

**Item 11**

**Local Studies and Archives Centres - Case Studies**

**Purpose of report**

For noting.

**Summary**

The report below highlights several examples of Local Studies and Archives Centres succeeding in using volunteers, new technology, digital media and linking up with schools to increase interest in their archives and collections. Many of the projects sought to create a legacy engagement with their communities, developing the research and communication skills of both pupils and volunteers in the local community and then utilising these new skills to enhance their archives and build new collections. This paper complements item 2 on the agenda - a presentation by Oliver Morely, Chief Executive of The National Archives.

**Recommendations**

Members are asked to note the case studies.

**Action**

None.

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**Item 11**

**Case study: Durham County Record Office - Mining Durham's Hidden Depths**

Durham County Council's Record Office set up the Mining Durham's Hidden Depths project in October 2009. So far over 100 volunteers have created 86,701 index entries for an online index designed to "make County Durham's mining heritage more accessible to informal adult learners by exploiting a major archive collection of national and international significance." By the project's official end, in March 2010, over 60,000 miner's names had already been indexed and new data available on line for people to access. A network of 106 volunteers across a wide range of ages and abilities trained in research and indexing techniques with 50 of those people expressing an interest in continuing their voluntary work with Durham County Records Office.

**Case study: South Yorkshire Archives and Local Studies**

Local authority archives across South Yorkshire are using new technology to achieve better value for money whilst improving engagement with their communities. Barnsley and Sheffield have made available 60,000 local images online for residents to browse. They also have facilities in place to allow customers to purchase their own copies. Commercial websites such as these not only help promote local authority collections but also provide an income stream. As well as this, local authorities in these areas are improving access to information and reaching new people – at no cost to the local authority – using online resources like Flickr (a free image and video hosting website).

**Case study: Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies – Virtual Classroom**

At the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies, they have been seeking to encourage secondary schools to utilise their resources, especially their archives and collections. In order to achieve this they have taken advantage of the availability of Adobes Virtual Learning Software (Adobe Acrobat Connect Pro) across all schools in the county. Having been inspired by a demonstration of The National Archive's Virtual classroom, CBS used the software as an innovative and inexpensive way of bringing their archives into the classroom. The virtual classroom sessions allowed pupils and archivists to interact and discuss documents and other items stored in the CBS archives. An item would be presented on screen for the pupils to study, whilst other parts of the software allowed students to hear the archivist talk about it. Students could also type questions to the archivist. Whilst this session has been trialled in one school, the hope is to spread it out to secondary schools across Buckinghamshire.

**Item 11**

**Case study: East Sussex Records Office – If it wasn't for the war**

The If it wasn't for the war... project was delivered in a partnership involving East Sussex Record Office, Queens Park Primary school, Spoken Memoirs (an oral history organisation) and members of the Lewes District Seniors' Forum. The aim of the project was to help Queens Park Primary school develop awareness of how to best use an archive collection to support learning and good practice on developing partnerships with local community organisations. It also allowed children to increase their knowledge of World War II as well as develop research skills, communication skills, creativity, and critical thinking.

East Sussex Record Office held a number of sessions at a local primary school with year 5 and 6 pupils. These sessions at first, prepared and equipped pupils with the skills and understanding required to conduct a professional interview with the people who had experienced World War II, and successfully record these experiences for use by ESRO. In addition the sessions were designed to introduce the school, the pupils and the older members of the community taking part to the materials held at the record office and to think about creative ways of making use of them.