

Explore Your Archive
Evaluation Report – March 2014

Marc Pallascio

Table of Contents

Methodology.....	2
Background.....	4
Explore Your Archive Brand.....	5
Toolkit and Resources.....	8
Launch Week.....	12
Activities and Events.....	13
The Story Box Concept.....	14
Other Events.....	16
Media.....	16
Traditional Media.....	16
Online and Social Media.....	17
Trade and Family History Features.....	17
Website.....	17
Campaign Team.....	19
Open Theme vs. First World War Theme for 2014.....	20
Why did archives not participate?	23
Conclusion.....	23
Recommendations.....	23
Appendix A: Sector Activity.....	26
Appendix B: Key Stories Flagged by Media.....	28
Appendix C: Map of Explore Your Archive Evaluation Survey Responses (England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland).....	30

Methodology

This report is an evaluation of the Explore Your Archive 2013 campaign. The report will assess the impact of the campaign and provide recommendations for further development. The success of the Explore Your Archive campaign and suggestions for improvement will primarily be based on feedback from archive sector professionals from a variety of institutions across the UK and Ireland. The feedback was acquired by conducting telephone/in-person interviews and disseminating an evaluation survey electronically via Survey Monkey. Links for the survey were posted on the Archives and Records Association website from February 7th to 21st, 2014. Fourteen archive professionals were interviewed and the electronic survey received over one hundred responses (approximately 50% of recorded participants).

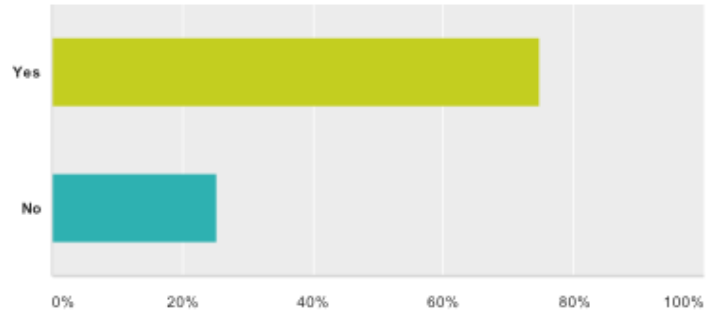
It is important to note that a slightly different survey was issued in Wales, in Welsh and English, to take account of the additional features of the Welsh Explore Your Archive campaign. The additional features were mainly the bilingual nature of the campaign and the fact that small grants were available from the Welsh Government through CyMAL: Museums Archives and Libraries Wales.

In order to provide a visual and geographical representation of the survey responses a map has been included in Appendix C. 66% of the responses came from archive services in England with a notable concentration in the London area. 11.3% of responses came from Wales, 14.1% from Scotland, and 8.4% from Ireland.

Of the total number of survey responses, figure 1.0 shows that that 74.4% of archivists who responded to question 2 of the survey for England, Scotland, and Ireland took part in the 2013 Explore Your Archive campaign, and that 25.26% did not take part. Figure 1.1 shows that 75% of archivists who responded to question 4 of the survey for Wales took part in the campaign, and that 25% did not take part.

Q2 Did you take part?

Answered: 95 Skipped: 0

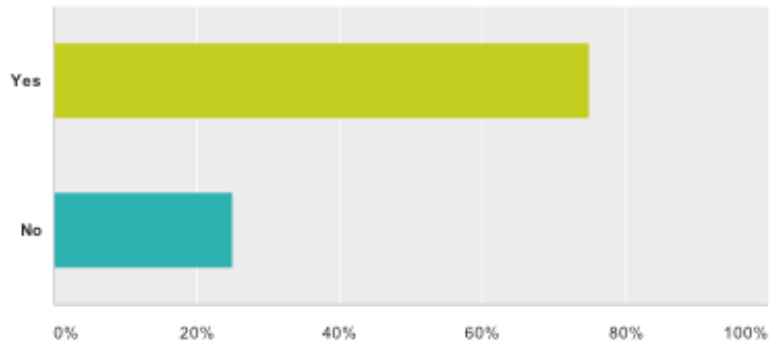


Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	74.74% 71
No	25.26% 24
Total	95

(Figure 1.0 – Explore Your Archive survey for England, Scotland, and Ireland)

Q4 Did you take part?

Answered: 12 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	75% 9
No	25% 3
Total	12

(Figure 1.1 – Explore Your Archive survey for Wales)

Background

The National Council on Archives (NCA) created the Archive Awareness Campaign (AAC) in 2003 as a response to the underrepresentation of UK archives, compared to museums and galleries, in the public's perception of valued cultural heritage services. With funding from The National Archives and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) the campaign sought to increase marketing capacity within the sector. In 2010, the NCA merged with the Society of Archivists and Association of Chief Archivists in Local Government (ACALG) to create the Archives and Records Association (ARA), which continued to deliver the AAC with funding from The National Archives.¹

The AAC ran for ten years with varying levels of participation by archives and public interest. The campaign was not sustaining the desired impact and according to the 'Taking Part Survey', a recent DCMS statistical release, overall visits to archives by the public has declined from 5.9% to 3.9% of the adult population.² However, there is evidence that public interest in cultural heritage is growing as participation of the adult population in museums and galleries has increased from 42.3% in 2005/06 to 52.8% in 2012/13.³

As leaders of the archive sector, The National Archives and ARA decided that the campaign still had the potential to have a significant impact with a new focus and direction. Based on recommendations from the government policy 'Archives for the 21st Century' primary tasks and objectives were designed to revitalise the AAC. The goal was essentially to develop a public engagement strategy based on a national stand alone brand for archive services supported by a campaign week and high profile advocates promoting the value of archives.⁴

Working with Forster Communications, The National Archives and ARA created the Explore Your Archive (EYA) campaign. EYA launched the 16th – 22nd of November 2013 with a week of coordinated events across England, Wales, Scotland, and all of Ireland. All archives including local, university, business, specialist and national were encouraged to join the campaign in order to raise public awareness of archives and promote their value to society. Over 220 organisations participated in the EYA campaign holding a variety of events in-house and online including talks, workshops, open days and exhibitions.

¹ *Invitation to Tender Campaign Brief: Redevelopment of a national campaign for archives*, Draft Version 2, p.3

² *ibid*

³ Department for Culture, Media & Sport, *Taking Part 2012/13 Quarter 4 Report* (Statistical Release), June 2013, p.21

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/taking-part-201213-quarter-4-statistical-release--2>

⁴ *Invitation to Tender Campaign Brief: Redevelopment of a national campaign for archives*, Draft Version 2, p.4

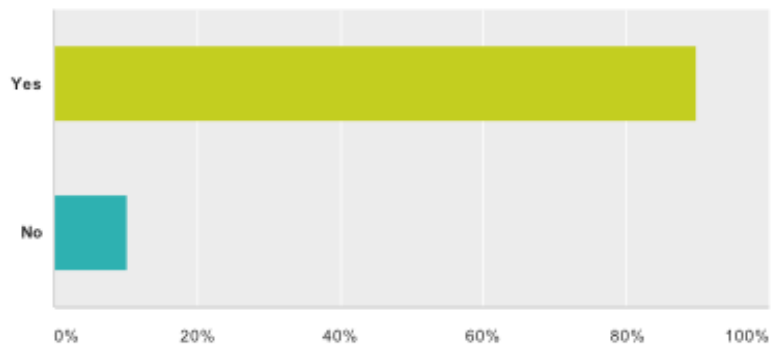
Explore Your Archive Brand

Forster Communications designed the Explore Your Archive brand. The National Archives, ARA and Forster Communications agreed upon a primary audience of people aged 50 – 70 years old as the demographic most likely to have time to engage with the campaign. A secondary audience of people aged 35 – 50 was also agreed upon due to the likelihood that they overhear content or messages designed to reach the primary audience.

The majority of the surveyed archivists responded positively to the brand's overall appearance. Figure 2.0 shows that 89.83% of archivists who responded to question 11 of the survey for England, Scotland, and Ireland liked the look of the Explore Your Archive brand. Moreover, figure 2.1 illustrates that 91.67% of archivists who responded to question 13 of the survey for Wales liked the campaign brand and overall aesthetic.

Q11 Do you like the Explore Your Archive look/branding?

Answered: 59 Skipped: 36

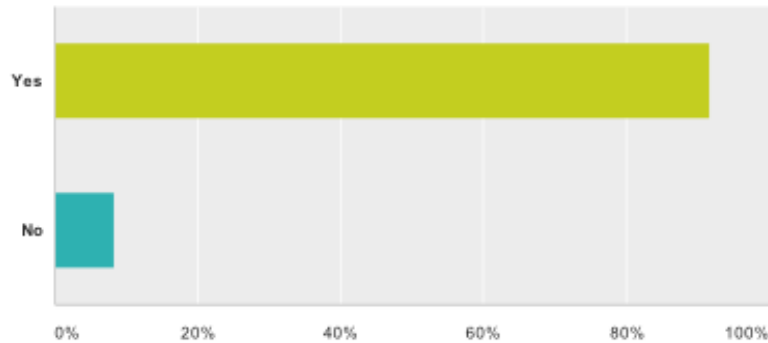


Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	89.83% 53
No	10.17% 6
Total	59

(Figure 2.0 – Explore Your Archive survey for England, Ireland, and Scotland)

Q13 Do you like the Explore Your Archive look/branding?

Answered: 12 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	91.67%	11
No	8.33%	1
Total		12

(Figure 2.1 – Explore Your Archive survey for Wales)

Most people liked the use of vibrant colours and found that the modern aesthetic effectively countered the perception of the archive sector as boring and out of date. Many comments also demonstrated an appreciation for a simple, yet bold and recognisable brand to help promote events. There were some issues incorporating the long rectangular logo (with 14 verbs) into visual displays and blog posts due to its shape, and it was suggested that circular, square or landscape rectangular logos would be easier to work with.

The majority of archivists who provided feedback found the ‘Archl’ve’ concept with interchangeable verbs appealing, and comments indicated that the public reacted positively. The intention to personalise archive services was understood and well received, however there were mixed views in regards to the play on words. Many people liked the wordplay, but some described the ‘Archl’ve’ slogan as gimmicky or unnecessary. One archivist commented that the title ‘Explore Your Archive’ “says it all” and that “there is no need for ‘clever’ word play which just clouds the message.” Furthermore, there was an issue with the wording of the ‘Archl’ve’ slogan when translated into Welsh. Archivists working in Wales felt that the translation was an afterthought and one person stated, “All archive services in Wales are legally required to produce public information bilingually so having a campaign that works well in both languages is essential.”

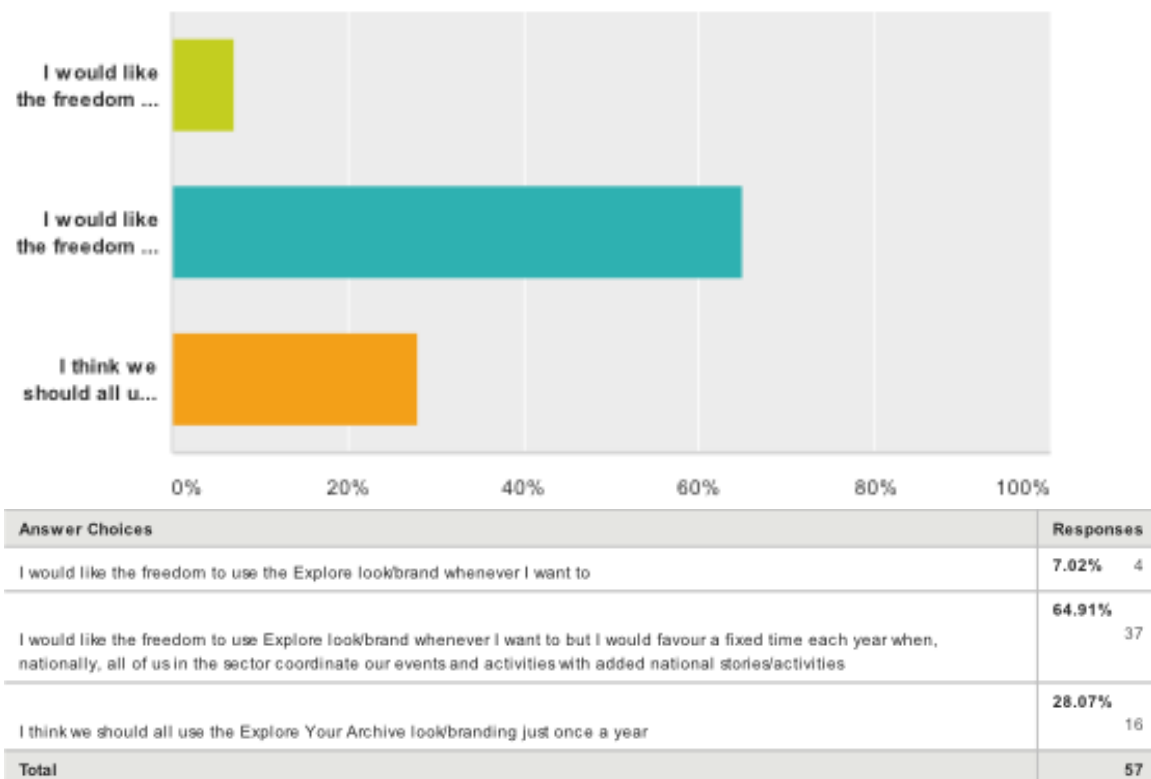
Another issue with the branding was its integration with already existing institutional brands. Many institutions, such as national organisations, county record offices, etc. have already developed a brand that must be used to promote activities and events due to set regulations. In a few cases archivists

said that it was difficult to merge the institutional brand with the Explore Your Archive brand, which resulted in limited use. In most cases a compromise was reached except for one educational institution where the brands had to be kept separate due to strict regulations. Apart from these cases, feedback indicated that archives, particularly smaller institutions with limited resources, found the Explore Your Archive brand useful for promoting events and relatively easy to integrate.

The majority of archive services want the freedom to use the Explore Your Archive brand at any point during the year while maintaining a nationally coordinated period of events and activities. Figure 3.0 shows that 64.91% of archivists who responded to question 26 of the survey for England, Scotland, and Ireland prefer this option. Figure 3.1 shows that 50% of archivists who responded to question 16 of the survey for Wales prefer this option.

Q26 Looking to the future, we need to decide how best to use the Explore Your Archive look/branding in the sector. Please tick the box that best reflects what you would like:

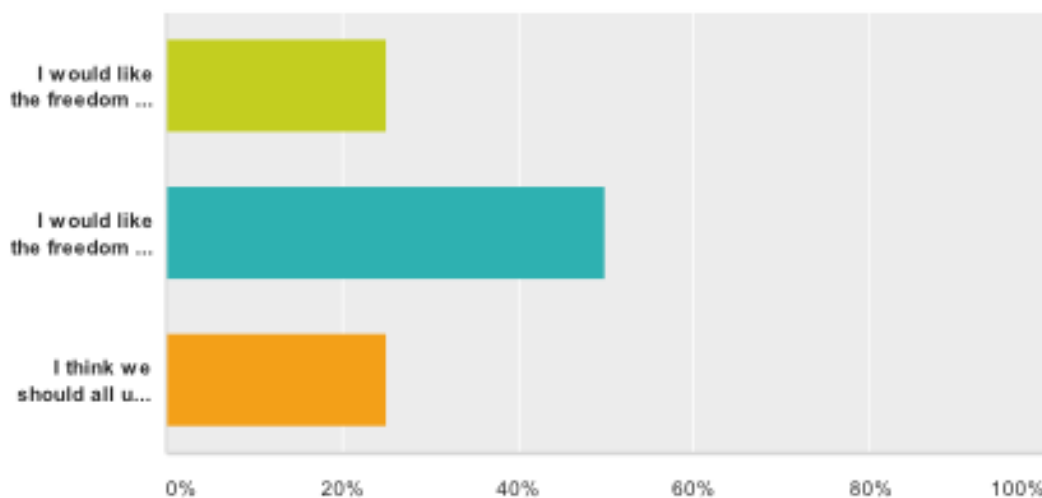
Answered: 57 Skipped: 38



(Figure 3.0 – Explore Your Archive survey for England, Scotland, and Ireland)

Q16 Looking to the future, we need to decide how best to use the Explore Your Archive look/branding in the sector. Please tick the box that best reflects what you would like:

Answered: 12 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
I would like the freedom to use the Explore look/brand whenever I want to	25% 3
I would like the freedom to use Explore lookbrand whenever I want to but I would favour a fixed time each year when, nationally, all of us in the sector coordinate our events and activities with added national stories/activities	50% 6
I think we should all use the Explore Your Archive lookbranding just once a year	25% 3
Total	12

(Figure 3.1 – Explore Your Archive survey for Wales)

According to feedback gathered, archivists felt that to have no annual push would be a mistake and that otherwise the brand might be lost among other campaigns and events.

Toolkit and Resources

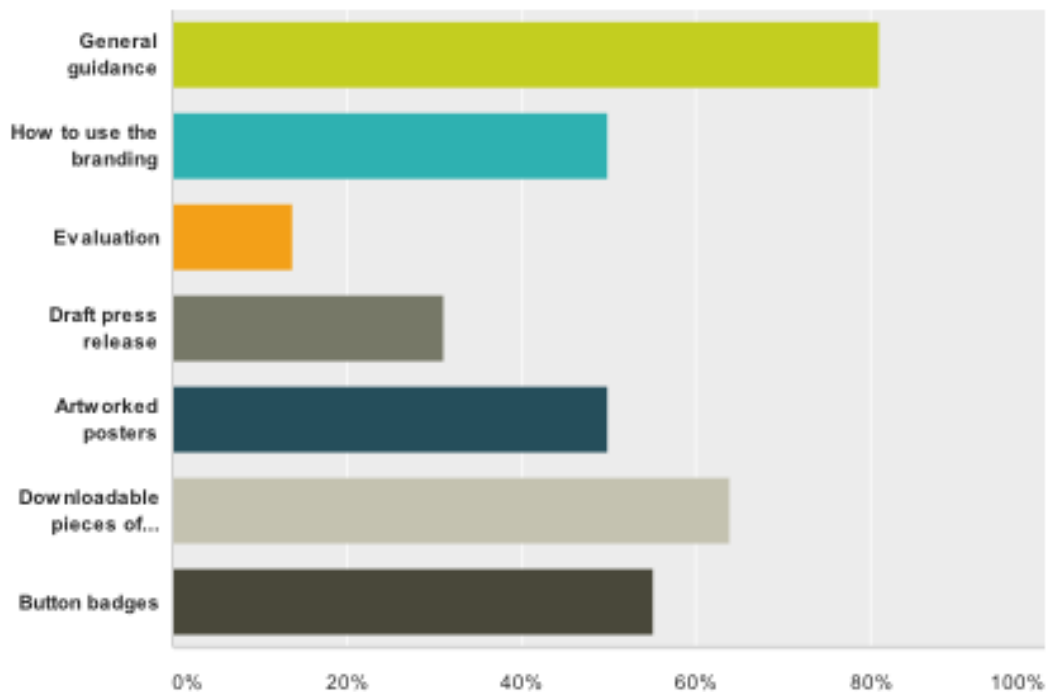
The Explore Your Archives Toolkit was available to download from The National Archives and Archive Wales websites.

The toolkit and resources provided by The National Archives included general guidance, information on how to use the branding, evaluation materials, a draft press release, artworked posters, downloadable pieces of branding from which to make your own material, and button badges. Figures 4.0 shows which aspects of The National Archives toolkit were used most by those who responded to question 16 of the survey for England, Scotland, and Ireland. Generally,

feedback from England, Scotland, and Ireland regarding the toolkit was positive with a few issues discussed below.

Q16 Apart from the Explore branding/artwork, please tell us which other parts of the Explore toolkit or other resources you used (tick any that you used)

Answered: 58 Skipped: 37



Answer Choices	Responses
General guidance	81.03% 47
How to use the branding	50% 29
Evaluation	13.79% 8
Draft press release	31.03% 18
Artworked posters	50% 29
Downloadable pieces of branding from which to make your own material	63.79% 37
Button badges	55.17% 32
Total Respondents: 58	

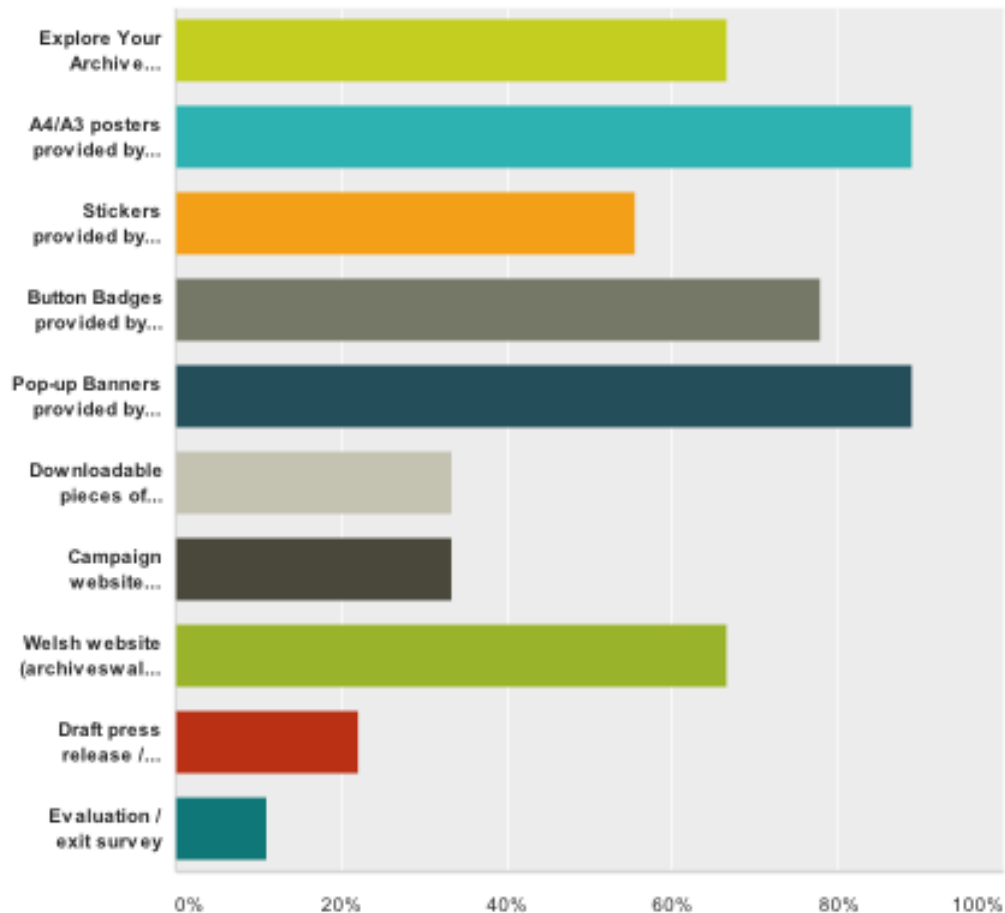
(Figure 4.0 – Explore Your Archive survey for England, Scotland and Ireland)

The toolkit and resources provided by Archive Wales were very similar to those provided by The National Archives. Moreover, figure 4.1 shows that the Welsh archive services used the toolkit and resources in similar ways. One noticeable difference was the use of pop-up banners. The pop-up banners and A3/A4

posters were the resources most used by archive services that responded to this question in the survey for Wales. The feedback from Welsh archive services regarding the toolkit was positive. The only issue raised was in relation to translation, which was discussed in the 'Explore Your Archive brand' section.

Q14 Please tell us which Explore Your Archive resources you used (tick any that you used)

Answered: 9 Skipped: 3



Answer Choices	Responses
Explore Your Archive Campaign Toolkit	66.67% 6
A4/A3 posters provided by Marketing Team	88.89% 8
Stickers provided by Marketing Team	55.56% 5
Button Badges provided by Marketing Team	77.78% 7
Pop-up Banners provided by Marketing Team	88.89% 8
Downloadable pieces of branding from which to make your own material / use online	33.33% 3
Campaign website (exploreyourarchive.org)	33.33% 3
Welsh website (archiveswales.org / online staff toolkit)	66.67% 6
Draft press release / quotes	22.22% 2

(Figure 4.1 – Explore Your Archive survey for Wales)

The survey results above show that the toolkit was primarily used as a guide to participate in the campaign. There were some comments saying that the toolkit was rather long and vague. For example, many archivists were not sure when to start advertising the campaign. More specific examples of how to participate rather than when to participate would have been helpful according to feedback.

There were many issues involved with the downloadable content of the toolkit. The technological issues were primarily due to incompatibility caused by out of date software in local archives. There was also at least one case at a county record office where the inability to control download limits inhibited the use of the toolkit. There seemed to be a bias towards using Microsoft Word rather than PowerPoint for templates. Despite technological issues, the materials were useful for promoting events. Some archivists even took it upon themselves to create their own promotional materials if unable to use the templates provided. For example, one archive service made its own bunting to set up around a display case and another made unofficial posters and recruited volunteers to post them around local coffee shops.

There was one complaint regarding inconsistencies in how prominently archive services were featured in promotional material. For example, the Surrey History Centre spent a significant amount of time providing material for a poster and when it was returned the visual credit given was incorporated into the image and very difficult to see, whereas for other poster the credit was incorporated more visibly into the quotation.

The press release templates were useful for archive services that have limited resources and marketing experience. On the other hand, there are a significant number of organisations that have their own press department, which limited the relevance of this aspect of the toolkit to these archive services. Even though archivists may not have had direct control over press releases the toolkit encouraged some to interact more directly with the press departments. One archive service emphasised that it had been difficult to get the communications team to take notice unless what is being proposed showed a good fit with the organisation's communications agenda. The Surrey History Centre made links with broader communications priorities by linking its collection of mental health and asylum records to the local libraries' health and wellbeing campaign for LGBT month in February.

The Explore Your Archive button badges were very popular among participant archive services. There was even one archive service that made use of the badges despite not being able to officially participate in the campaign. The badges were popular internally as well as with the public. Staff members at one archive service would colour-coordinate their outfits with their badge. The badges were also very popular with school children. One person commented that the badges could have been more colourful, and feedback also indicated

that more Explore Your Archive marketing materials could be useful such as branded pencils, bookmarks, post-its, etc.

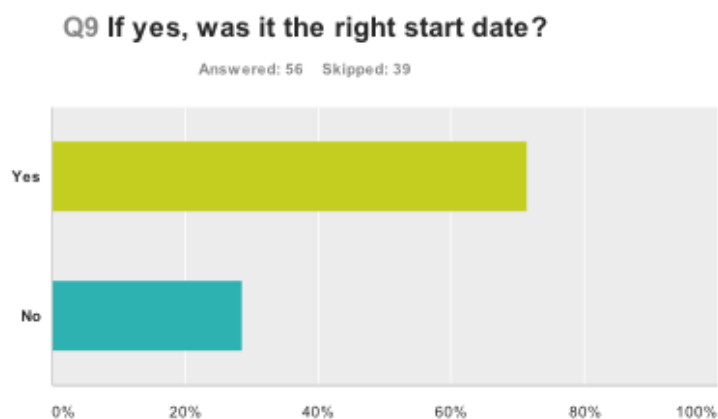
The evaluation forms for archive services and exit questionnaire for visitors were barely used. Archive services found it very difficult to motivate visitors to fill out the exit questionnaires.

In regards to developing new skills the feedback indicated that the toolkit was more successful in the furthering the development of certain skills and inspiring the application of certain skills in new and creative ways.

Launch week

The majority of archives agreed that it was useful to have an official start date and launch week. Archive services found that a nationally coordinated week of events was a good way to draw attention to the campaign and that it was an improvement from the AAC.

Most found that the November start date was fine, but there were some archive services that would have preferred an alternative start date. Figure 5.0 shows that 71.43% of archivists who responded to question 9 of the survey for England, Scotland, and Ireland agreed that November 16th was the right start date. Figure 5.1 shows that 80% of archivists who responded to question 12 of the survey for Wales agreed that it was the right start date.

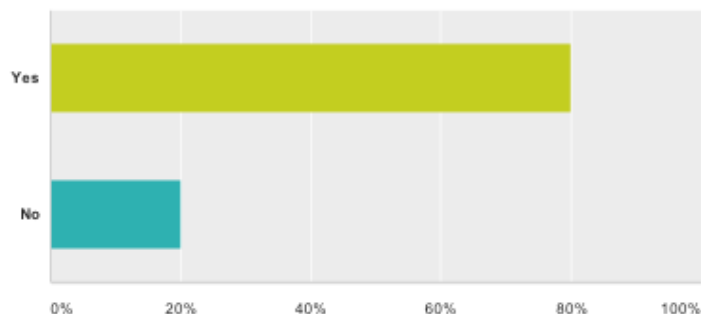


Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	71.43% 40
No	28.57% 16
Total	56

(Figure 5.0 – Explore Your Archive survey for England, Scotland and Ireland)

Q12 Was it the right start date?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 2



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	80% 8
No	20% 2
Total	10

(Figure 5.1 – Explore Your Archive survey for Wales)

Archives in more rural areas found that November was not ideal due to the weather. They found it was difficult to draw a significant number of visitors on a cold winter night. Spring/summer was suggested as an alternative to November.

A few archive services commented on the proximity to Christmas as an issue and felt that the campaign was overshadowed by the lead up to the holiday season. Again, spring/summer was suggested as an alternative.

In Scotland, Book Week was the week after the Explore Your Archive launch week, which was problematic for archive services that also hold rare book collections. At least two archive services commented that this limited their ability to participate in the Explore Your Archive campaign.

The reality is that no time will be perfect for every archive service and that there will almost always be competition with other events and/or campaigns. LGBT history month is in February, Museums month is in April, Heritage Open Days is in September, Black History month is in October, Remembrance Day and Take Over/Taking Over Day are in November, etc.

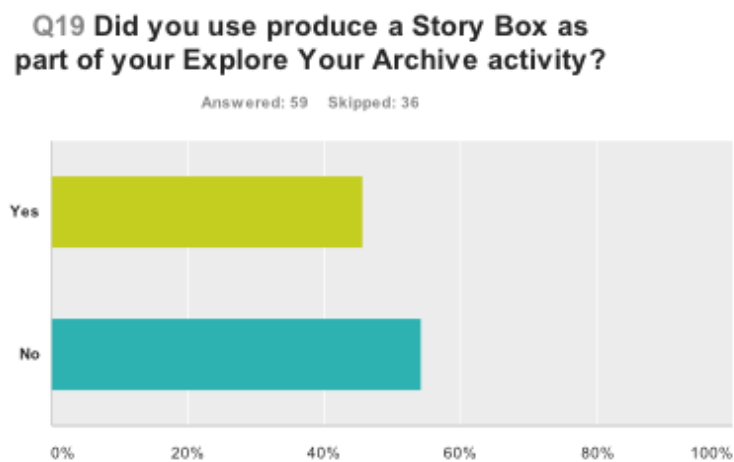
Activities and Events

During the official launch week (16th – 22nd November, 2013) hundreds of archive services hosted activities and events with varying levels of success. The majority of comments stated that attendance to events was average to excellent. There were a handful of comments saying that attendance was poor and, according to the feedback received, only one archive service had to cancel an event due to lack of attendance. A number of organisations commented that this was the first

time they hosted an event of this nature, which made it difficult for them to gauge the level of success. A recurring request in the feedback from the sector was to be given more notice in order to plan events. Many archive services must request permission and/or funding in order to organise events, sometimes one year in advance. The short lead in time made the planning process very hectic. For example, it is very difficult to find people to speak at events on short notice.

The Story Box Concept

Not all archives adopted the story box concept, however it was beneficial for the archive services that used the concept to engage with the public. Figure 6.0 shows that 45.76% of archivists who responded to question 19 of the survey for England, Scotland and Ireland produced a story box. Figure 6.1 shows that 55.56% of archivists who responded to question 6 of the survey for Wales produced a story box. Two archivists commented that they found the instructions on how to create a story box clear, but would have appreciated a brief explanation of the general concept and potential benefits of its application.

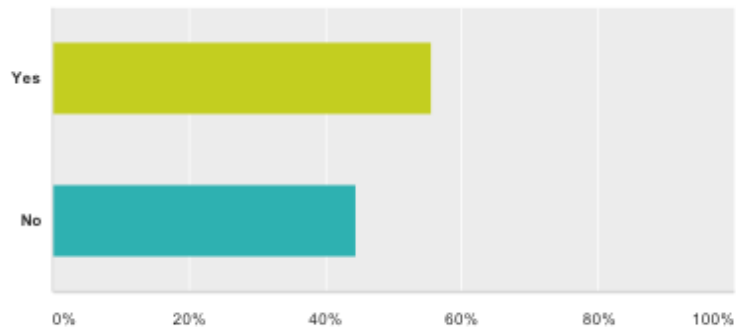


Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	45.76% 27
No	54.24% 32
Total	59

(Figure 6.0 – Explore Your Archive survey for England, Scotland and Ireland)

Q6 Did you produce a Story Box as part of your Explore Your Archive activity?

Answered: 9 Skipped: 3



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	55.56%	5
No	44.44%	4
Total		9

(Figure 6.1 – Explore Your Archive survey for Wales)

The story boxes were used to present unique and interesting documents, usually copies, to the public during a visit or organised event. Story boxes were practical because they created a mobile display allowing archivists to bring a small portion of the archive to the public and actively engage with people outside the archive. For example, Mark Bateson from the Kent History and Library Centre in Maidstone brought the story box to a local school (children were asked to transcribe documents and to fill out a quiz), library (a “coffee talk” was organised so that people could share their views of the story box) and a retirement home (people who might have difficulty accessing the archive were given a chance to engage with the campaign). He was also able to borrow relevant items from local museums to accompany the story box demonstrating the potential to collaborate with local institutions. Mr Bateson also used the story box to engage with a local Roma community. He invited them to create their own story box as a way to make them feel welcome within the community and demonstrate how archives can be created and continue to grow.

Story boxes could also be digitised and linked to social media. For example, the Hampshire Record Office produced "a virtual story box in the form of a film available on YouTube which highlighted the stories you can find amongst [its] archive collections and some of the unusual containers you find those archives housed in." The Glasgow School of Art Archives and Collections Centre asked its users to select documents to create story boxes and labelled each document in the story boxes with QR codes (Quick Response code). Visitors could scan the QR codes with their smart phone and link to related online content such as recordings of interviews with the users who selected the documents. This also shows how archivists can engage with the public during the creative process.

Other Events

In addition to a story box, Flintshire Record Office hosted a very successful bookbinding workshop led by a trained conservator. They received funding for the materials, which allowed them to run it as a free event with room for nine people to subscribe. The workshop was oversubscribed and it was so popular that they decided to run another workshop in May. They were also asked to host more advanced workshops and are planning subsequent courses in the near future.

Gairloch Heritage Museum was faced with a difficult situation as the museum was closed during the launch week. They therefore set up an exhibit at the local community/tourist centre (Gale Centre). The theme was hospitality and tourism (Gairloch has a long history of seasonal tourism), which fit the setting. Three students from the local high school were recruited as volunteers to help set up the displays. The event drew significant attention and the exhibit was left up for an extra week. The Gale Centre also said that they would be willing to host future events. Unfortunately the success of the event has not translated into increased visitors at the archive, but it has raised awareness of the archive service within the community. Their efforts also demonstrate how alternative public spaces can be used to display part of a collection and potentially reach a wider audience.

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Archive set out a series of documents that usually would not be displayed. The theme was based on Tudor times and in order to enhance the event staff members dressed up in Tudor style outfits. They also played music from the time period in order to create a more immersive experience. The archivist interviewed believes that taking a more theatrical approach encouraged visitors to interact with the staff, which created opportunities to discuss the campaign, as well as the collections and services the archive has to offer.

Media

Traditional Media (print, television, and radio)

The traditional media coverage of Explore Your Archive was successful on a local and regional level, but was lacking in terms of national media outlets. Many archives were able to secure coverage in local newspapers and radio, however television coverage was limited. The campaign was featured on ITV London, ITV Wales and Scottish TV (STV). According to the Explore Your Archive Press Office Evaluation the campaign was mentioned about 16 times in the domestic broadcast media, reaching a combined audience of about 10 million.

The campaign was featured in national newspapers including The Guardian (online), The Scotsman (online and print), Independent ie (online and print), and Belfast Telegraph (online and print).

Online Coverage and Social Media

Explore Your Archive was featured on the BBC website as well as online newspapers as indicated in the previous section.

The main use of social media was Twitter using the #exploearchives hashtag, which had been used 3181 times by January 2014. The Explore Your Archive Facebook page did not seem to attract much attention as it has only 208 likes.

Archive services primarily used internal/external websites, Twitter, Facebook, and blogs to promote participation in the campaign via the internet/intranet and social media services. Twitter was the most effective social media tool for sector professionals. For at least one public record office there were issues using social media due to access violations.

The social media presence was most effective within the sector and did not engage the public significantly.

Trade and Family History Features

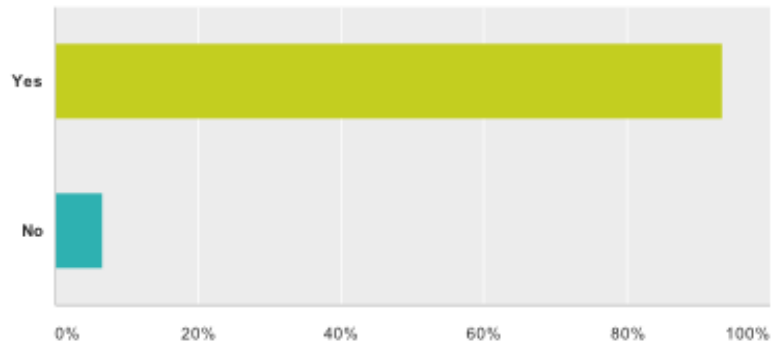
The Explore Your Archive campaign was featured twice in BBC Who Do You Think You Are?, Family Tree, Information World Review, CILIP, Mumsnet, Your Family History, Discover Your Ancestors, NMDC, and Information and Records Management Society.

Website

The majority of archivists who responded to the survey agreed that it is important to have a central public website for the Explore Your Archive campaign in order to portray a cohesive national image. The sector's general opinion is that without the official website it would be difficult to view the campaign as more than a series of localised events. Figure 7.0 shows that 93.22% of archivists who responded to question 22 of the survey for England, Scotland and Ireland think that a central public website is important. Figure 7.1 shows that 75% of archivists who responded to question 17 of the survey for Wales think that a central public website and social media is important for the campaign.

Q22 Do you think a central public website is important for Explore Your Archive?

Answered: 59 Skipped: 36

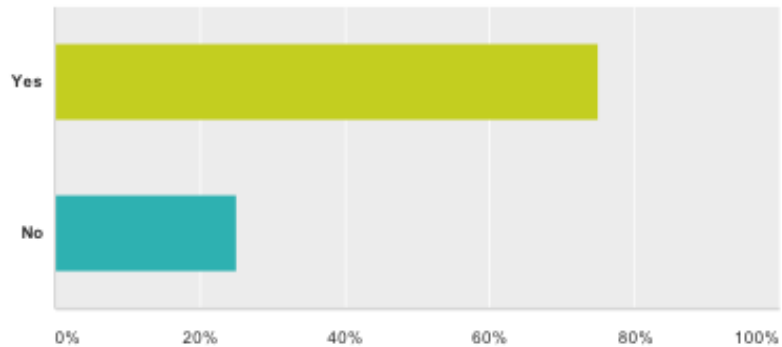


Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Yes	93.22%	55
No	6.78%	4
Total		59

(Figure 7.0 – Explore Your Archive survey for England, Scotland, and Ireland)

Q17 Do you think a central public website and social media activity is important for Explore Your Archive?

Answered: 12 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Yes	75%	9
No	25%	3
Total		12

(Figure 7.1 – Explore Your Archive survey for Wales)

The feedback indicated that the majority of sector professionals liked the overall look of the website and found it easy to use (navigation, submission of materials,

etc.). There were a couple comments suggesting that it would have been better to place the rolling banner at the top of the page, and a couple people said they found the website difficult to navigate. There was also concern that equal weight was not being given to all contributions and that the tendency was to stick with certain events.

There were some issues with the map featured on the website. According to feedback, two archive services did not appear on the map and another was mislabelled. The comment indicated that the labelling issue occurred because it was not possible to have multiple labels in one place.

One archivist commented that the website seemed to be geared towards the sector rather than the public, and that it would be beneficial to make the website more interactive in order to engage the public.

The videos featured on the website received a few positive comments, but there was also negative feedback commenting that the videos did not adequately display the diversity of archive services or users. The 'ambassadors' featured in the videos could have displayed more diversity within society. The current 'ambassadors' represent a demographic that is already familiar with archives and it may be difficult for someone who does not share a similar educational and/or socio-economic background to identify with their interests and concepts of social value. Moreover, the videos focus on the exploration of social history and local/national memory, which promotes a very traditionalist view of archival collections. As discussed in the Toolkit and Resources section, it is important to link the archive sector to a modern agenda and current social issues. This was done successfully to a certain degree with the segment showing how schools can use local archives as a tool to further education.

Overall the website could have been more successful as statistics show that there was minimal traffic, which was most likely from within the sector. There were however international visits to the website showing that the campaign has reached beyond the UK and Ireland.

The Campaign Team

Feedback regarding the support from the campaign team was positive. The primary methods of communication were email and telephone, which sufficed. People would have liked to be contacted earlier, and there were a few cases where archive services would have like to receive the campaign materials earlier.

Some commented that the actual length of the campaign was unclear. They were unsure whether the launch week was the entire campaign or if it was just the beginning.

It has also been suggested that it would be beneficial for the campaign team to communicate directly with senior management of participant organisations. It was also suggested that it would be beneficial for a campaign team member to visit archive services in person to present a stronger image of support, which might help convince upper management that the Explore Your Archive campaign has real backing and that it is something worth taking part in.

The sector found The National Archives talks and regional workshops helpful although it would have been beneficial to have them further in advance of the campaign start date. They provide an important opportunity for sector professional to interact, share ideas and plan collaborative efforts.

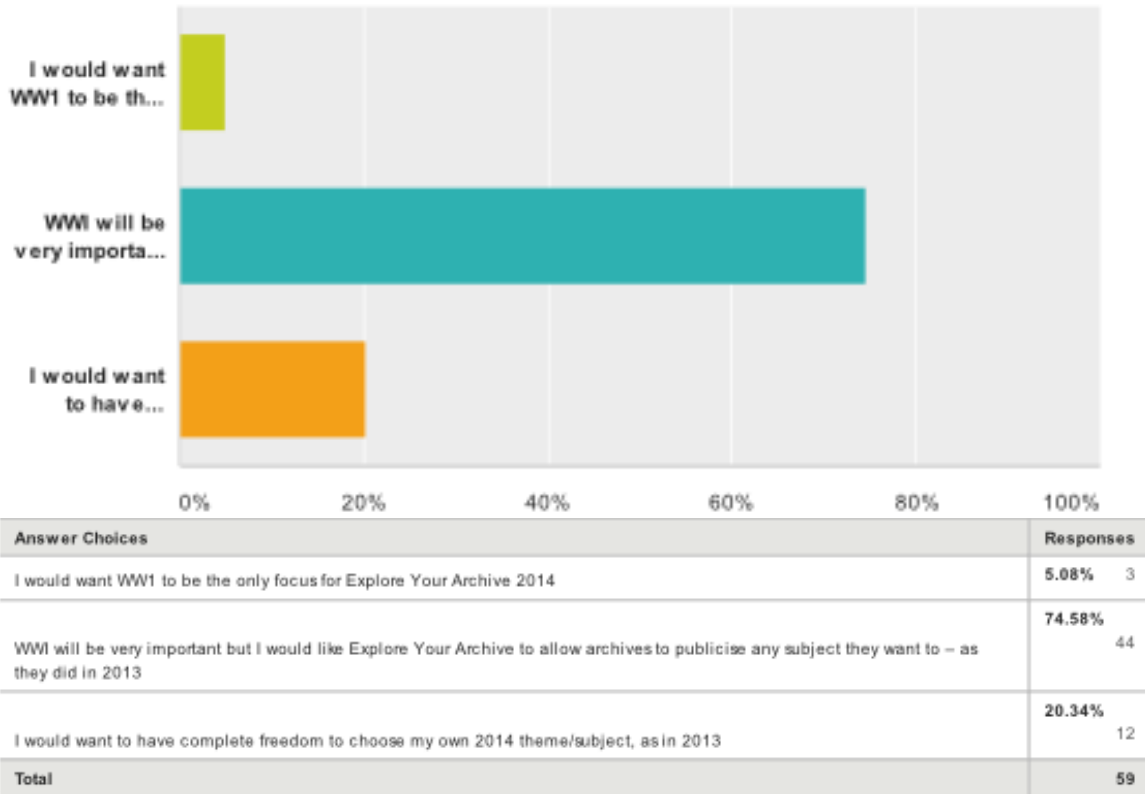
Open Theme vs. First World War Theme for 2014

Archive services liked having the freedom to choose their own theme for Explore Your Archive events. This facilitated participation and reflects the reality that archive services are very diverse in regards to the collections they hold.

The Explore Your Archive campaign team has been considering the possibility of developing a First World War theme for 2014. Figure 8.0 shows that 74.58% of archivists who responded to question 28 of the survey for England, Scotland, and Ireland acknowledge that the First World War will be very important for 2014, but they would like Explore Your Archive to allow archives to publicise any subject they want like the previous year. Figure 8.1 shows that 66.67% of archivists who responded to question 22 of the survey for Wales agree that the First World War will be important for 2014, but would also like the freedom to publicise any subject.

Q28 Thinking about 2014: many archives will be highlighting their First World War collections. Please tick the box that best reflects your view of what the 2014 Explore Your Archive should be

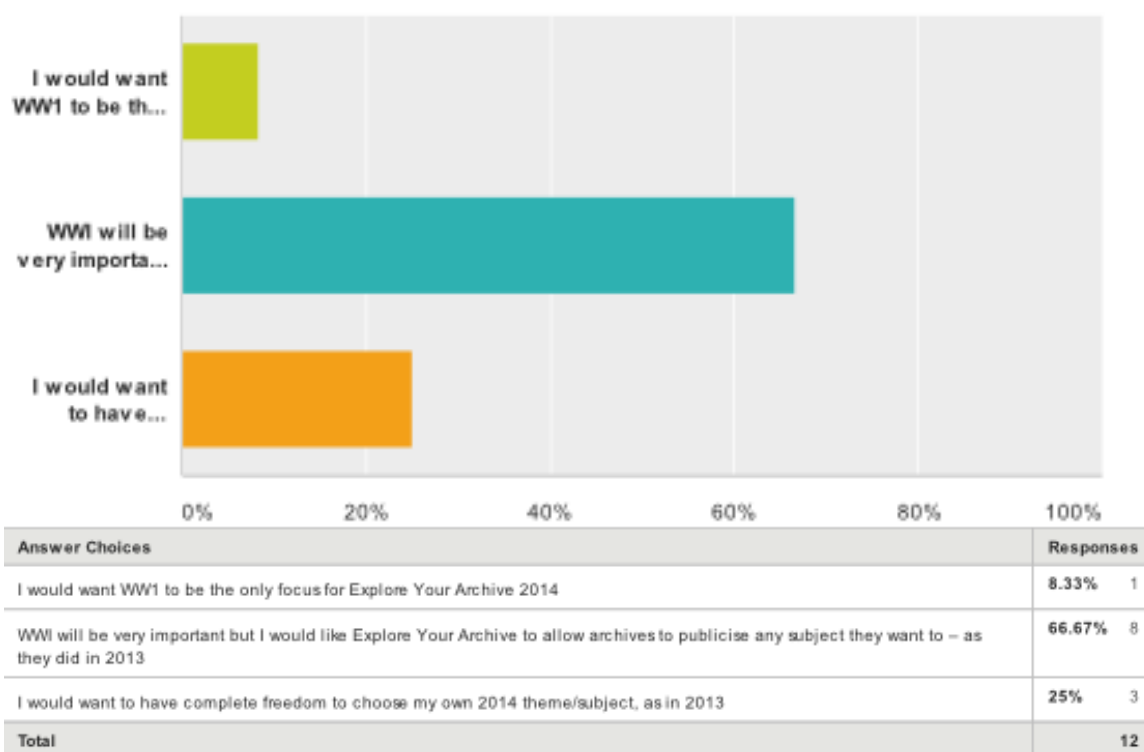
Answered: 59 Skipped: 36



(Figure 8.0 – Explore Your Archive survey for England, Scotland and Ireland)

Q22 Thinking about 2014 - many archives will be highlighting their First World War collections. Please tick the box that best reflects your view of what the 2014 Explore Your Archive should be:

Answered: 12 Skipped: 0



(Figure 8.1 – Explore Your Archive survey for Wales)

Having an open theme for the campaign was perceived as an improvement from the AAC and to revert back to a prescribed theme could have negative effects on participation within the archives sector. There are concerns that adhering to a First World War theme would be detrimental to the campaign’s ability to stand out amongst the plethora of events and activities that will be doing similar things. Having a set theme also risks alienating archive services that do not have relevant collections. Some archive services commented that it is quite late to set a theme and that they will have already held First World War themed events before the Explore Your Archive campaign.

If Explore Your Archive was to select the First World War as a theme archive services have expressed that it must be approached cautiously and sensitively. Moreover, some archivists said that they would appreciate guidance on how to handle the theme in relation to the Explore Your Archive campaign.

Why did archives not participate?

Generally archive services that did not take part were unable to do so because they lacked the resources, the timing was too inconvenient and/or the institution was going through major structural changes.

Feedback indicated some archive services were unsure that the potential benefits justified participating in the Explore Your Archive campaign. At least one archive service found that the story box concept did not fit with its community engagement and that it already had several activities planned for November, including Kids Taking Over in Museums Day. Another comment indicated uncertainty regarding the potential benefits of the campaign, apart from an additional distribution stream for press releases, and that future participation would require a clearer understanding of the projected outcomes.

Conclusion

Overall, feedback within the archive sector was positive and indicated that the 2013 Explore Your Archive campaign was a significant improvement on the Archives Awareness Campaign. Moreover, archivists within the UK and Ireland generally feel that it is important to make a coordinated effort to promote the value of archives and engage the public.

Explore Your Archive is now established within the archive sector, and the 2013 campaign was a success in raising the profile of archives on a local level. Moving forward the campaign must find new and exciting ways to engage more dynamically with the public and attract national media coverage. Now that a solid framework has been created it is time to build upon that framework in 2014.

Recommendations for 2014

Explore Your Archive Brand

- Consider a simplified alternative to the current logo (with 14 verbs) that is easier to integrate into posters, visual bulletins and social media posts
- Working with Archive Wales to create a slogan that translates to Welsh
- Advice on how to combine the Explore Your Archive brand with already existing branding initiatives (toolkit)
- Clearer instructions on when and when not to use the brand (toolkit)

Toolkit and Resources

- Shorten the length if possible
- Provide specific examples of how to participate (examples of successful events from 2013)
- Migrate the Microsoft PowerPoint templates to Word

- Avoid using PDF files because they are difficult to manipulate
- Ensure that archives are consistently featured in posters and other promotional materials
- Include advice on how to propose press releases to marketing teams
- Create incentive for filling out feedback forms
- Provide examples of how to include the public in the creation and implementation of events; encourage feedback sessions for volunteers, which could potentially yield increased public feedback (participatory evaluation)

Launch Week

- Clarification as to what exactly is meant by a launch week
- Consider the proximity of the week to other November events such as Takeover/Taking Over Museums Day, Book Week Scotland, Remembrance Day and the lead up to Christmas

Activities and Events

- Provide a clear definition of what is meant by a story box; emphasise public involvement in the creation of story boxes
- Provide more practical information on how to organise events
- Encourage hands on workshop events
- Encourage public involvement in the creation of events as opposed to packaging documents and simply presenting the public; emphasise including the public in the process of discovery and not just in the viewing of what has been discovered by the archivist
- Encourage crowdsourcing as a way of engaging the public in a more meaningful and productive way (ex: volunteers from local schools to help with events/activities)
- Provide ideas of how to collaborate with similar organisations

Media

- The campaign needs national coverage in order to create a cohesive national image (perhaps a national competition would result in a national story)
- Create more of a presence on Facebook
- Consider the development of a mobile application in order to increase public accessibility and interaction. Possible features/functionality:
 - Document(s) of the day
 - Current events/activities taking place at archive services
 - Find an archive near you
- A more diverse and/or high profile group of ambassadors

Website

- Consider featuring the rolling banner and current events more prominently (top of the web page)
- Consider including a thematic search function
- Consider including an element of interaction to engage the public (ex: a space for public feedback)
- Resolve issues with the map
- Videos: feature a more diverse group of individuals and how archive services are relevant to current social issues
 - Surrey History Centre linked its mental health and asylum records to LGBT month
 - Kent History and Library Centre is using the archive to create a more cohesive community by encouraging underrepresented groups to create their own collections

Campaign Team

- Initiate contact earlier
- Ensure that materials are sent promptly
- Communicate directly with senior management
- Make on-site visits
- Organise talks and workshops further in advance
- Consider organising regional seminars to encourage interaction and collaboration between sector professionals

First World War Theme

- Maintain the option to create and publicise any theme if the First World War is selected as the theme for 2014
- Provide guidance on how to approach the First World War theme sensitively
- Find an aspect of the First World War that relates to archives (ex: record keeping during the First World War); or a specific aspect of the First World War that helps the campaign stand out

Appendix A: Sector activity

The campaign was embraced enthusiastically by archives, with over 220 organisations holding a variety of events in-house and online including talks, workshops, open days and exhibitions. There were many unusual activities including:

Cumbria Archive and Local Studies Centre's display about Cumbrian pioneer of women's rights - Catherine Marshall (1880-1961). In the years leading up to the First World War, Catherine Marshall emerged as one of the leading members of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies; she was renowned as a brilliant organiser and an effective lobbyist for the women's rights movement.

Berkshire Record Office's '*Downton Abbey*' type exhibition featuring records relating to the Victorian and Edwardian owners of Bisham Abbey. Bisham Abbey was not a grand house as *Downton Abbey* but the Vansittart Neales struggled financially to keep the estate going. The joys and sorrows of family life come alive in their diaries, photographs and drawings.

Strathclyde University Archives' exhibition on Verity Lambert the first female producer at the BBC and founding producer of Doctor Who and Jonathon Creek.

London Borough of Barking and Dagenham's series of 'Story Boxes' focusing on the theme of Workers Rights including one on the role of women in the workplace which will be exhibited March-May 2014.

Cornwall Record Office's exhibit about miner, Richard Scoble. His story was unearthed when Chloe Phillips, Learning Officer at the Record Office decided to research some letters about a migrant miner and ended up travelling to rural Idaho, meeting his descendants, and uncovering a connection to J. Edgar Hoover. The letters which were found in the archive cover from when Scoble left Cornwall in 1874 and continue until 1885, but they have managed to piece together the rest of his story until his death in 1933. He moved first to Nevada and then Idaho as part of a wave of Cornish miners who went overseas.

Victoria and Albert Museum's behind the scenes tour looking at the recently acquired Vivien Leigh archive and Paul Scofield's Oscar for Best Actor; as well as a number of colourful individuals and incidents that has helped to shape the Victoria and Albert Museum over the last 150 years.

SOAS, University of London's (The School of Oriental and African Studies) exhibition on the 200th anniversary of the birth of Dr David Livingstone, explorer and humanitarian campaigner. Tying in with the exhibition, '*The life and afterlife of David Livingstone: exploring missionary archives*', SOAS archivists created a 'Story Box' based on a box of medical equipment used by Livingstone.

The National Archives

As part of the week, on Saturday 22 November, The National Archives and the Friends of The National Archives ran a day for members of the public to experience the different ways archives can be used to inspire creativity. Visitors explored some of the strange, quirky and surprising stories in our collections and learned about collection care. A series of short films demonstrated how others had been inspired by archival records. In all, around 85 people attended and were given the opportunity to discover how The National Archives work.

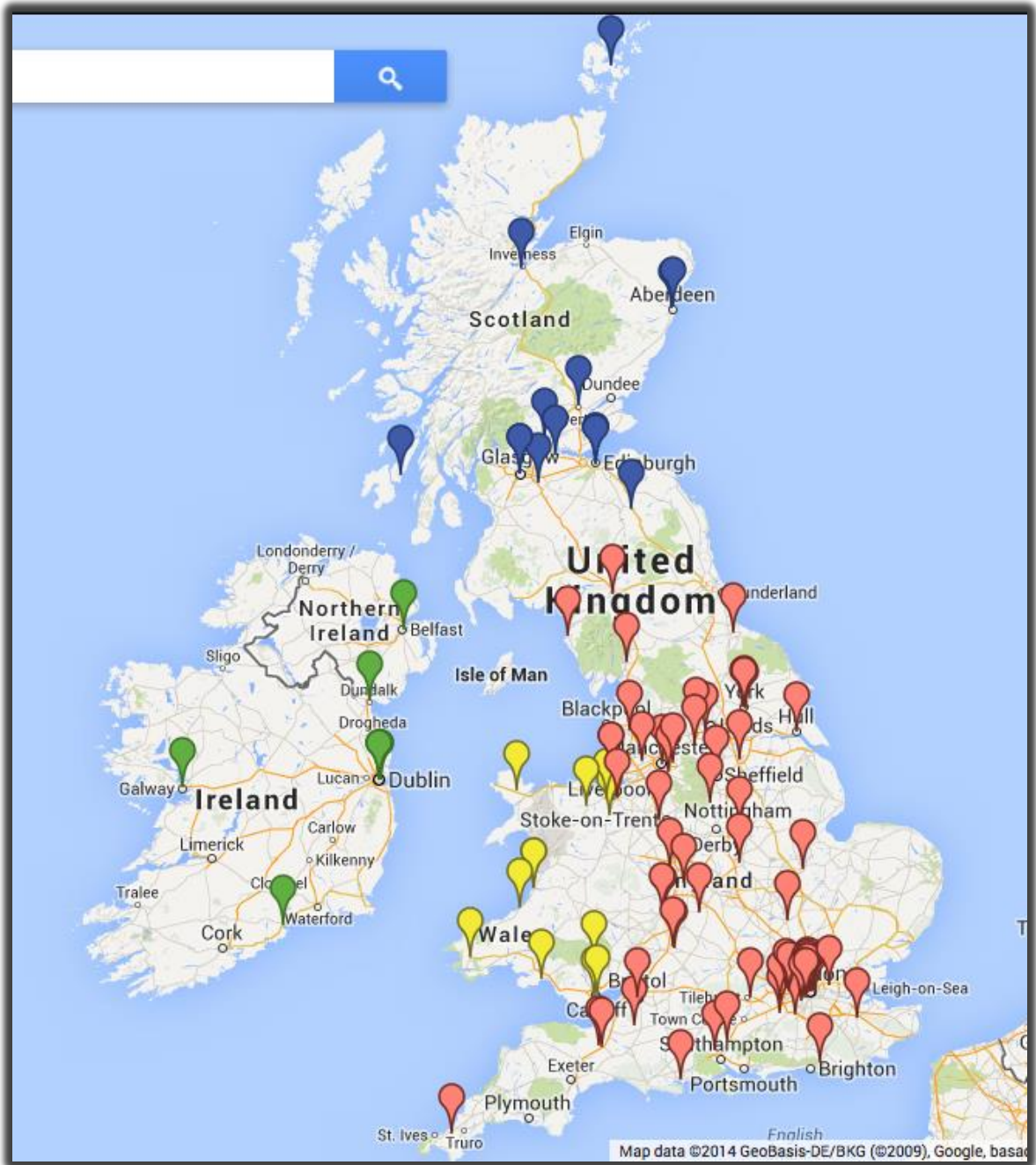
Appendix B: Key Stories flagged by media

The focus of the coverage was wide ranging and the stories the media picked up on included:

- Mystery of 18th century music book/album: a leather-bound songbook found by an archivist sorting through a catalogue of collections in the Watt Library in Greenock, Inverclyde. Historians are trying to trace the mysterious author. For example: [Mystery songbook from 1709 found in Greenock.](#)
- Cumbria's celebration of Explore Your Archive: Cumbria County Council archivists highlighted the lives of four very different Cumbrians through story boxes. This included James Freel, a Second World War hero from Barrow who was awarded a medal for Conspicuous Gallantry in 1946 after taking part in underwater warfare. Famed fellwalker and author Alfred Wainwright, renowned local stargazer and scientist John Fletcher Miller as well as Cumbrian pioneer of women's rights, Catherine Marshall. For instance: [Step back in time as Cumbria celebrates Explore Your Archive.](#)
- Dudley Borough Archives pre launch event: preview event to explore Dudley's new archives centre. [Visitors are invited to a sneak preview event to explore Dudley's new archives centre.](#)
- Explore the Archives - Made in Peterborough: Vivacity Archives Service's box of curios, documents, journals and paper cuttings all about Peterborough's industry in days gone by, to show the kinds of things that can be discovered in the archive. For example: [Explore Peterborough's history with library archives.](#)
- St Edmund Hall's Second World War archive: Documents, letters and cuttings about [Oxford University](#) college St Edmund Hall students who fought in the Second World War. E.g. [Archives tell story of brave students.](#)
- Rarely seen glimpses into the past at North Yorkshire County Records Office: A collection of personal diaries and sketchbooks from across the centuries, curated by North Yorkshire County Records Office which went on public display for the first time at the [Northallerton](#) archive. For instance: [Rarely seen glimpses into the past.](#)

- Worcester to go back in time to when *Kays and Co* ruled the mail-order world: The history behind (Kays and Co) the company that rose to become a pioneer of mail-order shopping at [The Hive](#). See: [Back in time to the world of mail order – Dudley New](#).

Appendix C: Map of Explore Your Archive Evaluation Survey Responses (England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland)



(England→red; Wales→yellow; Scotland→blue; Ireland→green)