

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

UK Memory of the World Register Launched

BRISTOL, UK – 1 September 2009. The first ever call for nominations to the UK Memory of the World Register was announced today at the opening of the Society of Archivists Conference in Bristol. Nominations to the newly-established register are being sought for documentary heritage which holds cultural significance specific to the UK.

The UK Register is part of the international UNESCO (United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization) Memory of the World programme, which promotes access to the world's archive holdings and library collections, as well as their preservation. The UK Memory of the World Register will help highlight some of the UK's exceptional, but lesser-known documentary riches by awarding them with the globally-recognised Memory of the World status.

Nominations to the Register will be considered against criteria including authenticity, rarity, integrity, threat and social, spiritual or community significance. The Register will be administered by the UK Memory of the World Working Group through the UK National Commission for UNESCO, which is the focal point in the UK for UNESCO-related policies and activities.

David Dawson, Chair of the UK Memory of the World Working Group and Director of the Wiltshire Heritage Museum said, "The launch of the UK Register is the start of an exceptional opportunity to spotlight documentary heritage which has left its mark on the people and history of the UK. Through the UK Register we hope to encourage people to discover the rich and diverse documentary heritage near them."

The UK Register will complement the UNESCO Memory of the World International Register, which is a catalogue of documentary heritage of global significance and outstanding universal value. Other country-level Memory of the World Registers also exist around the globe, helping to promote documentary heritage of local significance. Together, these registers are the public face of UNESCO's Memory of the World programme, which promotes access to the world's archive holdings and library collections, as well as their preservation.

The deadline for the first round of nominations to the UK Memory of the World Register is 8 January 2010. The first inscriptions to the Register will be made in spring 2010.

For further information on the UNESCO Memory of the World programme and for full nomination criteria and relevant forms, visit www.unesco.org.uk/UK_Register.htm.

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For further information, or to arrange an interview, please contact Ian White at the UK National Commission for UNESCO on +44 (0) 20 77 66 34 92 or iwhite@unesco.org.uk.

Notes to Editors

- **UNESCO's Memory of the World programme** was established in 1992 to promote preservation of and access to the world's archive holdings and library collections. The vision of the programme is a simple but powerful one – the world's documentary heritage belongs to all, should be fully preserved and protected for all and, with due recognition of cultural mores and practicalities, should be permanently accessible to all without hindrance.

Inscriptions to the International Register are made every two years. In addition to maintaining the International Register, the Memory of the World programme campaigns to raise awareness of documentary heritage and to alert governments, the general public, business and commerce to preservation needs. The programme also raises funds and provides expertise to support preservation and digitisation projects in developing countries and for archives at risk.

The UK Memory of the World Register was launched on 1 September 2009. Inscriptions to the Register will be made regularly, on an annual or biannual basis.

- **The Memory of the World (MoW) Working Group** is the UK's official body for the Memory of the World programme and has responsibility for the overall management and monitoring of the programme in the UK. Its members serve in a voluntary capacity and are drawn from the UK's extensive library, archive and museum community, as well as from leading membership and regulatory organisations in the fields of preservation and access to documentary heritage. The Working Group administers the UK Memory of the World Register and reviews and facilitates nominations to the International Memory of the World Register.
- **The UK National Commission for UNESCO** is the focal point in the UK for UNESCO-related policies and activities. As an independent body, the UK National Commission brings together a network of nearly 250 experts from across the UK in the fields of education, culture, sciences and communication. Working closely in partnership with HM Government and UK civil society, the UK National Commission aims to provide expert advice to Government on UNESCO related matters, develop UK input into UNESCO policy-making and programme implementation, promote reforms within UNESCO, and encourage support in the UK for UNESCO's ideals and work.