



National Archives News

The Newsletter of the Archives and Records Management Unit

April 2008

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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 ^{management}*
- ✓ *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

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.

V. Penn Moll, Editor
National Archives and Records Management Unit
Upstairs Burhym Building
49 de Castro Street, Road Town, Tortola
Virgin Islands VG 1110
Tele: 1 284 468 2365; Fax 468 2582 Email: VPenn-Moll@gov.vg



Deputy Governor's History Awards Programme 2008



This year's theme:



Historical Sites in the BVI

The purpose of the awards is to **promote**, **encourage** and **recognize** local history research in the Virgin Islands. The general public is invited to participate!!!

Get forms and guidelines from Help Desk, DGO and the Archives Unit, Burhym Building, 49 de Castro Road at 468-3701 ext. 3044, 2562 or 2365.

Register Now!

