

City of Westminster Archives Centre

Education Policy

February 2008



City of Westminster

WESTMINSTER CITY ARCHIVES

EDUCATION POLICY

Introduction

The City of Westminster Archives Centre (COWAC) is part of the Customers Services Department at Westminster City Council. In accordance with the Council's Best Value Action Plan of 2003, and the One City agenda, COWAC is committed to making the Borough a learning borough. COWAC is committed to developing a sustainable programme of outreach and educational activity to enable new users to access our collections and professional expertise. In particular we aim to engage the young and the elderly who are often under represented amongst our most frequent users.

COWAC's Education programme will be responsive to the changing demands of the National Curriculum, the growing demand for life-long learning and policies of social inclusion and the needs of our users, both current and potential.

Aims

The education service aims to support lifetime learning by:

- Raising awareness of the rich cultural and historical heritage of the City of Westminster
- Providing access to and promoting the use of the wide range of primary and secondary sources of historical evidence
- To work in partnership with libraries, museums and other archives to provide educational activities
- To work in co-operation with other education providers such as schools, colleges, universities and adult education centres

Objectives

- To provide opportunities for teachers, students and learners of all ages to visit the Archives Centre and to examine and use a range of primary and secondary sources of historical information

- To create accessible learning resources based on primary and secondary sources held in the Archives collection which meet curriculum and user demands
- To support the development of historical interpretation and enquiry skills enabling pupils to assess and evaluate historical sources of information in an appropriate context
- To provide training for teachers in how to use sources and develop them for classroom use
- To ensure that teachers and students are able to exploit fully the Archives and Local Studies collections through an effective programme of user education
- To provide adult learning opportunities through the development of a programme of courses, workshops and other events
- To promote greater understanding of and interest in the heritage of the City through talks, walks and visits to community groups

Methodology

- **Class visits and archive workshops for schools and colleges**

Class visits to COWAC have become less frequent as our outreach programme has grown and the meeting room is less frequently available due to commercial bookings. However with sufficient notice the needs of most groups can be accommodated.

To provide greater flexibility for schools and also to leave the meeting room available for hire we now try to encourage school parties to visit on Mondays when the Archive is closed. Sessions on Mondays take place in the Archive Search Room. Groups normally request a 30-45 minute talk before being given a tour of one of the strong rooms. From Tuesday to Friday schools can visit and use the meeting room if it is available. The most popular talks for groups visiting COWAC are 'The Devil's Acre (History of the area immediately surrounding COWAC which links to the Victorians topic at KS2. Westminster in World War Two is also one of the more popular subjects requested. Talks can also be provided on Westminster in World War One (linked to 'A Miller's Tale' project and How has Britain changed since 1948/ (linked to the Education through Football outreach partnership with Chelsea FC.) Schools can also request with sufficient

notice for members of the Westminster Community Reminiscence and Archive Group (WCRAAG) to attend question and answer sessions linked to Westminster in World War two.

- **Training and advice sessions for teachers**

Inset training for teachers is a high priority. The Education Officer visits schools to conduct training sessions as well as running specialist courses linked to the Education through Football project at Chelsea's Stamford Bridge Education Hub.

A large amount of the education work undertaken is now through outreach linked to specific projects funded through grant applications. Schools participating in these programmes participate in training specific to the programmes.

Requests for specific INSET training can be considered given sufficient notice.

- **Support for students**

The Education and Interpretation Officer (EIO) gives individual advice to students of all ages by telephone, letter, email and in person, usually in the initial stages of their research. This service is of particular value to A-level students undertaking personal studies in History and Geography, helping them to identify suitable topics and appropriate sources to conduct their enquiry.

Help may also be provided for University students seeking advice regarding their dissertations particularly in regard to Victorian Westminster, and Westminster in World Wars One and Two.

Westminster Archives Education and interpretation Officer (EIO) encourages University students from home and abroad to apply for unpaid internships facilitating the education programmes run here. A regular placement scheme is run in partnership with the CAPA programme (Centers for Academic Programmes Abroad). Internships have also been offered to students at Sussex and Kent University. Each year the EIO visits Sussex University in Brighton to talk to History students and offer them the chance to work at COWAC.

- **Resource packs**

Resource packs linked to the Education through Football Programme are provided free of charge to participating Westminster schools. This includes a KS2 History pack: How has Britain changed since 1948? A KS 2 Literacy pack for Year 5 and Year 6 is linked to Michael Morpurgo's book 'Billy the Kid' provides literacy activities using archive material to stimulate creative writing.

A Miller's Tale pack compliments the KS3 History Unit 18: Hot war, cold war why did the major twentieth-century conflicts affect so many people? And Unit 13: How do we deal with conflict? The pack also works very well with YR 6's.

Monty's Lost Stripes pack will compliment KS2 Unit 17 What are we remembering on Remembrance Day? This pack is also suitable for children in Years 7 and 8 will compliment the KS3 History Unit 18: Hot war, cold war why did the major twentieth-century conflicts affect so many people?

Requests for specific local information can be met given sufficient notice.

- **Handling collection**

A small handling collection is available, particularly designed to meet the needs of Key Stage 1 pupils for immediate and visual resources relating to homes and people's lives. Two object boxes are available for loan to schools on the Victorians and World War II. Items in the handling collection have come from the Archives collection and additional resources purchased from Antique Fairs, E Bay. An Evacuee's suitcase linked to the KS2 topic: QCA 9 What was it like for a child in World War Two? is also available. The handling collection was developed in response to requests from schools in Westminster, where there is no local museum able to meet these needs.

- **On-line access to sources**

We aim to make the 'A Miller's Tale' exhibition available to a wider public through the COWAC website. This exhibition looks at the history of the area during World War One. We aim to put pdfs of education packs on-line - copyright permitting - if it is in our power to do so.

- **Publications**

To increase access to information about the local area, as well as highlighting sources in the collection, the education service includes a publishing programme. Publications include postcards, books of old photographs, local histories, guides to researching family history and house history and an annual journal the *Westminster History Review*. This was established in 1997 with the particular aim of encouraging research on many different facets of the City of Westminster's history, through the unique resources held in the Archives, by providing a vehicle to publish the fruits of that research, which might otherwise not reach a wider audience. The *WHR* also raises Westminster's heritage profile among local residents, and also in academic institutions worldwide. Partnerships have also been established with local community groups, including the St Marylebone Society, who have collaborated on joint publishing of *The Diary of William Tayler, Footman, 1837*, and *Marylebone Workhouse* (forthcoming).

Copies of 'A Miller's Tale' will be available to the public from the end of 2007. This booklet looks at Westminster during World War One and the plight of the sizeable German community that once flourished here.

- **Westminster Community Reminiscence and Archive Group**

This group was set up in partnership with the Cabinet War Rooms and Churchill Museum and the British Film Institute. Regular weekly meetings are held on Tuesdays between 3pm and 5pm from April to September. Meetings rotate on a tri-weekly basis between the participating partners. Transport is provided for elderly residents from the Pimlico area. New members are always welcome as are volunteers to help with trips out to local galleries and heritage venues.

- **Talks and tours for local and family history societies**

COWAC's Local Studies Officer is available for outreach in the local community. With sufficient notice, special interest groups, family history societies, arts and heritage associations, and adult education colleges are offered a variety of talks, both at the Archives Centre and at external venues. Sessions at the Centre usually last for one and a half to two hours with a talk based on an aspect of the local area, illustrated by sources in the collection, followed by a behind-the-scenes tour. They visit the Search Room, where they are introduced to finding aids, the Conservation Room where they see the Conservator at work and discuss issues relating to

preservation, and the Strong Rooms where they can handle original documents in a variety of formats and see how they are stored.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Regular monitoring includes the number of teachers and students using the education service at all levels, the number and range of resource packs supplied, the number of talks and visits, and topics requested. These statistics are included in monthly reports to the City Archivist.
- To ensure the high quality of the service is maintained, feedback is obtained from users through evaluation sheets issued at the end of each project.

Westminster City Archives, Peter Daniel,
19.2.08