

ARCHIVE LEARN'T

Why Your Archive Should Work With Young People



Introduction

Archives are for everyone, every group can find something that interests them, they just need to become aware of what archives can offer them. Encouraging young people to engage with archives and records can provide a range of benefits to young people themselves, educators and the archive sector as a whole.

If you are thinking about collaborating with schools, or hoping to convince your organisation that there are benefits to embarking on a project with the education sector, this resource is for you. As record keepers, the main audience of our work is our users. We begin by focusing on young people as archive users and what benefits that brings to them, before moving onto list the benefits to our services. Find out what benefits working with young people could bring to your organisation.

How to Use This Resource

Use this resource...

- If you are interested in working with young people and the education sector but are unsure what the benefits would be, read on to gain an introductory understanding.
- If you want to convince your service leadership team that working with young people will bring a range of benefits, use this resource to build your own advocacy document.
- If you want to convince those working in the education sector of the value of working with the archive sector, use the content of this resource and combine it with the information in the 'Archives as an Educational Tool' resource to show the possibilities.

One in a Series

This resource is the first in a series designed to encourage and support archives in collaborating with the education sector. The series consists of the following resources;

- 1- Why your Archive should Work with Young People**
- 2- Archives as an Educational Tool
- 3- Ways to Contact Educators
- 4- Case Study
- 5- Additional Resources



1. Belonging and Representation

Archives are a great tool for helping young people find a sense of belonging and establish a sense of identity based on where they come from / live.

BELONGING

Learning about where they come from through records will help young people...

- Feel connected, represented, empowered, and supported within a community
- Find opportunities to mix with each other and socialise
- Strengthen their identity, pride, and understanding of where they come from
- Provide connection to where they live and show how it has changed over time

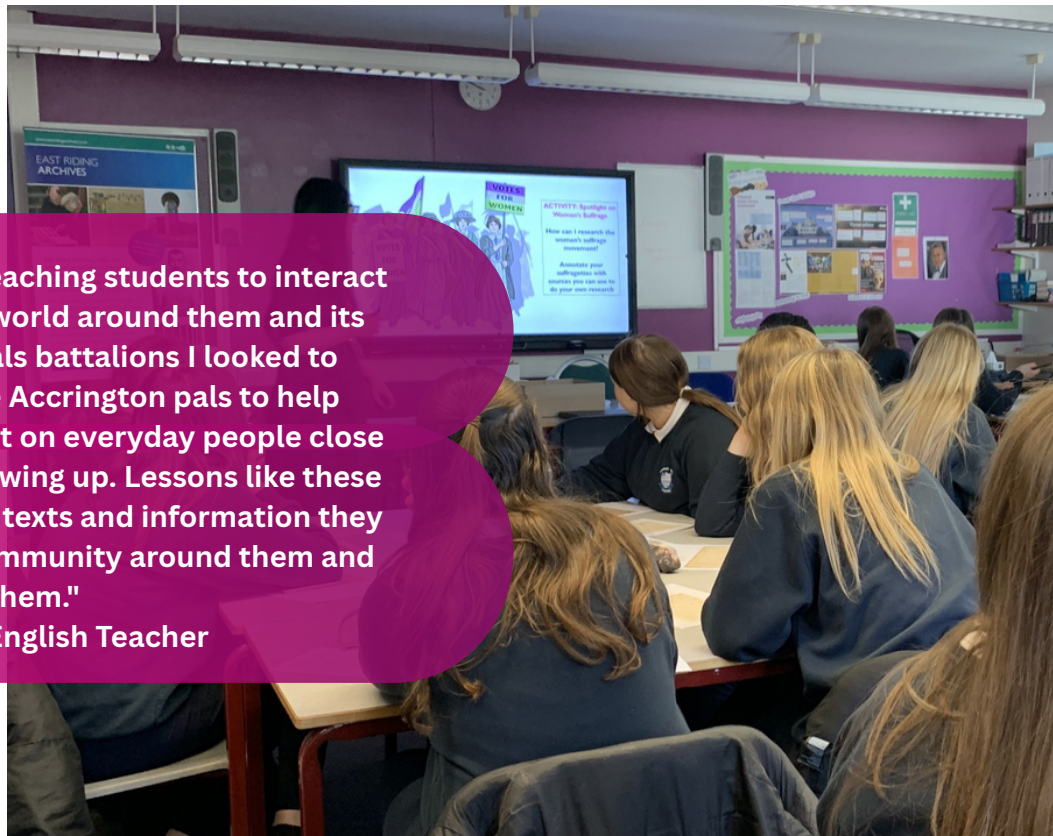
REPRESENTATION

Introducing young people to archives and records at school age will help...

- Remove pre-conceived barriers that make young people think they would not be welcome
- Encourage them to visit archives and learn about representation in collections
- Demonstrate relevance of archives as resources for their future studies
- Validate children and young people as researchers

"As an English teacher, I am teaching students to interact and communicate with the world around them and its history. For a lesson on pals battalions I looked to archives for records of the Accrington pals to help students really see the impact on everyday people close to where my students are growing up. Lessons like these help students connect to the texts and information they are studying, but also the community around them and before them."

- Rachel Smith, English Teacher



2. Support With Learning

Archives provide both educators and record keepers with a set of unique tools which align with all curriculums used across the UK and Ireland. When used correctly they can bring a wide range of subjects to life, spark imagination and encourage creativity.

CURRICULUM

Archives can support curriculums in the following ways....

- Archives provide a real life way to develop research skills
- Introduces primary sources in a tangible way
- Researching online and learning about digital records supports digital skills building
- Help to build confidence and creativity

SKILLS

Working with archives will help young people develop and build on the following skills...

- Develops critical thinking
- Promotes independent research
- Improves literacy and communication
- Encourages creativity
- Provides evidence to add to skills / experience section of CVs and University applications



"As a science student, I didn't really expect to use an archive, but in a recent project, I found the records from the first major study into my subject (elephants) were in the university archive. I went along to view them, and found it really interesting to see how 200 years on, we're still so far away from knowing everything about these animals!" - Phoebe Urmston, - Science Student

3. Benefits to the Archive

The reasons above also benefit the archive, as providing a useful service to our stakeholders is the main focus of our work. However, there are many more reasons for archive services to collaborate with the education sector.

- Young people are future service users. Engaging them early helps secure our long term user base.
- Every new user raises the profile of the service resulting in reaching new audiences and attracting new visitors, which helps build service sustainability.
- Engaging young people early increases the chance of student work experience placements. This will lead to a diversified workforce over time.
- Strengthening an archive's position in the community by working with young people could help with community group and local heritage group engagement.
- Projects with young people help support an archive's application for Archives Service Accreditation or maintaining accreditation if already achieved.
- Archives can build partnerships with teachers, colleges, youth services etc., which creates potential for collaborative projects in the future.
- Youth engagement can often be a priority for funders archives may be interested in applying to.
- Work with young people helps bust the myths that archives are secretive places reserved for academics.
- Working with young people provides an opportunity to shape historical narratives or fill collections gaps.
- Archive services can also connect with underrepresented voices, by encouraging young people to contribute to collections via contemporary collecting initiatives.

