

**The kinds of things you might want to communicate with your relevant media could be:**

- A news release about the campaign and your involvement (see template press release as a guide in the tools and templates section)
- Interviews with your ambassador – if you've secured the involvement of an ambassador who can talk about what they've discovered in your archive and why they're valuable, arrange for a journalist to interview them (bear in mind any media lead times here – if a local magazine works three months in advance, you'll want to pitch the idea to the journalist in plenty of time)
- Photo stories – if you hold an event and can share a photograph of people engaging with your Story Box, that can also work well
- Success story – issue a news release towards the end of the week letting people know how the event went, if you ran one, and how many people visited your archive

The latter two points are more relevant for local media than specialist media – it is likely that specialist media will only cover a story once and would combine a news story with an interview. Local media, on the other hand, might be more interested in update stories.

Throughout all news releases and pitching to journalists, please try to weave in some of our key messages as listed on [page 1](#) – this will help the campaign to have coherence and a greater impact.

As outlined in the section about 'getting buy in and support', it may be that you're doing this on your own, or you may have support from press teams.

### Events

We know that, as a general rule, events work well to draw in new audiences and to create a buzz.

If you already hold regular events and don't want the burden of extra organisation, it may be that your Story Box fits neatly into something else you're already doing and you can weave in some messaging about the campaign.

Ideally, we would love it if you could hold an Explore Your Archive event during launch week to invite people to discover the story/information contained within the box. A staff member or a keen archive user could do a short talk on the contents of the box, why it was chosen, why it's interesting, what they can find, and also talk more widely about the journey that you can go on when you explore archives.

You may also want to think about arranging a school-based Story Box event in order to reach parents and/or grand parents.

If you do hold an event, mention it as widely as you can – use your existing channels as suggested above, put up posters, but also engage other relevant community or specialist groups and talk to your local media (more about this below).

It might be that you are able to hold an event but don't have the time to do the Story Box itself – if this is the case, perhaps you could do a themed night where people who haven't visited the archive can be invited to an **Explore Your Archive** open day event where someone can talk through how to use archives, the kinds of things that you can find etc.

If you go all out and decide to take the Story Box out of your archive and to relevant community events or take it to a local pub, park, gallery etc, it may be that you need to consider the possibility of creating replica content, depending on the nature of the materials.

Separate from an event, the Story Box could also be made available to anyone who asks to see it that week.

## Engaging your audiences

### Engaging local groups, organisations, charities

This is a great way of reaching new audiences who might be interested in your archive. Local or specialist groups or organisations will have clusters of people interested in a particular topic or with a stronger tendency to be interested in community, history and discovering things.

The kinds of organisations or groups that might be relevant include (these will vary in relevance depending on what kind of archive you run):

- Special interest groups or clubs e.g. history, archaeology, gardening, cars, textiles, books, cookery
- Further education e.g. U3A, COURSERA, Open College of the Arts
- Local cultural institutes e.g. cinema, theatre, book shops, library, museum
- Community groups e.g. Women's Institute, Working Men's Group, faith groups,
- Local charities (volunteering section)

The ideal scenario is for an organiser or leader of these groups to distribute and share information about the campaign (and your Story Box/event, if applicable).

They can do this a number of ways, for example:

- Email newsletters
- Distributing leaflets/flyers
- Putting up posters
- Mentioning information at a session or meeting
- Mentioning the campaign on their website

You may already have good connections with local/special interest groups, but just in case you don't, here are some helpful tips on approaching them:

- Draw up a list of potential special interest or local organisations or groups that could be relevant to your archive (don't be afraid to cast a wide net here)
- Find out who runs the group or, if it's a bigger group, who coordinates communication to members
- Make initial contact with a phone call or an email - simply outline the campaign, what you have to offer (e.g. an event, or the ability to come and explore the Story Box), why you're contacting them ('we thought it might be of interest to your group') and a brief summary how they can help if they would like to (by sharing information through their channels)

### Internal audiences

Alongside these groups, it might be an opportunity to talk within your wider organisations about the campaign e.g. get the Council leader or portfolio holder, or business CEO, or the Vice-Chancellor of a university, on board.

### Sharing with the archive network

We want to work with as many archives as possible on this campaign – the more of you take part, the more of a noise we can make about how important and amazing archives are.

Tell us your ideas, and share hints and tips and learnings with other archives.

## Help us evaluate the campaign

We hope that the campaign will be a success, but we won't have a proper picture of this unless you help us.

Evaluating the campaign is a crucial element – you can help us by doing some of the following:

- Let us know anecdotally how you get on – have you noticed more people engaging with your archive during the week? Have people been saying that they 'didn't realise' what was in the archive etc?
- Keep a record of numbers of people visiting your archive in the week before your activity, the week of your activity and the week after your activity
- You can capture people's views through exit interviews – before people leave your archive, you could ask them to complete a short questionnaire that asks about their views, whether they were previously aware of your archive etc (we've included a template exit questionnaire in the appendix, which you can use)
- If you monitor your website traffic, have you seen an increase in web visits?
- Share your media coverage with us
- Let us know if you were able to recruit an ambassador for your archive
- Share your social media statistics with us

We've created short evaluation forms for you to fill out, which cover most of these points if you do take part in the Explore Your Archive campaign. You can download the forms from the [Explore Your Archive](#) web pages.

Please do complete this form and send it back to:

[exploreyourarchive@nationalarchives.gov.uk](mailto:exploreyourarchive@nationalarchives.gov.uk)

or

[ara@archives.org.uk](mailto:ara@archives.org.uk)