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Oxfordshire Record Office recently participated in an exciting pilot scheme to *communicate with schoolchildren, using new video-conferencing technology*. The children, aged between 7 and 11, from primary schools in *Kidlington and Wallingford*, were able to explore original historic documents and to interact with archivists at the **Record Office in Cowley without having to leave their classrooms**.

An introductory session which enabled pupils to learn about archives and the work of the Record Office generated enquiries like, “**What’s your favourite part of the job?**” and, amusingly, “*Are you a detective?*” and “*Are you a spy?*” on seeing the white gloves and magnifying glass that archivists use!

The following sessions were developed around topics that the children were studying. For example, original documents like school logbooks, *vividly illustrated the lives of Victorian children*, while Tudor wills and inventories (lists of the personal belongings of the deceased) highlighted differences between wealth and poverty.

For the archivists, one of the most exhilarating aspects of the project was seeing what children found most fascinating about the records. It was reassuring to see many hands going up and to hear questions like “**What is the longest inventory you have**”, “Did Henry VIII have an inventory?” and “What’s the most unusual document you keep?”

Aside from a few technical hitches, the project has been very successful and allows Cultural Services to explore new avenues for service delivery. Video-conferencing could revolutionise the way we interact with audiences, **especially those who are unable to visit**, for example, the Record Office, the Centre for Oxfordshire Studies or the Oxfordshire Museum.

Did you know that tennis was once illegal?



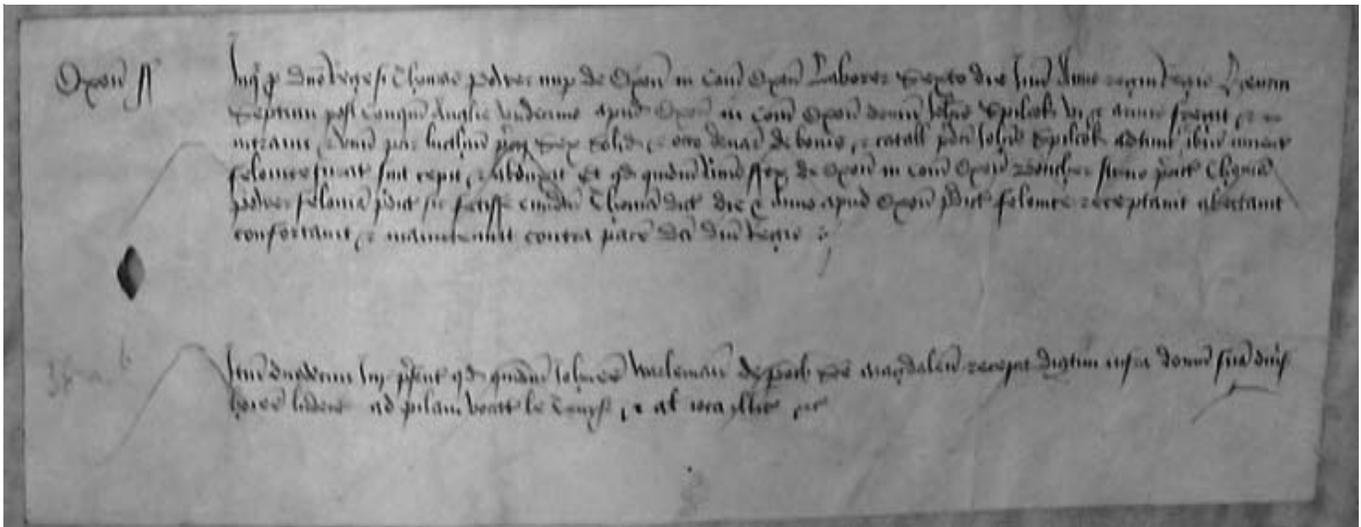
During the reign of the Tudors many **aspects of life were strictly** controlled by law, such as what clothes one could wear (the sumptuary laws) and what leisure activities one could pursue (Unlawful Games Act, 1541).

Tennis, cards, dice, bowls and skittles were among those pastimes that were unlawful for the ordinary person. In some cases the reason was because the activity was considered frivolous and inappropriate for good citizens, and an unnecessary distraction from their daily work. In others it was because a sport was injurious and might reduce the number of able-bodied men.

In the case of tennis it was a **matter of class**; at the highest level. Both Henry VII and Henry VIII were keen players of real tennis (as distinct from lawn tennis). It was originally played with the hand and evolved into a racket sport with hand-strung rackets and hand-stitched balls made of cork and felt. As a sport of kings, this was no game for ordinary folk.

This Latin document is evidence that John Warleman of Oxford, St Mary Magdalen, is presented before the jury as having received daily into his house various men playing a ball-game called 'Le Tenyse', and other unlawful sports. It is thought to have been written by a medieval travelling notary. Evidence of the Tudor public's criminal thirst for tennis?

T.R.



Item duodecim jurati presentant quod quidam Iohannes Warleman de parochia sancte Magdalene recepit diatim infra domum suam diversos homines ludentes ad pilam vocat' le Tenyse & alia joca illicita.

Transcript from **H.E. Salter, 'Snappe's Formulary and Other Records' (Oxford Historical Society Vol. LXXX, 1924) p. 233:**

The translation is in the catalogue entry, namely:
A certain John Warleman of the parish of [Oxford] St. [Mary] Magdalen was presented before the jury as having received daily into his house various men playing a ball game called le Tenyse and other unlawful games

Oxfordshire Record Office Promotion - How do people get to know about us?

Exhibitions; Generally exhibitions are produced by ORO staff, often in conjunction with or solely by, outside groups. They usually last approximately 2 months. Sometimes planned to coincide with a special occasion or event. **Recent exhibitions:** - Oxfordshire Barns, Oxford Prison (coinciding with BBC TV's "Ancestors"), Black People's Presence in Oxfordshire. **Planned exhibitions:** - Weird Wonders, Conservation, Black History Month, Debenhams, Shipton-on-Cherwell Railway Crash.

Classes, Talks, Tours, Search room inductions; Given by members of staff in office or elsewhere, covering a wide range of topics.

Recent and planned examples are a talk to History undergraduate students, and tours for The National Archive and a group of French students.

Education Room; a facility available to outside groups as well as County Council users – frequently booked for computer courses, education projects and videoconferencing for schools.

Reception & shop; is being improved by the choice of more merchandise being made available; also a wider selection of biscuits and crisps to complement the Fair Trade tea, and coffees. There is a video room, which shows the office video – which is of interest especially to new visitors.

Partnerships; we have participate in activities with partners from other heritage services and outside the County Council; for example A2A, the Ashmolean, videoconferencing, Culture Bus and Loans schemes, Black History exhibitions. Road Shows and Open Days are planned with partners from OFHS, Archives Awareness month and possibly Oxfordshire Museum and the Centre for Oxfordshire Studies.

Press, TV and Radio publicity; frequent use of the Council's publicity service leading to articles in the press and mentions on TV/Radio; as in Archives Awareness Month and the launch of Black People's Presence in Oxfordshire.

Social Inclusion and Cultural Entitlement; ORO is actively promoting both these objectives, a number of staff are involved partnership and cross-domain projects; such as Videoconferencing for schools and Black History Month. Participating in national programmes and events.

The Internet; ORO has its own pages on the Oxfordshire County Council website, with details for first time users, events etc. We are also involved in the A2A programme for electronic conversion of catalogues and it is hoped current catalogues will soon be available on line. ORO is active in promoting computer literacy and the provision of heritage services through digital technology.

VAMPIRES, GHOSTS, GARGOYLES AND CURTAIN-EATING GOATS

See them all and more in our Weird Wonders exhibition throughout June and July.

Mull over:

- 'ghosts' at Hampton Gay
- Winston Churchill and the Albion Lodge of Druids
- the gargoyles of Burford
- executions at Oxford Prison

Name that actor! Pictures from Oxford Playhouse Collection!

How many actors and actresses can you name?

One of the challenges of cataloguing hundreds of photographs is identifying the people, places or events pictured! You're sure you've seen these faces on TV or in a play, but can you remember their names?

An exhibition celebrating Black History & Culture in Oxfordshire drew many visitors from London, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire throughout May to the Record Office in Cowley. We also received email, postal and telephone enquiries from **New York, Jamaica and Manchester** so interest could be described as global! To launch the event on 5 May, Guy Grannum, author of 'Tracing Your West Indian Ancestors', gave a talk about African Caribbean genealogy, which attracted around **50 people**, many of whom chatted about Black family history over Caribbean nibbles until late in the evening.

The exhibition was jointly organised by **ACCAN** (African Caribbean Community Action Network), **Roots 'n' Culture** Oxford and the **Record Office** with the aim of promoting Black History as something to be celebrated all year round, not just for Black History Month in October. The event received much media attention with a big article in the Oxford Times, pieces in the Black Press (New Nation, Gleaner) and various local papers and newsletters; a SixLife interview for the Oxford TV Channel, and interviews for Radio Oxford, Fox FM and Radio Leeds, the latter having read the interesting article in 'New Nation'!

The Oxfordshire Ethnic Minorities Service visited the exhibition, which highlighted positive role models in the community, and a class of schoolchildren arrived with their teacher. Several other teachers and the Surrey Museums Service also expressed interest.

Although letters were sent out to local Black organisations and communities inviting them to participate or to show their own archival material, most of the actual records, photos and memorabilia on display came from Heritage Services, the Bodleian Library and Pat Green of ACCAN. It is hoped that for **Black History Month in October** members of the Black Community will play an active role in what is being shown.

K.G.

ORO Top Ten ; Jan-Mar	
Subject	Searchers
Family History	505
Local History	113
Wills	37
Banbury	24
Transcription	22
Oxford	21
Church History	17
Parish Records	13
GRO	11
Private Records	11



The Treasures of Oxfordshire

A selection of beautiful, unique items- each one tells a story! See a Roman Altar! See an Oxford marmalade pot! See the report of a Witchcraft trial!

Published by Friends of Archives, Museums and Oxfordshire Studies

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New
Books
In
Shop**

Coffee shop News!

New to the coffee shop ~
Crinkly crisps, Jacobs
Packets of biscuits, Fair
Trade coffees and teas~
Come in, try them all!!!!

Exhibitions

June/July - Weird Wonders

August/September -

"The Medium Matters":

archival materials and
their preservation.

**October - Black History
Month**

November/December -

Debenhams

**January/February Shipton-on-
Cherwell Railway Crash**