

Committee(s)	Dated:
Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee	06/02/2017
Subject: 950 Years of London's Archives - a Programme of Events for 2017	Public
Report of: Assistant Town Clerk and Cultural Hub Director	For Information
Report author: Geoff Pick - Director of London Metropolitan Archives	

Summary

This report summarises the key events that will take place during 2017 to celebrate 950 years of London's extraordinary archive collections, the best of any city in the world and a tribute to the City of London's long stewardship of London's written memory.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. 2017 marks the 950th anniversary of London's archives and the oldest document in the collections at London Metropolitan Archives – the Charter of William 1 to the City of London, written in 1067. The Charter, written in English, confirmed the legal rights of the citizens of London and was a key part of William's policy to win their support. It also reflects London's already established international character, and its position as a vital centre for international trade, by addressing both the French and English residents and treating them with equal status. In 2010 the document was inscribed to the UNESCO UK Memory of the World Register as being of outstanding national importance.
2. The anniversary of this tiny but extraordinarily important document provides the opportunity to celebrate and promote the outstanding archival collections in the City's care. LMA's collections as a whole have been designated of national importance and it is the largest archive of any kind in the UK after The National Archives at Kew, holding some 100 kilometres of material from 1067 to the present day. Alongside this the anniversary also provides an opportunity to highlight and publicise LMA's services to the public, both to people in London and the south-east, and across the rest of the UK and overseas, and to draw in new audiences.

Current Position

3. The William Charter itself has gone on public display in the Heritage Gallery at Guildhall for the first time in its history. It is there until 27 April and has already generated much press interest, including interviews on ITN London news and BBC Radio London and articles in the Guardian and Time Out.
4. On 6 February ***The Londoners: Portraits of a Working City, 1447 to 1980*** opens at LMA. This exhibition will bring together an extraordinary range of photographs, prints and drawings from the collections. As well as displaying a selection of images of well-known faces, such as Charles Dickens, Isambard Kingdom Brunel and Oliver Cromwell it will include portraits of lesser known Londoners including
 - London's Last Night Watchman - prior to the appearance of the first Metropolitan Police constables in 1830, Londoners were protected by the watchmen. The exhibition includes a rare photograph of Charles Rouse, reputedly the last night watchmen still on duty in London in the middle of the 19th century.
 - Street Trades – an 1830 lithograph of a crossing sweeper, the 'Old Commodore of Tottenham Court Road', appears alongside match sellers, boot blacks and an 18th century procuress.
 - The Roaring Twenties - a number of beautiful photographs shot by George W F Ellis in the mid-1920s, a period of significant change in the working world. Portraits include Dora Russell, a feminist and socialist campaigner standing for the Labour party in Chelsea in the 1924 General Election.
5. At the end of April folios of the Great Parchment Book will go on display in the Heritage Gallery. The project to conserve, transcribe and digitise the Book has been a significant project at LMA for a number of years but it has not yet been on sustained public display. It is also worth noting that LMA's partners at University College London announced just before Christmas the publication of a major academic paper on the project. Published in Oxford University Press's ***Digital Scholarship in the Humanities*** journal, it presents a complete overview of the project, detailing the conservation, digital acquisition, and digital reconstruction methods used. It is freely available on open access (the web link is in Members Briefing which came out at the end of January). April is also likely to see the launch of Digital 950, the new version of LMA's collections catalogue.
6. For the late spring and early summer activities and events are planned around regional and national initiatives. On May 31 Historic England is promoting the first ever London History Day across the capital. As this falls in what will be the half term holiday for most schools, LMA plans to run family events and activities, drawing inspiration from the 1067 William Charter and its time. LMA's longest single item, a twenty-two metre hand coloured copy of the Bayeux Tapestry dating from the nineteenth century will be on display and there will be Norman themed events and activities for a younger audience. In June to celebrate National Volunteering Week LMA will celebrate the contribution of volunteers. LMA currently has some sixty volunteers who have given over one thousand hours of their time (April – November 2016 figures).

7. Major events over the summer include the launch in July of an exhibition at LMA on theatres. This currently has a working title of ***Life on the London Stage***, and will concentrate on telling the stories of the people who have worked in London theatres. In August: the City of London's 1199 Grant of Shrievalty will go on display in the Heritage Gallery: this will be the first time it has been available for the public to see for a sustained period. This document is one of the City of London's key charters, along with the 1067 William Charter, the 1215 Mayoralty Charter and the 1297 Magna Carta, which provide such a solid base for the rights and privileges of the City and its citizens.
8. In September LMA plans to open for ***Open House London***, the capital's major festival celebrating architecture and design with a focus on opening up buildings and places to the public. On Saturday 16th September LMA will run special tours of strong rooms and the conservation studio to show people something of how the City manages its 100KM of archives. This will be a new and exciting initiative for LMA which should showcase the service as a major public resource in London.
9. At the end of the year LMA will take part in the national ***Explore Your Archive*** programme launch. In December some of the global links of LMA's archives will be highlighted. For the final display of the year in the Heritage Gallery the City's letters from the American colonists at the time of the War of Independence will return to public display, showing the City's particular involvement in this conflict. At LMA itself a new exhibition will examine the impact of the transportation of criminals from London to Australia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with ***Digital Panopticon: the Global Impact of London Punishments, 1780-1925***.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

10. The programmes outlined in this report align with the City of London Corporate Plan 2015-19. The proposals support the strategic aim *to provide valued services, such as education, employment, culture and leisure to London and the nation* as well as Key Policy Priority 5 *increasing the outreach and impact of the City's cultural, heritage and leisure contribution to the life of London and the nation*.

Conclusion

11. The 950th anniversary of the City of London's 1067 William Charter gives an opportunity to celebrate and showcase the City's archives and archive services to London and the world.

Contact

Geoff Pick

Director, London Metropolitan Archives

Town Clerk's Department

T: 020 7332 3833

E; geoff.pick@cityoflondon.gov.uk