

Dear Colleagues

Archives 4 All

Please find below exciting information about a new departure for archives in the UK and a new phase of A2A entitled **Archives 4 All**.

Archives for All has the support of **aUK**, the recently launched successor to the Linking Arms initiative. The Steering Committee of **aUK** is composed of Sarah Tyacke, Chief Executive of the National Archives, Gwyn Jenkins, Director of Collection Services of the National Library of Wales, George Mackenzie, Chief Executive of the National Archives of Scotland, Gerry Slater, Chief Executive of the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Chris Batt, Chief Executive of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, Liz Hallam-Smith, Chair of the National Council on Archives and James Strachan, Head of Online Services & Strategic Marketing at TNA. **aUK** is pledged to connect and develop the archives of the UK.

Grant awarding bodies which may give support to projects outlined below are those identified in the *Community Access to Archives Project: Outreach Pack*, 2004, the *Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)*, and any other independent funding body you may wish to identify.

Enquiries and expressions of interest in projects to be developed under the banner **Archives 4 All** are welcomed. Please contact **Monica Halpin**, the Regional Liaison Co-ordinator for A2A at **monica.halpin@nationalarchives.gov.uk**

Best wishes

Louise Craven

Archives 4 All

In 2005, archives in the UK are poised for a new departure. Virtual catalogues and online material relating to archives are now well established. Overwhelming evidence for archive material emanating from community groups of all kinds is clear in the *Final Report of the Community Access to Archives Project*¹. It is now within our means, and arguably our responsibility, to deliver an understanding of the richness of community collections to current and new audiences for archives, and at the same time, to deliver and share the treasures available in traditional and formal archive collections, to those new audiences for archives throughout the world.

In March 2004, the AFT in its Report *Listening to the Past, Speaking to the future*² recommended that the archives sector should:

- strive to reach new audiences and embrace community archives increasing participation with hard to reach communities;
- digitise documents aligned to popular themes;
- position UK archives as key contributors to local, regional and national economic objectives;
- release the potential of archives to enrich and enhance teaching and learning and contribute to raising standards in education;
- encourage business, private and specialist archives to develop as part of our heritage; and
- encourage the creation and sustainability of moving image, photographic and digital archives.

It also recommended that the technical vehicle by which these developments were to be taken forward was to be the archival Gateway which would give everyone the opportunity to participate in the archival heritage³.

A new phase of A2A entitled **Archives 4 All** seeks to mark the beginning of that new departure, by, in the first instance, going far to meet the goals of the ATF outlined above. **Archives 4 All** seeks to:

- mark the development of this new phase with a dynamic programme/ calendar of interactive and educational events;
- celebrate social cohesion and community identity with high profile events across the UK;

¹ *Community Access to Archives Project. Final Report*, October 2004

² *Listening to the past, speaking to the future. Report of the Archives Task Force*, MLA, March 2004

³ *Listening to the past, speaking to the future*, Recommendations 1-7, pp 61-67

- reach out to new audiences, by promoting the Best Practice Model developed in the Community Access to Archives Project (CAAP) to traditional and community archives and by developing local and regional strategies for hard to reach groups;
- offer a digitisation service which will enable new material from community archives to be made available on the **Archives 4 All** website and which will provide a service by which material already online from community archives can be linked to **Archives 4 All** and searched;
- work in partnership with regional MLACs and with representatives of local archives, museums and libraries, focussing on the archives of local industries, businesses and their workforce communities, as key to the local regional and national economic profile and history of the area;
- unleash the educational potential of existing and new material through thematic and interpretative projects taking advantage of interactive technologies offered by WWW; and
- present common standards for moving image, photographic and sound archives ensuring that this phase of A2A collaborates with archives and the audiences of new media.

Archives 4 All: Projects

Archives 4 All will develop the above through new *projects* which may be large regional projects or smaller local or small community projects. All projects will seek to:

- build on partnerships preferably on a regional or local basis;
- stress the community, the socially inclusive and the intergenerational aspects of the material to be made available;
- be built around sharing: skill sharing, shared values, and the social cohesion which develops there from;
- develop educational themes or educational interpretation from the subject matter of the project;
- incorporate digitisation;
- ensure community ownership of a community archives to remain with the community (conservation information to be provided online in support);
- invite contributors to tell their own story
- and be based on community activity – on people participating in the heritage.

Heritage Lottery Fund have indicated that they would be supportive of projects which meet the criteria outlined above.⁴

⁴ Awaiting confirmation of wording by HLF

Archives 4 All: *Users will benefit from:*

- a wider access to the riches of the archival heritage of the people of the UK; and
- will be invited to participate in the interactive aspects of the site: eg in adding their own story, in digitising their own documents;
- will be invited to participate in a dynamic calendar of celebratory events;
- will be invited to take part in educational activities arising from any of the projects; and
- will be involved in celebrating the history of their local or regional communities.

Archives 4 All: *website*

The **Archives 4 All** website will bring together information about community archives and traditional archive collections. It will give high profile publicity to the heritage and richness of all archives and celebrate access to all for audiences of all kinds. In doing so, it will:

- provide tailored access for users with diverse interests;
- provide customised help;
- provide a powerful search engine;
- provide access to digitised images, film and sound clips; and
- invite and enable people to contribute their own stories.

To co-ordinate and deliver this new phase, the **Archives 4 All** central team will:

- provide programme and project administrative oversight;
- provide guidelines for all projects to be submitted in this new phase;
- give advice and training as to the use of standards for archival description (*ISAD(G)*, *EAD*, and *NCA Rules*);
- promote the Best Practice Model of CAAP for community archive projects;
- promote advice on project methodology and indexing terminology arising from the CASBAH⁵ project; and
- promulgate new standards for the metadata of moving image, photographic and sound archives;
- evaluate this phase and produce a report to celebrate and coincide with the completion of **Archives 4 All**.

⁵ CASBAH: *a study of research resources for Caribbean Studies and the History of Black and Asian People in the UK*, RSLP 2002

It is proposed that **Archives 4 All** run from September 2005 to March 2008. The stages of the phase are proposed as follows:

- *September 2005- March 2006*: promotion, publicity, development of bids by partners;
- *January-March 2006*: deadline for project submissions to funders;
- *March – September 2006*: evaluation of bids by HLF and other funders;
- *September 2006 - March 2008*: 18 months for staff of successful projects to receive training from **Archives 4 All** Central Team; and to develop and deliver their projects;
- Celebratory events to signify the completion of each project; final celebration to mark the end of **Archives 4 All**.

In this way, **Archives 4 All** will signal a new departure for archives in the UK.