
Executive Summary

What are archives?

Archives are the raw material of history. They show how the lives of individuals, organisations and communities have been shaped by past events. The archival record provides the direct evidence of what people did and what they thought in the past, without which we would have a poorer understanding of the present and weaker foundations for the future. Archives are unique.

We use archives in our everyday lives to:

- Prove who we are
- Trace our ancestors
- Develop our collective memory
- Learn about things in the past
- Hold organisations to account
- Build efficient businesses
- Work effectively in the digital age

Why are archives important to the South East?

We believe that archives already contribute in many ways to the social, cultural and economic life of the people of the South East but need development and action. Our vision is:

“To develop archives to be at the heart of the social, cultural and economic life of the people of the South East.”

Archives are important because they support:

Communities

- Archives enable people to understand their personal identity, to build community cohesion and to exercise their democratic rights. 77% of people visiting archives in the South East are researching their family history, building a historical picture of who they are and where they have come from.

- Archives can be used as tools to develop community identity, engagement and cohesion. The social impact upon groups not just using archives but, in fact, creating and interpreting their community histories can generate wider benefits in terms of active citizenship, through volunteering, and local community regeneration.

- As the official record, archives allow citizens to have access to information about decisions made on their behalf. As the Hutton enquiry has shown, archives are key to public accountability.
Learning and Skills

- Nearly nine out of ten visitors to archives describe their visit as a learning experience. 11.5% of visitors state that the experience has improved their workplace, job seeking or IT skills. The process of engagement with archives can improve people’s basic skills, especially in terms of literacy, numeracy and IT.

- Archives make a valuable contribution to enriching the national curriculum, not just supporting history but also citizenship, literacy, science and Information and Communications Technology.

- Family history research is one of the top five most popular reasons for Internet searches world-wide. The numbers of people learning through archives online far outstrip physical visits. Online access to archives in the South East has, to date, enabled people to learn at their leisure through over 425,000 searches for material in three years.

- Archives sustain research in every branch of knowledge whether the arts, humanities or sciences. Their use as a resource for multi-disciplinary research remains as important as ever in supporting excellence at the most advanced levels.

Economy

- 10% of archive users’ main reason for visiting archives is in connection with their employment. Records management, especially in the electronic environment, is central to supporting business efficiency through information and knowledge management.

- Family history generates significant spend in the local economies of the South East. For 87% of users, visiting the archive was their main purpose for visiting an area, and while there 29% ate out locally and 36% used local shops and services. The spending power of overseas visitors adds significantly to this effect.

- Interpretation of archives provides the backbone for the history market. They generate commercial spin offs in terms of book sales, genealogical sites and licensed TV programmes. Drawing on archives as source material, 5,517 history titles were produced in 2001 (5% of all new titles). The BBC produced 559 history programmes in 2003 with an average audience of 3 million people for each programme.

- Archive services can act as a partner in economic regeneration schemes. Major new buildings and redevelopments of services can act as a spur to inward investment and offer opportunities for employment and training.

Creativity

- The cultural and creative industries use archives as a source of inspiration. Writers, designers, architects and filmmakers commonly delve into archives to fire their imaginations and, in turn, they bring archives to new audiences in cinemas, arts venues, and in the media. In a similar fashion, archives can stimulate creative development amongst vulnerable groups, improving self-expression, pride and confidence, particularly through reminiscence therapy.
Profile of archives in the South East

There are some 375 archive collections and services in the South East, second only to London in number. Some of these are publicly-funded, providing services to the people of the South East, while others are collections in the care of their parent bodies and may not provide access to the general public. 20% of the nation’s archivists are employed in the South East.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collections</th>
<th>Services</th>
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<tr>
<td>Many important collections are held by museums and libraries, military, religious, charitable organisations. World class collections include the archives of:</td>
<td>14 local authority record offices – the largest number of any region in England – representing the core of public service provision.</td>
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<td>• ruling monarchs since Queen Victoria</td>
<td>Two major film and sound archives based in Brighton and Winchester.</td>
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<td>• eight British Prime Ministers</td>
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<td>• the cradle of British Christianity at Canterbury and Winchester</td>
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<td>• national bodies like BBC written archives</td>
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<td>• Oxford University</td>
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Users of archives in the South East

Local authority archive services attract over 104,000 on site visits per year. This physical use, has in recent years, been overtaken by an explosion in online access to records. There have been over 425,000 searches of South East material through the Access to Archive online gateway.

In terms of profile, motivation and experience:

- 18.5% visitors are making a first visit to an archive each year
- 63.8% of visitors are over 55, 95.1% are White British and 7.3% of visitors consider themselves to have a visual disability, 8.5% a hearing disability, 5.6% another physical disability, and 1.5% a learning disability
- 75% of visitors use the Internet in their daily lives and are researching their family history

What external factors will effect the archive development in the next three years?

National
- The Government will maintain its commitment to education and skills; sustainable communities; and regional agendas
- The gap will grow between the wealthy and the deprived, increasing the “digital divide”
- The profile of the UK population will change and grow older
- E-government will radically change the way organisations deliver services
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998 will keep records management centre stage in delivering information to citizens
- Archives Task Force report’s new vision for archives from 2004-7 of “an archival heritage unlocked and made open to all citizens in a way that engages and empowers them to use archives for personal, community, social and economic benefit.”

Regional
- The South East receives the lowest level of public investment of English regions
- The most successful regional economy in the UK but with pockets of deprivation
- The population is forecast to grow, adding 884,000 people by 2021
- Amongst its priorities, The South East Plan focuses on new housing and regeneration schemes

What are the key issues for archives in the South East and how are we going to tackle them?

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<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<td>Access and Inclusion</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Online use is exploding but access outside local authorities is poor</td>
<td>- Develop accessible and inclusive collections and services that people can engage with in ways that are suitable to their needs</td>
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<td>- Public sector archives need to demonstrate their contribution to social inclusion, community identity and cohesion.</td>
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<td>- The legal and evidential nature of archives is not well championed regionally</td>
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**Issues**

**Strategic Marketing**
- A need to promote the value of market research, including that relevant to online services, to those working in archives.
- Archives attract new users but their profile is only marginally more diverse than current users. The secondary use of archives (e.g. via TV) needs developing.

**Collections**
- Urgent provision is needed to secure the preservation of electronic records.
- Archives suffer from shortcomings in accommodation and there remain very significant preservation needs and cataloguing backlogs.

**E-Society**
- The creation of a Gateway to Archives, building on the existing collaboration that has forged the National Archives Network is a major driver for development.
- Archives contribution to the E-Government target for online services by 2005 and development of the knowledge economy is not recognised.

**Advocacy and Leadership**
- With 375 institutions, the South East has the largest archive domain of any region, outside London. Their number and diversity presents advocacy challenges.
- Advocating the contribution of archives and records management to the social, cultural and economic development of the region is hampered by lack of evidence.

**Action**

- Encourage and support archives to respond to the identified needs of current, intending and new users on a sustainable long-term basis.
- Ensure that the development, preservation, management and documentation of collections to recognised standards underpins the needs of current and future users.
- Support learning, community capacity-building and an inclusive society by developing online information and services and knowledge management networks.
- Secure recognition and support for the cultural, educational, social and economic contribution of archives to the region's development.


**Issues Learning**

- The value of archives as an education resource is not well recognised. Archives are in a poor position to benefit from the resources available from Government for education programmes.

- Users perceive the use of archives as a learning, rather than a cultural, experience.

**Objectives**

- Encourage archives to develop a broad range of learning experiences and opportunities that inspire, inform and stimulate research and personal development using collections.

**Research and Development**

- Archives need better data to demonstrate their contribution to the South East.

**Standards**

- A need to know which archives in the South East meet standards.

- Putting archives online requires use of cataloguing and metadata standards.

**Workforce Development**

- One fifth of the nation’s archivists are employed in the South East but most archives are run by unqualified staff with other skill sets.

- The skills base for archivists and records managers is broadening into new areas.

**Objectives**

- Ensure that there is evidence to inform the development of archives and to demonstrate their impact on people’s lives.

- Develop and implement standards and performance measures to underpin high quality services and provide evidence for advocacy purposes.

- Develop a motivated, appropriately skilled, diverse and outward-looking archival workforce capable of delivering high quality services to all users.

**SEMLAC Contacts**

This document is a summary of ‘Future Archives South East’, SEMLAC’s regional archive development strategy for the South East of England available on the SEMLAC website [www.semlac.org.uk](http://www.semlac.org.uk) or by contacting Caroline Eade, t. 01962 858834 e. carolinee@semlac.org.uk

Any comments or for further information please contact: Sophia Mirchandani, Head of Development and Funding, SEMLAC, t. 01962 858839 e. sophiam@semlac.org.uk

July 2004

*Future Archives South East: A strategy for archive development in the South East 2004-2007*
## Task Plan

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Action Plan Ref</th>
<th>Tasks for 2004-05</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Partners</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access and Inclusion</td>
<td>Disseminate guidance on implementation of Freedom of Information legislation and provide training seminars</td>
<td>SEMLAC</td>
<td>Archives Policy Advisory Group (APAG), The National Archives (TNA)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lobby and seek funding for pilot Community Liaison Officer to support the development of community archives</td>
<td>SEMLAC</td>
<td>APAG, National Council on Archives (NCA), Heritage Lottery Fund, community groups</td>
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<td>Strategic Marketing</td>
<td>Encourage the uptake of SEMLAC’s marketing advisory materials by disseminating it to every archive and providing training seminar</td>
<td>SEMLAC</td>
<td>Archives, Society of Archivists South East (SOA SE)</td>
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<td>Ensure that the needs of archives are reflected in the SEMLAC regional marketing needs assessment</td>
<td>Archives</td>
<td>SEMLAC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collections</td>
<td>Reflect the needs of archives in the development of SEMLAC’s Stewardship Strategy</td>
<td>SEMLAC</td>
<td>Archives, SOA SE</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Develop 10 good practice cataloguing case studies and make available via web.</td>
<td>APAG</td>
<td>SEMLAC, TNA</td>
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<td>e-Society</td>
<td>Learn from and extend the best practice developing from Broadband pilots in archives</td>
<td>SEMLAC</td>
<td>Archives, Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Deliver existing e-content projects and broker regional partnerships for the Gateway to UK archives online</td>
<td>Archives Consortia</td>
<td>SEMLAC, TNA, MLA</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Promote role of electronic records management in business efficiency by producing advocacy material for promotion to SEEDA and Enterprise Hubs</td>
<td>SEMLAC</td>
<td>APAG, TNA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advocacy and Leadership</td>
<td>Develop a single voice for archives in the South East</td>
<td>APAG</td>
<td>Archives, SEMLAC, SOA SE</td>
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<td>Investigate options for regional archival support including developing communication networks</td>
<td>SEMLAC</td>
<td>APAG, Archives, SOA SE</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Start to ensure implementation of the Archives Task Force through regional working group</td>
<td>APAG</td>
<td>Archives, SEMLAC, SOA SE</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Produce and start to implement Action Plan for the South East Audiovisual Archive Strategy</td>
<td>SEMLAC</td>
<td>South East Audiovisual Archives Forum, NCA, Film Council</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Publish advocacy statements demonstrating archives contribution to social, learning, economic and cultural agendas</td>
<td>APAG</td>
<td>SEMLAC, SOA SE, South East of England Cultural Consortium, MLA</td>
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<td><strong>Learning</strong></td>
<td>Disseminate <em>Inspiring Learning Framework</em>(^1) to all archives in the region. Provide support and advice to ensure at least 20 archives per annum use the Framework</td>
<td>SEMLAC</td>
<td>APAG, Archives, Society of Archivists Education and Learning Group</td>
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<td>Map existing basic skills work in archives and secure funding for basic skills programmes in archives</td>
<td>SEMLAC</td>
<td>APAG, Local Learning and Skills Councils, Archives</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Research and Development</strong></td>
<td>Complete categorisation exercise for all archives in the South East to fill gap in knowledge</td>
<td>SEMLAC</td>
<td>APAG, Archives, MLA</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Standards</strong></td>
<td>Support archives to implement <em>The National Archives Framework of Standards</em></td>
<td>SEMLAC</td>
<td>APAG, Archives, TNA</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Disseminate the Designation Scheme and provide support and advice on applying.</td>
<td>SEMLAC</td>
<td>APAG, Archives, MLA</td>
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<td><strong>Workforce Development</strong></td>
<td>Clarify the extent of the workforce in the South East archives through regional mapping study</td>
<td>SEMLAC</td>
<td>APAG, Archives</td>
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