

# See the bigger picture

Our plans for 2010-11



In 2008-09,  
**1,680,551**

free copies of records were downloaded  
through our DocumentsOnline service

There were  
**108,100**

visitors on site at Kew in 2008-09

There were  
**22,232,142**

online visits to The National Archives'  
website in 2008-09

**5**

doctoral students funded by  
the Economic and Social Research  
Council (ESRC) completed  
research placements at The National  
Archives in 2009

We welcomed  
**13,919**

visitors from schools to  
our Kew site in 2008-09

There are  
**340,000,000**

online documents accessible through our UK  
Government Web Archive



The National Archives is a government department and an executive agency of the Ministry of Justice: we are the official archive of the UK government and for England and Wales.

We are government's knowledge and information champions, pioneers in the field of managing information. Our role is to make sure that key government information is sustainable – that it remains accessible and useable for as long as it is needed.

### Information experts

We are well known for our unique collection of over 11 million historical government and public records – one of the largest in the world. From Domesday Book to modern government papers and digital files, our collection includes paper and parchment, electronic records and websites, photographs, posters, maps, drawings and paintings. Our repositories are filled with priceless treasures: our nation's story can be read through the documents and artefacts we hold.

But preserving this rich seam of history, and making it accessible to researchers, is only one part of our work. We ensure that one of government's most precious assets – its information – can be used by those who need it, and that the public record survives for future generations. Our expertise touches every point in the lifecycle of information – from the early stages of planning processes and storage methods, through the creation, management, use and re-use of information in day-to-day business by government and citizens, right through to its eventual archiving and long-term preservation.

- We research and identify the best methods for managing official information, setting standards and providing guidance to support government and the wider public sector in managing and using key information effectively.
- We publish information that underpins government's core, day-to-day business, including publishing all UK legislation.
- We promote the re-use of data created and collected in the public sector by citizens, community groups and businesses.
- We preserve, protect and support research of all kinds into one of the most significant collections of official records in the world, dating back over 1,000 years.
- We provide leadership and support to the wider archive sector across England and Wales.



Public sector information forms the basis of approximately **15-25%** of all data used in e-commerce trading and information products

The Office of Fair Trading has estimated that stimulating and facilitating the re-use of public sector information could potentially contribute **£1 billion** to the UK economy per year

### Supporting government

Effective government depends on accurate, accessible information. But managing and preserving information is a complex task, especially in a digital world. Information only has value if you know what you have, you know where to find it and it is still secure, accessible and useable when you need it.

We work with over 250 government bodies, helping them to manage their information so they can be sure it will meet their needs. With our support, they identify what needs to be kept to support ongoing business activities and to inform future historical research. And with the right methods and facilities, they can keep vital information safe so it can be accessed and used when needed.

### Contributing to the UK digital economy

Information generated by the public sector can also benefit members of the public and businesses. Public sector bodies produce reports, statistics, datasets and other kinds of non-personal information that can be repurposed and combined to create all kinds of new services and resources.

Our work helps to ensure that information of this kind can be accessed and re-used. We champion re-use throughout the public sector, working to increase the information resources made available and ensure that they are released in accessible formats. We also regulate the 'information trading' activities of public sector bodies that issue commercial licences to re-use their data.

We have developed an innovative approach to making our most popular records available online: forming licensing partnerships with commercial companies. These partnerships make records such as censuses, military records and ships' passenger lists more widely accessible to growing numbers of family history enthusiasts. And they help us to protect fragile historical documents, by reducing the need for handling them. It is estimated that two million people in the UK now visit genealogy websites every month.

At the same time, our licensing partnerships are helping to drive the growth of the UK online genealogy market, which has an annual turnover of £100 million and makes a significant contribution to our national digital economy each year.

### Supporting the wider archive sector

We help members of the public, students of all ages and researchers worldwide to explore the history of our society – and their own families – through our vast collection of official documents, files and artefacts.

There are many archive services and collections across the country, both publicly and privately funded. We are a leader for the whole archive sector across England and Wales. Our work with archives nationwide supports them in preserving the histories of countless communities, companies and individuals, and in making these resources accessible.

### The way forward

Our five key priorities for the coming year are designed to help us achieve our goals.

They are to:

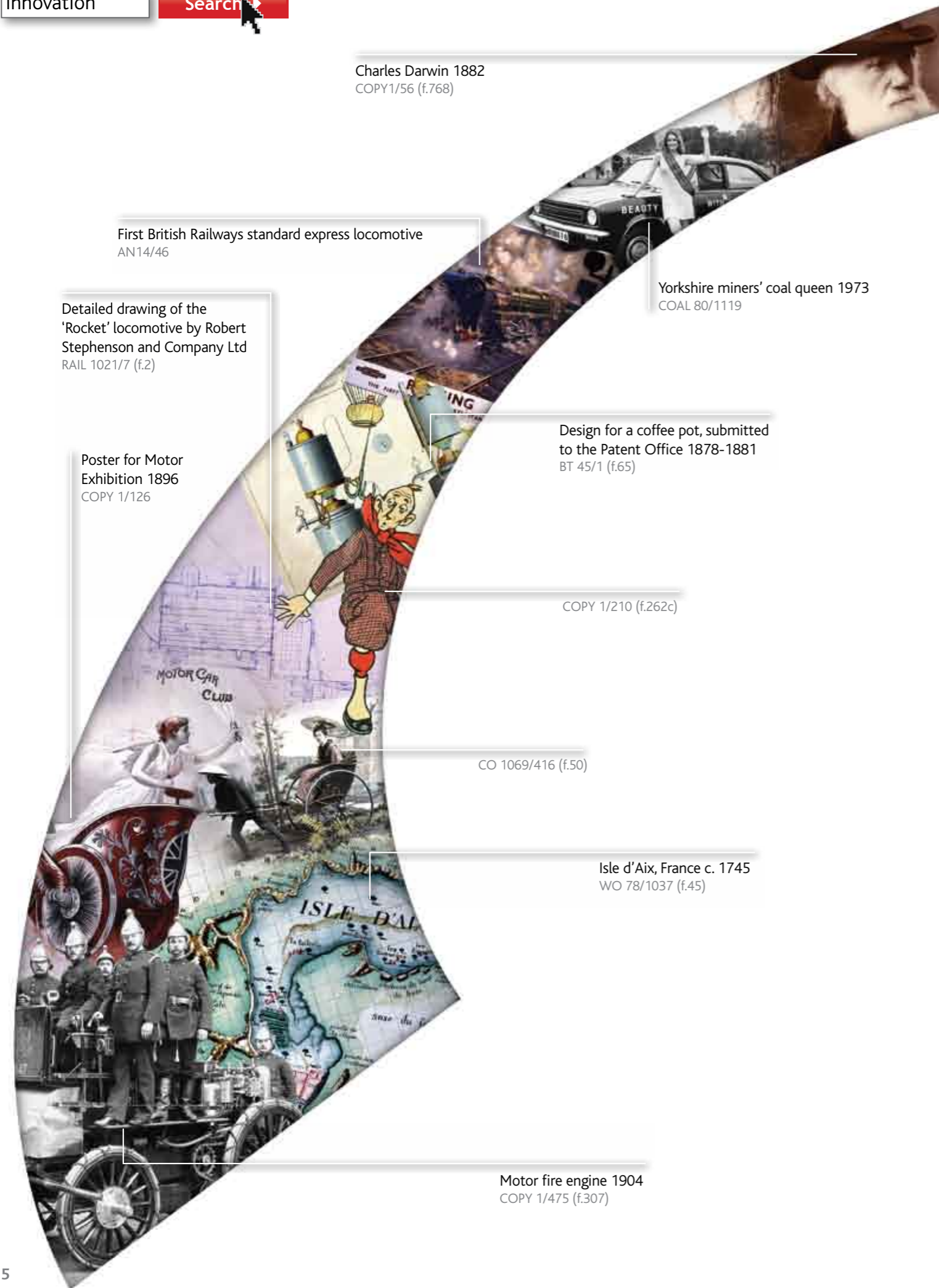
- Drive innovation: drive service excellence
- Unite the online and on site customer experiences
- Strengthen our working relationships with key partners
- Build a culture that inspires us all to fulfil our potential
- Champion investment in information management throughout its lifecycle

Our commercial publishing partners have invested around **£53,000,000** since 2003 in scanning, transcribing and publishing our records online

We have grown our annual commercial revenue by over

**71%** in the last five years: we reinvest this money in continually enhancing our public services

There are over **2,000** archives in the UK



Charles Darwin 1882  
COPY1/56 (f.768)

First British Railways standard express locomotive  
AN14/46

Detailed drawing of the  
'Rocket' locomotive by Robert  
Stephenson and Company Ltd  
RAIL 1021/7 (f.2)

Poster for Motor  
Exhibition 1896  
COPY 1/126

Yorkshire miners' coal queen 1973  
COAL 80/1119

Design for a coffee pot, submitted  
to the Patent Office 1878-1881  
BT 45/1 (f.65)

COPY 1/210 (f.262c)

CO 1069/416 (f.50)

Isle d'Aix, France c. 1745  
WO 78/1037 (f.45)

Motor fire engine 1904  
COPY 1/475 (f.307)

## Efficiency through innovation

Our collection of historical records dates back over 1,000 years, but to achieve our goals we must keep pace with the latest developments in many fields.

The digital revolution has transformed the way that government works. Information is no longer expressed just in paper documents. Communications and key decisions are now captured in a multitude of digital file and media types. This new approach demands new strategies for managing and preserving information, and making it available for re-use.

We have the expertise to support government in identifying what information is essential for business activities and for the historians of the future, and storing it effectively to be accessed when needed.

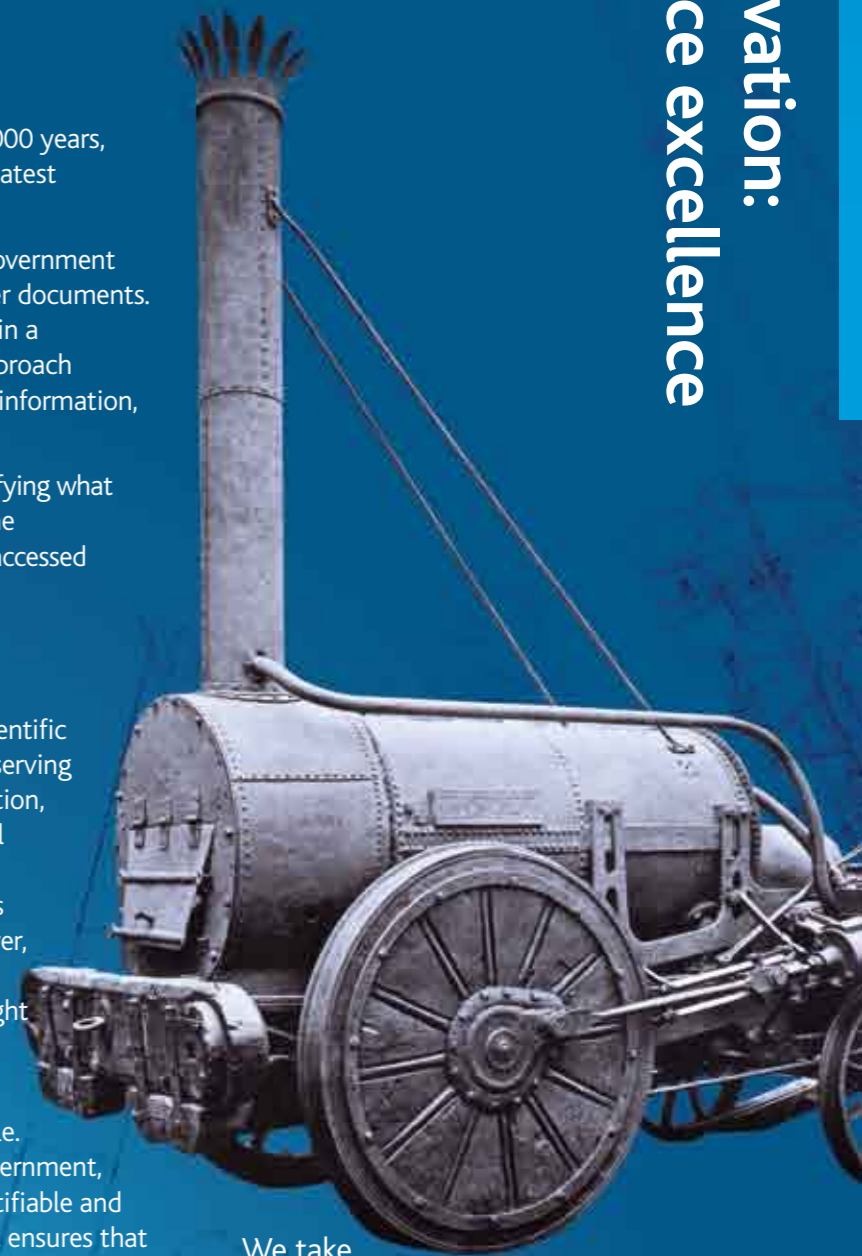
### New technologies

Keeping our historical collection safe and useable also demands a modern outlook. We conduct in-depth scientific research to help us identify the best strategies for preserving the many different objects and materials in our collection, and to determine the most appropriate environmental conditions for our repositories. Monitoring and maintaining the right temperature and humidity levels helps protect our records and artefacts. Installing newer, more efficient environmental equipment will allow us to reduce energy consumption while sustaining the right conditions.

Our role is not just to protect government's historical records, but to help keep current information accessible. We run the Digital Continuity project on behalf of government, ensuring that critical digital information can stay identifiable and readable. Our groundbreaking Web Continuity project ensures that links on central government sites remain active and useable, even when the information they link to is no longer available on the live site – users are automatically redirected to content captured in our UK Government Web Archive.

The online revolution is helping us widen access to our collection and our expertise. Our plans include developing new web and catalogue search technologies to make it easier for researchers to use our collection.

Embracing new ideas and technologies is vital in providing quality services for our customers, and ensuring that our collection continues to grow for future generations.



We take

# 12,614,400

measurements of temperature and humidity levels in our repositories each year

Drawings of shapes of UFO sightings 1970 -71  
AIR 2/19086

COPY 1/308 (f.204)

Co-operative society poster 1898  
COPY 1/143 (f.ii)

Design for a nail submitted  
to the Patent Office 1842  
BT 42/12 (f.1123)

CO 1069/416 (f.52)

BT 52/143 (f.22125)

COPY 1/398 (f.93)

COPY 1/210 (f.79)

Furness Abbey, copy of  
deeds, 1412  
DL 42/3 (f.7)

The British Scene: London rail terminus.  
Series of pictures from Ministry of  
Information  
INF 3/1740

## The best of both worlds

As the world wide web becomes more popular and sophisticated, more and more of our customers expect to be able to find the information they seek online.

Over 20 million people visit our website each year, which is designed to make information and resources that our audiences need more accessible. It provides access to our catalogue of 11 million records (and to many of the most popular documents, now digitised and available to download worldwide). The site also features other search tools to help people use our collection, including research guides, podcasts, tutorials for people unfamiliar with archives, and a range of reference guides.

We provide resources for teachers across the UK – including lesson plans and a wide range of class activities – and interactive learning aids for students of all ages.

We also use our website to make information resources and guidance available to colleagues in government and the archive sector, and to promote the re-use of public sector information across the UK.

### Up close and personal

There will always be those who need or choose to visit us in person, and we are proud of the world-class service we offer at our Kew site. We have three reading rooms, where researchers can order original documents or access copies using computers or microfilm readers. Expert staff offer visitors advice on how to use our catalogue and our collection, and help with specific research queries.

We continually enhance our online services and search tools, making them as user-friendly and effective as we can. They benefit all our visitors – not just people accessing digitised images, but also those who use our online catalogue to order original records on site. Our aim is that our online and on site services should fully complement each other, providing a seamless, intuitive and rewarding experience. We want to make sure that all our audiences can access the information and the expertise they need from us – whether they visit us in person, or online.

The Tzar of Russia and the Prince of Wales COPY 1/536 (f.73)  
Background: AIR 2/19086

There are

# 117

'research signposts'  
on our website –  
short guides to help people  
locate historical sources  
for exploring the history  
of people or places, or  
particular subjects

Unite the online and  
on site customer experience



England v Scotland rugby match at Edinburgh 1895  
COPY 1/120 (f.212)

COPY 1/295 (f.138)

British Railways coronation poster in  
tribute to HM Queen Elizabeth 1953  
AN 14/48

Workers from Cubbit & Co,  
Chelmsford Essex 1912  
COPY 1/566

INF 3/29

Elephant at work 1907  
COPY 1/514 (f.560b)

Tower of London: 1741  
Copy of 1597 survey  
MPH 1/214 (f.2)

Isambard Kingdom  
Brunel 1857  
RAIL 1014/37

TS 11/115 (326)

## Sharing insights

We have a very wide range of audiences. To government and public sector bodies, we are a key resource supporting the management and use of current information, and in making public sector information accessible for people to re-use. We work closely with the archive sector across England and Wales, offering support and guidance on best practice. Our education resources benefit teachers, pupils and university students, and we offer unrivalled research facilities to the academic community and everyone interested in studying records from our vast collection, both online and on site at Kew.

### Two-way dialogue

Each group of customers has very different needs and expectations. To understand these, and to provide the services that they require from us, we need to maintain a close relationship with each of our audiences. We need to make sure that we listen to and communicate with them, both now and in the future, building stronger relationships.

A number of regular forums allow us to gather essential feedback from many of our different audiences. We also gain valuable knowledge and understanding through collaborating with other expert organisations. We co-ordinate research seminars, academic forums, postgraduate training courses and conferences, working with scholarly partners such as the Institute of Historical Research, the Liverpool University for Archive Studies and the Department of Information Studies at University College London. We also organise conferences and training events for information management professionals in the public sector.

Comprehensive user testing is a key element in our development of each new service, and regular surveys help us determine what our customers need and how satisfied our on site and online visitors are with what we provide.

Effective communication with our customers means that we will better understand their requirements and also benefit from sharing their insights and expertise. This will allow us to continue to enhance our services for all our customers.

Japan COPY 1/371 (f.40)  
Background: COPY 1/420 (f.ii)

Strengthen our working  
relationships with key partners



38

volunteers work with  
our expert conservators,  
contributing a total of

**2,400**

hours

each year,  
helping us to  
protect and preserve  
our unique records

Great Exhibition building  
COPY 1/21

COPY 1/145 (f.349)

COAL80/97

Fostering poster 1976  
BN 10/23

Construction of  
Tower Bridge 1892  
COPY 1/409

Anti-litter  
campaign  
pamphlet 1960  
INF 13/223  
(f.22)

Pyramids in Giza, taken by RAF c. 1939  
AIR 27/131

Anti-litter campaign  
pamphlet 1960  
EXT 1/121

Suffragettes, Annie Kenney and Christabel  
Pankhurst 1906  
COPY 1/494

MPF1/212

## People power

We pride ourselves on a strong tradition of combining outstanding customer service for our different audiences with expertise in every aspect of information, records and archive management. We have the knowledge and the skills to tackle the unprecedented challenges created by our society's shift to digital working.

But this work – and our capacity to respond to the requirements of our customers – is only possible because of the contribution made by each member of our staff. Every team has an integral role to play, whether working directly with our different customers, maintaining our collections and facilities, or providing vital support for colleagues.

### Green culture

We are working to become more efficient and reduce our environmental impact. Installing technology to monitor and reduce our power use at our Kew site has helped us to save money and energy. But becoming a greener organisation depends on a staff commitment to conserving resources, cutting down on waste by re-using and recycling, and sharing ideas about being more environmentally-conscious. Staff at all levels are helping The National Archives become more sustainable, and building a greener internal culture.

Our goal is a working community where every member of staff feels inspired by being part of an exceptional organisation – by its goals and priorities, by the opportunities for learning and development that are available to them, and by the contribution they can make.

By continually working to make The National Archives more inclusive and more accessible, embedding equality and diversity in all our strategies, we can enhance our own resources of talent and expertise. This will allow us to provide better and richer services to an ever wider range of audiences.

Our contact centre  
staff answered

**69,261**

telephone calls  
in 2008-09

Schoolchildren playing cricket Jamaica 1960s INF 10/147 (f.1)  
Background: COPY 1/409

Build a culture that  
inspires us all to fulfil our potential



COPY 1/134 (f.364)

Land girls poster  
INF 13/140 (f.19)

COPY 1/497

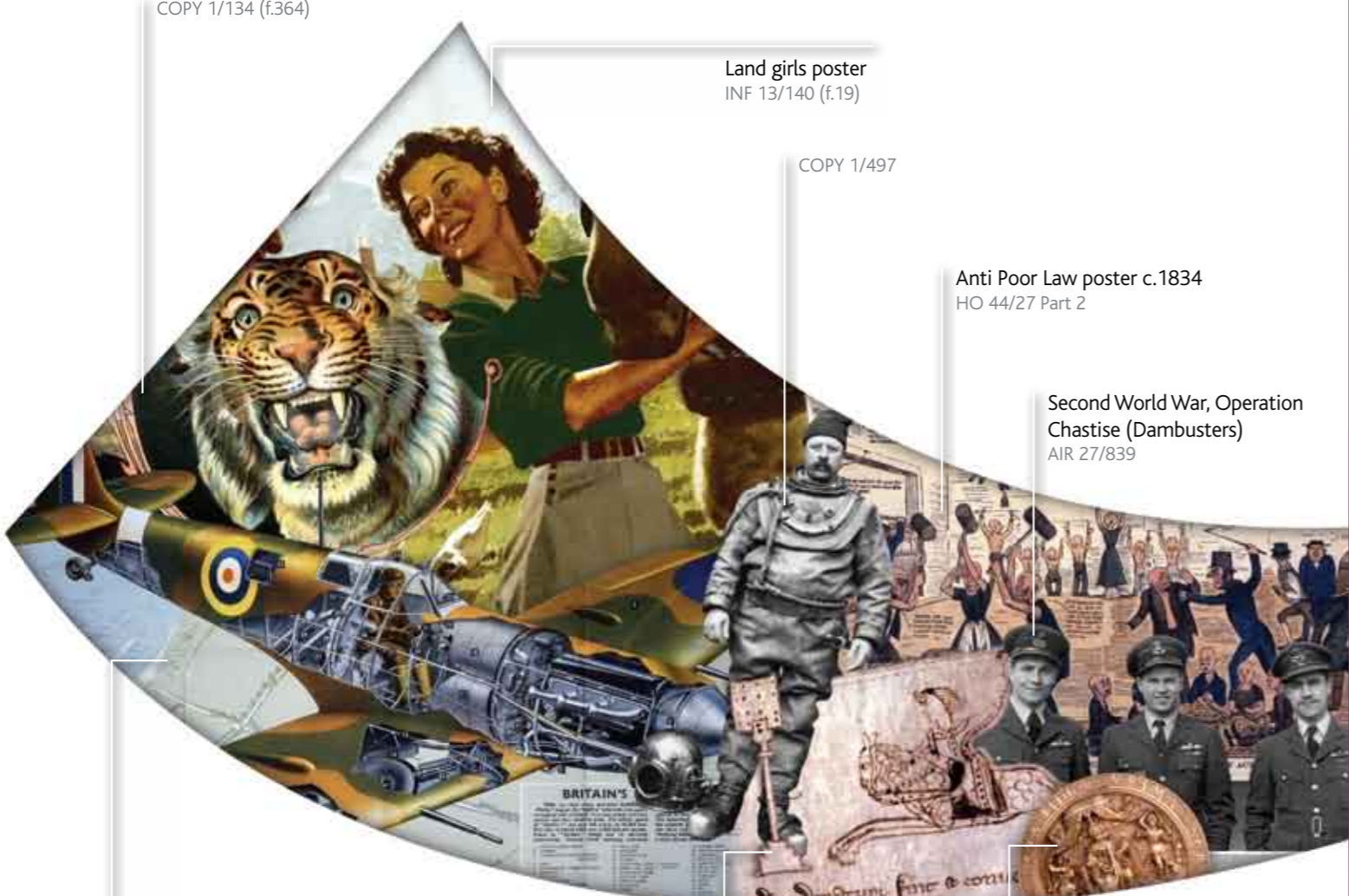
Anti Poor Law poster c.1834  
HO 44/27 Part 2

Second World War, Operation  
Chastise (Dambusters)  
AIR 27/839

Golden seal from treaty of  
perpetual peace between  
England and France 1527  
E 30/1109

E 36/275

Cutaway diagram of a spitfire  
INF 2/17



## Priceless assets

Technology and the tools we all use for creating and storing important information continue to develop at breathtaking speed.

Keeping the right information accessible not only supports the process of good government today, helping to ensure accountability, it also enriches the public record for future generations of researchers. Effective information management – rooted in up-to-the-minute principles and best practice – is an absolute necessity for government. The National Archives has the expertise and flexibility to respond to advances in information technology with robust new strategies.

### Working together

We support the cross-departmental Knowledge Council, which leads on Knowledge and Information Management (KIM) throughout government. It works to help government continuously improve the way it manages and uses information. It also supports the professional development of 4,000 government KIM practitioners. KIM is a key business function across government, and our chief executive is head of profession.

The 2009 government policy on archives – *Archives for the 21st Century* – sets out a path for publicly funded archives in England and Wales, to raise awareness of the contribution they make to everyone’s lives and to kick start action to ensure their continued survival. The challenges inherent in archiving and preserving digital documents affect archives across the UK. We are working with the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) and CyMAL (Museums Libraries and Archives Wales) to support the archive sector in addressing these issues and implementing the policy.

We continually plan for the future, researching new ideas and technologies, and identifying skills we will need. As the ways people create and use information change, so do the requirements of our many different audiences. We offer an over-arching, comprehensive service that can assist at every stage in the lifecycle of managing official information – but our services, our organisation and our strategic priorities continually evolve to keep pace with new challenges and expectations.

World War II Avro Lancaster bomber crew INF 2/42 (f.190)  
Background: INF 2/175

Champion investment in information management throughout its lifecycle

**140**  
government  
staff  
trained with  
us in records  
and information  
management  
in 2008



# Our strategic priorities in 2010-11

## Drive innovation: drive service excellence

Researching new ideas and technologies is key in providing the high standard of services our customers expect. We need to make the best use of public money; we also need to be as environmentally-friendly as possible. We're proud of our services, but our culture is one of continuous improvement.

- Our digital data tape library can hold one petabyte of government information – enough to fill 20 million filing cabinets of paper documents. It's greener than hard disks, as well as more cost-effective. (pictured below).
- We are developing a new website providing comprehensive access to UK legislation. It will make this information easier to access and re-use.

### Safeguarding historical records during digitisation

Digitising and publishing historical records online makes them more accessible and protects unique, fragile documents – but it's complex and painstaking work.

Our approach to preparing for major digitisation projects (often scanning millions of pages) means better protection for historical records and a smoother process. It includes:

- surveying records' condition and materials
- recommending digitising equipment and deciding how documents should be prepared
- carrying out necessary conservation treatments (such as cleaning, flattening or repairing pages)
- training scanning operators in handling documents safely
- overseeing the digitisation process, providing support throughout.

This approach has proved so successful that it is now being adopted by other archives in the UK and abroad.



## Unite the online and on site customer experience

We've developed a comprehensive web service to make our resources more widely accessible. But we are also committed to maintaining the quality of our services on site at Kew for those who visit us in person. We are improving our website with changes based on customer research and testing; we want to make sure that our online and on site services fully complement each other, providing a seamless experience.

- Our animated online guides help new researchers get the most out of a visit to Kew or our website. They show how an archive works, how our records are arranged, how to use our catalogue and how to access documents online or in our reading rooms.
- Our education team runs award-winning on site education sessions for pupils of all ages, and also online 'virtual classroom' sessions that can be joined by students nationwide. Schools just need computers and an internet connection to take part.

### The secret life of our repositories

When a visitor orders an original record, details go straight to the document handling team in the relevant repository. (We have 16 repositories at Kew, containing over 150 kilometres of shelving.) Our staff collect the record – which could be one of many types including files, boxes of documents, maps, scrolls or paintings – and deliver it to a numbered locker or a collection counter.

There are dedicated lifts for relaying records between floors, and we use electric carts to convey them safely from one end of the site to the other. We guarantee that records on site are delivered within 60 minutes: customers can check progress using status screens.

All original records are collected and re-shelved by hand. And the teams don't only deliver records – they carefully monitor their condition and help to keep them safe, working closely with our conservators.



## Strengthen our working relationships with key partners

We have a very wide range of audiences, with different needs and expectations. To provide the services that they expect from us, we need to maintain a close relationship with each audience – to ensure that we listen to and communicate with them, building stronger relationships.

■ We share information and insights with representatives from the Royal Historical Society, the British Academy, the Historical Association, the Institute of Historical Research and the History of Parliament Trust at our quarterly strategic academic stakeholder forum.

■ In 2009 we hosted the annual conference for publishers of European countries' official 'newspapers of record', used by governments to issue legislation, legal notices and other official announcements. We manage the publication of the UK's official government newspapers: the London, Belfast and Edinburgh Gazettes.

## Supporting government in making data accessible for re-use

Government's data.gov.uk website provides access to a wealth of non-personal information created and collected in the public sector. Over 2,500 government datasets are available to the public for free re-use. The data can be combined to create a wide range of products, services and community resources.

Our close involvement throughout the site's planning and creation has included revising and simplifying the licensing terms for the government data and information, to make them easier for the public to re-use.



## Build a culture that inspires us all to fulfil our potential

We aim to combine outstanding customer service with expertise in all aspects of information and archive management – but this depends on the part played by all our staff. We are working to build a culture where staff feel inspired by being part of this organisation, by the opportunities available to them, and by the contribution they can make.

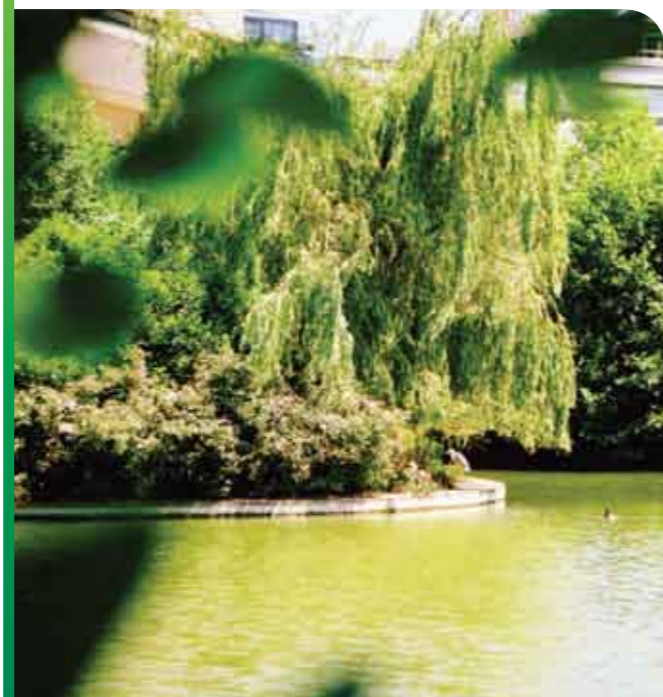
■ Our 'War on film' videocasts grew out of an exhibition originally created by a staff member in his spare time – they tell the true stories behind six popular war films, using records from our collection. They are now watched by viewers all over the world.

■ Archus – our lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) staff forum – has been working with volunteers from the Ministry of Justice to identify records in our collection relevant to LGBT history. Their findings are published on Your Archives, our interactive online forum, and are available for other researchers to use and develop.

## Building a greener community

Volunteers from across our organisation organised a staff 'Green Week' in 2009. Events included sessions on greener living and getting involved in promoting biodiversity on site at Kew.

Installing two beehives will boost the local bee population and provide pollination for local plants. We are also providing bird boxes for a variety of British birds, along with boxes for bats, insects and hedgehogs. In addition, Kew Gardens has donated logs for a 'logery' which we are creating for stag beetles and other insects.



## Champion investment in information management throughout its lifecycle

For government, accurate and accessible information is vital – and information essential to government today will be critical for the researchers, historians and policy makers of tomorrow. But in a digital world, managing that information becomes ever more complex and challenging. We champion effective information management, providing guidance and support to help government create, manage and use its information effectively. We are also building stronger links within government's community of knowledge and information management professionals.

■ At the end of 2009 we officially launched our Web Continuity project. It helps people using government websites to find information which would have been lost through broken web links – they are redirected automatically to information in our UK Government Web Archive. The service is now redirecting more than six million hits a month.

■ We have developed and run 'Civil Pages' on behalf of central government: a secure online people directory and workspace for the civil service. Members can search for colleagues to discuss ideas, share information and build collaborative networks online.

## Assessing public sector bodies' records management

The Freedom of Information (FoI) Act 2000 requires the Lord Chancellor to issue a Code of Practice on records management. This official Code of Practice is relevant to over 100,000 public bodies.

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is the independent authority that enforces and oversees the FoI Act within the UK. If the Information Commissioner has concerns about how a public body manages its records, he can commission The National Archives to assess its practices against the Code of Practice on his behalf.





