**London Archives Partnership**

Practitioners Meeting

Wednesday September 24th

London Metropolitan Archives

9.30am - 12.30pm

**NOTES AND ACTIONS**

**Attendees: London Councils, TNA, City of London, Brent, Hackney, Camden, Wandsworth, Greenwich, Tower Hamlets, Kingston, Hillingdon, Barking and Dagenham, Lambeth, Waltham Forest, Hounslow, Haringey, Bromley, Bexley, Westminster, Camden**

**Apologies: Southwark, Barnet, Croydon, Lewisham, Sutton**

1. Introduction and project progress Sue Mckenzie
* Progress against all current projects
* Now have website hosted by London Councils <http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/policylobbying/culturetourismand2012/cultureandsport/londonarchivespartnership.htm>
* Being seen as an entity – approached by Film London about possible partnership
* Sue M and Ted R presented to the ARA conference in August and received positive feedback and interest about how the partnership will progress.
1. AIM25 <http://www.aim25.ac.uk> Geoff Browell

Aim25 now has 150 partners, most recently the College of Arms and the Salvation Army and would like to extend an invitation to all the London Boroughs. Have been going for 14 years and get half a million hits a month. We would need to look for funding – could be HLF, HE, or a contribution from boroughs to enable transfer of the technical data and a peripatetic archivist to travel between boroughs.

Possible future developments for Aim25:

* Digital Asset Management – collaborative DAM cloud – all members could have a slice. The more members involved the cheaper it would be. Could link to e-commerce and picture libraries/portals.
* Detailed catalogues. Commercial companies such as Axiell tend to have slow development arcs. There is an opportunity to develop Aim25 to have the capability for more detailed, multileveled catalogues. Can design it ourselves and transform the display capabilities. (Discussion included maps, timelines, responsive to new media e.g. smart phones and tablets, internet etc)
* Digital preservation. Will look at Data protection issues, workaday v. preservation copies, integrated storage solutions. Will cost less in partnership.

Can look for money together for phase 1 and plan a multi stage project.

**ACTION: LAP Board to meet with Geoff B and think about the best way forward re: funding and timeline**

Q&A: Difficult part is the data!

LMA has used increased hits to demonstrate widening access

Could possibly add crowdsourcing / volunteer element?

Unique angle – access to stories – records are about people’s lives

Possible bid to a university R&D fund?

Front end will be open source. Cross sector partnership working a strength. We can make a bigger and better offer together.

1. Other project updates Tina Morton
* **Shared image portal**: core 12 boroughs with another 3-4 interested. Boroughs at various stages with contract negotiations. Hope to at least have individual sites up by November. Max Communications are working on the shared portal, date for launch to be confirmed.
* **FFW project**: LMA is leading this proposed project to digitise and make available online archives relating to the First World War. LMA are leading a bid for HLF grant funding and if successful, co-ordinate work to make FWW material from London’s archive services available through a website and app. Following meetings with potential partners, LMA is currently drafting the application for HLF funding and has met with HLF to discuss the details. 22 boroughs have expressed an interested in being part of the project.
* **Shared catalogue: Aim25** – see above
* **London Councils: 50th anniversary of the London boroughs**. All will have received email from Souraya A via Tina M asking for images for the online photo narratives about borough’s roles, responsibilities and activities over the past 50 years. The deadline has been extended. Please email 50thanniversary@londoncouncils.gov.uk

Images have been received from 9 boroughs so far: LBBD, Bromley, Ealing, Enfield, Lambeth, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth, and Westminster.

There are promises of images to come for a further 5 boroughs: Hackney, Hillingdon, Redbridge, Richmond, City and Sutton.

So that leaves 19 boroughs that are yet to get involved. Do let Souraya know if you are able to contribute (or not)! She particularly needs more recent images and those covering inner London.

Post meeting rush – images have now also been received from Camden, Richmond, Hounslow, Croydon, Hackney, Brent, and Kingston so 13 outstanding now.

1. Workshop on procurement Simon Mckeon

Libraries have done this for some time e.g. London Libraries Consortium who procure stock, LMS, specialist stock, IT, transport together.

Why procure jointly? Savings, demonstrating service is looking at best value, buying power and economies of scale, pulling together expertise and knowledge.

Practical exercise looking at large and small scale possibilities:

Long list:

Offsite storage (possibly regionally)

IT

Conservation services

Conservation materials /preservation equipment

Conservators/cataloguers (joint post?)

Membership – Ancestry / Find My Past

Piggy backing on LMA contracts – key purchaser use their procurement?

Training

Possibility to work with museums and/or libraries

Microreader maintenance and purchase

Digitisation (especially larger/fragile items)

Marketing/printing

Research services

Online sales books, merchandise etc.

Disaster management supplies/contacts etc.

Remote hosting Axiell etc.

Apprenticeships

For economies of scale need a lead authority – not just driving costs down but only need one procurement process?

TNA licencing team can advise on joint contracts

MOST POPULAR:

* Microreader contracts – who pays what? What machines do they have?

**ACTION: Survey monkey to be send round by Tahlia Coombes**

* Preservation equipment (not boxes)

**ACTION: generate a menu of commonly used items**

**Ask services to estimate the quantity they order in a year. Simon McKeon**

* Offsite Storage/transport – possible links to library (LLC)
* Disaster management

Ruth M has done some work on this.

**ACTION: Investigate London Heritage Disaster Group**

**Southwark have been working on this. Sue McK and board to speak to Pam Usher.**

* British Newspaper Library/Bright solid

Can we find out the programme for digitisation of local newspapers? Could be a potential projects for LAP?

* Ancestry/FMP membership

**ACTION: To be investigated by Sue McM**

1. Benchmarking our services Tahlia Coombs

Hard to collect meaningful data. Are we measuring what matters? We are being asked to deliver more with less and need to show the value of our services.

National Surveys:

CIPFA: good for statistics and as a benchmarking tool but hard to compare data as very often not comparing like with like especially with financial information which can be very complex.

PSQG: user survey, most service take part but don’t do any other user surveying. Good for service development but doesn’t help with non-users.

**ACTION: LAP to consider whether a London wide approach could be taken to surveying non users and to equalities data collection.**

PSQG asks one question (see below) about the social value of archive services but is it the right question?

How far do archives contribute to society by:

* Providing opportunities for learning?
* Preserving our culture and heritage?
* Strengthening family and community identity?
* Supporting administrative and business activity?
* Supporting the rights of citizens?

Practical exercise looking at the benefits of the archive service to individuals.

* Is a better question did you learning anything today? /Did you learn anything about your local area today?
* Social value if more intangible e.g. community experience will be outside of the searchroom over a long period of time
* Social value = why do we do what we do
* PSQG questions are quite dry, could be worded better. Do you feel more part of your community/local area?
* Equality of access/universal access important – links to citizenship, sense of place and personal identity

Ideas on social value:

* People using material adds value
* What would be the democratic deficit if there wasn’t an archive/local studies service?
* Democratic accountability, access and impact on local people – holding local politicians to account
* Linking local services to national e.g. Ofsted inspections
* Main stakeholder is the local council – business argument internally staff time offset against answering FOI enquiries
* IMPACT on wider world Internal (council) & External (researchers)
* Surveying internally amongst internal council users could be helpful and justify internal market for services. E.g. how meet key council objectives – planning applications, electoral registers, birth certificates,. Impact of real lives and economic value
* Why do people come back – makes them feel better and increases quality of life.

**Possible actions:**

**Internally look into having a link to archives/local studies on councils democratic services webpages.**

**Use ALCL to raise issues if not being heard**

1. Roundup and next steps Ted Rogers

Have looked at some strategic and quick win solutions involving professional values and philosophy!

Need to turn into action – Aim25 project looks particularly exciting and we will definitely meet with Geoff B to thrash out the details, look at fundraising and the practical circumstances. Detailed catalogues on Aim25 could extend our research reach and save money.

The procurement workshop has generated more ideas than we can take forward at the moment but have all been captured.

The discussions on the value of archive services have been interesting, arming us for the battles ahead and helping us to reflect on what we are really here.

**We would like to continue with these practitioners meetings. Please email ideas for future sessions to Tina.** **tinamorton@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk**

We now have 28 borough heads of service signed up to the concept of the London Archive Partnership. It is easy to feel lost in a bigger authority but having the Heads of Service signed up and happy with the projects should help with resistance.

Souraya A is helping us to write a briefing on the London Archive Partnership for elected members which we will share once it is ready.