**DEMONSTRATING MARKETING EXCELLENCE**

**Highly Commended – Archives**

Marketing Excellence Award entry by: Ms Helen Palmer, County Archivist, Information and Records Manager

Organisation Name: Ceredigion Archives

Organisation Address: Old Town Hall, Queen’s Square

Town: Aberystwyth

Postcode: SY23 2EB

Contact Number: 01970 633697

Email: helen.palmer@ceredigion.gov.uk

Twitter Account: @ceredigionarch

Organisation Profile/ Overview:

Ceredigion Archives is a small local authority record office, based in new premises ( 2012) at the Old Town Hall in Aberystwyth and serving the county of Ceredigion, formerly Cardiganshire. The team ( 5.5fte) manages and administers the Archives, Information and Records Management,including electronic records management, Data Protection and Information Security training. The archival collections comprise about 45 cubic metres of records dating from the sixteenth century to the present. We are open to the public five days a week, provide research services for distance users, and provide access and interest through our web-site, Twitter account, blog and Facebook pages.

Category Entered: Archives

Project Title: Explore Your Archive - the pink napkin project

Context:

Explore Your Archive is an annual marketing opportunity throughout the archival community. One week in November is designated as Explore Your Archive Week and archives are encouraged to promote their services in interesting and innovative ways, to attract positive attention and new users. We wanted to approach a new audience, covering as many sites in the county as possible, but with a very small budget.

Aims and Objectives:

We had a very specific aim, and that was to make as many people as possible aware of the existence of the service, and aware too that they could 'explore the archives'. We wanted to 'get the county talking' about Archives. Because we are fortunate enough to have The National Library of Wales, two universities,and the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales in this county, who all hold excellent archival collections, there is a large and well-educated body of people who use and enjoy archives regularly. But there are also many people for whom the concept and reality of archives is alien. We wanted to give those people a nudge towards thinking about archives and their potential.

The project was measurable to the extent that we targetted up to 24,000 people at 100 different venues in 22 towns and villages over the county.

It proved happily achievable: the printers were helpful, the archives team hugely enthusiastic, and the cafe proprietors welcoming.

Realistic too - it was a very simple project, which was easy to realise given the co-operation of the parties involved

Timebound : the time-scale of the campaign was the one week of 'Explore Your Archive' ; the time-scale of the effect of the campaign is much longer.

We were fortunate to receive a grant from CyMAL for Explore Your Archive week, and this particular project cost staff time and energy plus £358 for the printing and delivery of the napkins.

Strategy and Planning:

Our strategy was a simple but innovative one - to reach out to as many people via as many venues across the county as we could manage with our budget and other resources.

We achieved this by designing a simple logo ( incorporating nationally developed text &c) and getting it printed onto 24,000 bright pink paper napkins. Staff then distributed these napkins at cafes, restaurants and pubs for use throughout Explore Your Archive week. Each gift of napkins ( with which the recipients were delighted - they saved on the cost of a week's napkins) was accompanied by a bi-lingual poster giving details of the archive service, and a small pack of leaflets. Cafe proprietors were encouraged to point out the poster and leaflets who anyone who commented on the napkins. Cafe proprietors told us how many napkins they felt they were likely to use and we succeeded in distributing them all to over 100 venues throughout the county. We were pleased that our 'promotional items' were useful, recyclable and eye-catching.

Tactics and Implementation:

1. We found a catering supplies firm (Caterprint ) who were willing to help us with our design and who guaranteed delivery by the necessary date. We only selected the bright pink colour of the napkins because it was on special offer.

2. We designed the napkins using the generic 'Explore Your Archive' marketing logo in conjunction with details unique to Ceredigion Archives . We also updated our paper leaflet, and designed a poster to explain the location, function and contents of the Archives.

3.We approached cafe owners by e-mail. We later abandoned this in favour of 'cold-calling' with the napkins - the latter approach was more successful.

4.The napkins arrived - 12 large boxes, each full of 20 packs of 100 napkins and staff devoted their spare time to distributing them ( plus leaflets and posters) around the county in the fortnight preceding Explore Your Archive Week.

5. We announced the existence of the napkins on Twitter and Facebook and sat back and waited

Results/Measurements/Outcomes:

The results of the project - although ultimately difficult to measure - were gratifying. We have definitely had new users as a result of the pink napkin campaign - some people came to the Archives brandishing their napkins ! Existing archives users also came in with napkins reporting conversations with other cafe users. cafe proprietors reported the popularity of the napkins amongst their clientele, and how they had become a 'talking point'. Several other organizations have approached me since the campaign to elicit details as they felt the idea would work for them too.

Date of Project: July - November 2014

Summary:

Everyone loves a snack in a cafe - Ceredigion Archives used this simple truth as a means to promote its service during Explore Your Archive Week ( 10th - 15th November 2014) by distributing 24,000 bright pink promotional napkins around 100 cafes, restaurants and pubs in 22 towns and villages in the county. People were encouraged to 'Archwilwch Eich Archif / Explore Your Archive' over their coffee and cake. The archives logo and web-site details appeared on each napkin, whilst cafe proprietors were also given an explanatory poster and some leaflets to help spread the word.