

Welcome to the Summer 2014 edition of The National Archives' research newsletter. This summer is set to be busy, and we are delighted to welcome our new Chief Executive and Keeper. Jeff James will be re-joining The National Archives in July, and you can read more about his appointment on [page 2](#).

We have a full schedule of events and conferences and look forward to meeting as many colleagues from the academic and archive sectors as possible. The National Archives, Research Libraries UK and Arts Council England, in partnership with The Library of Birmingham and the Cadbury Research Library, University of Birmingham are collaborating on a two day event in October to address collection-based collaboration between archives, museums and academia; find out more on [pages 3 and 4](#). This issue also features a look back at recent successful events such as the Gerald Aylmer Seminar on [page 9](#) and the launch of our First World War 100 commemorations on [page 6](#), which featured a fascinating keynote from Sir Max Hastings.

In previous editions of this newsletter we have featured profiles of records specialist teams in the Advice and Records Knowledge department. The Foreign and Contemporary team tells us more about their work on [page 7 and 8](#).

The National Archives will be undertaking some exciting new projects this summer, as a result of funding successes. 'Transforming Archives' received funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to deliver a range of training and practical archiving skills to trainees across the country, and will run from 2014 to 2017.

The National Archives will also be working with colleagues at the University of Glasgow and Kings College London as part of an AHRC-funded project to analyse Scottish and English medieval charters. You can find out more about these significant documents on [page 10](#).

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this edition.

Victoria Lain

Editor and Research and Academic Liaison  
The Research Team  
**The National Archives**



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# Appointment of Chief Executive and Keeper

The National Archives is pleased to announce that Jeff James has been appointed to the position of Chief Executive and Keeper. The appointment is the result of an open, external recruitment process, managed by the Ministry of Justice and overseen by the Civil Service Commission.

Jeff has considerable senior management experience in the public, private and charity sectors at Board level. He is currently the Deputy Chief Executive at the Chartered Institute for Housing, where he is responsible for leading on strategy development, operational excellence, business performance and change management. Prior to this Jeff was Director of Operations and Services at The National Archives for nearly six years. In this time he was responsible for leading the development and delivery of public services; overseeing The National Archives' estates and assets; managing customer relations and maintaining service excellence.

On accepting the role, Jeff said: 'I already have first hand knowledge of what a fantastic organisation The National Archives is, and I'm very much looking forward to taking up the role of Chief Executive and Keeper in July. It's a great privilege to accept this position and I am joining at a time when there are both challenges and opportunities ahead, but I know that with such a resilient and innovative organisation and dedicated staff this is also a very exciting time to take the helm at The National Archives.'

Jeff will take up post on 29 July. In the interim Clem Brohier, Director of Finance and Corporate Services at The National Archives, will continue as Acting Chief Executive.



▲ Jeff James, the newly appointed Chief Executive and Keeper

# Discovering Collections, Discovering Communities: Forging collection-based collaboration between archives, museums and academia'

## The Library of Birmingham 29 and 30 October 2014

A collaborative conference between The National Archives, Research Libraries UK and Arts Council England, in partnership with The Library of Birmingham and the Cadbury Research Library, University of Birmingham.

This conference follows on from the success and popularity of 'Enhancing Impact, Inspiring Excellence: collaborative approaches between archives and universities' held at The University of Birmingham in September 2013.

This year's conference will explore the 'discoverability' of collections across different formats, institutions and professions. It will investigate the potential collections have for engaging with a range of communities, whether academic, socio-economic, or demographic.

### Conference Brief

The last decade has witnessed the unprecedented development of partnerships and collaborative

working across the heritage and cultural sectors. It has also seen universities and researchers refocus on the social, political and economic 'impact' of research. This has enabled greater opportunities for wider collaborative working between universities, academics and the wider heritage sector.

While teaching and research partnerships are relatively well charted, less is known of how these collaborative efforts can transform our knowledge of collections and their ultimate presentation to wider society. This conference will explore inter-disciplinary, cross-sector approaches to developing and widening access to collections (their 'discoverability') through partnership working.

### Call for Papers for Day 1: 29 October 2014

The organisers invite the submission of 300 word abstracts for 20 minute papers by 01 July 2014. Paper abstracts should be sent to **both Melanie Cheung** (Research Libraries UK) and **Matt Greenhall** (The National Archives).

Speakers are invited to submit papers relating to a wide variety of topics, which explore the following [additional topics are welcome]:

### The process of discovery: 'finding collections, finding communities'

To examine methods of ensuring the discoverability of material as a means of mapping collections. What resources can be used to ensure that collections, even across different institutions and disciplines, are not seen in isolation from one another?

### Collecting: for whose sake?

Why do we acquire new material and how does collecting relate to teaching, research, and corporate priorities of universities and heritage organisations? Have these changed with the new research landscape? How do we ensure that vulnerable collections don't slip through the net?

### 'Out of the strong room and into the street':

Developing collections with communities  
How can partnership working with new and emerging communities redefine the process of collecting, our understanding of collections, and their role within society? These communities can be defined by interest, geography, ethnically, or socio-demographically.

[Continue overleaf ▶](#)

## Demonstrating the impact of collections

How do we measure and subsequently demonstrate the social, cultural and economic impact collections can have?

### 'Uniting the Stuff with the Stories': cross-sector curation in partnership

How can collections be physically combined and presented to wider society whether through joint research projects, exhibitions or events?

### Social media: virtual collecting and the new frontier of discovery?

What are the ways in which new forms of social media can be used to widen access and understanding of collections, wherever they are?

### 'Are we in it together?': developing a national collections strategy

Is there a need for a national collections strategy to ensure the sustainable collecting of material across the HE and wider heritage sector? How can we all work more effectively together?

### Workshop proposals for Day 2: 30 October 2014

Special interest groups are invited to submit proposals for a two-hour workshop or round-table discussion exploring some of the particular technical and logistic challenges of discoverability.

## Conference essential details

**When:** 29 and 30 October 2014

**Where:** Library of Birmingham, Centenary Square, Broad St, Birmingham, West Midlands B1 2ND.

**Format:** this year's conference will be spread across two days, 29 and 30 October. Day one will explore the possibilities and methodologies of collection-based collaboration between archives, museums and universities, and is open to all those working across the heritage, cultural and academic sectors. The day will consist of a series of 20-minute presentations, key note speeches, open discussions, and networking opportunities.

Day two will consist on a series of focused workshops and round-table discussions hosted and delivered by individual interest groups. Workshops will focus upon the technical possibilities of discoverability and cross-collection collaboration and will be tailored to specific sector needs.

**Fees and charges:** There is no fee for this conference although registration is required. Conference delegates are required to fund their travel and accommodation. Refreshments and lunch will be provided on both days courtesy of RLUK. A charge applies to attend the Conference meal and networking event on the evening of 29 October (evening of day one).

# All at Sea: the prize papers as a source for a global microhistory

Monday 6 – Wednesday 8 October 2014,  
The National Archives, Kew

The Prize Papers - ships' papers, including private mail, that were seized and made part of the dossier kept by the British High Court of Admiralty (record series HCA 30 and 32) - are an invaluable source for researching new perspectives on the early modern global world, and a number of scholars have tapped these sources for various questions.

This international conference aims to bring together scholars who have worked on the Prize Papers (or related materials) to discuss their research and projects, and to think about ways of using the source material for future research. The international conference is one of several steps towards establishing a European research network on the Prize Papers. The conference is intended as a forum for sharing research projects and ideas among all attendees.

More details at [nationalarchives.gov.uk/events/all-at-sea-conference.htm](http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/events/all-at-sea-conference.htm)

# Transforming Archives

The National Archives has received a new grant of nearly £1 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) under its **Skills for the Future** programme, which gives people the skills they need for careers in heritage, and opens up heritage to wider audiences.

The grant will enable The National Archives to run a new project, Transforming Archives, offering trainees the opportunity to develop practical archiving skills. Transforming Archives will run from 2014 to 2017, building on the success of our previous scheme, **Opening Up Archives**. The project will run in partnership with the **Archives and Records Association (ARA)** and a network of partners across England who will host work placements at archive and heritage services.

The hosts are:

- Archives+ Manchester Libraries, Information and Archives
- Cheshire Archives and Local Studies
- Gloucestershire Archives
- Hull University Archives, Hull History Centre
- London Metropolitan Archives
- Newsam Library and Archives, Institute of Education
- Norfolk Record Office
- Rambert Dance Company
- St George's Chapel Archives, Windsor
- The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust
- Vivacity: Peterborough Local Studies and Archives
- Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre
- Wigan Archives Service

Trainees will share regular joint training days and a training week at The National Archives. The grant will enable the continuation of The National Archives' work to tackle skills shortages in the wider archives sector and is further evidence of the vitally important role archives play in providing a gateway to our nation's rich and fascinating history. It will also allow us to provide opportunities for people from a diverse range of backgrounds to explore the world of archives, learn about the important work that goes into preserving heritage, and play a significant role in sharing our history with the wider community.

We are extremely pleased to be able to welcome further cohorts of trainees and develop our training provision through this new programme. Transforming Archives will also run in collaboration with a Skills for the Future project developed by the Scottish Council on Archives, **Opening Up Scotland's Archives**.



# First World War 100



On 24 March, The National Archives hosted a special event, bringing together over one hundred key stakeholders involved in First World War Centenary initiatives.

Guests included colleagues from national institutions, government departments and archives as well as military experts, academics, broadcasters, artists and charities. The evening began with a talk by celebrated historian Sir Max Hastings, which was followed by a reception providing guests with a chance to network and view a display of our original documents and a showcase of our centenary programme.

In our role as archive sector lead, it was important for us to provide an opportunity for guests from archives to meet each other and to open dialogue with representatives of other institutions key to First World War centenary activity. For The National Archives, this was an opportunity for us to share details of our exciting five-year programme **First World War 100**, including **Operation War Diary**, our crowd sourcing project delivered in partnership with Imperial War Museums and Zooniverse. This project asks volunteers to tag our newly-digitised collection of First World War Unit War Diaries so that we can better interpret and understand the wealth of information they contain.

This was a highly successful event and dialogue was opened between many organisations. The National Archives is following up on discussions begun on the evening and will make the most of opportunities to work with the institutions who attended.

## War and Peace: diplomacy, espionage and the First World War

**Saturday 28 June 2014**

**9:30 to 16:30**

This one-day conference will explore the use of diplomacy, propaganda and intelligence throughout the build-up to war, and its influence on the peace negotiations and the construction of the new world order. The conference will appeal to all those interested in intelligence, diplomacy and military studies. Tickets cost £40, with discounts for students and Friends of The National Archives. **Book now** to guarantee your place!



▲ WORK 21/74 (10): Victory parade, London, July 1919

# Meet the Foreign and Contemporary team

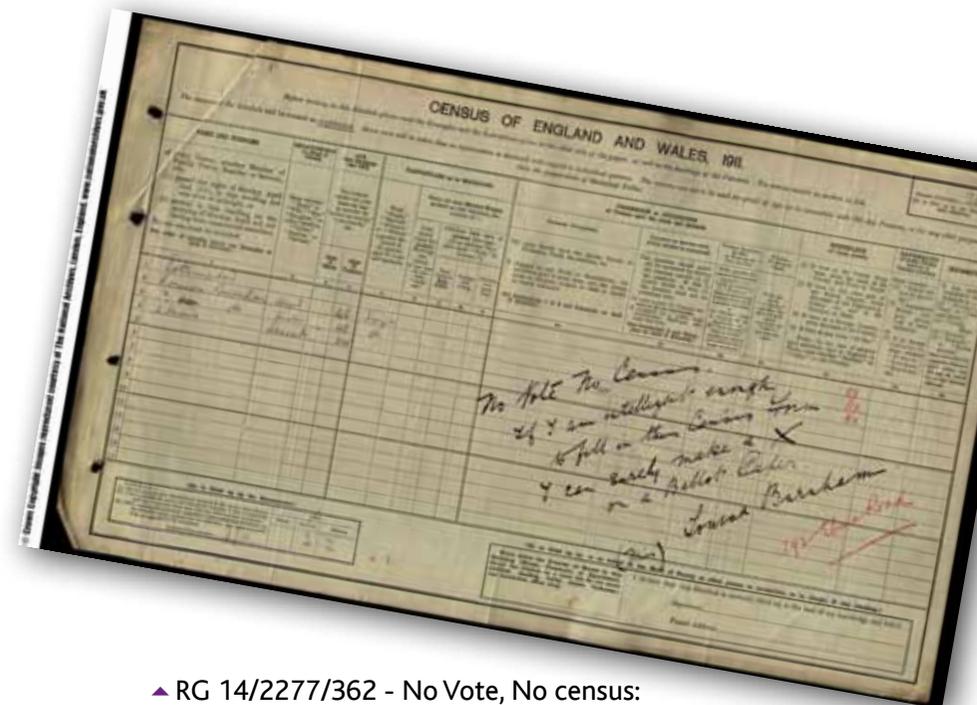
The Foreign and Contemporary team at The National Archives currently consists of nine staff whose specialisms cover a wide range of subjects from 1782 to the present day:

- **Dr Juliette Desplat** (19th-20th centuries Middle East history with a particular focus on diplomacy and on the construction of national identities / Cold War history with a particular focus on diplomacy and on nuclear issues)
- **James Cronan** (South West Europe countries and their colonial possessions, and British possessions in the Mediterranean / Treaties, pacts and agreements)
- **Simon Demissie** (British history since 1945 with a particular focus on The National Archives' digital records, including the UK Government Web Archive and datasets from the National Digital Archive of Datasets)
- **Dr Richard Dunley** (Pre-WW1 British policy)
- **Mark Dunton** (Post-1945 British political, social and economic history with a particular focus on anti-inflation strategies in the 1970s and on the Prime Minister's role and functions)
- **Dr Dan Gilfoyle** (South and East Africa / history of science and medicine)
- **Sally Hault** (Colonial Office Blue Books of Statistics / Ionian Islands)
- **Keith Mitchell** (Overseas Births, marriages and deaths/Intelligence gathering 1796-1815)
- **Jenni Orme** (Diverse histories, e.g.: LGBT history, Black and ethnic minority history, women's history and disability history)

All of them have a broad knowledge of diplomatic, colonial and contemporary record areas and of records of The National Archives in general.

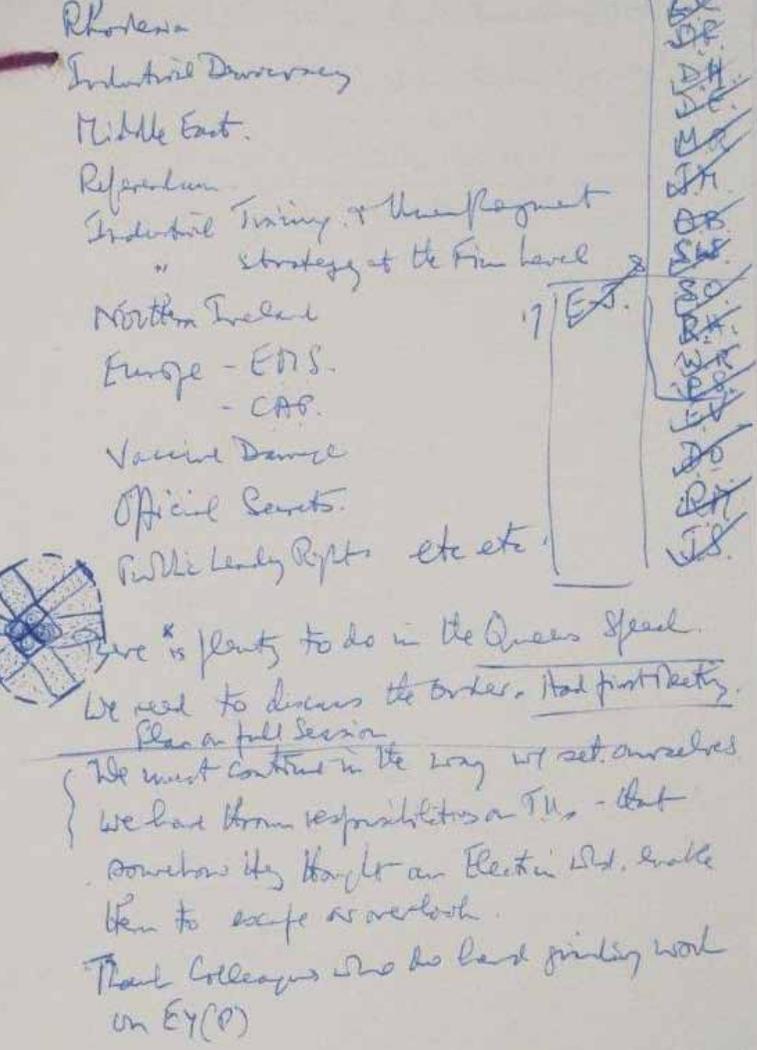


▲ FO 94/999 - Treaty: London Convention on the safety of life at sea, 1914



▲ RG 14/2277/362 - No Vote, No census: 1911 census return overwritten by a suffragette

[Continue overleaf ▶](#)



▶ PREM 16/1667 - Marginalia: PM James Callaghan's notes on policy initiatives for the term ahead, Autumn 1978

▶ Server Room at The National Archives: the digital repository will comprise up to five terabytes (5TB) of data, which compares to 50km of paper records

Over the last year, First World War related work has mobilised the entire team, with three different projects marking the centenary. The 'Empire at War' will result in an interactive map of the British Empire explaining how the Empire was affected by the Great War and contributed to the war effort, showcasing our collections in a new and different way. 'The Road to War' will provide users with a timeline highlighting the long and rather tortuous road that led to the war from the 1839 Treaty of London to the Assassination of Archduke Franz-Ferdinand. The **War and Peace: Diplomacy, Espionage and the First World War** Conference, which will be held at The National Archives on 28 June 2014, will explore the use of diplomacy, propaganda and intelligence throughout the build-up to war, and its influence on the peace negotiations and the construction of the new world order.

The Foreign and Contemporary team also takes the lead when it comes to new releases. This year, the releases of 1984 CAB and PREM files, KV files and 1982 FCO files have been successfully managed.



# Gerald Aylmer Seminar 2014 - The Global Archive

## Professor Clare Anderson University of Leicester

In recent years, there has been a turn toward the global across the humanities and social sciences, including in the discipline of History. Global history has been taken to mean many things, and can encompass world, transnational, postcolonial and connected and comparative approaches to the study of the past. This year's Gerald Aylmer seminar saw the Institute of Historical Research, the Royal Historical Society, The National Archives and the University of Leicester partner to explore issues around this shift and the use of the global archive. The event took place on Friday 28 February 2014, at Senate House in London and brought together an audience of archivists, curators, early career researchers and university faculty to discuss these significant issues.

Professor Miles Taylor, Director of the Institute of Historical Research, welcomed delegates. The conference then opened with a keynote lecture from the Acting Chief Executive and Keeper at The National Archives, Clem Brohier. He introduced the work of Gerald Aylmer, who was longstanding member and chair of the Historical Manuscripts Commission. Clem then provided a fascinating look at using global archival resources to trace his family history of migration, using documents from The National Archives.

The first panel included academics and archivists from the University of Cambridge, the Royal Commonwealth Society, Bank of England and Royal Geographical Society and discussed the challenges of writing, exhibiting and curating global histories. The second panel addressed writing global histories



▲ Acting Chief Executive and Keeper, Clem Brohier introduces the conference and discusses Operation War Diary

using UK archives and featured colleagues from The National Archives and the Universities of Warwick and Cambridge. The third panel included viewpoints from experts at the British Museum, British Library and University College London, who discussed collections in global histories beyond documents. The day ended with a roundtable to address questions, and included colleagues from the Founders and Survivors project at the University of Melbourne.

Discussions centered on what the shift to global means for archivists, curators and historians in terms of the presentation, organisation and use of textual, material and visual collections. The diversity of the historical community was well represented, and we learned much about how historians are using British collections – including photographs, objects and documents - to trace global histories of circulation and connection. One of the strongest themes to emerge was the need for the formation of research partnerships between academic and non-academic historians. Professor Peter Mandler, President of the Royal Historical Society, closed the meeting, expressing his appreciation of the event, and his thanks to the presenters and delegates.

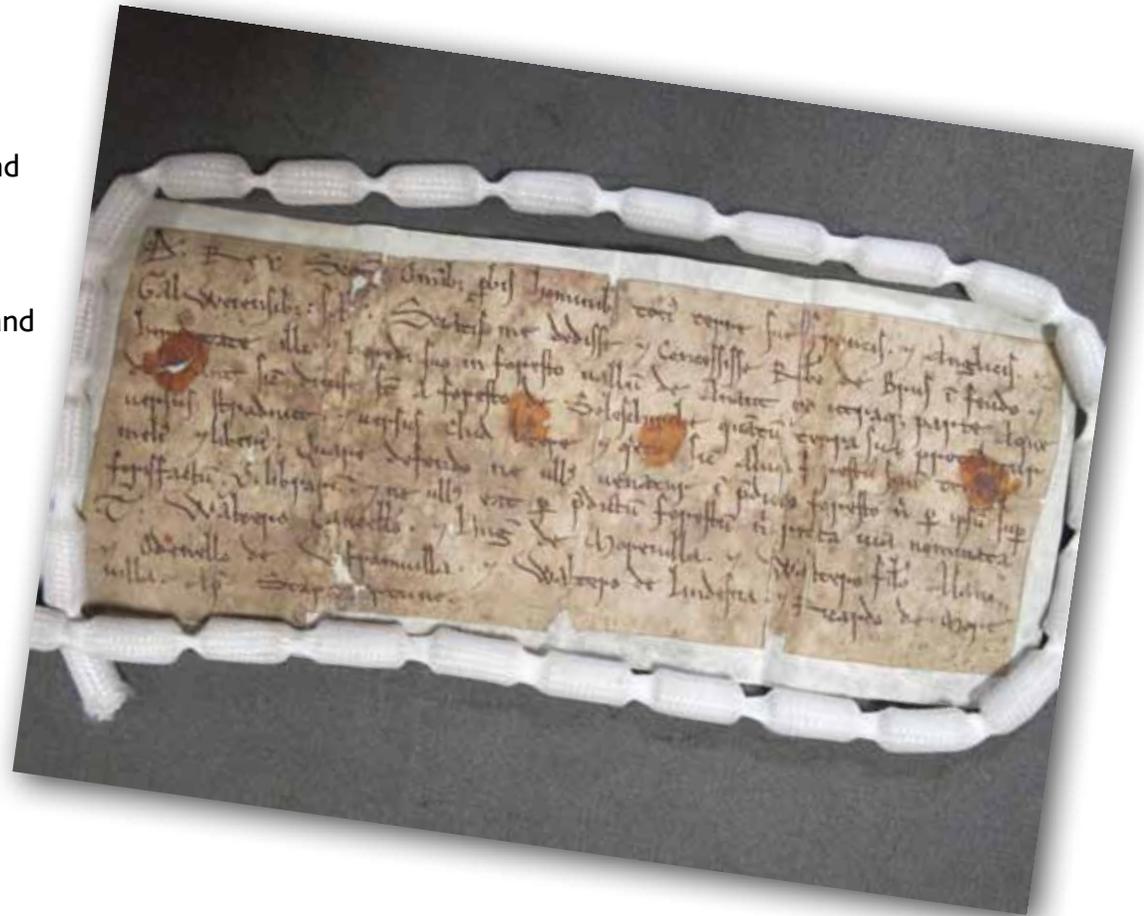
Videos and podcasts of the event can be found at: [sas.ac.uk/support-research/events/videos-and-podcasts/cat/history](https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/sas.ac.uk/support-research/events/videos-and-podcasts/cat/history)

# Funding Success for Medieval Charters Research

The National Archives has supported a successful funding bid to the Arts and Humanities Research Council to research the emergence of medieval government. The project, entitled 'Models of Authority: Scottish charters and the emergence of government 1100-1250', will be led by Professor Dauvit Broun at Glasgow University, and will draw on expertise from colleagues at Kings College London and Cambridge University. Using Scotland as a case study, the project will analyse forms of charter writing to provide insights and new perspectives on the development of government from 1100-1250.

The project will use charters from a number of archives, including several charters held at The National Archives, and will use new technologies to investigate their forms and the relationships between them. Charters were produced centrally by royal government, and locally by greater and lesser nobles and by both ecclesiastical and lay institutions. Similarities and differences between the forms that the charters took will help the research team understand how these different groups influenced each other, and to what extent royal government acted as a model.

An exhibition will be held at The National Archives in 2017 and will feature reproductions of charters and interpretation material to help non-specialist audiences understand the importance of charters and what they can tell us about medieval government. This will be accompanied by an exhibition of original documents in the Keeper's Gallery.



- ▲ DL 2578: a grant of David, King of Scots, to Robert de Brus (DL 25/78); one of the charters that will be analysed by the project

# Big Ideas talks series

The Big Ideas talks series provides briefings on pioneering ideas coming out of - or related to - The National Archives' research programme. Covering themes of innovation, creativity and excellence, each 'Big Idea' highlights aspects of innovative research which has the potential to provide the knowledge, ideas and expertise to be transferred into innovative practice and delivery.

Presentations from both internal and external researchers have thus far focused on subjects as diverse as: 'Big Data' methodologies; computer modelling for collection management; collaboration in research and practice; how to make colour, pattern and texture 'searchable' within catalogues; and public history and archival engagement.

The talks are usually held on the first Monday of each month and are open to the public. The presentations are also made available to a wider audience through podcasts in our [Archives Media Player](#).

## Programme 2014

### 2 June 2014

Material culture, maritime law and trade: High Court of Admiralty Records – Creating European identities; creating a pan-European research collaboration  
Caroline Kimbell, Head of Licensing, The National Archives

### 7 July 2014

Mapping the Statute Book: Applying Big Data methodologies to UK legislation  
John Sheridan, Head of Legislation Services, The National Archives

### 4 August 2014

Understanding patterns of behaviour for users of public records  
Matthew Pearce, Standards Manager, The National Archives

### 1 September 2014 TBC

### 6 October 2014

What is the value of culture?  
Prof. Geoffrey Crossick, Director of AHRC Cultural Value Project and Distinguished Professor of the Humanities School of Advanced Study, University of London

### 3 November 2014

Time-wise visualisations of historic data  
Dr. Stephen Boyd-Davis, Research Leader, School of Design, Royal College of Art

### 1 December 2014

Ethics and Digitisation  
Helen Wakeley, Archivist, the Wellcome Library

The programme and presentation titles subject to amendment.

Please email [research@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:research@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk) for more information or to book your place.

# Tackling Dust at The National Archives

## Dr Helen Wilson and Amy Sampson

Dust – it's everywhere! It's scattered across our homes, public transport, our place of work and even the repositories where we store the priceless records at The National Archives. But how much of a problem is dust, and should we be doing more to protect our collection? In October 2013, the Collection Care department began a dust project to answer these questions and to potentially seek ways to improve how we look after our records.

So what is dust? And how much does The National Archives have? Dust is made up of particles originating from the immediate environment. It can include textile fibres from clothes, hair and skin cells, fragments of building material, and airborne pollutants.

We are concerned about dust because it can permanently damage and disfigure records and can accelerate other forms of degradation, for example, by providing food sources for mould and pests and increasing the risk of chemical changes to records due to dust trapping moisture on the surface. To reduce the likelihood of harm to the collection we ensure that, where possible, all records are boxed and repositories are cleaned regularly. But could we be doing more?

During this project we are monitoring dust levels in multiple locations in two document repositories using glass slides to collect samples. We will determine how quickly dust gathers on our records and, in collaboration with English Heritage, we will analyse the samples to determine the types of dust particles present. We are also investigating how easily dust can transfer from the outside of a document storage box to its contents and will be testing different cleaning methods to see if current practises can be improved.

Between now and April 2015, we will carry out experiments and develop a series of recommendations based on the evidence acquired. This will give The National Archives a fuller understanding of the implications of dust and will help to identify further areas of research.

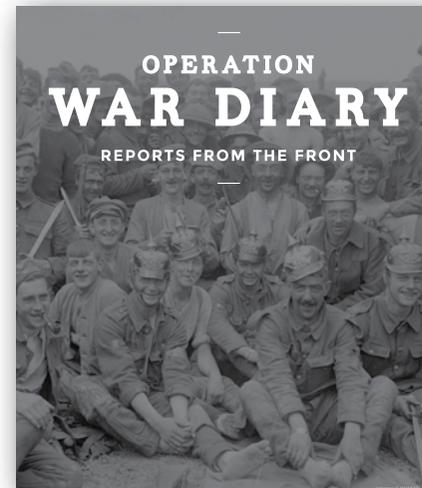
# Operation War Diary - Best of the Web Award

**Operation War Diary** - a key project in our First World War 100 programme - won an award at **Museums and the Web**, a major annual conference for museums and technology. The conference took place in the United States, where the project won in the research/collections online category.

Since the launch of the project, over 10,000 people across the globe have volunteered to tag names, places and other details in our **First World War unit diaries**. With over 200 diaries already tagged and verified, this innovative crowdsourcing project goes one step further than traditional transcription by using the data to digitally map and analyse patterns and trends in the unit war diaries, offering new perspectives on the war.

**Operation War Diary** is a collaboration between The National Archives, Imperial War Museums and Zooniverse, and is part of **First World War 100**, our centenary programme of events and digitisation releases. This new digital platform has been created to guide people through the vast collection of historic records, letters, wills, maps, photographs, illustrations and artworks held by The National Archives.

Volunteers can take part in Operation War Diary at [www.operationwardiary.org](http://www.operationwardiary.org)



# Collaborative Doctoral Partnership Studentships 2015-2016

CDPs were formed by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) in 2012 to increase the research capacity of major cultural institutions such as The National Archives. The scheme allows cultural institutions to collaborate with Higher Education Institutions to offer funded three-year PhD studentships. Under the scheme, cultural institutions choose the research subject areas, so that the partnerships contribute towards the delivery of their work, objectives and priorities.

The 12 organisations and consortia of organisations awarded CDPs will be looking to allocate a total of 55 AHRC-funded studentships to start in the 2015/2016 academic year. The Thames Consortium, comprising The National Archives, The National Maritime Museum and The National Portrait Gallery are pleased to be offering six CDP studentships this year and would welcome applications and expressions of interest from university partners.

For general information about AHRC CDPs, please see [funding opportunities](#) and [AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership consortium](#). For specific enquiries regarding potential collaborations with the individual Thames Consortium partners, information about what each organisation is looking for, and how the competitions will run under this scheme, please contact:

- Research, The National Archives: [research@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:research@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk)
- Nigel Rigby, The National Maritime Museum: [NRigby@nmm.ac.uk](mailto:NRigby@nmm.ac.uk)
- Peter Funnell, The National Portrait Gallery: [pfunnell@npg.org.uk](mailto:pfunnell@npg.org.uk)

## The National Archives' CDP Research Priorities for 2015-16 are:

### Historical

- The mechanics of the central government machine (13th-17th centuries)
- Land ownership, transfer and inheritance in the medieval and early modern periods
- Common law, politics and power in medieval and early modern England and Wales

- Early modern letter writing, literature and record keeping
- Developments in early modern science, technology, art and material culture
- Legacies of Empire
- British Foreign Policy in the Middle East in the 19th and 20th centuries
- Transatlantic relations during the Cold War
- Popular radicalism in the 18th and 19th centuries
- Attitudes to vagrancy and poverty in the 19th century
- Surgeons at sea: Royal Navy Medical officers' journals
- The social impact of the First World War

### Heritage Science

- Sustainable stewardship: targeting wider collection management issues in order to provide solutions for sustainable stewardship of The National Archive's collections and exploring the potential of modeling and technology to provide evidence for decision-making
- Managing material change: for example, understanding materials, degradation processes and the relationship of materials to their environments, to enable The National Archives to predict the long-term stability of its holdings

### Digital

- Challenges in identifying and managing sensitive historical digital records
- Challenges in identifying and linking individuals across multiple series of digital records
- Archival digital collections as historical big data: challenges in understanding, exploring and visualising large digital collections
- Challenges in documenting and managing the context, provenance and integrity of the historical digital record during digital transfer from creating bodies to archives

**Deadline for applications is 28 November 2014.** For more information visit [nationalarchives.gov.uk/jobs/collaborative-doctoral-partnerships.htm](http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/jobs/collaborative-doctoral-partnerships.htm)

# New research role to support archives sector



**In February 2014 the Archives Sector Development department at The National Archives appointed Dr Thomas White as its first Research Manager. Tom speaks to Victoria about his ambitions for the new role.**

**What is your new role and why was it created?**

My role faces out to the archives sector, particularly to local government and university archives to research – and commission research into – archives'

digital services and online audiences. This includes forming links with national bodies such as Research Libraries UK to gather evidence and resources. As attendance at archive search rooms declines across the UK, and access to digitised material online continues to rise, my role is to produce an evidence-based response to help archives respond effectively to the changing landscape of archive audiences. I am currently developing a research tool to capture the range of services offered by archives across the local government sector.

**What did you do prior to joining The National Archives?**

My background is in academia and the public sector. From 2007-11, I completed an AHRC-funded PhD on the social and cultural history of albinism and albino identities in the West. The following year I worked as a team leader at London 2012, based at Wembley, before taking up a place on the Local Government Association's **fast stream for local government programme**. I undertook three six-month placements across Cambridgeshire County

Council, leading projects in Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Economy Transport and Environment. The highlight was designing a new domestic violence performance framework for the County while in secondment with Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

**What attracted you to the role?**

I enjoy the varied and collaborative nature of the job. I have been given a broad remit to horizon scan, stay on top of the latest developments in audience engagement and digital technologies, and to foster relationships with knowledgeable professionals across the cultural heritage sector. My work into the present state and future of local government has proven useful to colleagues in the Engagement Team, who deal directly with authorities across the country to support and improve archive services.

**How have you found working at The National Archives so far?**

Colleagues are friendly, approachable, and always willing to share new ideas. I have enjoyed the opportunity to get out into the sector to see a range of archives in public, private and higher education settings.

**What do you want to achieve in the role?**

At present, there is a dearth of concrete research explaining what services archives provide and what is happening to audiences both online and offline across the sector. I hope to fill that gap and produce guidance and policy papers to steer the sector on to the right course. I also hope to bring fresh ideas to help archives develop new ways of working within the broader context of massive cutbacks to resources.

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\*\*](mailto:research@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk). Please note that we reserve the right to edit articles.

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