

# The People's Record: Hadleigh 2012 Virtual Archive

The project created a virtual archive relating to the 2012 London Olympic Mountain-bike event to be held in Hadleigh and the associated regeneration of the town, delivered in partnership with Hadleigh Community Archive (HCA) and Essex Libraries. Essex Record Office trained young people in interview techniques and photographic skills to enable them to contribute to the virtual archive and encourage intergenerational working. The recently formed HCA lacks an operational base for training, meetings and community interface; project funding contributed to renting HCA premises in the short term. Digital images and interviews were collected and a small exhibition produced.

## Target Audience

Young people involved in the interviewing and recording process  
Audience for the digital images and interviews are local residents of Hadleigh.

## Aim

Hadleigh is one of the few communities outside London that will host an Olympic event. The Hadleigh Community Archive is uniquely placed to record the community's changing response to the Olympics and the wider regeneration of Hadleigh. The project aimed to create a vibrant on-line record of the local perspective of an international event, providing a lasting legacy of a unique period in Hadleigh's history.

## Process

The staff at the Essex Record Office worked with the Hadleigh Community Archive, a constituted volunteer organisation comprising local people with a passion for the heritage of their home town. The group has strong connections with the Salvation Army Hadleigh Farm Colony (site of the 2012 Olympic Mountain-bike event) and local youth groups. Further support will come from Essex Library Service and Hadleigh Library in particular. The Hadleigh Community Archive, though a vibrant and lively volunteer group, currently lacks a dedicated Resource Room in which members of the local community can meet to discuss this and other heritage projects, record and edit oral history, store equipment and undertake work on their heritage-themed displays and Community Archive website. The project involved the hiring of a room for the Community Archive to operate from, paying for photographic training, digital camera and recorders and some exhibition materials. Essex Record Office trained the young people and digitised the records created so they could be made available over the internet.

## Number of participants

10 volunteers from the Community Archive were involved.  
10 young people from the local community were trained in interviewing and digital archive recording.  
20 people took part in offering their stories, and memories as part of the oral history process  
85 people saw the resultant small-scale exhibition.

## Impact and outcome

The young people gained skills in interviewing and digital recording. The volunteers, of which 2 were new, gained skills in using the digital equipment, creating web resources and running events.

## **Evaluation**

A number of volunteers stated that the project has increased their knowledge and understanding, skills and, enjoyment and creativity and had made them consider working with the archive again in the future.

## **Tips**

The funding allowed Essex Record Office to engage a professional photographer to lead the photography element of the project, which meant that the photographic work was professionally printed and mounted. This made a great difference to the quality of the result. Having digital cameras ensured that no one was excluded because they did not possess or have access to a digital camera.

## **Future development**

Essex Record Office are planning to work with the Hadleigh Community Archive after the Olympic Mountain Biking to carry out a period of oral history collecting to record residents' experiences of the event. These interviews will form a counterpart to those recorded for this project. This will be shared via the Hadleigh Community Archive website.

The positive response to the photographic sessions has inspired the Record Office to plan other photographic sessions in other parts of the county (subject to funding). Additionally, it is now in the process of setting up a project, 'Essex: Now and Then', using what was learnt from the impact of the photographic sessions – this will be a small, but county-wide, project where volunteers create a number of photographs that are inspired by photographs in the ERO collection.

The full oral history interviews are to be used by the Hadleigh Community Archive and deposited at the Essex Record Office. Much of the digitized material appears on the Community Archive's website – and the group have benefitted from the digitization of material from the Record Office's collection.

## **Project website:**

<http://www.hadleighhistory.org.uk/>

<http://www.peoplesrecord.org.uk/>

## **Case study record created on:**

05/07/2011

## **MLA funded:**

Yes

## **Institution:**

Essex Record Office

**Key partners:**

Hadleigh Community Archive  
Essex Libraries  
Hadleigh Library  
Salvation Army Hadleigh Farm Colony

**Team members:**

Deborah Peers, Audience Development Officer

**Start date:**

September 2010

**End date:**

March 2011

**Contact:**

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**Programmes:**

The People's Record

**Domains:**

Archives

**Sector developing role:**

Evaluation  
Partnerships

**Social groups:**

Children and young people  
Older people

**Social outcomes:**

Community cohesion & inclusion  
Community empowerment & active citizenship  
Health & well-being  
Raising participation

**Geographical Coverage:**

East of England