

Archives West Midlands

A prospectus for future sustainability



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Foreword

The West Midlands is fortunate to have an amazingly rich and diverse range of archives. Local authorities, universities, cathedrals and independent organisations and businesses ensure that these unique records of the region are made accessible today and kept in care for the future.

Alongside that core purpose, archives in the region are making significant contributions in areas such as skills and employability, community engagement, health and wellbeing, and tourism.

To sustain the excellent work being done in archives, especially in these times of financial constraint, it is important that archives work together collaboratively like never before. The possibilities of coming together to share knowledge and expertise are far greater than if archive services worked in isolation. As a result of this, archive services across the West Midlands are forming a new organisation that will help to promote the valuable contribution that archives make to people's lives and present opportunities to work in collaboration to achieve more than a single archive could do on its own.

Archivists in the region have, for many years, been working together to share ideas and good practice. They believe that the time has come to formalise that arrangement in a new organisation that will be independent, strong and have the potential to raise support and funding for collaborative work.

The National Archives is delighted to have supported the foundation of Archives West Midlands. Both organisations look forward to working together to promote collaboration between archives across the region and to further the exciting work outlined in this prospectus.

Janene Cox OBE

Commissioner for Tourism and the Cultural County
Staffordshire County Council

Jeff James

Chief Executive and Keeper
The National Archives



Archives today – a mirror on the past and a window to the future

Archives are the original documents that tell the stories of people and places and events that have shaped the world we live in today.

Archives enrich our understanding of the present through an appreciation of the past

Archives connect us to our families, our homes and the places where we live and work

Archives foster and promote a sense of place and community

The archive services in the West Midlands are committed to making their unique and precious documents - written and digital, images, maps, film and other media – accessible to everyone.

Archives continue to collect documents, in all forms, that will tell the story of today for people in the future

Archives play an important role in communities and organisations to support and develop:

- Learning and skills
- Health and wellbeing
- Economic prosperity
- Creativity

To make all this possible, archive services ensure that significant records, whether in traditional or digital format are:

- Actively collected and described
- Preserved for future generations
- Accessible and set in a context that helps us understand them
- Able to fulfil their valuable role in providing evidence for legal and other official purposes





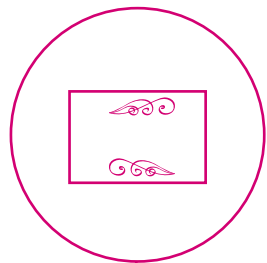
Three organisations in the West Midlands were awarded Accredited Archive Services: Media Archive for Central England (MACE), Warwickshire County Record Office and Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service.



Back to paper

Coventry History Centre, with the Herbert's learning team, has been working with a group of young people identified as being addicted to social media. A tour of the archive store enabled them to see traditional forms of communication over a 600 year period, including letters from Anne Boleyn and

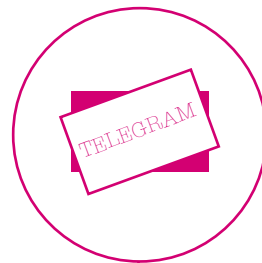
Queen Elizabeth I. Seeing actual telegrams, letters, mourning cards and faxes impressed the tech-savvy young people and sparked discussions about authenticity and the importance of preserving things that might at first seem ephemeral.



1400



1600



1800



2000



2015

Over **500** people worked as volunteers in our archives, giving over **42,000** hours of time to support our work throughout the West Midlands for 2014–2015.



Working in partnership to save Black Country photographs

The Express & Star, an evening newspaper based in Wolverhampton has a private photographic collection dating from 1909 and estimated at over 1 million images. The Heritage Lottery Fund is supporting the partnership of Wolverhampton City

Archives, the Express & Star and the University of Wolverhampton to digitise and preserve this collection and make it freely accessible to the public. Volunteers, schools and community groups are helping to bring the collection to life.



Photograph courtesy of Express and Star



Photograph courtesy of Express and Star

Archives West Midlands – a new way of working together

Archives West Midlands is a new independent organisation that exists to advance education for the public benefit by supporting the collection, storage, preservation and access to archival materials relating to the West Midlands region.

The West Midlands is fortunate to have a rich and diverse range of archives, held by over 160 organisations. These include the local authority archives and record offices, universities, cathedrals, business archives and many specialist collections. The organisations with the largest collections and numbers of visitors have come together as Archives West Midlands.

Archives West Midlands aims to complement and enhance the work of its constituent services by enabling and supporting work that is best achieved collectively.

In particular, it aims to use the collective identity of AWM to:

- Promote the importance of archives as vital regional assets
- Encourage the highest standards of archive work
- Encourage investment in digital preservation and digital access to collections and services
- Develop and support regional (or sub-regional) projects
- Raise funds for regional and sub-regional work and projects

Archives West Midlands welcomes members from all archives and archive services in the region who share these aims.



MOORE HAIR DRESSER.

MOORE,
HAIR DRESSER,
(AND)
FANCY REPOSITORY.

PERFUMER.



The personal stories of children **evacuated** to Staffordshire during the **Second World War** were captured in the **Children on the Move project**. Staffordshire Archives now have a unique record of people speaking about events, places and people of **75** years ago; stories that would otherwise have been lost to us.

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FOR POSTAGE STAMPS
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SERVICE INSTRUCTIONS

Charge Counter Number
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Chief Constable,
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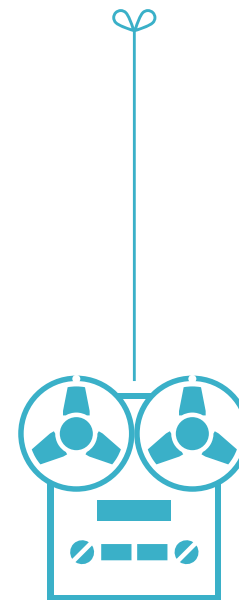
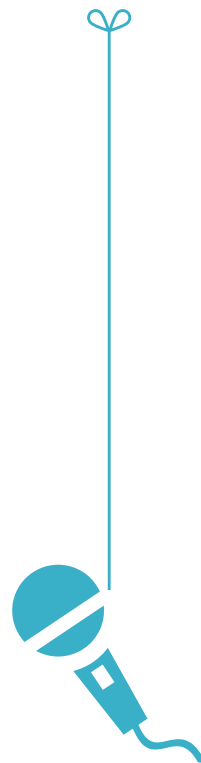
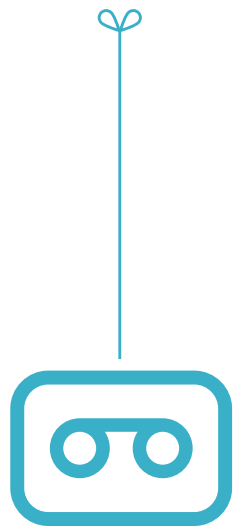
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= HOP EXERCISE SPECIAL SCHEME AS A WHOLE BEING PUT
INTO OPERATION ZERO HOUR MIDNIGHT ON 23/24 SEPT
ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT TO REGIONAL COMMISSIONER HOP
EXERCISE = SECRETARY HOME SECURITY
C NIGHT STOKE-ON-TRENT 29551) s form, and, if possible, the envelope.

Capturing memories before they are lost

Staffordshire County Council and Stoke City Council worked together to create *Children on the Move*, a participative reminiscence project aimed to encourage people to record their memories of evacuation in the Second World War. The oral history

recordings and transcripts of the personal stories from over 90 former evacuees were made available on a dedicated website along with learning resources for schools. They are now preserved as part of the permanent collection and the materials created

for the project continue to be used in the teaching modules at Worcester University. The project was supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.



Volunteering

Volunteering for Shropshire's Heritage was a three-year project (2012-2015) supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. It involved over 400 volunteers giving over 10,000 days of their time to researching, cataloguing, conserving, digitising and promoting Shropshire's archives and museum collections. Three apprentices were given work experience and achieved NVQ qualifications. Volunteers helped to establish two new local history centres and mount exhibitions in a range of locations. Many of the people involved continue to volunteer their time for the archive and museum services.

'I get a buzz from seeing something on the web and thinking, I helped put that there! I believe it is very important to make history available to all and, in a small way, I am helping to make this happen.'

'It's a big thrill being given the responsibility of caring for four hundred year old documents. Also, I'm very grateful to be learning new skills and ways of working.'

Friends

2016 will mark 400 years since the death of William Shakespeare. To mark this special anniversary, staff of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and a small band of 10 volunteers – many of whom have not worked with archives before – are listing, recataloguing, and digitising collections in preparation for the launch of the new integrated online catalogue. This will enable the rich collections and prized possessions held in Stratford-upon-Avon to be even more accessible to the huge global audience for material relating to Shakespeare.

Most archive services have a friends' group. The Friends of Dudley Archives and Local History Service (DALHS) was formed in 2001 and now has 97 members. In addition to their regular programmes of talks and coffee mornings, the Friends provide a buddying system to introduce new users to the searchroom and assist them in using genealogy sources online. The Friends played a vital role in the relocation of the archive in February 2014, giving a colossal number of hours for repackaging and labelling the collection in preparation for the move. The Friends continue to



assist in packaging and labelling new accessions, scanning photographs, supporting the service in bids for funding, keeping abreast of potential new deposits in the community and supporting the Local History Day. They are now an integral and vibrant part of the service.



Building on success and working together

Archives West Midlands is committed to building on the excellent work already happening in archives throughout the region. We are committed to doing this in collaboration, working together to increase the impact of what individual services do and achieving this in the most efficient ways.

Why working together is important

The capacity of individual archives to play an active part in collaborative projects is severely limited. Even the bigger services are struggling to meet demand and respond fully to the opportunities presented by digital technologies and audience development. A collaborative response to the challenges and opportunities will create a collective strategy that is much better placed to meet the increasingly complex demands of existing and potential users and strengthen the position of archives services. Working as a regional partnership, the services will be in a stronger position to seek funding from national agencies for collaborative projects.

Priorities for collaboration

The following areas have been identified as the aspects of our work that will bring most benefit to our users and help to raise awareness of the services to new audiences.

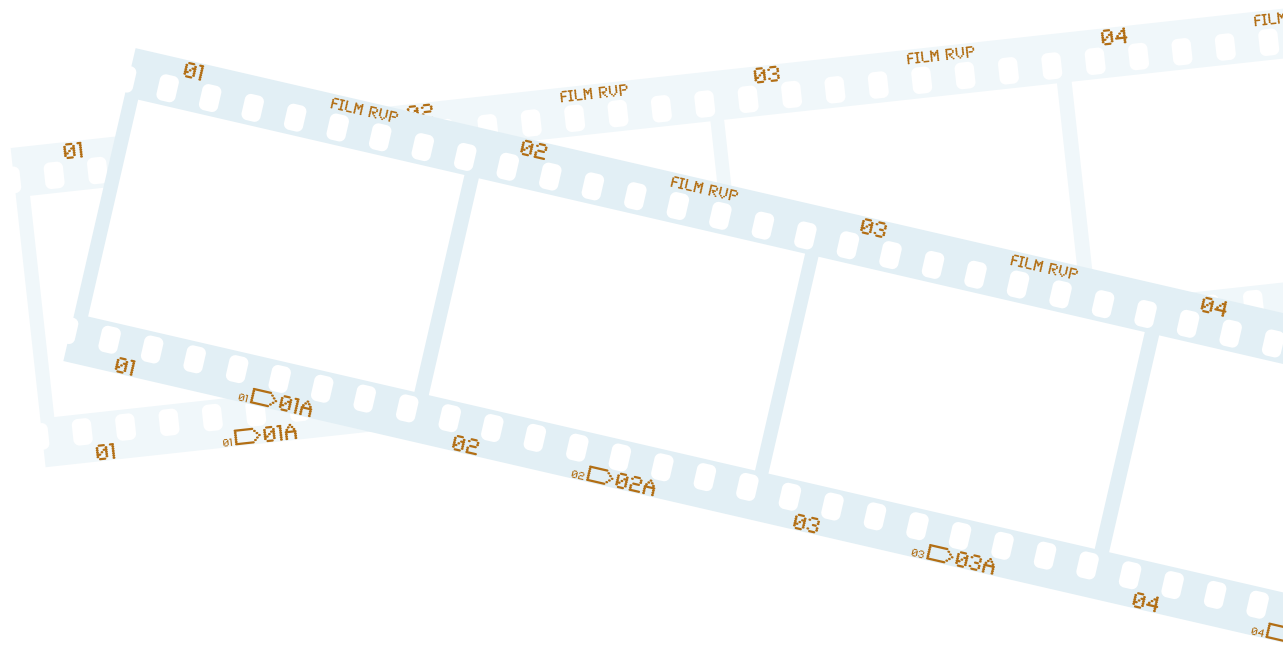
- Volunteers
- Quality Standards and Accreditation
- Digital Access, Preservation and Engagement
- Community Engagement



Working with community groups

Full Circle, a Heritage Lottery Funded project managed by the Media Archive for Central England (MACE) supported 69 local history societies, community groups and other organisations to

find, identify and use film for the benefit of the community. The community groups uncovered 486 hours of film and tape. MACE digitised 209 collections, totalling 2,406 reels and 330,600 feet!

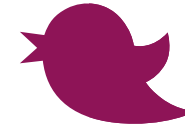


Ben, a young man with learning disabilities, gained a work experience placement at the Warwickshire County Record Office.

“I really love the Log Books and Vehicle Surrender Cards and they’re the two things that I am really good at doing.”



Archives app for mobiles and tablets



The Library of Birmingham's fun mobile app, designed by Birmingham-based studio Substrakt, focusses on introducing its collections to new audiences by engaging with digital technology and social media and the way it is used by people to interact with their environment.

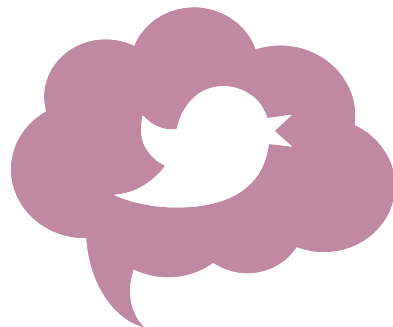
The Dozens are themed visual collections of 12 surprises, curiosities and hidden gems from the collections, while the Trails are sights and stories mapped across the city providing illustrated tours that lead you around Birmingham.

Dozens include "The Butcher, The Baker, The Candlestick Maker", an exploration of the trade card collection, "The REP: Drama Queens" features the leading ladies, costumiers, writers and designers, who have played their part in making the REP one of the country's foremost producing theatres, and "A Spy's Eye on Newly Catalogued Archives", showcases newly available collections.

Follow one of our illustrated Trails that reflect Birmingham's contribution to anti-slavery, suffrage movements with the 'Birmingham Anti-Slavery Trail' and 'The right to vote Trail', or 'Birmingham on six pence a day' which focusses on what it was like to live as one of the poorest inhabitants of one of the British Empire's greatest cities.

Find out about the city of today and discover your own connections to Birmingham past and present!

"This app serves fun and visual introductions to the library's vast collections of manuscripts, maps, books and artefacts." www.theguardian.com.



Volunteers

Over 500 people already volunteer their time and skills to support our work.

- Volunteers make a valuable contribution to archives and bring a wide range of talents and experience
- Volunteering can be a way for people to increase their skills, gain work experience or remain active during retirement
- Volunteers can help archives relate to community groups where there is little or no engagement at the moment
- Volunteers deserve to be properly supported and appreciated
- The recruitment, training and management of volunteers requires staff resource and skills

Archive services in West Midlands already work effectively with many volunteers on a wide range of activities. We will build on this and work together to:

- Increase the number of volunteers and engage with a more diverse range of volunteers
- Improve the volunteer experience and demonstrate our appreciation of their work
- Provide appropriate training and support and,

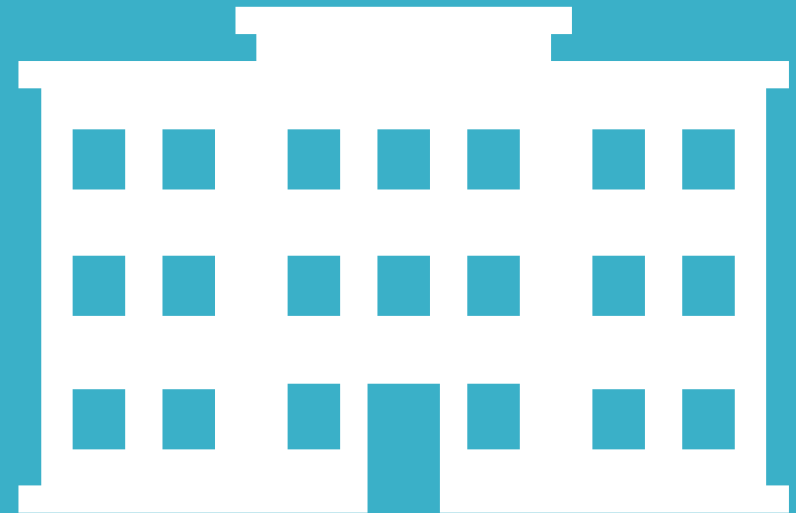
We will do this by creating and developing:

- A new Archives West Midlands volunteering strategy and good practice guide (including recruitment, training, support, management and recognition)
- An Archives West Midlands Volunteer scheme that recognises and rewards volunteers and demonstrates how they are part of a regional network
- A regional approach to training and support of archive volunteers





The new Herefordshire Archive and Records Centre opened, adding to recent major new buildings in Birmingham, Dudley and Worcestershire.



Researching Shakespeare for a Wildlife Audio Trail

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust (SBT) is working with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust to enable groups of young people to create an audio trail around Welcombe Hills and Clopton Park near Stratford-upon-Avon, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The young people have chosen three Shakespeare centred themes, each focusing on his links to the natural landscape. They will use original materials in the SBT archives including

Warwickshire maps and natural history books from the 16th and 17th centuries, deeds, poems, illustrated plays, and production photographs. Special research workshops in the archives will provide inspiration and ideas for the audio recordings that will give users of the Trail new insights to the connections between history, literature and the natural environment.

Shakespeare online catalogue for 400th anniversary

2016 will mark 400 years since the death of William Shakespeare. To mark this special anniversary, staff of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and a small band of 10 volunteers – many of whom have not worked with archives before – are listing, recataloguing, and digitising collections in preparation for the launch of the new integrated online catalogue. This will enable the rich collections and prized possessions held in Stratford-upon-Avon to be even more accessible to the huge global audience for material relating to Shakespeare.



Quality Standards and Accreditation

Archives Service Accreditation is the new UK wide standard for archives. It defines good practice and agreed standards, thereby encouraging and supporting development. It is aimed at organisations that hold archive collections, whatever their constitution, and covers both private and public sector archives.

Three organisations in the West Midlands are already Accredited Archive Services: Media Archive for Central England (MACE), Warwickshire Record Office and Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service.

They are sharing their experience with colleagues in the region and we will build on that spirit of collaboration in order to:

- Support all members of Archives West Midlands to raise service standards and aim for Accreditation
- Share expertise, knowledge, skills and information to encourage a spirit of continuous improvement

- Seek and nurture partnerships and new ways of working that improve standards and efficiency
- Look beyond the West Midlands to other regions and national organisations for ideas and partnerships





Online access to our collections and catalogues continues to **increase** year on year.



MOTOR PANELS (COVENTRY) LTD.

COVENTRY

Motor Panels (Coventry) Limited is largely concerned with the production of pressed metal motor car bodies and commercial vehicle cabs and trucks and a wide range of pressed metal components and assemblies for the Vehicle Building Trade. The factory is engaged in the manufacture of many other pressed metal products including Petrol Pump casings, Electric Radiators, panels and assemblies for Refrigerators and Washing Machines, pressed metal motor cycle Chassis Assemblies, pressed metal Cinema Seats, panels and assemblies for Agricultural Machinery and miscellaneous pressings and assemblies for the Aircraft and Electrical Industries.

The factory and office block, which covers approximately a quarter of a million square feet, can offer comprehensive facilities and services. The factory is equipped with Product Design and Jig and Tool Design Offices, Pattern Shop and Tool Room and a Press Shop with a range of machines up to 500-ton Drawing Presses. The assembly departments are equipped for batch or line production in which modern welding techniques are employed. There is a conveyerised Paint Shop fully equipped to carry out the various types of painting, including dipping and stoving.

Apart from motor car body shells and components which are being produced to customers design, the Company is manufacturing a standard all-steel Cab which it developed in conjunction with some of the country's leading Commercial Vehicle manufacturers and which, with minor adjustments, is being fitted standard to a number of different chassis.

A separate factory building is entirely engaged in the manufacture of aircraft sub-assemblies.

C.T.D. (BIRMINGHAM) LTD.

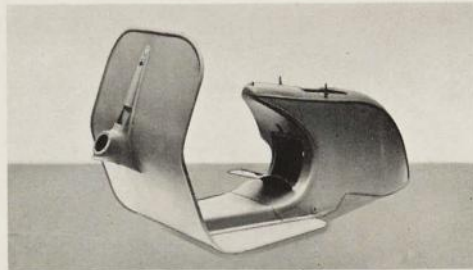
(A subsidiary of Motor Panels (Coventry) Ltd.)

To implement the design facilities at the Coventry office of Motor Panels (Coventry) Limited, a Company specialising in design and development work has been established in Shaftesbury Buildings, Station Street, Birmingham. A competent Staff of Jig and Tool Designers has been built up qualified to design any types of press tools or jigs and fixtures for the Automobile, Aircraft or Allied Trades. In addition to this, specialist sections have been created for the design and development of pressed metal assembly or mechanical end products.

The facilities of the Jig and Tool Office, as well as the Special Development Sections, are available to firms in the Engineering Trade at competitive rates.



PETROL PUMP HOUSINGS



PRESSED STEEL MOTOR CYCLE CHASSIS



PRESSED METAL CINEMA SEATS

1. Complete all-steel Body Shell.
2. Estate Car Side Panel.
3. Van Side Panel.
4. Inner Boot Lid Panel.
5. Front Wing.
6. Car Body Rear End Assembly.
7. Owen Cab.



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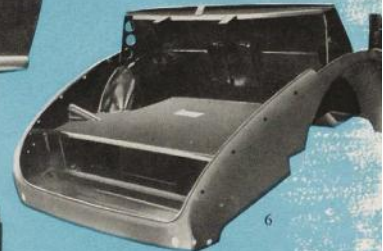
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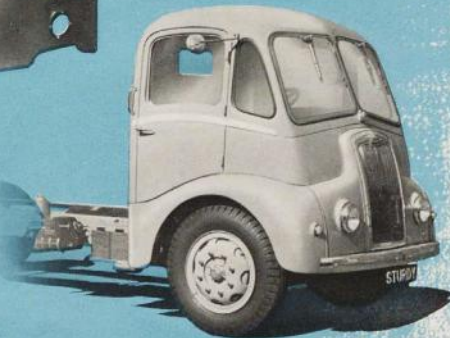
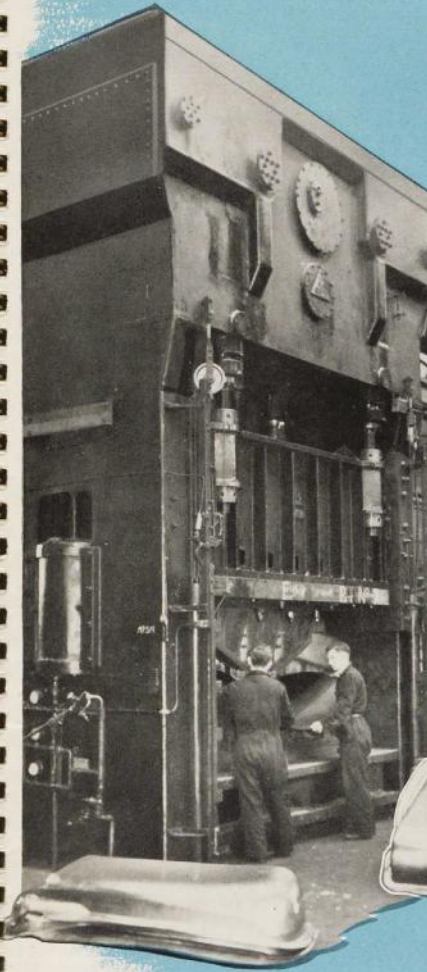
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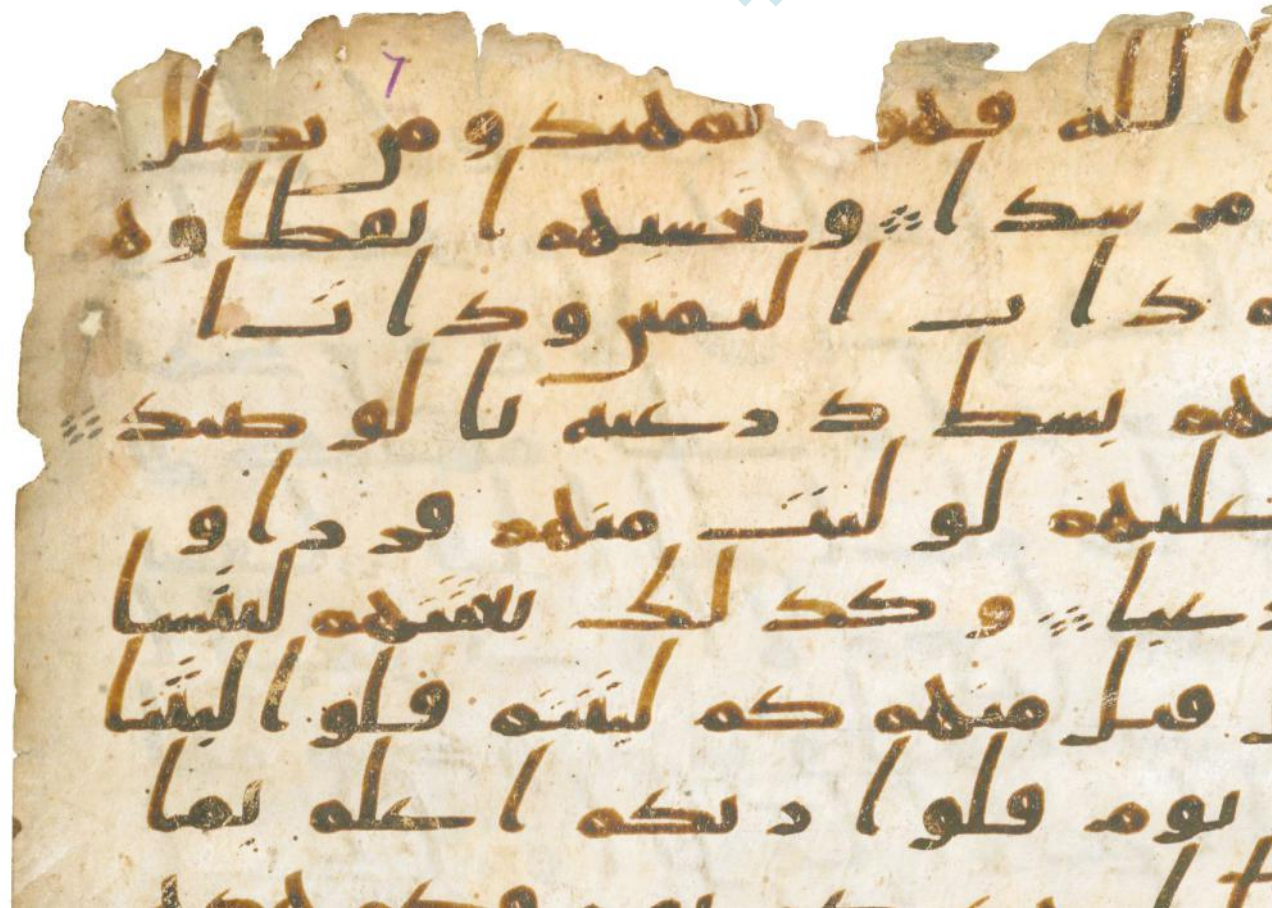


STURDY

New audiences for manuscripts

A partnership between the University of Birmingham's Cadbury Research Library and Birmingham Museums Trust created an exhibition on calligraphy in Arabic script. Qalam: the art of beautiful writing attracted 33,000 visitors over 12 weeks. Around 60% of visitors identified themselves as Muslim, including around 20% who were first-time visitors to the museum. These high figures demonstrate the success of taking manuscript collections out of their usual context and using them to help engage new and diverse audiences.

The recent discovery of one of the oldest Qur'an manuscripts in the Mingana Collection at the Cadbury Research Library has attracted international news coverage. This item, of global significance, will attract even more visitors to Birmingham and provide the opportunity to promote the value of collecting and conserving unique materials.



Digital Access, Preservation and Engagement

Responding to the opportunities presented by digital access and engagement is a major challenge for archives today.

Creating digital versions of archives has many benefits, including:

- **Access** – enabling the material to be made available in many contexts and available to a global audience
- **Preservation** – ensuring unique and fragile material is preserved in digital format
- **Finding** – making digital records easier to search

Today, individuals and organisations are creating many documents in digital formats. This trend is sure to continue and it presents new challenges for archives and records management.

- Many organisations are unaware of the importance of archiving digital records and websites
- Archives are having to learn new skills to manage original digital materials

Making catalogues and indexes available online is a huge benefit to researchers; they are able to identify the documents they need to see and where they are located. Resources such as Ancestry have enabled family historians to trace records in a fraction of the time and from any place.

A new collaborative project for Archives West Midlands is being developed to provide the capacity for extensive research into the requirements of customers in terms of access, and also the services in terms of the practical management of digital archives. Outcome of the collaboration will include:

- Shared guidelines, policies and best practice for the region and beyond
- Joint training and development opportunities
- Shared skills, knowledge and experience





Keeping the Home Fires Burning: WW2 Propaganda

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PAPER

a parent
a citizen

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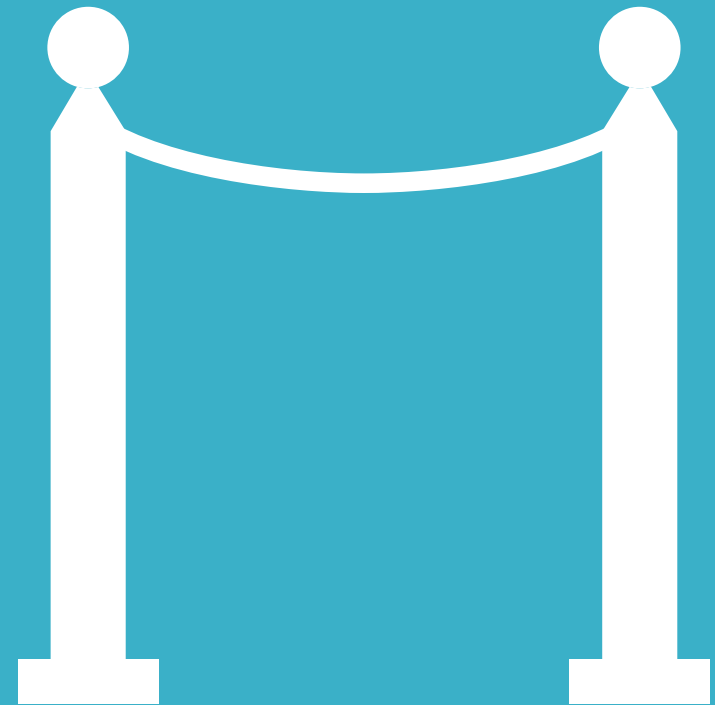
WANTED

A.R.P.

PARP LOOKS



Over **26,000** people attended one of over **900** learning events held in our archive centres. Over **100,000** visits were made to our exhibitions across the region, in 2014-15.



Artists help archives reach new audiences

Archives West Midlands is working with Arts Connect, funded by Arts Council England, to enable artists to develop work that will help us reach new audiences, especially young people. Acclaimed street and graffiti artist Mohammed Ali is developing an outdoor touring installation that will present archives in a totally new way. Mohammed Ali has been melding together street-art with Islamic script and patterns for the past 10 years, combining meaningful messages that connect people of all faiths in multicultural cities across the globe. His new work for us will tour venues across the West Midlands.



University archives supporting students and research

As with other university archives, the Birmingham City University Art & Design Archives are a key educational resource for students. The archive staff have run sessions for PhD students on using archives for research; led workshops for MA in Art

Education students on the life and career of Marion Richardson, who was a pioneer in the development of child-centred art education; taught MA Histories of Art & Design students on the Arts and Crafts Movement, illustrated with examples from the

School of Art collection; and run a project to design posters promoting the Archives for a group of final year BA Visual Communication students.



ARCHIVES

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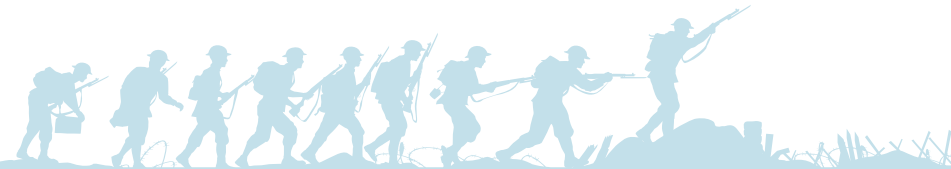
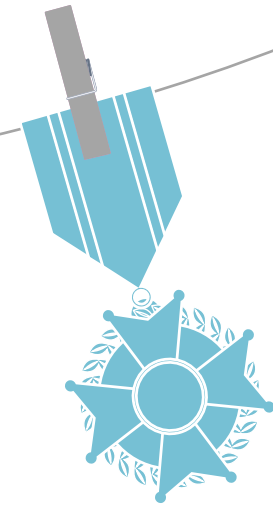
ARCHIVES

People's Collection

The Worcestershire World War 100 project, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, is a cross-sector partnership of archives, public and independent museums and community organisations. A central feature of the project is the People's Collection that asks individuals and organisations to come forward with letters, diaries

and artefacts to contribute to our understanding of Worcestershire people in the First World War. These items will be used in a major exhibition in 2017. The exhibition will be curated in partnership with depositors, engaging them in research and interpretation. It is hoped that loaned items will be gifted or digitised to permanent collections in

Worcestershire Archives and museums. Parts of the exhibition will tour to libraries, historic houses, community centres and factories in the county in the lead up to the centenary commemorations in 2018.



Community engagement

There are already some excellent examples of community engagement work in the region (see examples in the case studies above). This work has demonstrated the valuable role that archives play in:

- Fostering pride in the places where we live
- Increasing our understanding of how people used to live
- Explaining why and how things have changed
- Appreciating better the society we live in today

We will build on these achievements and work together to:

- Increase awareness of archives and their relevance to people from all communities and backgrounds
- Seek opportunities to take archives to places where they are not normally seen
- Use other premises for outreach activities and learning programmes
- Involve community groups in the work of archives, including the telling and recording of their own histories and personal experiences

Vitality, we will:

- Increase the numbers and diversity of people accessing archives and archive services
- Experiment with new ways to encourage active participation in the work of archives
- Support communities to use our archives in ways that are relevant to them and contribute to their
 - Learning and skills
 - Health and well being
 - Sense of belonging and pride in the places where they live
 - Participation in civil society and democracy





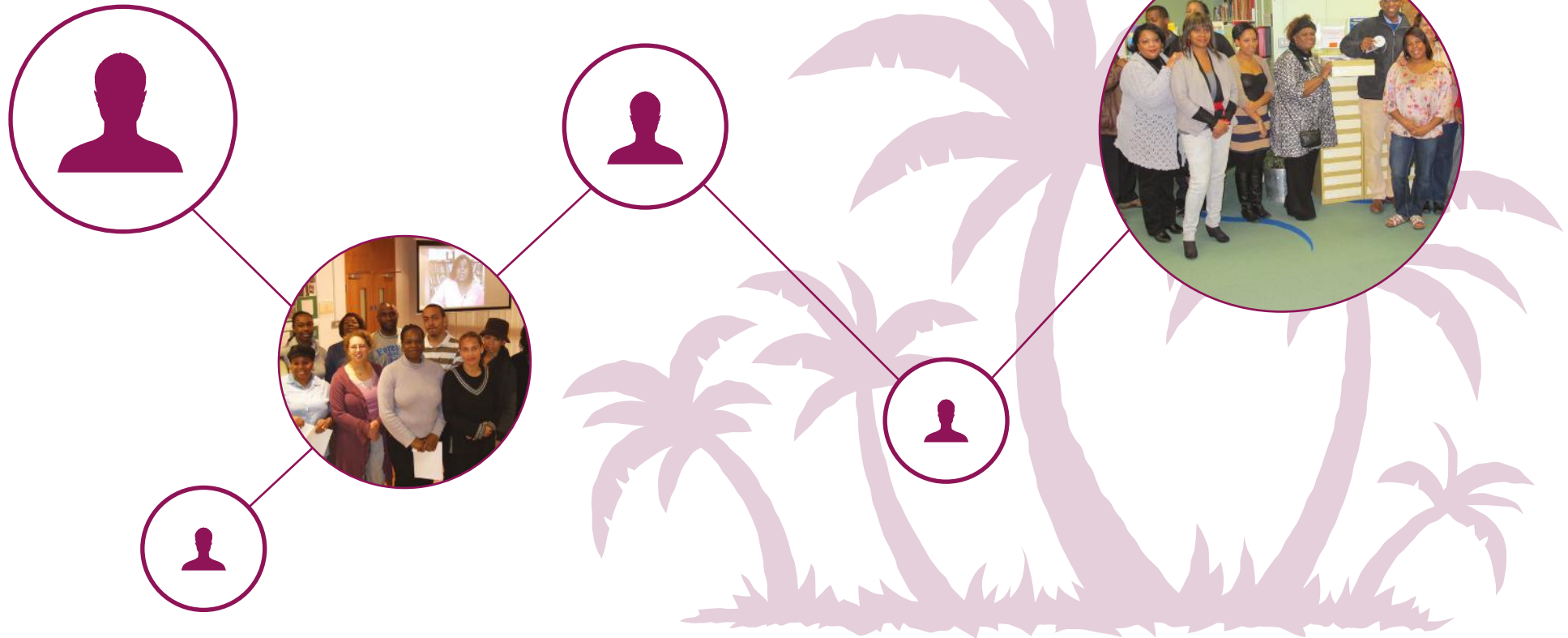
Photograph courtesy of Express and Star

Caribbean family history

Solihull Arts and Libraries, with support from the European Social Fund, created a project for people of Caribbean heritage that included a Caribbean Family History course (a national first), radio phone-ins, Heritage Gallery exhibitions, a Caribbean ancestry leaflet and web pages. The course attracted younger than usual family history learners (in their 30s and 40s) who were amazed at

the research resources available in the UK. One of the learners went on to be the course tutor. The classes have now become a self-managed advocacy group that continues to be a source of knowledge and expertise, giving talks, curating exhibitions, generating a new Jamaican-specific group, and fund raising to amass Caribbean microfilms at Solihull Central Library as a resource

for all to use. Warwickshire and Worcestershire County Record Offices digitised the region's historic school admission registers and log books as part of a national project with Find my Past to improve access to school records and develop income streams for archive services.



Developing skills and opportunities for employment

Many archives actively seek opportunities to give people work experience that will improve their skills and increase their confidence. Warwickshire County Record Office worked with Warwickshire Employment Support Team (WEST) and Learndirect to recruit and train people with learning difficulties on short-term contracts. The work experience has helped them to develop new skills and to demonstrate their employability.



Curriculum Vitae

Full Disclosure: the vital role of modern records

The independent inquiry into infant cremations at Emstrey Crematorium in Shrewsbury (2015) made extensive use of records managed by Shropshire Archives. As with the Hillsborough Independent Panel, and numerous individual cases, the proper collection, care and management of documents have been vital to the proceedings.



Membership of Archives West Midlands

Aston Villa Football Club
Birmingham City Council
Birmingham City University (Special Collections)
Culture Coventry Trust
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Hereford Cathedral
Herefordshire County Council
Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust
Media Archive of Central England
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Shakespeare Birthplace Trust
Shropshire Council
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Staffordshire County Council
Staffordshire University
University of Birmingham (Special Collections)
University of Warwick (Modern Records Centre)
Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Warwickshire County Council
Wolverhampton City Council
Wolverhampton Wanderers Football Club
Worcestershire County Council

The work of Archives West Midlands is supported by The National Archives.

We also value the support from:

Archives and Records Association, Arts Connect, British Records Association, depositors, Federation of Family History Societies, Friends' Groups, Information and Records Management Society Midlands Group and the Midlands Conservators Group.

Archives West Midlands will continue to welcome new members who are committed to our aims.

Archives West Midlands is a subscription based organisation for archives across the region. It uniquely pulls together a variety of organisations and a wealth of skills, knowledge and expertise into a single body, focused on delivering value for money and tangible results for its members. This prospectus has showcased the very exciting and varied work of archives across the region and the real contributions their work makes to communities, collections, and individuals.

In 2016-2017 the work of Archives West Midlands will focus on ensuring the success and sustainability of archive services in working with priority and emerging audiences. It will look at developing a coherent volunteering programme across the region, allowing communities to take an active stake in the work of archives. It will confidently engage with new audiences and raise the profile of archives as powerful connections between people, place, past and future through working with artists. Finally, it will look to the challenges of the future by exploring collective responses to preserving digital records.

Archives West Midlands provides a confident and coherent voice for the region's archives.

For further details and membership, please contact: archiveswestmidlands@gmail.com

