



# National Archives News

January 2008

Vol. 2 No. 1

(The Newsletter of the Archives and Records Management Unit)



**Virgin Islands Archivists visit  
Microfilming firm**

# Visit to Microfilming Firm

**Government Archivist Christopher Varlack and Chief Records Management Officer Verna Penn-Moll** visited the Puerto Rican based Professional Microfilm Imaging Inc. towards the end of 2007, to observe its operations and the capabilities of its equipment. As a result, some basic equipment to set up a Micrographics section in the ARM Unit was ordered in December. The intention is to recruit 2 persons to be trained in micrographics in order to tackle the long-term preservation of records now more than 50 years old. Recruitment is, of course, dependent on whether the 2008 Budget will approve the implementation of such an initiative.

## **Why are we taking the Microfilm route? Is that not an outdated form of preservation??**

Microfilming is still being considered for preserving records in this era of computers and digitization. Two of the world's leading National Archives still use microfilm as the safest form of long term records preservation today despite the great strides in computer technology and digitization. They are the National Archives (TNA) of the UK and the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) of the United States. Because of that we are able to access Virgin Islands records dating back to the 1600s preserved on microfilm in the UK.

Here are some specific reasons in favour of microfilming:

- Microfilm is a low-cost, reliable, long-term standardized image storage medium
- The equipment needed to view microfilm is simple, consisting of light and magnification.
- The medium has a life-expectancy of hundreds of years
- Digital images, on the other hand, consist of a wide variety of machine codes that require computer hardware and software to be made visible.
- Digital images are easily lost especially when migrating them from obsolete hardware
- The cost of maintaining microfilm is small compared with that of digital images.

- Microfilm only needs shelving in a cool, dry place for a very long period of time.
- Microfilming is appropriate for records which are too fragile to handle frequently
- For permanently valuable records, microfilm is the best storage medium

Microfilm is a unique backup medium because it can be read by the eye, and like paper can be viewed by anyone with a light source and magnifier. Today's technology makes it possible to easily digitize information from your microfilm for viewing and convenient distribution over computer networks, fax equipment and other types of devices.

## **What about digitizing?**

Digital images may prove valuable for immediate access to facilitate the delivery of frequently requested items. Therefore all accountable organizations should be committed to keeping up with the digital technology and applying it experimentally; with newer records especially since most government information is now being created electronically. The electronic medium is ideal for disseminating information about archives, for example, catalogues, indexes, calendars etc.

# **Records Management**

## **Appraisal Update**

We regret to announce that the 'records appraisal' project had to be halted because of the lack of an appropriate space in which to work. The temporary records centre (at McNamara) needs extensive repairs to the ceiling and roof, and working in the Basement of the Central Administration Building is affecting the health of officers. Early repairs to the McNamara facility are dependent on the availability of funding between now and March 2008.

## **Annual Review of Files and File Census**

Permanent Secretaries, Heads of Departments and all Records Personnel are reminded of DGO CIRCULAR NO. 1 OF 2007 outlining the details and giving directions on conducting the annual review of files. The Circular should be in the Red RM Binder. If you need a copy it can also be accessed online. Please call the ARMU at ext. 3044 or 2564 or email Christopher Varlack at [cvarlack@gov.vg](mailto:cvarlack@gov.vg) for details on how to obtain a copy.

# Out reach Activity

## History award initiative gets accolades

The Deputy Governor, Mr. Elton Georges and visiting Consultant Mr. Kelvin Smith of the International Archives and Records Management Trust presented five persons and organizations with awards totalling \$2000 for their work submitted to the History Research Initiative. The awardees were the Elmore Stoutt High School Drama Society, the St Williams Catholic Church, Mrs Janice George-Harris, Mr Justin Hodge and the Carrot Bay Progressive Committee.

The Deputy Governor thanked all who made the initiative the success that it was, especially the judges and the participants. He appealed to the public to participate in the 2008 programme, which will be announced in the New Year.

The programme is an initiative of the Archives Unit to illustrate the value of Archives in the society, to encourage Virgin Islanders to do more history research and to present it in various forms of written and oral expression. A committee headed by Dr. Patricia Turnbull of the ad hoc Archives Committee interviewed the participants and judged their submissions. A detailed report on the reviews and interviews is available for reference upon request.

## Concerns raised by researchers

**Maurice Donovan** emphasized the difficulty of doing research here when compared to holdings in other locations. Individuals in organizations and most Government offices selfishly hold documents as if they personally own them. He urged the Archives Unit to acquire documents for public use which some offices are currently hoarding.

**Mrs. McAnaney of the St. Williams Catholic Church** would like to get advice from the Archives Unit on how to preserve their old documents.

**Mrs. George Harris** bewails the absence of local history in the school curriculum and the failure to focus on the value of research throughout the education system.

**Mr. Justin Hodge** applauds the Archives Unit for recognizing the value and role of artistes and researchers in nation-building.

# INFORMATION INDUSTRY NEWS

## **The National Archives UK**

### **Public Sector Information**

Operating from within The National Archives, the Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI) is at the heart of information policy, setting standards, delivering access and encouraging the re-use of public sector information. OPSI provides a wide range of services to the public, information industry, government and the wider public sector relating to finding, using, sharing and trading information.

The new organization, under the banner of The National Archives, is raising the stakes in information management across government. Strong information management is essential for the effective working of government, providing excellent services, joined-up policy making, and strengthening public confidence and trust. The National Archives, through its merger with OPSI, has expertise across the information management spectrum and is well placed to lead this agenda. In supporting better information management, the National Archives will continue its work in preserving history for future generations.

### **Archives/Records Consultant Visited, Dec 13-23, 2007**

Mr. Kelvin Smith from the International Archives and Records Management Trust was engaged to develop a proposal for a dedicated archives building and an integrated archives and records management programme in the Virgin Islands. The main areas for consideration in the proposal are: governance and implementation structures for the records and archives management programme; a dedicated archives building, including site, design, cost, phases, services, equipment and staff; and a records centre for inactive records, including policies and procedures, control systems, staff, and training.

Mr. Smith who is a Consultant with the National Archives for 40 years is the honorary secretary of the Commonwealth Archives and Records Managers Association. He travels extensively, and advises on archives projects in African and Asian-Pacific countries. We are looking forward to his proposal/report.

### **Virgin Islands Archivists visited Antigua Archives**

On Friday, November 9, 2007, Chief Records Manager Verna Penn Moll and Government Archivist Christopher Varlack visited the Antigua Archives, one of the few purpose built archives repositories in the Eastern Caribbean States. The objective was to

see a functioning repository in action, to observe the scale of accommodation and use of space, staffing and training, services and programmes.

## Feed Back

“It gives me great pleasure to reflect on the undying effort of the Deputy Governor’s Office and the National Archives and Records Management Unit. You have made a vital step in allowing the public to participate in nation building through research.”

Justin Hodge.

“I extend sincere gratitude to the Archives Unit Initiative 2007 for recognition of my work, "Holiness Our Heritage". Congratulations are in order to the staff and committee members who worked diligently in making the Virgin Islands History Award initiative a resounding success... "Without a vision, the people perish." Your vision has become the impetus for winds of change -a change in the way we view and value our history, our heritage.” Inspired, Janice George-Harris

“The Elmore Stouff High School Drama Society thanks the Archives Unit Initiative 2007 for recognizing our production of "Anansi". It is gratifying to know our efforts were appreciated and that we have contributed to this historical event.” ESHS.

## Quote for Today

"The National Archives, UK is well known and highly regarded for the work we do in safeguarding and illustrating British history. However, doing this requires us to be a lot more than just a historical government archive". Natalie Ceeney, Chief Executive,

## Friends of the Archives

The objective of the Friends is to provide financial and other support as required to the National Archives. Please become involved today!

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# National Archives News

(The Newsletter of the Archives and Records Management Unit)

February/March 2008

Vol. 2 No. 2/3

## Winning the Victoria Cross Award, Shipwrights, Boats, Captains and Sailors



We Salute Our Heroes in  
Black History Month!



# Winning the Victoria Cross Award

On the 24th June 1867, **Private Samuel Hodge of the 4th West Indian Regiment** was presented with the Victoria Cross medal in British Honduras (now Belize), nearly one year after the merited action. He was born in Tortola in the British Virgin Islands and was the first soldier of African descent to receive the award. He never fully recovered from his wounds and died less than seven months after receiving his medal. His remains lie in an unmarked grave in Belize Military Cemetery. It is believed that Hodge's medal was buried with him.

However, every year in Jamaica, Private Hodge along with William Gordon, the only other black recipient of the award, is honoured. In the Virgin Islands, Hodge was honoured by being included in the Millennium stamp series in 2000. Further research on Private Hodge is continuing.



**The Action:** On 30 June 1866 at Tubabecelong, near the River Gambia, West Africa, at the storming and capture of the stockaded town, Private Hodge and another man, who was afterwards killed, volunteered to hew down the stockade. After the Colonel had effected an entrance, Private Hodge followed him through the town, opening with his axe two barricaded gates and so allowing the support troops to enter. On reaching the other side of the town Private Hodge was acclaimed as the bravest man in the regiment, but he was very severely



wounded. He later achieved the rank of **Lance-Corporal**. Details of the award are recorded in the **London Gazette, 4th January 1867**.

**The Origin:** The Victoria Cross was instituted by Royal Warrant of Queen Victoria on 29th of June 1856. It is awarded to "those officers or men who served us in the presence of the enemy and that shall have performed some single act of valour or devotion to the country." The decoration consists of a bronze Maltese Cross, which, until 1942, was made from the metal of Russian guns captured at Sebastopol, in the Crimean War. It is worn with a red ribbon by recipients in the army and with a blue ribbon for recipients in the Navy.

## **VIRGIN ISLANDS SHIPWRIGHTS, BOATS, CAPTAINS AND SAILORS**

The shipwrights, captains and sailors of the Virgin Islands were regarded as some of the most ingenious in the world. They ploughed the seas of the Caribbean and beyond and conducted high profile cargo traffic in neighbouring islands and as far away as Santo Domingo, Haiti, Cuba and Jamaica.

In fact as far back as the 1774 a Tortola Commercial Fleet engaged in a roaring inter-Colonial trade even before slavery was abolished in 1834. The fleet, owned by Virgin Islanders and crewed by slaves later consisted of 51 sloops, schooners and scallops sailed to Jamaica,, Antigua, Barbados, Dominica, St. Eustatius , Curacao, Philadelphia, New York, Newfoundland, Baltimore; with cargoes of Lignum Vitae, boards, bread and flour, candles, codfish., shingles, meats, rum etc...

Below are the bare bones of continuing research on these heroes: Boat Captains. Shipwrights will follow in the next issue. We are building databases on subjects of national historical significance for future reference. We are therefore soliciting the assistance of the general public with this task. We need you, the relatives, friends and acquaintances of these heroes to help us fill in the blanks. Please call or email the Unit with any pertinent information.



## **Captains of SLOOPS AND SCHOONERS**

### **Anegada**

Ira Smith  
Ludvick Varlack  
Ozorio Norman  
Lansewell Vanterpool  
Lincoln Vanterpool  
Emilio Vanterpool  
Elbert Vanterpool  
Ogeste George

### **Cooper Island**

Cornelius Leonard

### **Jost Van Dyke**

Wallace Chinnery

### **Salt Island**

Clarence Smith  
Norwell Durante

### **Virgin Gorda**

Everad Smith  
Osmond Stevens  
Elvin Flax  
Godfrey George  
Howard O'Neal

### **Central Tortola**

#### **Baughers Bay**

Ernest Pickering  
Walter Malone

#### **Road Town**

Carlton de Castro

### **Eastern Tortola**

Claremond Floyd Davies (24/5/1888 - 3/9/1968)  
Haldane Davies (3/11/1916+)  
Carris Penn (17/.3/.1906 – 17/2/1986)  
Adolph Penn  
Milford Chalwell (20/6/1906 – 12/4/1966)  
Edward Frett (16/5/1912 - 11/6/1992)

Augustus Alexander, Ivan and Maxwell Lettsome  
Evermond Rabsatt (14/12/1914 +)  
Gad Malone (20/8/1915 -4 /10/1944)  
Fritz Penn  
Victor Penn  
Dennis Potter (5/6/1905- 5/1959)  
Joseph Smith (17/5/1900 -11/11/1988)  
Warren Smith  
Herman Thomas (28/12/1929 +)  
Bim Thomas (James Osmond Thomas) 1868-1952)  
Milton Thomas (26/3/1869-28/8/1938)  
Anthony Stoutt  
Wattley Thomas  
Garnett Wheatley

### **Northern and Western Tortola**

Rudolph Hodge  
John Hodge  
Bristol Frazer  
Monroe (“Sonny”) Henley  
Warren Stoutt  
Owie Scatliffe

## **Captains of MOTOR/SAIL BOATS**

### **Anegada**

Kenneth Faulkner

### **Baughers Bay**

Ernest Pickering

### **Road Town**

Wendell Parsons  
Ira Smith

### **Eastern Tortola**

Reynold Osmond Davies  
Ebert Lettsome  
Basil Penn, Jr.  
Glanville Chalwell

### **Western Tortola**

Warren Stoutt

# Records Management

1. All Departments and Units should have in their possession a copy or copies of the Records Management Procedures Manual. Both hard copies and electronic (PDF) copies were delivered to all government users. Copies could also be downloaded from the Deputy Governor's website.
2. RM Training modules for a) New recruits and b) Administrative records personnel, are being developed in conjunction with the Training Division
3. RM Seminars with staffs of individual Records Offices will continue as time allows. Two such seminars were recently conducted with the ES High School and Ministry of Education.

## Outreach: Community participation and awareness

### 1. DG's History Awards Programme 2008:

**The theme is:** "Historical Sites in the Virgin Islands". The purpose of the programme is to promote, encourage and recognise local history research in the Virgin Islands. The general public is invited to list historical sites in a particular locality and to do an in-depth research study on one of the sites. Sites may be on land or at sea, and may cover any subject or period, such as ecclesiastical, naval, plantation, or pre-plantation. Application forms and guidelines are available from the Help Desk, DGO and the Archives Unit., Tele: 468-3701 ext. 2365, 3044 or 2562.

**2. Interactive research on Heritage topics:** Persons are encouraged to call or write in information relating to the Unit's on-going research projects.

**3. Microfilm reader Use:** Researchers wishing to search the microfilm collection are reminded to make bookings at least 24 hours in advance as there is only one microfilm reader and space is very tight.

**4. Microfilm additions:** We have just received Virgin Islands Original correspondence dating from 1711- 1872.



## Quote for Today

"The prime occupation, therefore, must be with maximising the traditional boating, repair and other skills into genuine growth paths for the indigens, so that Virgin islanders could leap forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century with confident response and pride."

- 1987

"The latest technologies and gadgets make it incredibly easy for your data to be stolen from right under your nose, unless you take steps to protect it."

- Nick Lowe, Records Management Society.

## Friends of the Archives

The objective of the Friends is to provide financial and other support as required to the National Archives. Please become involved today!

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# National Archives News

*The Newsletter of the Archives and Records Management Unit*

*April 2008*

*Vol. 2 No. 3*



## Deputy Governor History Research Awards

From L. Visiting Consultant Kelvin Smith, Deputy Governor, E. Georges, Ulric Pilgrim and Velma Chung for the Carrot Bay Progressive Committee Genealogy project, C. Varlack in background.

# Records Management

## Continuing Education

### RM Workshops

In collaboration with Training Division the ARMU is conducting workshops throughout the year to target both Junior and Senior officers. The Government Archivist is the facilitator.

Junior officers who are directly (and indirectly) responsible for the maintenance Of public records will receive training covering the following areas:

- ✓ *Records vs. Documents*
- ✓ *Establishing an efficient records management system*
- ✓ *Minimizing the damage to files*
- ✓ *Practical tips to maximize space*
- ✓ *Records Management as a lifestyle*
- ✓ *Sharing the workload*
- ✓ *Health and safety – protect yourself*
- ✓ *And more ...*

After the Course participants will know the basics of records management with particular emphasis on its application in the Virgin Islands Government. The sessions are designed to give practical guidance to records managers and other officers.

Senior Officers who are Supervisors, Team Leaders, Middle Managers and Senior Managers will receive training in the following areas:

- ✓ *Providing leadership for the records management team*
- ✓ *Legal implications of poor records management*
- ✓ *Financial implications of poor records <sup>management</sup>*
- ✓ *Disaster planning*



- ✓ *Health and safety – minimizing injury and illness*
- ✓ *Delegating records management responsibilities*
- ✓ *Improving records management in the office*
- ✓ *And more ...*

After the Course Officers will know techniques to encourage office wide participation in records management; and the implications of records management on productivity, accountability and overall management. Additionally, they will gain a sense of the changing landscape of records management standards and legislation in other jurisdictions and the impact on The Virgin Islands.

## **Classification Scheme for official records.**

The draft File Classification Scheme for general subjects is posted on the Government Portal under captions- Class 2&3; and Memo Class File All responsible officers are requested to look at it and send in amendments and comments by April 30. If you have problems accessing please contact us.

## **Are you “ARMed?”**

### **Here are some tips to prepare you for RM battle:**

1. All routine financial receipts and vouchers seven (7) years and older should be weeded from current and inactive record stores in preparation for destruction. A record of the series and the relevant dates must be kept. Please see appropriate form to be filled in on the DGO website.

2. There are some records that do not need to be kept at all. Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) defines types of records, which staff may routinely destroy in the normal course of business. SOP usually applies to information that is duplicated, unimportant or only of short-term facilitative value. They include:

- ✓ *With compliments' slips*
- ✓ *Catalogues and trade journals*

- ✓ *Telephone message slips*
- ✓ *Non-acceptance of invitations*
- ✓ *Trivial electronic mail messages/ notes that are not related to agency business*
- ✓ *Requests for stock information such as maps, plans or advertising material*
- ✓ *Out-of-date distribution lists*
- ✓ *Working papers, which lead to a final report*

3. Duplicated and superseded material such as stationery, manuals, drafts, forms and address books may be destroyed under Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). Electronic copies of documents, whose originals have been archived under the Electronic Archiving Solution Policy (EASP) or where a hard copy has been printed and filed; and thermal paper facsimiles after making and filing a photocopy, are also covered. Standard Operating Procedure should not be applied to records or information that can be used as evidence, that is, to prove that something happened. If you are in doubt about what information is required consult the ARMU or the Attorney General's Office.

## Outreach: Community Awareness and Involvement

**1. Visits To Private Archives:** In keeping with the Government's Archives policy to encourage and assist with the care and preservation of all Virgin Islands records including private archives, the Chief Records Management Officer will visit schools and church offices, especially long established ones, to inspect and assess the state of the archives and records within the care of those organizations, during the months of April and May.

The Officer will also advise and recommend measures for the care and preservation of those records. Prior to the visits the Archives & Records Management Unit will contact individual organizations to arrange mutually convenient dates and times.

The full co-operation of all stakeholders would be very much appreciated.

**2. Deputy Governor History Awards Programme:** There are attractive cash prizes to be won! So everyone is reminded to get going early! Get the details and forms now. Come in and discuss!

**3. Interactive Research on Virgin Islands Shipwrights, Boats, captains and sailors.** Help us build databases on subjects of national historical significance for future reference. Please call or bring in information about your captains and shipwrights with lots of interesting details. We need names, significant dates, sea stories, anecdotes etc.

**4. Microfilm Use:** Researchers wishing to search the microfilm collection are reminded to make bookings at least 24 hours in advance as there is only one microfilm reader and space is tight.

## Records May Day- May 1

Join the International Association of Archives and Records Managers in observing May 1 as the day to focus on protecting records from disaster!

Think of something simple that could be accomplished in a day but that would have a profound impact on protecting your department's records. Let's update the Emergency Plan for Records!

- ✓ *Call the ARM unit and let us know the names of contact /response persons in your Department.*
- ✓ *Ensure that the fire extinguisher works!*
- ✓ *Ensure that records are off the ground especially in basement storage*
- ✓ *Replenish your stock of heavy duty plastic covering*
- ✓ *Add your own ideas*

# Information Industry News

## **Government Archivist attends Workshops**

### **Digitization Workshop in Barbados**

Government Archivist Christopher Varlack recently attended a Digital Archives Workshop in Barbados, hosted by the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation and the Barbados Government Information Service and supported by the Caribbean Broadcasting Union and UNESCO. Attendance at the conference was a cooperative effort between the Deputy Governor's Office and the Department of Information and Public Relations, through which the Virgin Islands Government is a CBU member.

The Workshop, with facilitators from the BBC and FIAT (The International Federation of Television Archives) covered a wide range of topics about the preservation and exploitation of digital content and provided valuable in-depth knowledge for developing and implementing digital content archiving systems here.

### **AIIM Conference and Expo in Boston, USA**

As ERM (Electronic Records Management) is now an essential necessity in the Public Service, the Government Archivist last month attended the AIIM Conference and Expo in Boston, MA. It is the world's largest educational conference dedicated to information management solutions. In addition to training and interaction with industry professionals, Mr. Varlack completed the ECM (Enterprise Content Management) Certificate Training; he will receive the designation of ECM Practitioner on completing the online exam.

### **Microfilming Workshop in PR**

Mr. Varlack also attended a 2 day- training workshop at the Professional Microfilm Firm in Puerto Rico, in preparation for the setting up the Unit's Micrographics Section here soon. He had the opportunity to experientially document the processes we need for the efficient establishing of the unit.

### **Historical Slave Records of the British Empire launched - Online**

Ancestry.co.uk launched the names of 100,000 Barbados slaves - Former Colonial Dependencies slave Register Collection, 1812-1834

Ancestry.co. uk today launched its black history collection, with the Barbados Slave Register for 1834, which contains the names of 100,000 slaves and their owners working in the former colonial dependency, one of the busiest slave trade 'hubs' in the 18th and 19th Centuries, the height of the British Empire.

In the near future, the entire Former Colonial Dependencies' Slave Register Collection, 1812 -1834, the definitive and only collection of slave registers kept by 23 colonial dependencies and overseas British territories which used slaves, will launch on Ancestry.co. uk. When complete, the names of an estimated three million slaves will be included. All inquiries should be addressed to: [support@Ancestry.co.uk](mailto:support@Ancestry.co.uk)

## Feed Back

We have just received a telephone call from a member of the public complaining about the sad state in which the court records are being kept in storage across town and that access to important documents is therefore denied. This Unit has since 2004 reported to the responsible authority on the condition of the said records. Some but not enough effort is being made to right the situation. Court records are still governed by outdated 1881 Act.

The Attorney General's Office is currently working on the Archives Act which, when enacted will bring all Virgin Islands records under one umbrella and hopefully begin to seriously address the problem of care and access to Court records. In the meantime, we are all expected to cooperate within departments and utilize whatever power within us lies, to do something, however simple, to help alleviate the sad state of affairs.

## Quote for Today

"We are capturing more information now than was ever the case in a purely paper records management environment. Digital files need active management to ensure that they remain readable over the long term". **ACARM Newsletter # 41**

## Join the Friends of the Archives today!

Call 494 3546 or 494 3701 ext 2365 for info.

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# National Archives News

*The Newsletter of the Archives and Records Management Unit*

*May, 2008*

*Vol. 2 No. 5*

## *Observing Records May Day*



*This is what happens when records are not protected*



# RECORDS MAY DAY

The Virgin Islands territory joins USA colleagues in observing Records May Day on May 1<sup>st</sup> with an open house at the Archives and Records Unit and other activities aimed at encouraging people to protect important records in their possession.

Records May Day, first observed by archivists in the Americas, is being recommended for international recognition, as the day devoted to caring for and protecting valuable records.

Members of the public are invited to visit the Archives and Records Management Unit in the Burhym Building on Wickhams Cay I on Thursday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Visitors will be able to see a video on records management and will receive one complimentary acid-free box in which to store fragile records.

Acid-free boxes protect records from exposure to light and air which cause paper to breakdown. Paper becomes brown, brittle and crumbly when it comes in contact with the damaging agents in light and air. Records stored in acid-free boxes can last for hundreds of years. Tune in to local radio during the day and hear the Deputy Governor's Records May Day Message and records preservation tips.

For more information about the VI Archives and Records Management Unit, please visit the Deputy Governor's Office website at [www.dgo.gov.vg](http://www.dgo.gov.vg).

## Simple things to do on Records May Day

- ✓ Call the Archives Unit on the Day and tell us the name and telephone number (work and home) of the contact person in case of an emergency in your office.
- ✓ Read up the Records Emergency Plan
- ✓ Ensure that officers know how to use the Fire Extinguisher
- ✓ Designate a person to ensure that the Fire Extinguisher is working
- ✓ Call the ARM Unit to discuss any RM problem
- ✓ Move boxes of files off the floor in your storeroom.



# Preserve Virgin Islands Memory

## -Tips-

1. *Do not display your favourite items/records in direct sunlight. It will illuminate them beautifully but will also cause significant fading or colour change. Displaying artwork and other artefacts out of direct sunlight will help retain their rich colours.*
2. *Keep enemies of archives at bay at all times*
3. *Store photographs and paper documents in that part of your home/office with the least fluctuations in temperature and humidity.*
4. *A stable environment should be between 55° F and 70° F degrees*
5. *Relative humidity should be at a fixed point, between 45% and 60%. 50% is preferred.*
6. *Consider making duplicate copies of valuable photographs, video tapes and delicate records*
7. *Store records in good quality enclosures. This can minimize damage from environmental fluctuations, dust and light.*
8. *Use pencil to label photographs, videotapes and other records with dates, places and names of the people for the benefit of future generations.*
9. *Do not use ink. It can run and ruin the document*
10. *Although there are not many professional conservators in the Virgin Islands consider getting advice before attempting to repair a damaged family heirloom. Contact your local art gallery, museum or archives, who could refer you to names of conservators nearest your area.*

# Conversation with a Conservator

## *Confessions*

A member of the public confessed to a Conservator that she had kept some certificates and documents from the 1800's in an old suitcase. Is this the best way to keep these documents? she asked.

The Conservator replied: "Acid-free protection is very desirable; also keep the documents in the dark if possible. Don't frame them and put them on your wall - keep them in that suitcase! Strong light of any sort (sunlight, camera flashes, scanner illumination) will very gradually bleach the inks and may also help to turn the paper brittle.

## *Old Paper Was Better*

Paper made from the late 19th century onwards eventually gets very brittle and brown when exposed to light, due to its high acid content caused by chemical bleaching during a new manufacturing method - you can easily see this in books of the period, where the outer quarter-inch or so of each page has turned brown and will crumble into dust if you try to bend it, whilst the centre of each page (where the light couldn't penetrate when the book sat closed on a bookshelf) remains relatively undamaged.

## *Old Rags Better Still*

Earlier paper that has a high content of rag (yes, old rags!) and little or no wood pulp will probably keep in better condition. Vellum and parchment should last even better, if looked after. Don't forget that you're preserving the document for posterity, not just for the next few decades. Rough handling might well not produce any noticeable harm to the document now, or even in our lifetime, but in a hundred years or two it could be a very different story. Ideally, the docs also need to be kept at a modest room temperature and at normal humidity levels, but more important is that the temperature and humidity levels stay constant and don't fluctuate...

## *Hold Your Breath*

Don't forget that handling docs transmits small amounts of warmth, perspiration and breath onto them; this will have adverse effects over time.

I personally would make a digital copy of an old document, as long as it's not in terrible condition, as from the point of view of preserving the document (i.e. the historical information in it), having a copy that can be studied and reproduced at any time without concern will obviously reduce wear on the original." (To be continued next issue)

## Records Day Quiz

1. What is the title of the most recent ARMU publication?
2. How many specific concerns are recorded in the 'Emergency Plan for Records' (EPFR) re the CAB Basement as a records storage?
3. Define 'Vital Records' in one sentence.
4. What is a Records Centre (in one sentence?)
5. At what temperature should records be stored? At what 'relative humidity'?
6. According to the EPFR, how many Departments have rented off-site storage space?
7. All e-mail messages should either be saved forever or deleted after a few months (True or False)?
8. All records are archives (True or False)?
9. The best legal defense is to keep all records forever. (True or False)?
10. The Virgin Islands Government has a state-of-the-art information policy in place. (True or False)?  
Answers on last page. Be honest. Do not look before you have answered all questions.

## Industry News

### Preserving Electronic Records

According to the latest report released by the Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC), Portable Document Format (PDF) is one of the best file formats to preserve electronic documents and ensure their survival for the future. This announcement will allow information officers to follow a standardised approach for preserving electronic documents.

Information management and long-term preservation are major issues facing consumers and businesses in the 21st Century. This report is one of a series where The Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC) aims to think about and address the challenges facing us.

The report reviews PDF and the newly introduced PDF/Archive (PDF/A) format as a potential solution to the problem of long-term digital preservation. It suggests adopting PDF/A for archiving electronic documents' as the standard will help preservation and retrieval in the future.

It concludes that it can only be done when combined with a comprehensive records management programme and formally established records procedures.

Betsy Fanning, author of the report and director of standards at AIIM, comments, "A standardised approach to preserving electronic documents would be a welcome development for organisations. Without this we could be walking blindly into a digital black hole."

The National Archives works closely with the DPC with issues surrounding digital preservation and will continue to do so. Adrian Brown, head of digital preservation at The National Archives said: "This report highlights the challenges we all face in a digital age. Using PDF/A as a standard will help information

officers ensure that key business data survives. But it should never be viewed as the Holy Grail. It is merely a tool in the armoury of a well thought out records management policy. "

The report is a call to action, organisations need to act now and look hard at their information policies and procedures to anticipate the demand for their content (documents and records) in the future. Everybody has different criteria, types and uses for documentation so you need to find one that works for your organisation.

If you would like to read the full report please go to the Digital Preservation Coalition website. This can be accessed at: [www.dpconline.org/graphics/reports/index.html#twr0802](http://www.dpconline.org/graphics/reports/index.html#twr0802)

The Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC) is a cross-sector member organisation established in 2001 to foster joint action to address the urgent challenges of securing the preservation of digital resources in the UK and to work with others internationally

## Answers to Quiz

- (1) Records Management Procedures Manual for the Virgin Islands Public Service
- (2) Six.
- (3) Vital records are those records essential for the continued operation of government, business or organization in the event of catastrophic loss
- (4) An interim store of inactive files, from 5-15 or 25 yrs, managed for administrative use and archival review.
- (5) 68° F; Relative humidity at 55° F.
- (6) Seven.
- (7) (False) Some email messages contain business- related information and should be kept based on their content. Like paper records, e-mails should be assigned appropriate retention schedules.
- (8) (False). Some records could be disposed of shortly after creation in routine operational procedures or after a short period as specified in the Retention Schedules.
- (9). (False). Records are retained because of their content but not all content is useful forever. By hanging on to all your records forever, you not only escalate costs associated with records management, but it is challenging to locate what you need when you need it most.
- (10) (False). There is no written information policy in place

If you answered 8-10 questions correctly. Congratulations! You have the beginnings for grasping the basic concept of RIM, which when applied could help reduce Government risk and increase its ability to compete.

If you answered 5-7 questions correctly, you need to learn more about RIM. Make an effort now .

If you answered less than 5 questions correctly, you could be putting Government at risk financially and legally. Seek to remedy the situation. Attend all RM Workshops and Classes



# National Archives News

*The Newsletter of the Archives and Records Management Unit*

*June, 2008*

*Vol. 2 No.6*

## *Disaster Management for Records*



*This is a Hurricane Disaster! How Prepared are You!*



## ***Disaster Management Tips for Records***

*Please pull out your Disaster Management for records pamphlet and follow the guidance there. Here are a few reminders:*

- *Everyone should observe the general precautions outlined in the Disaster Management Handbook.*
- *Each office should revise its 'response team' and should know who is responsible for doing what if and when disaster strikes*
- *Examine all rooms where records are stored and check for leaks*
- *Know where fire distinguishers and sprinklers are located*
- *Ensure that officers know how to use fire-extinguishers*
- *Store books, documents, records off the floor in basement storerooms*
- *Store plastic sheeting for covering stacks of shelves and documents*
- *Store bags of sand to check floor water in basement storerooms*
- *Check and restock the list of precautionary supplies*

## ***History Teasers***

- 1. In what year was the wreck of HMS Nymph found in Road Harbour?*
- 2. How many members were elected to the House of Assembly in 1773?*
- 3. Who was the President of the Virgin Islands in 1741?*
- 4. Who was the Member for Trade and Production from 1950-1957?*

***Answer all four correctly and win a prize. Contact the Archives and Records Unit***

## ***Out reach: Community Awareness and Involvement***

***Records May Day*** was a success with several members of the public visiting the Unit for the first time, viewing the RM video and microfilmed records and asking interesting questions. Each took away an acid-free box or envelope to assist in managing their records at home. However, many more telephoned instead, some with requests for advice on preserving their records and with their research.

***Visits to Schools and Churches:*** The inspection of Churches and Schools records by the Chief Records Management Officer is turning up many valuable records, which for the most part are 'at risk.' So far seven churches and seven schools were visited. Storage of many is unsatisfactory and needs urgent remedying. Advice is being given on the spot but at the end of the exercise a Report with recommendations will be submitted to the Ministry and Department Of Education and Culture.

***Interactive Research on Virgin Islands*** shipwrights, boats, captains and sailors is continuing. Persons are reminded to call in any pertinent information.

## ***Records Management Education***

The Government Archivist conducted workshops in the Junior and Senior Induction Training Programmes for Civil Servants sponsored by the Training Division during March and April 2008. He also held remedial seminars with three Government departments.

Two trainers from Professional Microfilm Firm (PR), held demonstrations of micrographic equipment at the Unit

Appraisal Workshops are due to be held for Records Officers during the second week in August. Actual dates will be posted in the July Newsletter.

# Industry News

## Outside email accounts in the workplace: How safe?

**Companies may** have the most secure corporate e-mail system possible, but that means nothing when it comes to the very real risks to the organization when employees forward their office e-mail to free web-accessible accounts from such providers as Google, Yahoo and MSN.

**Employees often** forward their work e-mail – some of which may contain sensitive company information – to their personal accounts, bypassing any password requests meant to protect them.

**Experts urge organizations** not to disregard the danger. They warn of corporate secrets leaking from the well-protected corporate network with a click of the “forward” button and fear that forwarding e-mails might inadvertently expose proprietary information.

**Corporate networks** usually have several layers of protection against hackers, including special software and multiple passwords. Web-mail systems, however, have weaker security and could allow viruses or spy-ware to get through, meaning employees accessing these systems from the office could accidentally download bugs and infect the entire corporate network, according to a *N York Times* report.

**Another risk**, the *Times* noted, is that employees’ use of outside e-mail may result in companies being unable to comply with legal rules requiring them to archive corporate e-mail, which is discoverable in the event of a lawsuit, because messages sent from outside e-mail accounts do not pass through the corporate network.

**Along those lines**, many technology professionals worry that Google and other web-e-mail providers may actually own the intellectual property in the e-mail that resides on their system, according to the *Times*. Gmail’s terms of service, however, states that e-mail belongs to the user, not to Google, and the *Times* reported that the company’s extensive privacy policy ensures no human at Google reads user e-mail.

**In an attempt** to fully protect themselves, though, some companies have gone so far as to ban employees from accessing outside e-mail in the workplace. And, according to e-mail security firm Proofpoint, 37 percent of U.S. firms surveyed said they monitor employees’ use of web mail.

(From: *You’ve Got Mail and Trade Secrets* IN *Information Management Journal*, Vol. 41, No.3)

## ***Protecting Information from Insiders***

***Although organizations are making strides in protecting their sensitive information from outsiders threats, reports show they often are failing to protect it from the much greater threats posed by their own employees.***

***In recent months***, insider data theft stories have been grabbing headlines from tales of stolen laptops. Despite the growing risk, however, many businesses – even the biggest and most well known – are not properly protecting their sensitive information from inside threats. For example, a federal jury recently convicted a former Coca-Cola secretary of conspiring to steal trade secrets from the world’s biggest beverage maker in an effort to sell them to competitor Pepsi Company. Joya Williams faces up to 10 years in prison, pending sentencing.

***In February, Computerwork.com*** reported that a cell development technologist at Duracell Corp. admitted to stealing research related to the company’s AA batteries. He e-mailed the information to his home computer and then forwarded it to two Duracell rivals.

***In another case***, a former DuPont scientist walked away with more than \$400 million worth of trade secrets after being hired by a rival company. Gary Min, who had worked at DuPont for 10 years, pleaded guilty to stealing proprietary data from DuPont by illegally down-loading or accessing thousands of documents stored in an electronic library. He faces a maximum of 10 years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000.

***Experts say too*** many firms are still relying on the old security model that advocated protecting information assets from the outside in through firewalls, intrusion detection systems, and other defenses. But those methods will not protect companies from insider threats.

***“Frankly, we all*** have to actively stop thinking of insider vs. outsider” and improve access controls for all users,” Matt Kesner, Chief Technology Officer at California law firm Fenwick & West LLP, told Computerweek.com. “It means looking at each and every person and machine as an island and deciding what rights and access each person and machine needs or doesn’t need.”

***Paying closer attention*** to access rates would have provided DuPont a clear warning about the jeopardy of its intellectual property. According to court data, Min downloaded about 22,000 documents abstracts from DuPont’s Electronic Data Library server and accessed another 16,700 full-text PDF files, the documents related to DuPont’s major products and technologies, including some that were in the research and development stage. Min illegally downloaded and accessed more than 15 times as many documents as the next highest user of the DuPont database, according to Computerworld.com. Still, he wasn’t caught until after he left the company.

*Upon Min's registration, an internal investigation exposed his activities, which DuPont then reported to the FBI and the U.S. Department of Commerce. Meanwhile, he was brazen enough to upload another 180 of DuPont documents onto a laptop – owned by Victrex PLC, the England-based company which he left DuPont to join a full month after. DuPont contacted Victrex officials, who seized Min's laptop and turned it over to the FBI. (Nikki Swartz IN Information Management Journal, Vol. 41, No.3)*

## **Feedback**

*The Archives and Records Management Unit took centre page coverage in the ACARM Newsletter, Issue 41, published by the Association of Commonwealth Archivists and Records Managers, in London, UK. The Editor specifically prized the Old Pictures Exhibition held at the Central Administration Complex last year.*

## **Some Comments on Records May Day:**

*For research on the family of Salt and Peter Islands, good!*

*"Very interesting!" Keep up the good works".*

*"This is touching. God is good!"*

*"The Open House idea is a good one."*

*"Thanks for the acid-free box!"*

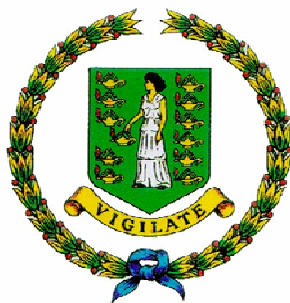
## **Quote for Today**

*"The average life of a piece of digital information is 5 to 7 years. Vital government information is now becoming unreadable or even unrecoverable because the media on which it is stored is deteriorating. Digital files need active management to ensure that they remain readable over the long term". ... Kelvin Smith, Consultant UK*

## **Friends of the National Archives**

*There will be a Friends meeting on June 25<sup>th</sup> at 4.00 pm., at Conference Room # 10, Central Administration Building. Interested persons are invited to attend.*

*Virgin Islands National Archives, Archives and Records Management Unit, Deputy Governor's Office, Burhym Bldg, 49 deCastro Street, Tele: 494 3701 ext 3044/ 2562/2365. email: [vpenn-moll@gov.vg](mailto:vpenn-moll@gov.vg) Website [www.dgo.gov.vg](http://www.dgo.gov.vg)*



# National Archives News

*The Newsletter of the Archives and Records Management Unit*

*August, 2008*

*Vol. 2 Nos. 7&8*

## **Sources of VIs Family Records**

The following Offices hold Virgin Islands records relevant to **family history research**. Although they do not all have adequate space and staff to accommodate public searches, if you make an appointment, the appropriate officer would make a way to assist you with your search .

**T**he **General Civil Registry Office** is responsible for Civil Registration. It holds records of births, marriages, deaths and wills from 1859 to present. The Anglican and Methodist Churches hold records of baptisms, marriages and deaths as follows:

**A**nglican Church: Baptisms, 1825-1861; Marriages, 1833-1946; Burials, 1819-1867

**M**ethodist Church: Baptisms, 1815-1895; 1889; Marriages, 1877-1934; Burials, 1845-1896

**I**ndland **Revenue Office** records ownership of houses, land and other property. Tax lists containing pertinent information are published annually.

**L**and Registry holds property indentifiers: indexes and Maps from 1972

**P**ublic **Library**: Newspapers from 1959 and various name indexes; history books

**S**urvey **Department**: Ordinance 1953 Maps; Boundary Maps from 1975

**T**he **National Archives**: Slave Records from 1800s, Census Records from 1700s (On Microfilm); and Wills and Deeds from the 1700s.



***Wills and Deeds are sources of genealogical information. Original Wills dating from 1776-1857 and Deeds from 1753-1867 in the Archives collection are too fragile to handle but Deeds from 1905-1959 (on microfilm) can be accessed at the Archives Unit.***

### ***Wills as sources of Information***

Wills are documents in which people try to exert control over their property – and their heirs – after their death. Over the centuries, what would happen to property in the absence of a will has been governed by a variety of laws and customs, generally allowing so much to support the deceased widow and other dependants, so much to go direct to the next heir, and so on. A Will gives greater scope, allowing the testator to support a wider range of people and to leave property exactly as he or she wishes – for example, to a best friend, a trusted servant, the poor of the local parish, or even to a home for disadvantaged boys and girls.

### ***Why do people leave Wills?***

People would decide to draft a Will in order to settle their affairs, to ensure that their family or dependants were provided for to make charitable bequests, and to remember friends.

Generally people did not make Wills early in life. There was much superstition among the medieval and early modern populace, and it may have been thought that to make a Will too early in life might tempt fate and accelerate death.

Some people sort out their estate and any marriage settlements years before they die, thus, making the necessity for a Will redundant. However, a Will may have been considered a prudent precaution if there was the possibility of the wife remarrying (especially if she was young) – in which case her possessions would have become the property of her new husband. Also, a Will may well have been judged necessary if it seemed likely there would be a dispute among family and relatives.

### *Wills for family history*

The information contained in Wills is rich with genealogical value. Indeed, it has been estimated that every Will gives the names of about 10 people associated with the deceased – though wills vary from the very short, naming maybe just one beneficiary, to extensive documents, running to as much as a hundred pages, with many individuals mentioned.

Wills can give an insight into the lifestyle and status of a family. For example, a series of bequests of scholarly books would indicate an interest in learning. They may display deeply felt emotions: love, hate, exasperation, or protectiveness. References to non-family members – trusted servants, business associates, local worthies – can help to reveal aspects of family life and may provide clues to a wider story.

Also if one member of a family has left a written Will, it is likely that other members of the family, from earlier and later generations, may have left Wills, too.

### *Wills for local, social and economic history*

Perhaps because of the difficulties in locating Wills according to trade or place, until recently they were not generally regarded as a prime source for local, social or economic history. But now many more wills are searchable online by place or occupation, and so the types of research for which they can be used have been greatly extended. Wills can, for example, be a helpful source in plotting the growth of a village or a trade, or the influence of landed families in an area or the spread of business contacts.

Identifying farmers, carpenters, butchers, preachers, clergymen or lawyers and examining their wills in conjunction with linked evidence, such as inventories and accounts, can allow the identification of social trends, or patterns of activity such as booms and slumps, across places and time. A number of important studies of the various social classes have drawn extensively on such records, produced both by academic institutions and individuals.

Charitable bequests – including those that actually create a charity – can offer an insight into the religious and philanthropic nature of society. In addition, a

particularly generous bequest may prompt further research, to try to ascertain the motive for the testator's generosity.

***Look out for forthcoming related workshop activities in researching family records!***

## ***Records Management Education***

- *The Unit is now taking registrations for Appraisal Workshops to be conducted on August 18 & 19; 21 & 22 and 25 & 26. The Objectives of the Workshop are to provide 'hands-on' practical experience using semi-current records from Government Departments and to teach the skills needed to manage backlogs of inactive records in offices and storerooms. Please telephone the Unit for further details.*
- *We will need to visit some inactive records stores in order to select records for 'hands-on' experience during the Workshop. In order to facilitate ease of access to the store rooms we are kindly requesting the cooperation of Heads of Departments and Records Managers to make keys available during that time.*
- *Demonstrations illustrating the use of scanners in managing information electronically are being conducted on request. Heads of Department may contact the Unit at extension 2564 to make appointments.*

# *Industry News*

## **Right to know Law**

Pennsylvania Gov. Edward Rendell signed an open records bill that will dramatically increase public access to state and local government records.

The new Right to know Law, which affects request for information made after January 1, 2009, makes it easier than it ever has been for Pennsylvania to find out about how their government operates and spend tax dollars. The law deems all state and local government records public unless specifically exempted, putting the onus on government to prove that they should be closed.

“Pennsylvania had one of the worst open-records laws because it allowed too many records to be classified, essentially, as closed, unless the person asking could prove that those documents should be public,” Rendell said in a press release. “With a new law, it’s now the state agency’s burden to show why information should be protected.”

Under the new law, written records request may be submitted in person, by email, fax, or any other electronic means as provided by the agency. Agencies must respond to requests within five business days, which is half the time required by the current law.

An agency may respond to a request by notifying the person who is seeking the information that the document is available through publicly accessible electronic means. If the requester cannot access the record electronically, he or she may submit a written request within 30 days of the agency’s notification to have the record converted to paper.

The new law provides for 30 exemptions that will still allow agencies to withhold certain records, including:

- If releasing the records would likely result in physical harm or risk the personally security of an individual
- If releasing the records would compromise the safety or security of a building, resource, or public utility
- Certain personal or employment information
- Notes or working papers of public officials and agency employees created for their own personal use
- Certain information related to criminal investigations

## ***Quote for Today***

*“The dilemma all guardians of documentary heritage are facing is to increase access while still ensuring its ultimate survival.” Mairo Aleppo, UK National Archives*

***The Friends of the National Archives*** will meet on 10th September, 4.30 PM, Conference Room # 10, Central Administration Building.



## ***Anglican Church Festival Queen Competition, 1940s***

*The winner was Beatrice Donovan*

*Virgin Islands National Archives, Archives and Records Management Unit, Deputy Governor's Office,  
Burhym Blding, 49 deCastro Street, Tele: 494 3701 ext 3044/2562/2365. email: [vpenn-moll@gov.vg](mailto:vpenn-moll@gov.vg)  
Website [www.dgo.gov.vg](http://www.dgo.gov.vg)*



# National Archives News

**September**

**Vol. 2 No. 9**

**(The Newsletter of the Archives and Records Management Unit)**



**Records Officers at Appraisal Workshop**



# Records Management

## Continuing Education

### RM Workshops

**Records Officers from 27 Ministries and Departments attended Appraisal workshops conducted by Kelvin Smith, the Archives Consultant recommended by the IRMT, August 18-22**

Participants were introduced to the principles, practices and methodology of appraising records including both traditional paper and electronic records.

It is expected that the knowledge and skills learnt will help equip records personnel to better cope with managing inactive files in their offices and records store rooms.

A programme of 'applying the skills' in the workplace will be developed jointly with departments and the ARMU, so as to initiate the mammoth task of scaling down the backlog of inactive files.

### **The aim of Appraisal and Disposal**

The aim of appraisal and disposal is to ensure that records are either destroyed or transferred to an archival institution at the right time, as a result of systematic implementation of decisions made concerning the continuing utility and enduring value of records.

It is neither practical nor desirable to preserve all records created by every department. Records **must** be removed and records **must** be destroyed. Though practice will vary between agencies, the often quoted estimate is that less than five percent of government records are of enduring value and therefore ought to be preserved permanently. While the destruction of records is irreversible, the retention of records of no further value involves high and continuing costs. Striking the right balance between destruction and retention requires a planned and consistent approach to appraisal and disposal.



# Outreach: Community participation

## We welcome Picture donations

Father Keith Perry Gore Jr., who now resides in Canada, has donated a very significant picture collection of Church, family and community life in the Virgin Islands dating back to the 1930s. The donor's father was a former Rector of the Anglican community in the Virgin Islands.

We have also been promised another collection which documents how a Virgin Islands Church was built strictly by community effort.

It is from such collections that researchers will glean the facts and write the social history of this country both now and in the next 100 years.

Do you have old picture albums so old that the pictures have started to fade and stick to pages of the album? Don't let your history and that of the Virgin Islands fade away. Share them with the Archives Unit and let us scan them into our collection for the future generations.

## Reminder

Please submit applications for the Deputy Governor History Research Awards now. The theme is "Historical Sites in the Virgin Islands" and the deadline is Nov 1.

The purpose of the **DG's History Research Awards Programme** is to promote, encourage and recognise local history research in the Virgin Islands. Participants are invited to list historical sites in a particular locality and to do an in-depth research study on one of the sites. Sites may be on land or at sea, and may cover any subject or period. Application forms and guidelines are available from the Help Desk, DGO and the Archives Unit., Tele: 468-3701 ext. 2365, 3044 or 2562.

## **Coming Soon! Selections from the Old Pictures Exhibition**

The Friends of the National Archives (FONA) has recently embarked upon a project to make the 2007 Old Pictures Exhibition a permanent compendium for current and future generations. The committee, organized to support the Virgin Islands National Archives, is compiling selected pictures from the exhibition into a book. The compilation will be a catalogue of the photographs and other submissions to the popular exhibit, and will include pictures from various sources from as far back as 1789.

Along with adding to the growing number of Virgin Islands historical and pictorial publications, the project is intended to ensure this unique documentary is available to everyone. The Friends are working to have copies available by Christmas. More information is available from the Government Archivist at the Archives and Records Management Unit. He can be reached at [cvarlack@gov.vg](mailto:cvarlack@gov.vg) or by phone: 284 494 3701 ext. 2562.

## **INFORMATION INDUSTRY NEWS**

### **White House officials lost millions of e-mail messages**

It's estimated that more than 90% of the records being created today are electronic. Coupled with the overwhelming growth of electronic messages - most notably e-mail and instant messaging - the management of electronic records has become a critical business issue. How that information is managed has significant business, legal, and technology ramifications. Ultimately, it doesn't matter what medium is used to create, deliver, or store information when determining if content is a record and should be managed accordingly.

How does the US Government manage data that was born digital, meaning it was created in electronic form? Organizations as varied as the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), the White House, open-government groups, and House members have recently offered recommendations for managing the growing volume of such

information. Their approaches underscore the differences of opinion about how much responsibility and power various entities should have over future federal recordkeeping.

Electronic records management has been the topic of proposed legislation and rules, court cases, congressional investigations, hearings, and government audits as agencies weigh options for maintaining the vast amount of official communication that is conducted electronically. Because federal employees use e-mail and other technologies daily for routine notes and important information, it's not always easy to decide which messages qualify as records that must be preserved. And once a decision is made, the next question is how best to store the messages.

Under the Federal Records Act, NARA approves agencies' recordkeeping schedules and maintains data once it is submitted for archiving, but each agency decides whether to keep a document. In the case of e-mail messages, individual users typically make the decision.

"I think there is a growing consensus that electronic mail and other forms of electronic records that are born digital need to be managed and preserved in electronic form," said Jason Baron, NARA's director of litigation.

But lacking a statutory prescription for maintaining electronic records, most agencies print and file them as they would paper documents, according to a recent investigation by the Government Accountability Office. GAO's report states that top agency officials are not properly maintaining their electronic communications, and NARA has not been inspecting agencies' recordkeeping practices.

Those revelations provided fuel for House Democrats who were already angered by allegations that White House officials lost millions of e-mail messages generated during the prelude to the invasion of Iraq.

## **The Virtues of Scanning**

- In March, the National Archives and Records Administration awarded a \$2.1 million contract for a solution to scan and process millions of government documents.
- The Indiana Department of Environmental Management recently used a service bureau to scan archives into a virtual file cabinet, providing online access to more than 9 million documents.
- Austin, Texas, implemented document imaging in two city departments since 2006 and is eyeing further applications.

Despite the e-government trend and the move toward enterprise wide information systems, there's still no end of paper in the public sector. Between government's

historical archives and the myriad forms used to transact business, paper management is still a major challenge.

Many use document imaging systems to close the gap between hard copy and digital business processes.

Document imaging captures electronic copies of pages and provides tools for indexing, storing and retrieving them.

It allows users to manage workflow, ensuring employees handle documents according to established protocols.

Also, this technology may automatically apply records management rules, such as how long different document categories must be stored and when to purge them.

Document imaging is a subset of document management, a category that also includes documents that are "born digital"- word processing files, spreadsheets, e-mails and the like. Document management, in turn, is a subset of content management, which also may encompass photographs, videos, voicemail messages and other digital materials.

Merrill Douglas (IN Policy & Management) *Aug 25, 2008*

## Quote for Today

**"Establishing a sound records management programme in today's environment requires not only a thorough understanding of the fundamental records principles but also the legal, regulatory, financial, and operational requirements of the organization."** Michelle Rush. *Information Management Journal*, Vol. 42. No 4. pg 49

## Friends of the Archives

The objective of the Friends is to provide support as required to the National Archives. Please become involved today! Telephone 494 3546.

**National Archives and Records Management Unit**  
**Deputy Governor's Office**  
**Upstairs Burhym (Civil Registry) Building**  
**49 de Castro Street, Road Town, Tortola**  
**Virgin Islands VG 1110**  
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**[www.dgo.gov.vg](http://www.dgo.gov.vg)**



# National Archives News

November

Vol. 2 No. 10/11

(The Newsletter of the Archives and Records Management Unit)



Although we are almost out of the hurricane season and have had few reported serious incidences of flood damage after Omar, the threat of water damage to records is ever present.

One records store flooded, luckily, there were no records on the floor and therefore no damage was caused. However, quite apart from Omar, recently a burst water pipe in one department played havoc with records which were stored on the floor. Some remedial efforts were put into action and the records are on the road to recovery.

# Records Management

**“The Disaster Management Tips for Records”** is a very useful brochure which every Records Office should have. It is available from the Archives and RM Unit.

- The brochure gives guidelines on salvaging water damaged documents and
- It explains basic drying techniques such as ‘air- drying.

**“The Emergency Plan for Records”** is another useful document  
Here is an excerpt taken from it:

## **In the event of flooding the following steps should be taken:**

- ✚ Documents or records should be removed from lower shelves to a higher location and wherever possible, have documents removed from the room.
- ✚ Documents should be covered with plastic immediately, in the case of a broken pipe.
- ✚ In case of flooding, water should be pumped out immediately.
- ✚ In case of broken pipe(s) the water should be turned off and the pipes repaired.

## **Recovery Efforts**

- ✚ Act quickly.
- ✚ Assess the extent of the damage.
- ✚ Consult the Archivist and Conservator and work closely with him or her.
- ✚ Prioritize the damaged documents with regards to restoration.
- ✚ Damaged documents should be removed immediately and placed in an open area to dry.
- ✚ Wherever possible freeze-dry the documents in 3-10 hours. Depending on the extent of the damage this may be the only safest way to restore the documents.
- ✚ On completion of the disaster recovery, plastic should be removed, and documents

returned to shelves and replaced in new containers or boxes.

- ✚ If a freeze dryer is unavailable, use commercial fans to dry the documents.
- ✚ Blotting paper can also be used between pages to absorb moisture.
- ✚ When packing the wet documents, be extremely careful in handling them. They would be very fragile.
- ✚ Pack the wet documents in plastic crates; fill the crates up to three quarters and then mark with identification labels.
- ✚ Single pages should not be separated; interleave every two inches of pages with freezer paper.
- ✚ Water colours, maps and manuscripts with soluble media should not be blotted.
- ✚ Do not open or close wet books or remove wet book covers.
- ✚ If the flood water is dirty; wash the books before freezing.
- ✚ Do not wash open books. Books should be washed closed, in tubs of running water and dabbed. Do not rub.
- ✚ Pack books with the spine down.
- ✚ Leather, parchment and vellum bindings are immediate priority because they distort and disintegrate in water.
- ✚ After all the methods of salvaging have been completed and books and documents dried, repairing of documents and rebinding of books can take place.

**Should mould and mildew occur because of any type of flooding or other conditions, take the following steps:**

- ✚ Wear a filter respirator.
- ✚ Mould kills, it is toxic therefore all cleaning of books or documents with mould should be done outside in the open air and not in doors.
- ✚ Thymol should not be used in cleaning mould from documents. It has been found to be a health hazard.
- ✚ Storage conditions should be checked and corrected to prevent further mould outbreak. Ensure that the temperature and humidity are at the right level as mould thrives on dampness and still air.



# Continuing Education

During the month of October the Government Archivist, Mr. Christopher Varlack, gave an introductory Records Management (RM) talk to Senior Civil servants as part of the Training Division's Civil Servants Induction Programme. During his half hour presentation, Mr. Varlack outlined basic RM concepts and stressed that all Civil Servants can help enhance the quality of their professional and personal lives by enhancing their RM knowledge base.

He also spoke at the Tortola Ladies' Club Luncheon on the importance of archives in society. In addition to outlining a brief history of the Archives, the GA updated the group on current initiatives such as the Deputy Governor's History Research Awards.

Archives Records Management Unit (ARMU) staff members have also responded to SOS queries and requests from several departments for assistance with RM problems and procedures.

Remedial seminars, discussions and mini-workshops with records personnel in crisis situations is a routine service provided as requested and as time allows.

## Outreach: Community participation

### Governor's office augments collection

Our picture collection has been augmented by the official photos of the Governor's Office. His Excellency the Governor has kindly agreed to lend us his office's pictures for scanning so that they can be made available to a greater number of the persons, for reference, study and educational purposes.

We appeal to members of the public, individuals and organizations to lend us pictures for scanning in order to build up our collection. We reiterate that it is from such collections, that researchers will glean the facts to write the social history of this country both now and in the future. So, don't let your history and that of the Virgin Islands fade away. Share them with the Archives Unit.



"Expecting the Unexpected: Disaster Preparedness Strategies for small Business" is an excellent brochure that can be downloaded at: [www.officedepot.com/get prepared](http://www.officedepot.com/get_prepared).

## History Awards

The results of the Deputy Governor's History Research Awards submissions will be announced soon. The theme this year is: "Historical Sites in the Virgin Islands"

The purpose of the DG's History Research Awards Programme is to promote, encourage and recognise local history research in the Virgin Islands. Participants are invited to list historical sites in a particular locality and to do an in-depth research study on one of the sites. Sites may be on land or at sea, and may cover any subject or period. Application forms and guidelines are available from the Help Desk, DGO and the Archives Unit., Tele: 468-3701 ext. 2365, 3044 or 2562.

## Information Industry News

### Should citizens pay to see records?

At the same time the city of Missoula is taking steps to make more public records more easily available in the future, some citizens are encountering a barrier to seeing electronic records from the past. Blackler said he understands that it takes time to pull together materials for the public, but it isn't every citizen who can foot the bill. And from his perspective, the cost essentially removes the documents from the public realm. After learning the cost, just one person so far has agreed to pay, according to city officials.

"I think the city should make it extremely easy for people to get these records," Blackler said.

Laura Howe wanted to see city e-mail exchanges during meetings about two developments in her neighborhood. In an e-mail from the city, she learned officials did not know if the records were available. If they were, though, she would have to pay for 20 hours of research at \$10 an hour.

"Well, do you have the information? Or not?" Howe said. "It just seemed really discombobulated."

Howe said she understands that public agencies function on limited resources. But the bill

seemed too high and the research time inordinate to fulfill her narrow request.

"I understand that public requests take time, but I thought it was excessive," Howe said.

By law, however, the city is allowed to recoup reasonable costs of providing documents to the public. The city provides citizens half an hour of research time at no cost, and thereafter charges \$10 an hour, Rehbein said.

She said people have made requests that require researching backup tapes, which involves many staff hours at a time when the information technology department is short staffed. So when people have made extensive requests, the city has asked for a deposit up front of half the estimated cost.

## Private rights?

Chief Administrative Officer Bruce Bender said providing e-mail records is complicated by legal ramifications as well.

"The difficult ones are those individual e-mails," Bender said.

He said a lot of his electronic correspondence includes private medical information from firefighters out on medical calls, or even information about criminal investigations before they result in charges. So the city needs to review communications before releasing them to the public to ensure it's not violating privacy rights, he said.

"It's very, very burdensome," Bender said of fulfilling requests for electronic records.

But he said the city is clarifying its processes. City Attorney Jim Nugent has long told elected ward representatives to enter into the public record information that influences their decisions, in particular in areas of land use. In some cases, that means a council member announces during a public meeting a grocery store encounter with a constituent, for example, Rehbein said.

And to keep the record straight, city officials said councilors also must record pertinent ideas coming to them through cyberspace. They can continue to make announcements at public meetings, where staff members record minutes later available online. They also can forward e-mails to all council members, as the city has considered messages sent to all members, or "group," part of its permanent public record already available at City Hall (and soon posted on the city Web site).

(Keila Szpaller: The Missoulian, Records and Records and Archives in the News)

## Cayman Islands Freedom of Information Act

A 16-member select committee of public and private sector representatives is in the process of drafting regulations for the Cayman Islands Freedom of Information Law. The A US open records expert who visited the Cayman Islands recently said the country has taken many positive steps towards enacting a Freedom of Information law. ....

But Laura Neuman of the Carter Center in Atlanta, Georgia warned that the Islands aren't all the way there yet.

"Increasingly, we're seeing a problem in the actual use of these (FOI) laws after they've been passed," Ms Neuman said. "Implementation is the greatest challenge to government."

Cayman's Freedom of Information Law, which was passed by the Legislative Assembly in September, is not scheduled to take effect until January or February of 2009. Ms Neuman said in several countries in the Caribbean and Latin American region, the Carter Center has observed that the passage of FOI laws isn't being followed up by enforcement.

"Panama is a perfect example," Ms Neuman said. "Once the law was passed they patted themselves on the back and didn't pay attention to the regulations. What was given with one hand in a great law was taken away with the regulations."

"For example, they fought very hard for what I believe is an international norm, that if you ask for information...you don't have to give a reason. Then in the regulations it added a provision that said you had to have an interest in that information in order to get it."

A 16-member select committee of public and private sector representatives is in the process of drafting regulations for the Cayman Islands Freedom of Information Law.

The regulations are expected to include the cost of obtaining government information, and will define the role of information managers that oversee the operation of the FOI Law in each government agency.

The regulations will also define what the crucial legal test of public interest will be in regard to whether certain records should be released or withheld.

People are encouraged to e-mail suggestions to the FOI coordinator's office.

Ms Neuman also noted that Cayman would soon select an independent information commissioner who's job will include ruling on whether government information should be made public in cases where the release of those records are disputed by the agency that holds them.

Under the law passed in Legislative Assembly, the appointment of an information commissioner is at the sole discretion of the Cayman Islands Governor, who is an appointed official himself.

## Comparing Cayman FOI

In general, Ms Neuman gave good reviews to the Freedom of Information Law passed by the Legislature when comparing it to similar laws used around the world.

“This law is better than the US Freedom of Information Act,” she said, noting the US FOIA legislation only covers the executive branch of the government, not the judicial or legislative. She said the US federal government routinely allows its agencies to get far behind on requests for information, and has not updated its open records laws in some 40 years. ..

She said lawmakers in the UK and Ireland had recently voted to increase fees on Freedom of Information requests, which had sharply decreased the overall number of applications for information.

In the Caribbean and Latin American region, 25 countries have either laws or constitutional provisions that guarantee the public’s right to access information. Three other countries do so by executive decree.

Most of those laws have been passed within the last 10 to 15 years.

(RAIN - Records and Archives in the News)

## Quote for Today

“...40 percent of small U.S businesses admit that they are not prepared for a disaster and one-third said they have no plans to prepare. (Info Management, Sept-October 2008)

## Friends of the Archives

The objective of the Friends is to provide support as required to the National Archives. The Friends meet monthly on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday at 4.30.pm. Please become involved today!

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