Title: User Advisory Group
Date of Meeting: Tuesday 11th June 2019
Location: The Swan Room, Kew

Attendees:

Staff
SG – Outreach Manager (item 4)
IH – Regional Community Partnerships Manager (item 4)
Valerie Johnson (VJ) – Director, Research & Collections (Chair)
MM – Learning and Outreach Support Officer (item 4)
AV – Personal Assistant (minutes)

Delegates
Sue Adams (SA) – Independent Researchers
Adam Chambers (AC) - Map Room Users
Nadine Chambers (NC) – Student Users
Amelia Clegg (AC) – Student Users
Stephen Daglish (SD) - On line Users
Angela Graham (AG) - County/External Archives
Francis Howcutt (FH) - Family History Societies
Grace Ioppolo (GI) – Academic Users
Sophie Kay (SK) - Diversity and Inclusion
Geoff Monks (GM) – Academic Users
Will Reid (WR) - Diversity and Inclusion
Anne Samson (AS) - On site Personal Interest Users
Camilla von Massenbach (CvM) - Online Family Historians

Apologies
LO – Head of Venue Management and Services
1 Minutes, matters arising and general updates

1.1 The minutes of the 5th March 2019 were approved with changes to the following:

2.1 – Replace final sentence with ‘CvM had used the buddy scheme which she felt was helpful for new members although she didn't make full use of it herself. It was reassuring to know there was someone to call on if needed’.

3.4 – Add ‘and aiming to embrace the range of diverse groups in the UK’.

1.2 Matters arising on 8.2. The segment on George Orwell due to be aired on BBC 1’s ‘The One Show’ on the 12th March was postponed. WR will advise the group of the new date when received.

2 Welcome to New Delegates

2.1 VJ welcomed NC, AC and GI to the group.

3 Tour of the Cold War Exhibition

This item was not minuted.

4. Outreach Programme (SG, IH and MM)

4.1 The team gave a talk on the objectives of their work and recent project work (presentation attached). The team was formed in 2001 and the scope of their activities has expanded since. Their work focuses on the objective of the new strategy, ‘Archives for Everyone’ to be an inclusive archive.

4.2 The team works with a wide range of organisations such as charities, heritage, creative and commercial organisations to build relationships with audiences who may be either unaware of the relevance of, or intimidated by the idea of using archives. The objective in this outreach is to help audience members build their skills and confidence through enriching and pleasurable experiences with archive material.

4.3 Recent work included ‘Stories from the Streets’ a storytelling project run from 2016 to 2017 in conjunction with care home residents in Reading and West London. Residents gave their personal recollections prompted by contemporary street scene photographs dated from 1930 to 1960. This provided participants with an opportunity to contribute to a booklet and to reminisce with like-minded people and family members.

4.4 IH worked with the Education Team on research for the ‘Loyalty and Dissent’ programme which explored material evidencing how Indian soldiers fought for both the Empire in World War 1 (‘Loyalty’) but also for Independence (‘Dissent’). Over 1.4 million Indian soldiers and non-combatants served in the war, including on the Western Front. This has resulted in an educational resource for teachers including five short plays based on the research documents.

4.5 The MM’s work on the 100th anniversary of the 1919 Race Riots (‘Riots, Repatriation, Revenge, Regulation’) led to an exhibition in Liverpool Record Office. The exhibition will be moving to Cardiff shortly. These two cities were most heavily impacted by the unrest and led to the death at Liverpool docks of Charles Wotten, a Bermudian sailor. The research seeks to understand the causes of the riots, their impact and the government response. The team are looking to create educational resources from the materials.
MM has provided a link to the blog about the launch at Liverpool Record Office: [https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/raising-awareness-of-the-1919-race-riots-in-liverpool/](https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/raising-awareness-of-the-1919-race-riots-in-liverpool/)

4.6 CvM asked if the team were able to track the social benefits of their work. SG advised that an evaluation of ‘Stories from the Streets’ was run a year after it ended to understand the challenges, successes and learning from the project. It was intended to undertake an online version but sadly a number of the group had passed on since the project was completed so permissions need to be re-sought (and long term sickness in the team has also delayed plans) but the Outreach team is now working with the Education team to create an online version which will showcase the project on the Education website with the aim of using it to develop literacy objectives for children. It was suggested that the evaluation could be used to share learning points and challenges within the sector, such as considerations for working with groups with mobility, seeing and hearing challenges.

4.7 IH advised that assessment also feeds into Caroline Ottaway-Searle’s work into benchmarking audiences and using evidence based research to gauge a clearer idea of diversity. TNA is partnering with organisations including UCL, Glasgow Museum and the Horniman Museum looking at practices and approaches in cultural heritage and wellbeing. A report will be published in November. The new role of Regional Community Partnerships Manager of which IH is the post holder, aims to reach out to the public and engage in conversations and build up networks and trust with local organisations and communities.

4.8 GI recommended that the team share their work through TNA Twitter feed or sub feed to increase visibility. **Action: SG to follow up on this suggestion.**

4.9 AS asked how ‘Stories on the Street’ work had extended the work of the archive given the subsequent life span of the participants. SG advised that the work had created new experiences for the participants and prompted conversations with relatives on social and family history. One of the homes was located next to a school and links were built between the two with the residents able to share with the children how life used to be for them. AC suggested that the principle of acting for the public good would be sufficient in itself instead of the project being intended solely to grow a new pipeline of users.

4.10 NC thanked the team for the BAME Seafarers event on the 24th January in London which she had attended and found hugely interesting. **Action: NC and GI will forward onto the team a couple of related Twitter feeds which they feel could be of use.** WR commended MM’s contribution working in Liverpool with local archives and community towards the launch of their 1919 exhibition. SA felt there is scope for the team’s work to expand and their support for small archives without the resources to do more makes Outreach’s role invaluable.

5. **Delegate submitted items:**

5.1 **UAG meeting minutes (SK)**
   The group were satisfied with the current format so members will follow up on any individual queries raised directly. It was agreed that action points should be highlighted.

5.2 **Discovery updates (SK)**
   **Actions:** 1. TNA to circulate a link to TNA’s annual report on major cataloguing updates to the collection. 2. TNA will ask the Research team to flag major additions to the catalogue in their newsletter. 3. The Head of Cataloguing to be invited to attend UAG to give the group further information on TNA’s approach.

5.3 **Record copying service (SK)**
   SK commented that she had received positive feedback on the recent changes but users would find it helpful to have digitised multi page images to be sent together as a concatenated file rather
than individually. VJ advised that Document Services are aware of this issue but at present each image is taken and numbered separately. Where there is a large number of images they are generally sent via a download tool that will download all of the images at once. Otherwise the images are too large in terms of memory and if they are linked into a single file it is likely that the user’s email provider will refuse the file because of its size.

5.4 Out of town researchers (SK)
A user has suggested improved awareness is needed of the costs to researchers who travel long distances to TNA, especially where a visit needs to be planned weeks in advance. This arose from a case when pre-ordered documents had been returned to offsite storage in error and were not available on the day. Action: VJ to discuss with the Complaints Officer as we believe this is being dealt with as a formal complaint.

5.5 Charges for author talks (GI)
Tickets to attend talks by authors at TNA are sometimes chargeable despite the authors often selling their work at these occasions. AC suggested that a discount should be made to the cost of the book when purchased at the event to compensate for the cost of the ticket. Action: VJ to follow up with the Events team on this suggestion.

5.6 Access to old versions of user guides (SA)
VJ advised that prior versions of the user guides are available on TNA’s web archive.

6. AOB:

6.1 VJ advised that a campaign is underway to recruit a UAG delegate to represent onsite personal interest users - the closing date is 21st June.

6.2 Next Meeting; 24th September, 12.00 – 14.30

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