

Community Access to Archives Project (CAAP)

Issued: 27 August 2004

Community Archives: the answer to social exclusion?

The Community Access to Archive Project (CAAP) is an innovative community focused project called led by The National Archives. The project aims to provide a framework for development of relationships and activities with community groups by developing a 'Best Practice Model' for community-based online archive projects.

The 'Best Practice Model' aims to address the practicalities of developing community-based online archive projects from start to finish and beyond. The team is building on the expertise our partners West Yorkshire Archive Service and Hackney Archives Department have developed in community-archive relations through their local projects, in addition to the input of our advisory partners The National Archives of Scotland, The National Council of Archives, The National library of Wales, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland and Commanet.

Gerry Slater, CAAP Project Partner, Record Office of Northern Ireland, believes that community-archive projects have an important role to play in United Kingdom communities.

He said "Community archive projects can contribute greatly to social inclusion, community development, skills development and the preservation of 'unofficial' history, and are a means of encouraging non-traditional users to become involved with archives".

The Community Archives Network (Commanet), a not for profit organisation that promotes, supports and develops community archives, has wide experience of the success of online community-archive projects in encouraging social inclusion.

Patsy Cullen, Director, Commanet, has seen that community archives have met objectives associated with community development, cultural identity, regeneration, lifelong learning, reminiscence, inter-generational dialogue and training in information communication technology skills.

She said "The Bygone Oldmeldrum" community-archive project is a classic example of encouraging social inclusion and community development, the community have come together by way of events such as coffee mornings, fundraising stalls and photo exhibitions for educational purposes and reminiscence".

Evelyn Munro from the Meldrum and Bourtie Heritage Society explains that events such as these are when we see the best examples of people being brought together into a welcoming environment. A community member has even told her that they find the events therapeutic.

She said “The people who come to our events are people who have always lived in the community, people whose roots lie in Oldmeldrum and who have returned to walk down memory lane, people who are new to the town and want to learn a bit about its earlier way of life”.

The CAAP Best Practice Model will be available from October 2004, and will include details of case studies, outreach strategies and fully investigated suggestions for funding streams for community-archive projects.

For more information on the Community Access to Archives Project please go to <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives/caap> or contact Frieda Midgley, Project Manager on 020 8392 5330 ext 2051 or email caap@nationalarchives.gov.uk

-Ends-

Notes for Editors:

For media enquiries please contact Olivia Hayward, Press & Communications Officer on 020 8392 5330 ext 2523

1. The project is being funded and led by The National Archives [nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk) in conjunction with partners [West Yorkshire Archive Service](#), [Hackney Archives Department](#), [The National Archives of Scotland](#), [The National Council of Archives](#), The National Library of Wales, [Public Record Office of Northern Ireland](#) and [Commanet](#).
2. The National Archives, Kew, www.nationalarchives.gov.uk has one of the largest archival collections in the world, spanning 1000 years of British history, from Domesday Book to newly released government papers. The free museum and research rooms in Kew, west London, are open to the public 6 days a week.