

“Preserving the past, informing the future”

Forward Plan

Our role and importance

The National Meteorological Library and Archive (NMLA) comprise a repository for unique meteorological and related data together with published and unpublished information relating to the science and history of the weather. It is a recognised Place of Deposit holding materials of national and international importance and as such plays a vital role in preserving these materials for the nation.

Archive Service

The National Meteorological Archive seeks to preserve the national memory of the weather. It fulfils the statutory requirement of the Met Office to preserve and make available Public Records. These records comprise observation data, analyses, charts and meta-data collected and created by the Met Office in the course of its activities. In addition the archive seeks to collect and retain a wide variety of other records and images which complement the Public Records and add to the depth and breadth of the collection.

The National Meteorological Archive is recognised by The National Archives as a repository meeting the Standard for Record Repositories for records created under the authority of the Met Office and its predecessor organisations and subject to the Public Records Act 1958.¹ This collection includes a vast array of charts, a large collection of Ship’s Meteorological Logs, extensive collections of climatological returns and daily registers and specific data covering all key meteorological elements including rainfall, wind, sunshine and pressure. The archive also holds a significant collection of rare books and related records on behalf of the Royal Meteorological Society (RMetS) which is managed under the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding. In addition there are a large number of private weather records

¹ Meteorological records for England and Wales are held at the National Meteorological Archive in Exeter under the direct responsibility of the NMLA. Records for Scotland are in the process of being transferred under a Memorandum of Understanding to National Records of Scotland (NRS) to be held in appropriate archival conditions. Records for Northern Ireland are held at the Public Records Office Northern Ireland (PRONI). For records held at NRS and at PRONI the National NMLA retains responsibility for making the content of these records accessible and understandable for users but their ongoing preservation, conservation and provision of access is devolved to the archives in which they are held (NRS and PRONI). Note records held in PRONI are subject to the Public Records Act (NI) 1923.

including an outstanding collection of Private Weather Diaries, a significant rare book collection and international records not held by the archives of the nations to which they pertain. The archive thus serves not just as a national source of meteorological knowledge but an international repository of meteorological knowledge.

Library Service

The National Meteorological Library holds one of the country's most comprehensive collections of published meteorological texts and journals as well as being the central repository for both hard copy and increasingly born digital Met Office publications (both published and unpublished). The library also maintains a digital image collection – a mixture of crown images and images provided by the public with a keen interest in the weather.

The library holdings are made directly available to the Met office, the wider scientific community and the general public. The library resource not only supports and promotes the science and history of the Met Office it also provides the public with a learning resource to better understand the science and history of meteorology. The library resource adds value and understanding to those original records held in the archive.

The library and archive together provide one of the country's most comprehensive collections on meteorological not only serving the UK public but a much wider international community.

Access

As a national library and archive service a key aim of the NMLA is to promote awareness of our collections and provide greater access to as wider a user community as possible.

Public access to our information is provided both directly and indirectly through a variety of means including the Met Office website, an online catalogue, a library & archive enquiry service and more recently the Digital Library and Archive. In addition, the NMLA is able to welcome visits by both individuals who wish to consult our records and by interested groups wanting a guided tour of the facilities.

We work closely with the Met Office Marketing and Communications Team and enable access for the media including supplying advice and representatives for television work.

We are constantly seeking new opportunities to enhance access to our holdings and widen participation, usability, reach and engagement by making use of all available dissemination methods. In addition we are starting the process of entirely re-

cataloguing the archive in order to greatly improve public understanding of the nature and extent of the collections and the wide variety of uses to which the material can be put.

Our ongoing conservation and preservation programme not only follows professional best practice but also ensures the ongoing preservation of our collection. This ultimately also improves access to more materials through both the active conservation of vulnerable items and the preservation scanning of items at risk from over handling.

Strategic Drivers

The Met Office has a stated aim 'To be the global partner of choice for weather and climate services' and purpose 'To work at the forefront of weather and climate science for protection, prosperity and well-being'. The Met Office Corporate Plan 2016 - 2021 lists four key Corporate Priorities:

- Deliver world-class services
- Maintain our world-leading science and capability
- Deliver social and economic benefits
- Transform how we work

The NMLA exists within the corporate body of the Met Office and as such our aims and objectives flow from the overall aim and Corporate Plan.

The NMLA is part of and governed by the Met Office Public Weather Service (PWS). The Public Weather Service Customer Group (PWSCG) is responsible for overseeing the PWS on behalf of the public, reporting to and advising the Minister of State for Universities and Science. The PWSCG acts as the customer on behalf of the public for free at the point of use weather services and on behalf of Public Sector users of PWS outputs. It is responsible for setting the requirement and specifying the outputs, supporting research and development to meet future requirements, meeting international commitments on behalf of UK Government, providing underpinning data for stakeholders and authorising payment for the PWS from BEIS.

We support the corporate aim for scientific excellence by maintaining a national collection of scientific and related texts both online and in print and we play a key part in the promotion of scientific output at the Met Office through our website pages,

our online catalogue and our digital library and archive. We are a unique source of historic data for the wider scientific community and climate science area; we provide an enquiries service to the public including schools and students and we work at all times with a view to efficiency and effectiveness in our role. We support and enhance the reputation of the Office on a national and international level through our outstanding levels of customer service as evidenced in regular feedback statistics and through our driver to act as a repository of knowledge for members of the public, members of staff and the scientific community as a whole.

Key objectives

Our strategy for the future services of the NMLA is very much aligned to priorities contained within the Met Office Corporate Plan 2016 – 2021 and we share the wider aim to achieve even closer engagement with our scientific, education and public customers.

Our goals for the next five years will support a number of the Corporate Objectives for this period:

1. Maintain world-leading science and capability

- Maintain our highly respected enquiries service as portal to meteorological knowledge for the UK and wider scientific community
- Respond to developments in scientific research by increasing access to historic data and related documents through support for significant digitisation projects
- Support the drive to improve the accuracy of historical data sets by assisting with digitisation projects and continuing to accession in new data sets where these assist with gap filling
- Respond to ongoing developments in weather science and climate research through provision of relevant historic data through a range of portals
- Support the drive to increase scientific excellence within and outside the organisation by improving knowledge of the body of data held within the library and archive through the use of physical and electronic dissemination techniques and an improved catalogue
- Support the drive to increase scientific excellence by developing the access and content of our library collections to include much broader coverage through e-book and e- journal collections
- Support science in their requirement to comply with RCUK mandate for open access to any peer-reviewed research article which

acknowledges funding from the UK's Research Councils (including EPSRC and NERC).

2. Deliver world-class services

- Maintain our highly respected public enquiries service as portal to meteorological knowledge for members of the public both in the UK and around the world
- Work at the leading edge of electronic archive provision to provide effective and safe public access to an increasing number of electronic materials via our Digital Library and Archive
- Widen participation through the ongoing provision of engaging and accurate resources on historical weather and climate both in analogue and digital format
- Improve access to our collections through a significant re-cataloguing programme to enable greater findability and understanding of the extent and depth of records held
- Respond to significant developments in the world of communication by developing new ways to reach our customer base such as through social media, podcasting
- Continue to engage with the wider public through involvement with relevant television and radio opportunities
- Develop our collection by introducing new collecting areas identified through our collections management policies
- Maintain the required conditions to meet the needs of a recognised place of deposit for public records
- Continue our ongoing conservation and preservation programme
- Continue to ensure and develop best practice in document control procedures
- Continue to develop the depth and breadth of our internationally important analogue and digital collections
- Continue to support and enhance Met Office brand and reputation by promoting our scientific excellence through our web pages, online catalogue and Digital Library and Archive
- Continue to develop a robust Digital Library and Archive that meets relevant TNA and wider standards

- Maintain and enhance our reputation as an expert and reliable repository of knowledge on meteorological history and historic data
- Respond to significant technological developments and take a lead in developing preservation and access to important digitised and digital resources
- Provide targeted skills based training for staff to improve knowledge based and technical expertise
- Work with Met Office Marketing and Communications Team to develop and market our profile more widely through all available means including social media

3. Transform how we work

- Maintain a maximum 5 working day response rate to all enquiries
- Report on our performance, successes, value and impact, using appropriate performance indicators
- Ensure provision of relevant and up to date training in preservation techniques, disaster recovery and cataloguing
- Continue to seek and respond to customer feedback to improve our services
- Continue to review and improve our systems and processes to ensure our continued relevance and effectiveness within available resources
- Continue to develop effective use of library space to ensure ongoing relevance of the service within available resource
- Re-assess archive storage space with a view to improving the storage of the art collection and maximising space to enable the inclusion of new materials from Edinburgh
- Review our forward plan in relation to the changing scientific landscape, digital developments and changing user needs and develop further policies for digitisation, electronic preservation and data management in line with the transformation and efficiency agenda.

Performance Indicators

Detailed performance measures against key short term and longer term library and archive objectives are formally recorded and measured within the staff performance management process. These are reviewed by line management on a regular basis but not less than six monthly intervals. Resulting feedback is passed up and down the reporting chain to ensure that any necessary action is taken to ensure targets are kept on track.

Key activities may also be incorporated into the PWS forward plans and performance measures as agreed with the PWSCG.

In addition, a series of statistical measures are recorded which form part of a wider monthly and annual report that is fed up to the PWSCG for on-going review.

Review Period: 3 years

Review Date: May 2021

Reviewed By: Library and Archive Manager and Archivist