



The Nation's Memory in Danger: make your mark on history

It may be why you got into politics in the first place: a chance to change people's lives and make history. But how is history remembered? Often, through the documentary evidence stored and researched in archives. Everything you do as a parliamentarian is recorded and held in an archive for future generations to consider. And yet these very archives are being underfunded to such a degree that they are struggling to make this valuable and unique resource available to the public.

In 2003/4 England's eight publicly funded audiovisual archives, which record a century of English history, collectively received only £256,308 funding in total¹ despite the enormous success of programmes such as *The Lost World of Mitchell and Kenyon*. This is just one example of the chronic under-funding of UK archives addressed in a report published by the National Council on Archives. *Giving Value* highlights the urgent need for further investment in archives if they are to continue to preserve and make accessible the cultural life of the nation.



Fowl play: *There was huge interest when The National Archives recently published a selection of Public Information Films on the Internet* (Picture: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk, Crown copyright)

¹ Source: *Hidden Treasures: the UK Audiovisual Archive Strategic Framework 2004*

Significant evidence shows that archives are of interest to a sizeable part of the population. For example, in 2004 the BBC series *Who Do You Think You Are?*, which traced family histories through archives, attracted 4.7 million viewers per episode. Yet despite such public enthusiasm, archives remain the "poor relation" of the cultural sector. In 2001 the government announced £100 million additional funding for the museum sector². UK archives are yet to receive *any* additional funding despite the recommendation of a 2004 government commissioned report that £12 million is needed to achieve set targets³.

The funding shortfall in archives means that existing problems continue:

In a recent survey conducted by The National Archives, only 58 of 230 archives confirmed that they had any annual acquisition budget at all, and of these only 18 had a fund over £5000. This is particularly concerning given the number of purchases of UK archives made by overseas buyers in recent years.

In the North West of England, 29% of archival holdings are un-catalogued due to under-funding. It would take one professional archivist an estimated 299 years to make this material fully accessible.

There are 2000 archives in the UK but as a result of under-funding only 2% meet the best possible standards for the storage and access of archives⁴. There are many examples of innovative archive projects adding value to the lives of individuals and communities across the UK. Unfortunately, the archive sector needs to grapple with the fact that there will *never* be sufficient funding of 'culture' to make such projects a given.

So what can you do to help? How do you make your mark on history?

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² Source: *Renaissance in the Regions: A new vision for England's museums*

³ Source: *Listening to the Past, Speaking to the Future: The Report of the Archives Task Force, 2004*

⁴ Source: The National Archives

The nation's memory in danger (Cont.)

- See the enclosed copy of the *Giving Value* report
- Contact the archive services in your area and ask for a tour of the facilities
- If you have any queries, please contact the NCA for further information.

In the absence of sufficient all-round funding, *Giving Value* highlights five key areas for future funding:

- Online access to archives
- Engaging new audiences with archives
- Sustainable development
- Interpretation
- Excellence and innovation.

How are archives surviving at present? With one-off project funding, often from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). Over the past decade the HLF has awarded more than £81 million to archives across the UK⁵. This has provided a tremendous boost to the archive sector, but the figure should be seen in the context of more than £1 billion awarded to museums, £458 million to industrial, maritime and transport projects, and £197 million to bio-diversity projects from the Heritage Lottery Fund in the same period. Also, this funding is for projects, not for sustainable core services.

For more information on *Giving Value* please contact Ruth Savage on (020) 8392 5376 ruth.savage@nationalarchives.gov.uk or visit www.ncaonline.org.



Endangered?: *Archives are facing a precarious future without significant new funding (Picture: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk, Crown copyright)*

⁵ All figures are taken from HLF *10 years of Heritage Lottery Funding* policy documents.

John Logan, 12, jailed under the Prevention of Crimes Act.

If you haven't heard of this case, don't worry. John



Logan was sentenced in 1871 and committed to Greenock Prison. His case is one of 65 images and documents in a free resource pack available to Primary School teachers as part of the Archive Awareness Campaign's new competition for Primary Schools.

Picture: National Archives of Scotland

Victorian Voices is a short story competition for 7-11 year olds run by Archive Awareness Campaign this winter. Winners will receive the chance to work with a design expert creating the perfect cover for their story, while their school receives books and Adobe software. The resource pack contains sample lesson plans on short story writing (for literacy) and helpful hints on using the resources in history, art, environmental studies, ICT and citizenship. Find out more by visiting www.victorianvoices.com or www.archiveawareness.com.

What's in a Name?

So Britney Spears called her baby Preston? But if she had wanted a *really* silly name she need have looked no further than Cornwall Record Office, where staff and researchers have compiled a list of over 1000 unusual names found in censuses, and births, deaths and marriage records going back as far as the sixteenth century.

Highlighted for Archive Awareness Campaign, the list includes some real corkers: Boadicea Basher, Fozzitt Bonds, Susan Booze, Truth Bullock, Philadelphia Bunnyface, Charity Chilly, Gentle Fudge, Obedience Ginger and Offspring Gurney. The list also includes some amusing couples. So ladies, if you're worried about having to take your husband's awful name, comfort yourself with some of these:

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What's in a Name? (Cont.)

- In 1636 Nicholas Bone married Priscilla Skin
- In 1711 Charles Swine married Jane Ham
- In 1791 John Mutton married Ann Veale
- In 1802 Richard Dinner married Mary Cook

Renée Jackaman, the Archive Assistant at Cornwall County Record Office, initiated the list after discovering the name Horatio Hornblower in a census entry. She said, "After I came across Horatio, I also found the rest of his family in the Baptist register of Truro. He had siblings named Azubia, Constantia, Jecoliah, Jedidah, Jerusha and Erastus. As my name is rather silly I decided to put them all together in one list. Since it started many people have contributed to the list including customers, family historians, volunteers and other members of staff."

The list shows that archives can be good entertainment as well as educational. Throughout the autumn there are hundreds of events taking place in archives which will demonstrate the same thing. You can go to a "woolly workshop" at Surrey History Centre, find out about the history of your house at Suffolk Record Office or join in a murder mystery night at Louth County Archives. Archive Awareness Campaign is an ongoing effort to raise awareness of archives. To find out what is going on at your local archive visit www.archiveawareness.com.

Remember, Remember the Fifth of November

Terrorism has become a constant menace, a disease that threatens to pervade our country and weaken our morale. Certainly with the current threat of religious extremism, suicide bombers and Al-Qaeda, the issue of organised terror campaigns has never been more topical. How fitting it seems, then, that 2005 marks the 400th anniversary of gunpowder, treason and plot: terrorism, 17th century style.

The 5th of November 1605 has, indeed, become synonymous with treachery and terror. It is the day the biggest planned act of terrorism in our history almost became a reality, the day a plot to assassinate not only the King of England and Scotland, but also a number of prominent bishops, nobles and members of the House of Commons ended in failure. By concealing 36 barrels of gunpowder, in a cellar within the parliament buildings, the conspirators planned to obliterate the

House of Lords at the time of State Opening of Parliament and in doing so annihilate all within its walls.

Who were these plotters and what could possibly drive them to attempt such mass-destruction? The answer lies predominantly with the accession of James VI and I to the English throne in 1603. His failure to exercise more leniency to English Catholics, in spite of his Catholic heritage, led many adherents of the religion to see a 'desperate remedy' as the only possible means in which to end years of repression and persecution. That 'desperate remedy' took the form of the Powder Plot. Its failure subjected those implicated or suspected of involvement to torture by the State, months of imprisonment and after 'trial' without legal representation to hanging, drawing and quartering.

By today's moral and legal standards the treatment of the plotters was undeniably a travesty of the proper legal process, yet the 17th century public, on the whole, embraced the punishment, feeling nothing but 'horror and rage' at the proposed conspiracy. For, to many past and present, terrorising violence of this sort is so abhorrent an act, it entices demand for the perpetrators to be bought to justice by any means necessary. It is perhaps such calls for justice that saw the proposed 90-day detention powers in the Government's Prevention of Terrorism Bill.

Four hundred years on, the Gunpowder conspiracy is renowned as much for its failure as for its mysteries that endure to this day. The National Archives offers you the chance to unravel these mysteries; take a look at the confessions of famed plotter Guy Fawkes on display at their website www.nationalarchives.gov.uk or visit the Parliamentary Archives exhibition at www.gunpowderplot.parliament.uk for a 'definitive introduction to the events of 1605': events which, in conjunction with a number of exhibitions taking place this year throughout the country, ensure that there be 'no reason why Gunpowder Treason Should ever be forgot'.



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Saturday, September 16th, GRAND AERIAL GYMKNHANA

And Military Tournament (see small bills)

Poster advertising the first scheduled air mail service. The service, from Hendon to Windsor, began on 9th September 1911 as part of the celebrations for the coronation of King George V.

Image ©The British Postal Museum & Archive www.postalheritage.org.uk