Welcome to the Summer Research Newsletter. Collaboration has been a theme emerging so far this year: with the establishment of a new directorate to focus on Research and Collections, we are working with a wider range of external partners and groups than ever before. This issue of the newsletter highlights a number of ongoing collaborative research projects and events.

The next Discovering Collections, Discovering Communities (DCDC) event takes place in October, and is organised by The National Archives and Research Libraries UK with the support of The Wellcome Library and the British Library. You can find out more about the event, which will focus on engaging with audiences in the digital era, on page 6.

We have also participated in some very successful collaborative research projects: you can find out more about our Big Data project, Traces though Time: Prosopography in practice across Big Data on page 9, a new digital resource about Magna Carta developed with Parliament on page 2, and a report commissioned by the Department for Education, The National Archives and British Film Institute about the development of a repository of moving image material on page 10.

We also have a busy summer of activities and events ahead. The new What’s On programme provides details of upcoming events, which include a programme of activities to investigate Magna Carta and an exciting collaboration with Tate Britain to showcase The National Archives’ collection of Barbara Hepworth records. On page 7, you can read about the forthcoming Barbara Hepworth exhibition and talks being held at The National Archives.

Finally, we are delighted to announce that two of our researchers have received awards in the last couple of months. Congratulations to Dr. Alexandra Eveleigh, who has undertaken remarkable and original research as an Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Collaborative Doctoral student into online participation in archives, and has recently received her PhD. Alexandra tells us more about her research and her experience of being a Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) student on page 5. Meanwhile, the Head of Collection Care at The National Archives, Nancy Bell, has been awarded the Plowden Medal by the Plowden Trust for her significant contribution to the preservation of cultural heritage. Find out more about the award on page 11.

I hope that you enjoy this edition of the newsletter and please do get in touch via research@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk with any comments, feedback or questions about the articles in this issue. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this edition.

Victoria Lain
Editor and Research and Academic Liaison
The Research Team
The National Archives
In March this year, The National Archives launched Magna Carta and the emergence of Parliament, a digital resource for school students developed in partnership with Parliament.

Part of the 2015 Parliament in the Making programme, it marks the 800th anniversary of the sealing of Magna Carta and the 750th anniversary of Simon de Montfort’s parliament, and sets these events within the wider context of the struggle between kings and barons from 1066 through to the end of the 13th century.

The resource requires students to work with over 30 original documents from the period to investigate how and why Magna Carta is issued, re-issued and evolves over time.

As guardians of two versions of Magna Carta from 1225 and 1297, The National Archives recognises the enduring importance of this document as the foundation of our system of limited, constitutional government based on the rule of law and the consent of representative parliament.

However as experienced educators who engage school students with archival material for the study of History, we also recognise that for the average 12-year old, Magna Carta appears to be little more than scribble on a page; indecipherable and incomprehensible. The challenge is to make Magna Carta real for our students, so that they want to engage with it and see beyond the illegible text, into the events that make the 13th century one of the most momentous in our history.

We do this by adopting an unconventional approach which requires students to work independently to write a comprehensive account of the struggle between kings and barons over a 250-year period. This requires them to read, understand, draw evidence from and substantiate judgements about four key points in time – 1215, 1225, 1265 and 1297 – before wrapping the whole thing up in the style of a medieval chronicle.

First, we frame the mystery of different versions of Magna Carta issued at different times by different people for different reasons. We then set the enquiry: why does Magna Carta keep coming back?

Next, we add characterisation with a cast of figures from the period-bookish monks, supercilious bishops, disreputable monarchs, stroppy barons, a particularly elegant queen with an outrageous French accent, and one very
condescending constitutional lawyer who becomes progressively confused by the weight of his own argument.

We used these characters to draw students into the period; to participate in a journey of discovery led by cowled figures with ancient maps, to track down parchment texts, and press well-intentioned, if occasionally impertinent, questions upon powerful people. The great monk chronicler, Matthew Paris, is their guide and mentor; setting tasks, selecting documents, helping with translations and explaining their meaning. For while Paris, as with all of his contemporary chroniclers, is a dab hand at recording the events of the period, he is less capable in explaining why they occur and judging what their significance may be.

This, then, is the role of the student. To be guided by Paris to take on board the opinions of the great persons whom they interview, to follow recommendations as to which documents to investigate next; and to record evidence; but ultimately the students’ challenge is to write a History, and not a Chronicle, of the period.

Students are rewarded throughout the resource with badges for visiting locations, reading documents, interviewing characters and completing chronicle chapters:

- Explorator (Explorer)
- Inquisitor (Researcher)
- Interrogator (Interviewer)
- Chronicator (Chronicler)

If they complete all this they will become Magister Chronicator (Master Chronicler) but more importantly they will have developed an incomparable knowledge and understanding of the complexity of how Magna Carta evolved and how it is linked to the rule of law, the genesis of our rights, the origins of Parliament, and the foundation of our constitution.

Magna Carta and the Emergence of Parliament is freely available to all schools on The National Archives website.
The Keeper's Gallery

The National Archives is hosting a programme of events to mark the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta.

From 19 May to 12 June, one of The National Archives' two exemplifications of the charter will be on display in the Keeper's Gallery. This document (DL 10/71) dates from 1225, when Henry III reissued the charter to illustrate his commitment to good government and the rule of law. There will be series of short talks in the Gallery to explain more about the charter and other related documents which will also be on display.

On Tuesday 23 June, a group of historians will debate 'Magna Carta: what was so 'great' about the charter?'. This event is co-hosted with the Pipe Roll Society and the panel will include Professor Paul Brand, Professor David Carpenter, Professor Nicholas Vincent and Professor Louise Wilkinson. The event will give the public a unique opportunity to put questions to some of world's leading experts on Magna Carta and medieval law.

For more information on these events and more, and to book your free place at the academic debate, please check the What's on pages on our website.

The National Archives has also loaned a number of documents to the British Library for its exhibition Magna Carta: Liberty, Law, Legacy so please look out for them there.

New possibilities: Elemental analysis at The National Archives

Dr Helen Wilson
Collection Care, The National Archives

The Collection Care department has recently expanded its technical analysis capabilities through the acquisition of a portable X-ray Fluorescence Analyser. The elemental analysis afforded by this analyser will help to identify pigments, dyes, inks, and photographic techniques in our collection.

The portability of this hand-held device and the ability to measure records directly and without damage makes it easy to use on our collection material. The results will have implications on preservation strategy as well as our understanding of our collection and its technical history.

XRF 4: X-ray fluorescence analysis of a wallpaper sample in Board of Trade design register, BT43/103.
Crowding out the Archivist? Implications of online user participation for archival theory and practice

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Regular readers of this newsletter may recall being asked to complete a researchers survey in 2012 on the subject of online participation in archives. The data collected and the interviews with researchers that followed, formed part of my PhD research into the implications of so-called ‘participatory archives’. This involved focusing on various online contribution initiatives which The National Archives has helped to pioneer in the archives sector over the past five or six years, including wikis, social tagging and commenting, and online volunteering or ‘crowdsourcing’. Finding out more about the accessibility and use of archival material online, and investigating the potential for researchers to collaborate and share their expertise about archives, are also organisational research priorities for The National Archives. My PhD research was sponsored by The National Archives under the AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) scheme, in partnership with UCL.

As a professional archivist by background, I was particularly attracted to the opportunity this partnership offered to derive research questions directly from ‘real world’ challenges and possibilities. As Collections Manager at West Yorkshire Archive Service (up to January 2010), I had already been experimenting with the use of social media tools, such as Flickr and Twitter, and had established the ‘Catablogue’ for staff to report news and invite comments on in-progress collections work. We had also been building up internally a wiki on the model of The National Archives’ Your Archives.

In attempting to establish a future strategic direction for this work, however, I discovered that – despite increasing evidence of practical experimentation in online participation in all manner of archives settings — there was as yet scarce analysis in terms of what might motivate people to take part, or consideration of the resources required to manage and sustain successful online collaborations, and no attempt to define measures of success or evaluate the impact upon either professional archival or research practice.

I soon discovered that researching at the leading edge of current professional practice in an internationally-renowned organisation such as The National Archives would pose particular challenges alongside the many exciting openings. Shortly after I began my PhD work, The National Archives began collaboration with the Met Office and Oxford University’s Zooniverse citizen science consortium to launch the Old Weather project, which would become a major focus of my research into participants’ motivations. In February 2012, the wiki Your Archives, which had been at the core of the original CDA proposal, was closed to new contributors and subsequently switched to read-only mode, moving to the UK Government Web Archive the following September.

New ‘user collaboration’ projects were under continual development throughout the period of my PhD. The context and literature review for the research were also consciously interdisciplinary, crossing boundaries across cultural heritage domains, and in the information and social sciences, finding inspiration from
academic disciplines as diverse as psychology, economics, museology, computer science, and even astronomy. I am also firmly convinced that my own experiences as a musician (a cellist – regular playing is the principal method through which I attempted to maintain sanity during the PhD experience!) profoundly shaped the development of my thinking about participation, expertise, representation, and how we reconstruct and reinterpret the past in the present.

My thesis charts a course through this emerging landscape of online user participation in archives, focusing on user involvement at the point of practice known to professional archivists as archival description. The study considers a spectrum of online initiatives which have sought to benefit from the skills or knowledge of diverse user groups: from mass participation ‘crowdsourcing’ transcription projects, via tagging and commenting functionalities added to traditional archive catalogues; to community engagement programmes which have attempted to build up multiple layers of narrative interpretation. The research was designed around three principal stakeholder groups (professionals, participants, and users) and presents two new analytical frameworks as navigation aids, taken from the perspective of professional archivists, and of participants respectively.

The discussion on users is necessarily more speculative, but concludes that realisation of the claims made for the transformative impact of online user participation is dependent upon a redefinition of archival use which is inclusive of both participation and the communication of meaning, in addition to the routine processes of information seeking. My hope is that my research has begun a process of identifying points of continuity and common ground across different stakeholder perspectives in the brief lifetime of participatory archives, and that these can be used as a firm foundation from which the future of online user collaboration may be built, rather than on the shifting sands of the latest technological innovations. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone at The National Archives who generously gave their time to take part in this research.

**DCDC15: Discovering Collections, Discovering Communities**

**12-14 October 2015, The Lowry, Manchester**

*Discovering Collections, Discovering Communities: Exploring new digital destinations for heritage and academia* (DCDC15) is a collaborative conference hosted by The National Archives and Research Libraries UK (RLUK). It explores inter-disciplinary, cross-sector approaches and opportunities to developing and widening access to collections through partnership and collaborative working, across the heritage, cultural and academic sectors. This year’s event will be sponsored by The Wellcome Library, with the British Library and JISC as supporting sponsors.

After a successful event in 2014, this year’s DCDC15 conference will look at the varied and innovative ways in which archives, museums, libraries and academic institutions can engage with audiences in the digital age. Digital platforms have provided many new and exciting opportunities, yet they have also presented new challenges for heritage and academic organisations. This conference aims to explore the possibilities and also the pitfalls of digital engagement.

Confirmed keynote speakers at DCDC15 are Simon Chaplin, Director of Culture & Society at the Wellcome Trust, Jeff James, Chief Executive and Keeper of The National Archives, and Chris Michaels, Head of Digital and Publishing at the British Museum. Further keynote speakers will be announced in due course.

Registration for DCDC15 will open soon. There is no fee to attend the conference; however, a modest fee applies for the networking drinks reception on Monday 12 October and the evening reception on Tuesday 13 October.

More information is available on the [event’s website](#) or you can contact Melanie Cheung (RLUK) and Matt Greenhall (The National Archives). You can also sign up to receive DCDC15 notifications through the RLUK [mailing list](#).
Barbara Hepworth: Life and Selected Archives

Ann Chow
Advice and Records Knowledge Editor,
The National Archives

To mark the 40th anniversary of Barbara Hepworth’s death, and to tie-in with the exhibitions held at The Tate Britain and The Hepworth Wakefield, the Keeper’s Gallery is displaying a selection of archival records held by The National Archives on the artist from 19 May until 21 August. This is an opportunity to promote some of the arts-related material that we hold here.

Barbara Hepworth was primarily known as a sculptor, but she also worked in other media (such as drawing in wax, ink, crayon and pencil on gesso) as part of her artistic practice. The records we hold relate to her career, including her first public commissions for the 1951 Festival of Britain and the following example of her international recognition (in file FCO 13/449). Her posthumous legacy, such as the acceptance of Dame Barbara Hepworth Museum, St Ives, as outstation to Tate Gallery (in file ED 245/104).

The select display in the Keeper’s Gallery includes a series of documents which feature or relate to Barbara Hepworth, such as the 1911 census and extracts from the exhibition records of the 1951 Festival of Britain and British Council files (although these latter records are not public records, we are custodians of a selection of these records along with other archives).

There will also be a programme of events inspired by Barbara Hepworth. One of the highlights will be an afternoon of talks on 14 July touching upon her life and the various selected archives held here and at the Tate Archives. Contributors include: Chris Stephens, co-curator of the exhibition at the Tate Britain exhibition, Morwenna Roche and Bianca Rossmann from the Tate Archives, and Briony Paxman, one of our Modern Domestic specialists whose expertise is in the Festival of Britain records.

An original document display of selected documents held by The National Archives (along with selected facsimile copies from the Tate Archives) will also be available for viewing on the day.

For more information about these and other events related to Barbara Hepworth being held here at The National Archives, please check the What’s on pages on our website in the coming months.

You can also read the blog investigating the letters behind carving and shaping stone, for examples of letters from Hepworth within the British Council files (BW series).

WORK 25/204 (2823): Hepworth working on her sculpture for the Festival of Britain 1951 at her St. Ives Cornwall studio.

WORK 25/213 (4873) Crowd with Hepworth’s sculpture Contractual Form in the background.
I was recently given the unique chance to get to know a partner institution, an opportunity that bore no parallel to stakeholder working hitherto, which turned out to be one of the most remarkable episodes in my professional career. For my week-long secondment to The National Archives, I am deeply grateful to Jeff James and all other staff who made this experience possible.

Day one was quite an introduction, not least because apparently I was to come up with a Big Idea (difficult enough at the best of times!) as part of an ongoing series of talks. The title of my presentation was "Towards a 'Public of Letters'" – the idea being that collection holders provide not just content but the means and encouragement to non-academic users to consider themselves 'Citizen Humanists'.

Over the following week I watched teams bring content to light, but also think carefully and creatively about making it meaningfully accessible to ordinary people – through themes such as democracy, health, and identity. In my 'Public of Letters' talk I had spoken of the need to establish and spread the notion of 'research democracy' but I suddenly found myself at the ballot box centre of it all, counting the actual votes.

But there was also a very personally moving experience of how profound content in self-created contexts could be. At one point I sat in on the Red Desk research advice desk in the Reading Rooms. Inspired by a couple searching for a relative who had served during the Second World War, I looked up some information about my own family and discovered that both my grandfather’s regimental diary covering the Normandy landings, where he fell, was available, as were my father’s discharge papers from the Merchant Marine in the 1950s. I was also enfranchised.

I came away from the week buzzing with ideas for furthering and deepening the collaboration of Research Libraries UK with The National Archives, a very real sense of being accepted as a colleague as much as a stakeholder, a humble realisation I had much more to learn about archives, and being really fired up to do so.
Traces through Time: Prosopography in practice across Big Data

On 23 March, the Traces through Time project team hosted a conference at the Institute of Historical Research in London. Led by Dr Sonia Ranade from The National Archives, the conference introduced the project and outlined the research. Roger Evans from the University of Brighton spoke about Natural Language Processing and Arno Knobbe, Kleanthi Georgala and Benjamin van den Burgh from the University of Leiden spoke about linking data and algorithms.

In order to demonstrate the Traces through Time data model in a more engaging way, Matt Hillyard from The National Archives took a well-known person and, using the model, built a graph database using facts about the life and family of that person. Matt then gradually revealed the facts by showing more and more elements from the data model via the graph...and there was even a prize for the lucky winner who guessed the mystery person first!

Mark Bell, also from The National Archives, used divorce records as an example of big data. Mark noted there was a surge in divorce rates at the end of the First World War leading to a change in the law. From 1923, women were able to cite their husband’s adultery for grounds for divorce. Mark found a number of love triangles in the records, including examples of the ‘third party’ cited in earlier records that appeared in later records as the newly divorced spouse.

The day concluded with two engaging panel sessions. Jos Lehmann from the University of Brighton talked about the DEEP Film Access Project and Peter Webster from Webster Research & Consulting Ltd presented the Big UK Domain Data for the Arts and Humanities project.

The second panel session was led by Lynne Cahill from the University of Sussex who spoke about ChartEx and John Sheridan from The National Archives who presented the Big Data for Law project.

The conference marked the end of the first phase of the project, which developed a methodology to identify and trace individuals across large and diverse historical datasets. You can find out more here. We are now into the second phase running internally at The National Archives. There are three main elements to phase two: continuing development of the tools from phase one and ensuring these meet The National Archives’ requirements; deploying the name-linking approach for Discovery, our catalogue; and research into using Optical Character Recognition to supplement the data available for analysis.

We’re looking forward to using this research to open up the archives and will continue to update on progress.
Research into moving image material in education

Andrew Payne
Head of Education & Outreach
The National Archives

In June 2014, The National Archives was commissioned by the Department for Education to undertake research into how teachers make use of moving image material, including film and television productions, within the history classroom. We were also asked to make recommendations on how this material could be made more accessible to support the implementation of the new national curriculum for history.

Through a combination of surveying, focus groups and direct consultation with stakeholders, the report below offers insight into current practice as well as considering different models for future delivery of resources and the impediments to using moving image material faced by History teachers.


Current Practice

Across the UK, the best History teachers are incorporating moving images into their programmes of study in innovative and creative ways. Specialist History teachers have developed exemplary modes of use that move beyond engagement and enable moving image to directly contribute to students’ knowledge and understanding of the past, while developing their critical thinking and appreciation of differing historical interpretations.

In theory, the explosion of content online should more than meet the increasing appetite among teachers for moving image. Organisations, such as the BFI and BBC, have made strides towards improving the public’s online access to archive and broadcast material, and it is clear that some of this moving image is hugely relevant to the History curriculum.

Yet, from the perspective of the teacher and student, the digital landscape can appear chaotic. Moving image is presented, categorised and contextualised (if at all) in widely different ways and often without regard to the specific needs of the education community, while an array of licensing and copyright restrictions cause confusion about one’s rights to show or repurpose moving image. Different technology platforms impose constraints on how moving image material can or cannot be viewed, used and shared and the majority of teachers lack technical means to record and use broadcast programs.

These practical barriers have, in turn, limited pedagogic creativity - inhibiting teachers’ ability to explore, exploit and share the full potential of moving image to develop young people’s historical understanding. They have also discouraged more widespread use of moving image in the History classroom, especially in the primary sector. As a result, there is a clear need not only for improved access to moving image relevant to the History curriculum, but also for pedagogic support in developing and demonstrating best practise – support that takes into account the variance in digital and media literacy among both teachers and students.

Investment in infrastructure would lay the foundations for a sustainable and vibrant education network. Crucially, it could also create commercial opportunities that currently do not exist, while fostering greater coordination and collaboration among public and commercial education providers.

Moving image has a unique application in the History classroom as a primary source, and, as such the History community is at the forefront of exploring the opportunities and challenges of this material as a teaching and learning tool. Where History innovates in the next few years, other subjects will follow.

The full report, including recommendations for improving access and use of moving image material in the classroom, is available on the research section of The National Archives website.
Plowden Medal Award

Congratulations to Nancy Bell, Head of Collection Care, who was awarded the Plowden Medal by The Anna Plowden Trust. Inaugurated in 1999, the Plowden Medal is presented annually to the individual who has made the most significant recent contribution to the advancement of the conservation profession. It can also be awarded to recognise a lifetime of commitment and achievement. The Royal Warrant Holders Association awards the medal in memory of the late Hon. Anna Plowden CBE, the leading conservator who was Vice-President of the Association at the time of her death in 1997.

The Trust commended Nancy for her ‘evolutionary work in developing a risk based approach to environmental management of heritage collections bringing together archive, museum, and library collections and taking account of wider ecological implications. This work would not have been achieved without her leadership, determination and energy’. They noted Nancy’s ‘ability to enthuse and lead others which has taken her to the highest echelon of the profession. She is in the vanguard of those who advocate an interdisciplinary approach and collaborative research to preserving, and accessing cultural heritage.’

News Update

MOI Digital

We have been working closely with the Institute of English Studies and the Department of Digital Humanities at King’s College London on an exciting project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council entitled ‘A Publishing and Communications History of the Ministry of Information, 1939-45’. The Ministry of Information (MOI) was established by the British government at the outbreak of the Second World War. It was responsible for issuing ‘National Propaganda’ at home and abroad, as well as controlling news and information deemed to be of military value. The project looks at the ministry’s relationship with the public, the physical form of its messages and the material mode of their transmission. The project website hosts research and a regularly updated blog.

Discover records and online resources for Gallipoli centenary

To mark the centenary of the Gallipoli landings of the First World War and ANZAC day this April, we have made a selection of records and blogs now available to see online. We have also created a video in which you can discover how the Mexican dollar coin was used to commemorate the crewmen of HMAS Sydney.

You can view a series of panoramic photographs taken of the Gallipoli peninsula and read a first-hand account of the Gallipoli landings from Captain CA Milnard.

Newly released records

Our partner Findmypast has also released over 43,000 records relating to prisoners of war (POWs) 1914-1920, including Gallipoli records that form part of a wider collection held at The National Archives. These records relate to the internment of both allied and foreign members of the armed forces, civilians and merchant seamen of various nationalities spanning 250 years. The records contain the names, ranks and locations of POWs and provide insights into life in the Ottoman camps. They also include details of requests made by inmates for items including footballs and biscuits, details of visits by foreign diplomats and reports on camp conditions.

You can follow global commemoration on Twitter using #Gallipoli100.
Beta launch of redesigned records web pages

The beta version of the redesigned Records section of our website has been launched. The new site, now called Help with your research, aims to provide people with clear routes in so that they can get the help they need with their research. While we have started with over 300 research guides, we will continue to add the few remaining pages from this section into beta over the coming months.

We carried out extensive user research throughout this project to ensure that users’ needs are at the heart of the new design, including online surveys and one-on-one sessions in London and Bristol. We wanted to bring the design of site up-to-date and to make it usable no matter what you are using, from smartphone to smart TV, so the pages are now responsive to any device. Other key changes include 11 new categories, so users should have a better sense of where to go for the records advice they need, and an access indicator, which shows whether records are available online. To find out more about the redesign process, and to let us know what you think, read our blog post and leave comments.

England’s immigrant records 1330-1550 now online

A new database revealing data of immigration in medieval England, held in the records at The National Archives, has been launched online. England’s Immigrants 1330-1550 is the result of a major Arts and Humanities Research Council funded research project by the University of York in collaboration with the Humanities Research Institute (University of Sheffield) and The National Archives. For the first time the database allows researchers to search over 65,000 immigrants who were resident in England during this period by name, nationality, profession and place of residence. There is more information in a blog post by Dr Jessica Lutkin and Dr Laura Tompkins which explores immigration in more detail.

WO 301/282: Gallipoli Peninsula, 1908.

E 179/155/94: Alien poll tax inquest for Northamptonshire, 15 April 1469, wall studio.
If you would like to get in touch with us, or if you have ideas for inclusion in future issues of this newsletter, email us at research@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk. Please note that we reserve the right to edit articles.