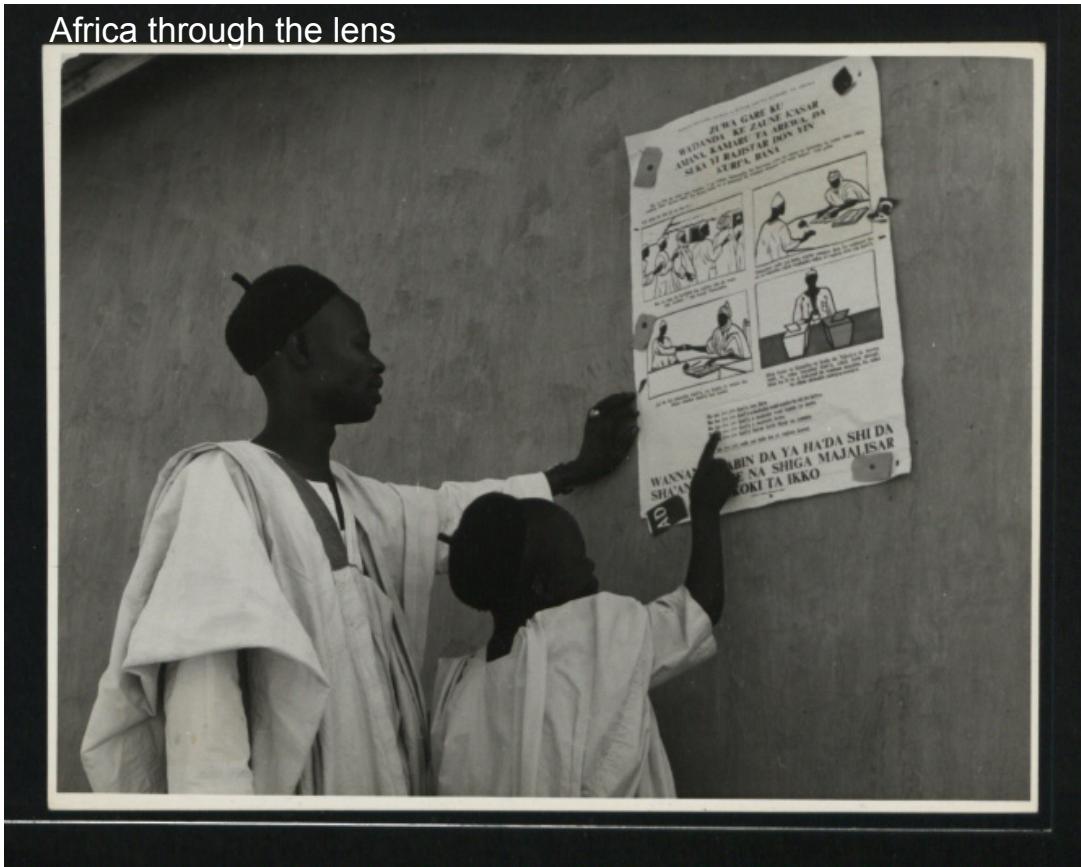


The National Archives: a fascinating day out with history

ITM London

Africa through the lens



The National Archives are housed in a majestic building near Kew Bridge and famous botanical Kew Gardens. In front of the building is an enormous water spectacle: a large pond with fountains. A pleasant garden for a picnic is nearby.

Visiting the UK government's official archive, containing over 1,000 years of history, is a fascinating day out with history. The walk to the archive from Kew Bridge underground station is clearly signposted and provides an insight into London's older, more fashionable suburbs with Victorian mansions from days gone by.

In addition to the archives the

building has a small museum focusing on the Doomsday Book and a bookshop which sells countless pencils - pens are not allowed in the reading rooms.

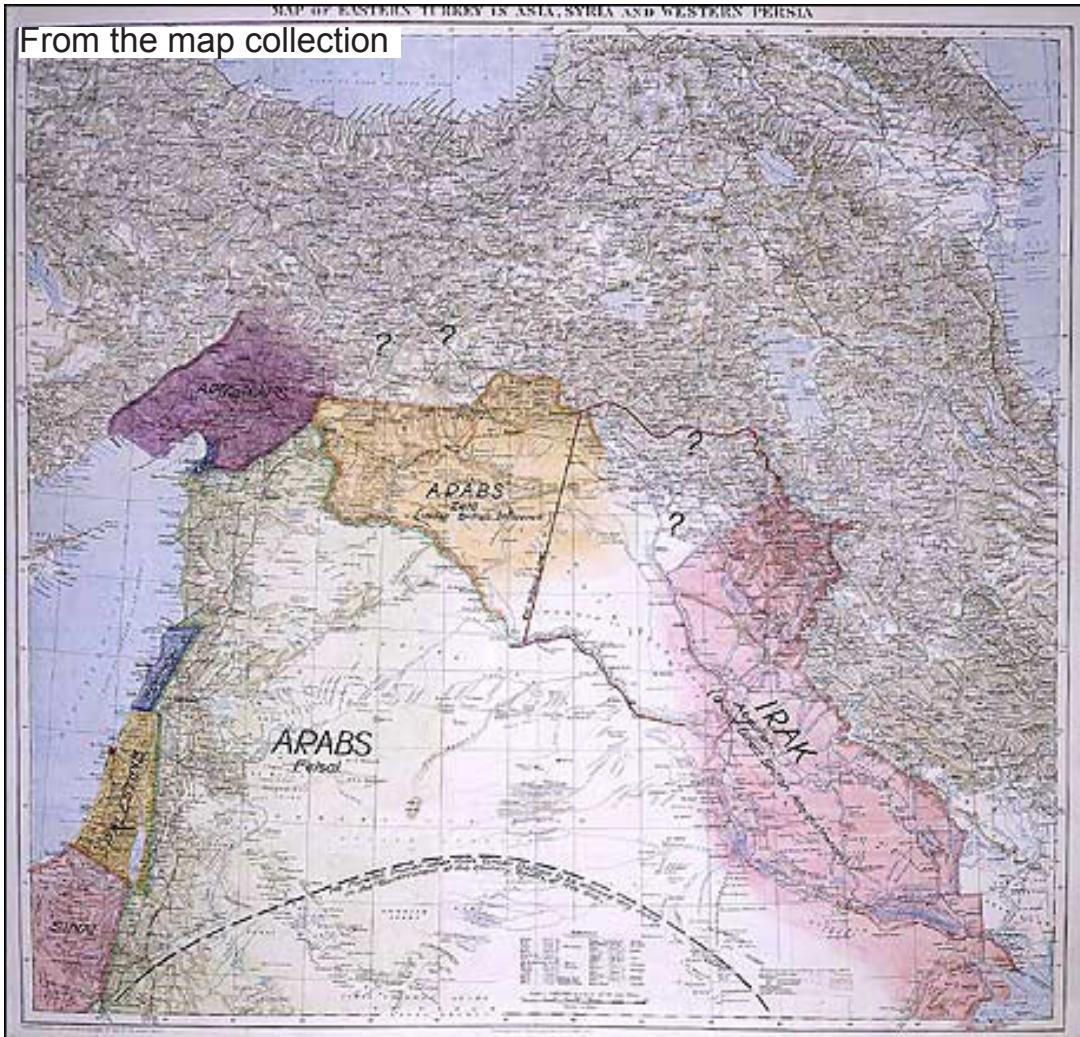
Between 2003 and 2006, four government bodies - each specialising in particular aspects of managing information - joined together to form a single organisation in The National Archives:



From the Colonial Office collection

MAP OF EASTERN TURKEY IN ASIA, SYRIA AND WESTERN PERSIA

From the map collection



* the Public Record Office, created as a result of the Public Record Office Act 1838 - the national archive of England, Wales and the United Kingdom government, dedicated to preserving key public records and making them accessible to researchers

* the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, appointed under Royal Warrant in 1869 to locate and identify manuscripts and private papers of historical interest, reporting on their contents

* Her Majesty's Stationery Office, founded in 1786, holder of Crown copyright and official printer of all

Acts of Parliament since 1889

* the Office of Public Sector Information, created in 2005 following a European Union directive to promote the re-use of information produced and collected by public sector organisations.

Public records in the United Kingdom began with the Doomsday Book. At over 900 years old, Domesday is the earliest surviving public record and the foundation document of the National Archives. It is also the starting point for most local historians researching the

history of their area.

In 1085 William the Conqueror ordered a great survey of land holding in England. This recorded who owned or lived on the land, what livestock they kept, how much the land was worth, and what taxes were owed to the Crown. It was nicknamed 'Domesday' by the native English, after God's final Day of Judgement when every soul would be judged and the verdict written in a book, with no right of appeal

Today the National Archives' collection of over 11 million



Home of thousands
of documents

The National Archives building in West London



historical government and public records is one of the largest in the world. From the Domesday Book to modern government papers and digital files, the collection includes paper and parchment, electronic records and websites, photographs, posters, maps, drawings and paintings.

As a general rule, government records that have been selected for permanent preservation are sent to The National Archives when they are 30 years old, but many are transferred earlier under the Freedom of Information Act.

In addition to documents The National Archives also house one of the world's richest holdings of historical mapping. There are believed to be more than six million maps and plans, with more added every year. Ranging from the 14th century to the modern day, most date from the 17th to the 20th centuries. The British Isles and places all round the globe are represented.

UFO files released on 3rd March this year by The National Archives revealed how the UFO

Magna Carta at the National Archives



phenomenon was discussed at the highest level of government and Security Services worldwide, including at the United Nations, the US Central Intelligence Agency and was even the subject of a debate in the House of Lords. The previously classified files showed how in January 1979, during the peak of the „Winter of Discontent”, in addition to discussions on trade union strikes, the House of Lords held a debate of the subject of UFOs - the only full debate on UFOs to ever be held in British Parliament.

The files also revealed that in December 1977 discussions on UFOs were held at the United Nations and the UK Government had to use its influence to talk down a call by Sir Eric Gairy, the President of Grenada, for a UN agency to conduct research into UFO sightings. Gairy withdrew his proposal eventually but continued his campaign for a full UN debate on UFOs, calling on the UN General Assembly to make 1978 "the year of the UFO".

The National Archives has digitised



National Archives
reading room



thousands of rare images of Africa and is enlisting the public to help identify the people, places and events captured on film. The Colonial Office photographic collection includes some of the earliest known photographs of Africa and its inhabitants from the 1860s and covers more than 100 years of British involvement in Africa - from early expeditions to the Boer War and Harold Macmillan's famous 'Wind of Change' tour in 1960.

The collection is as rich and varied as the continent itself and includes images of people, places, national and imperial events, conflict and natural disasters caught on camera. The result is a treasure trove of moments frozen in time from the peak of the British Empire to the rising tides of nationalism and independence.

Oliver Morley, Acting Chief Executive of The National Archives, said: "This unique collection of

photographs is now available to anyone with access to a computer and an interest in our shared history - wherever they are in the world. The National Archives is committed to using social media to engage new audiences, harvest their knowledge and share it with others. An online collection like this reaches beyond the academic world and into people's living rooms, enabling everyone to contribute to our understanding of past events."

The National Archives is the only public sector organisation among this year's winners of the Queen's Award for Enterprise. In doing so it becomes the first winner from a government department since the awards were expanded in 2000.

An Innovation Award was made jointly to The National Archives and Tessella for developing a system for preserving digital information which has since been adopted by libraries and archives around the world.

The Doomsday Book

