

Archival Developments in St Kitts

Some important work has been undertaken in the beautiful Caribbean island of St Kitts during the year. The Director of Archives, Viki O'Flaherty has compiled a superb little booklet to publicise use and understanding of archives. It is aimed at school children and their teachers to promote a greater understanding of the history of St Kitts.



The introduction to the booklet is a good summary of what the project is aiming at:

Knowing what information is available, where to find it and how to extract it from the places where it resides, are skills that seem to be more and more important these days.

Archives are among the information resources that are available to answer the questions we wish to ask. We may wish to find out why a particular government decision was made, what caused the Anguilla breakaway, or the responses to the decline of the sugar

industry. We may be pursuing a family history hobby, working on an academic project, documenting a legal claim or writing a book. Whatever the motivation for the research interest, it is possible that the information we seek is to be found in archives.

It goes on to explain what archives are; their uniqueness, provenance and functions; how they can be used as evidence; access to archives; and making the most of archives.

Viki has also started the publication of an information sheet for government departments. The purpose of this is to highlight the role of archives and to explain the importance of good records management. She is also working on the production of new key documents for the

island – an Archives Mission Statement, Collection Policy, Terms of Deposit and Access Policy. A draft records management policy has been prepared and will be discussed with heads of government agencies in early in 2007.

Meanwhile the National Archives was the recipient of a gift of two dehumidifiers which will be placed in the two vaults to assist in the maintenance of a more stable environment.

Kelvin Smith ■