



## Reaching out to new audiences

Amateur and professional historians, and schools, have an obvious interest in our collections.

But we also realise the huge potential appeal of our collections to everybody. Through creativity and innovation, we seek to adapt our documents and the stories they tell to engage the widest possible audience.

Here we draw together this work into three strands:

- Marketing initiatives
- Attracting new target audiences
- Online resources for lifelong learners

*Celebrating the sound of the 1950s at our Open Day in Kew in September 2002*

## Marketing initiatives

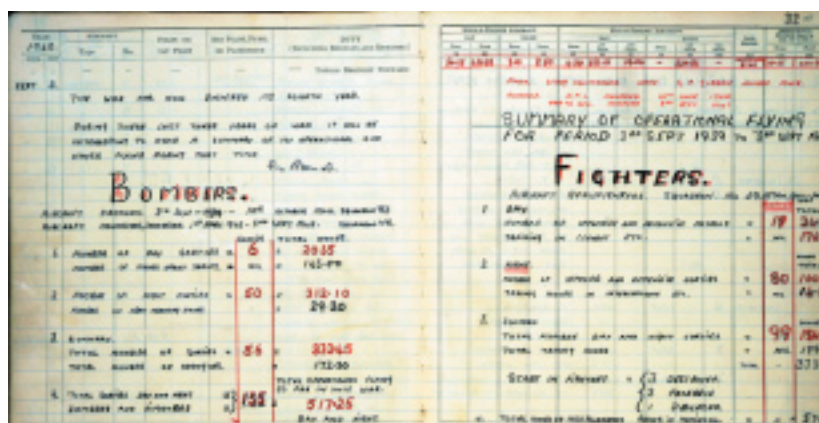
### New email newsletter

In October 2002 we launched our first e-mail newsletter. Each month we send the latest news on document releases, events, publications, new online services and special offers and competitions to a rapidly growing list of subscribers (25,000 as at March 2003).

Our newsletter, which is also on the home page of the new National Archives website, [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk), has now become one of the most popular history e-mail newsletters.

Marks and Spencer, Past Times, The History Channel, the Royal Horticultural Society and Imperial War Museum Duxford have provided some highly attractive prizes - one of the newsletter's top attractions.





Wing Commander Guy Gibson's flying log book, TNA: PRO AIR 4-37

inspiration for the exhibition's narrative – childhood memories and words of wisdom that the group wished to have recorded for the benefit of future generations.

The resulting exhibition was opened by David Lammy MP at a special event at Bruce Castle Museum in October 2002, attended by over 100 members of the local community.

The exhibition created much interest from schools and the general public and secured extensive media coverage in the Black press and on BBC Radio 4.

During the same period, two of our exhibitions, *From Strangers to Citizens* and *An Indian Album*, were loaned to Leicester Archives and Hounslow Library for display. At the Family Records Centre, Paul Crooks gave an informal reading from his book *Ancestors* and discussed aspects of his own research into his Jamaican and African ancestry.

In January 2003, *Memories from the Islands* re-opened at Kew and received over 4,700 visitors during its six week run.

*"A very emotional trip in history. Something every West Indian should view"*

*"I learned more about you and your islands than in six visits to the Caribbean!"*

*"Memories told full of friendship and warmth. Thank you."*

Some of the many visitor comments from our *Memories from the Islands* exhibition.

## E-marketing

In the spring of 2003 we initiated a marketing campaign, which is still in progress, to attract new users to the website.

Through partnerships with the History Channel, BBC History, Channel 4 and the Imperial War Museum, a "Dambusters" microsite was put together. It features original sources and the chance, courtesy of Dragon Helicopters and Ringwood Hall Hotel, Chesterfield, to win tickets to "fly like the dambusters" themselves.

## MORI research

In February and March we ran focus groups with MORI to find out how we could effectively tailor our marketing to reach new audiences. Focus group participants were chosen for their interest in history and the fact they had never used the PRO before.

The results were very positive. Once people understood what we held, and the fact it was accessible to them, they were determined to come back and find out more. The results of the research will inform our future efforts to attract new audiences.

## Attracting new target audiences

### Taking archives into the community

A key factor in our outreach activity for 2002 was the development of new partnerships across the museums, archives and libraries sectors. This resulted in the display of our travelling exhibitions, the co-hosting of our events and development of projects that take our holdings into the heart of new communities.

The main outreach project for 2002 was the community-led exhibition **Memories from the Islands**, a partnership project between our interpretation team, the on-line digitisation project *Moving Here* (see page 40), Bruce Castle Museum in Haringey, London and representatives of Haringey's Afro-Caribbean community from the University of the Third Age.

Members from this group worked over a six month period to select PRO photographs depicting scenes of Caribbean life taken in the 1950s and 1960s. The chosen images then provided the

Other events were timed to coincide with the exhibition's display at Kew including a costumed event celebrating the life of the 19th century nurse Mary Seacole. Many of the Haringey participants and their friends attended the performance and stayed to view documents and maps relating to the Caribbean and search the *Moving Here* website for relatives' passenger lists. The group revisited the exhibition and saw displayed personal items relating to the Caribbean that they had loaned for the exhibition's duration. The event was very successful in strengthening existing friendships and paves the way for future projects.

## Events

This year we attracted many new visitors to Kew with an exciting, popular programme of events.

Our costumed events, talks and Open Day spanned a huge range of history and records. These are some of the highlights:

- A series of free costumed events on Saturdays brought a wide range of historical characters and records to life from a lady preparing for a **Victorian Royal Wedding**, to a **First World War Tommy** with a moving, funny account of life at the front and a **13th Century Knight** explaining the rituals of medieval warfare and armour. Other costumed events included **Mary Seacole**, a **Notable Nurse** and **Samuel Pepys**, **The Bawdy Civil Servant**.
- Our lectures were also very well attended and received.



Dr David Starkey, who gave a lecture at Kew

Dr David Starkey gave a vivid, hugely entertaining lecture on **The Six Wives of Henry VIII** which culminated in a visit to our Museum to look at documents from the period. **Professor David Stafford's** fascinating and intriguing account of the **Berlin Spy Tunnel** also related closely to research he had done in the archives here. **Alison Weir's** excellent lecture on Elizabeth I posed the provocative question, **The Virgin Queen?** and was part of our programme of events in 2003 celebrating the life and commemorating the death of Elizabeth.

- There were 1,500 visitors to the **Open Day**, which was a chance to **Revisit the 1950s**. Visitors young and old enjoyed

authentic swing music and joined in with 1950s dancing. They found out about life in the 1950s through lectures, films and document displays covering subjects from the Festival of Britain to the 1950s kitchen. Over half the visitors were new to Kew, many of them brought here by our association with London String of Pearls Golden Jubilee Festival, and their feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

- We also hosted a highly successful sell-out performance by the **Kew Sinfonia**. For our Christmas extravaganza, we held a beautiful Victorian-style **Magic Lantern Show**. This included music and mulled wine, and a display of historic lantern slides in the Museum by our Photographic Conservator.
- Our monthly **Behind-the-Scenes Tours** remained popular with the public throughout the year and are now consistently fully booked.

Many of our events throughout the year were over-subscribed – a testament to the growing popularity of our What's On programme and proof that we



Dancing 1950s style at our Open Day in Kew in September

are meeting our goal – to promote the records and reach new audiences.

We have also made important advances in improving services for existing and new audiences. A custom-built database has allowed us to keep in touch with our ever-expanding audience and respond to their enquiries, suggestions and bookings more efficiently.

**"Splendid talk, full of humour and information..."**

**"A wonderful evening"**

**"First Class"**

Visitors' comments on Alison Weir's lecture about Elizabeth I, *The Virgin Queen*?

**"I was mightily impressed by the atmosphere. I hope to visit further events. The PRO's efforts to reach out to the public are excellent"**

**"Better every year"**

**"Enjoyed first visit, can't wait to come again"**

**"Thank you to all for a most informative and enjoyable day. Also all the hard work involved in the presentations and activities"**

**"A very good day out and extremely interesting"**

From the Open Day, *Revisiting the 1950s* visitor feedback forms

**"I did not know what to expect, but it was brilliant."**

Comment by a visitor to our Mary Seacole, *A Notable Nurse* costumed event

**"I was transported back in time, a wonderful evening."**

Comment by a visitor to our Samuel Pepys, *The Bawdy Civil Servant* event

**"Thank you for sending my What's On 2003. It is great being on your mailing list – what a super programme of events you offer"**

From a letter to our Interpretation Team

## Online resources for lifelong learners

Funding from the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) has enabled us to develop:

- a series of online exhibitions on *Pathways to the Past*, the resource for lifelong learners on our website at [www.pro.gov.uk/pathways/](http://www.pro.gov.uk/pathways/)
- *Moving Here*, a web-based resource for lifelong learning on the theme of migration to England.

### Pathways to the Past

In the past year we have substantially added to the content of Pathways to the Past and provided new resources in a variety of areas of interest.

Three of the new web exhibitions have benefited from substantial NOF funding. *The First World War: Sources for History* gives online access to documents illustrating all aspects of the war, from the collections of the Imperial War Museum, our project partner, as well as The National Archives. Its launch was celebrated early in November (together with the completion of the "Burnt Documents" project – see page 19). *The Sunday Times* called the web exhibition "a multi-layered

marvel... as gripping as it is rewarding to explore".

*Citizenship: A History of People, Rights and Power* was a joint project with the House of Lords Record Office, and makes available extracts of some of the major documents in the history of Britain, from Domesday Book to the Beveridge Report.

The third NOF-funded exhibition, launched in June 2003, will be *Black Presence: Sources for Asian and Black History in Britain, 1550-1850*. This presents a little-known history and complements the National Archives-led Moving Here website, which deals with a more modern period.



In 2002/3 we also launched "Trafalgar to Korea: 5 British Battles, 1805-1951", which gives an insight into events in military history over a century and a half. Pathways to the Past now provides a solid online basis for research for family, local and military historians, students and those with a general interest in history.