



Business Archives Council Newsletter

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The editor of this newsletter is Benjamin White. The next issue will appear in Summer 2017. Prospective copy should be sent to Benjamin White, email: Benjamin.White@bankofengland.co.uk

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Chair's blog

As I write this, Spring is definitely in the air. From the train window, blossom, daffodils and lambs are much in evidence. I'm heading to Exeter University for the sixth and final seminar in an ESRC-supported series which brings together organisational and management historians, and archivists. These events have been running over the last couple of years and I have reported on some of these in previous blogs. One of tomorrow's speakers is Sara Kinsey - fellow BAC Trustee and Head of Historical Archives at Nationwide Building Society. Although this marks the official end of the programme, I hope that academics and business archivists will continue to explore ways of working together and understanding what we all do.

Of course, advocating the value of business archives is at the heart of what the BAC does. Recently I had the opportunity to get excited about our sector at a seminar run by Archives for London, held at the London Metropolitan Archives. Well, in front of that audience and at that venue, I had to say that London is the country's foremost centre for business archives. However as I later conceded, other centres are available!

I was also delighted to attend a ceremony where the BT Archive received its Archive Accreditation award. Held at BT Tower, it was something of a 'who's who' in business archives, and The National Archives' Jeff James was there to hand over the gong. And I can report that the famous revolving bit did indeed revolve in celebration. One minor disappointment was the view - it was so misty that we couldn't see a thing! Well even the powers of the BAC Chair don't extend to controlling the weather...

Arguably my most important task this year has been to attend the launch of a new strategic vision for archives, 'Archives Unlocked', which took place at the Southbank Centre last week. Despite being a busy day politically (Article 50 was about to be triggered), Matt Hancock the Minister for Digital and Culture was there to give a speech. I'm pleased to report that BAC involvement in the formulation of the vision has been strong and the final document includes a case study of a business archive and a 'think piece' on archives and economic growth. You can find out more here: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/projects-and-programmes/strategic-vision-for-archives/

Despite the rival news, there was some excellent coverage on social media. My Tweet of the impressive #archivecake was one of my most popular ever, but let's not let our renowned fondness for cake distract from the fact that this is an important document, and is intended for the whole sector. We will be trying to align future initiatives to ensure that business archives are indeed unlocked.

We have just announced the launch of the BAC Cataloguing Grant for 2017, with the arts-related Grant to follow shortly. If you have, or know of, a business collection that would benefit from cataloguing then do apply, or encourage others to apply. As I've said before £3,000 can make a huge difference and to keep going with a theme, cataloguing remains critical in unlocking those archives.

Finally, I must end with the sad news of the death of John Armstrong. A fuller appreciation will follow, but suffice to say that he was a noted business and maritime historian who had been actively involved in the work of the Council. John was very encouraging to me over the years and he will be sadly missed.

Mike Anson
BAC Chair

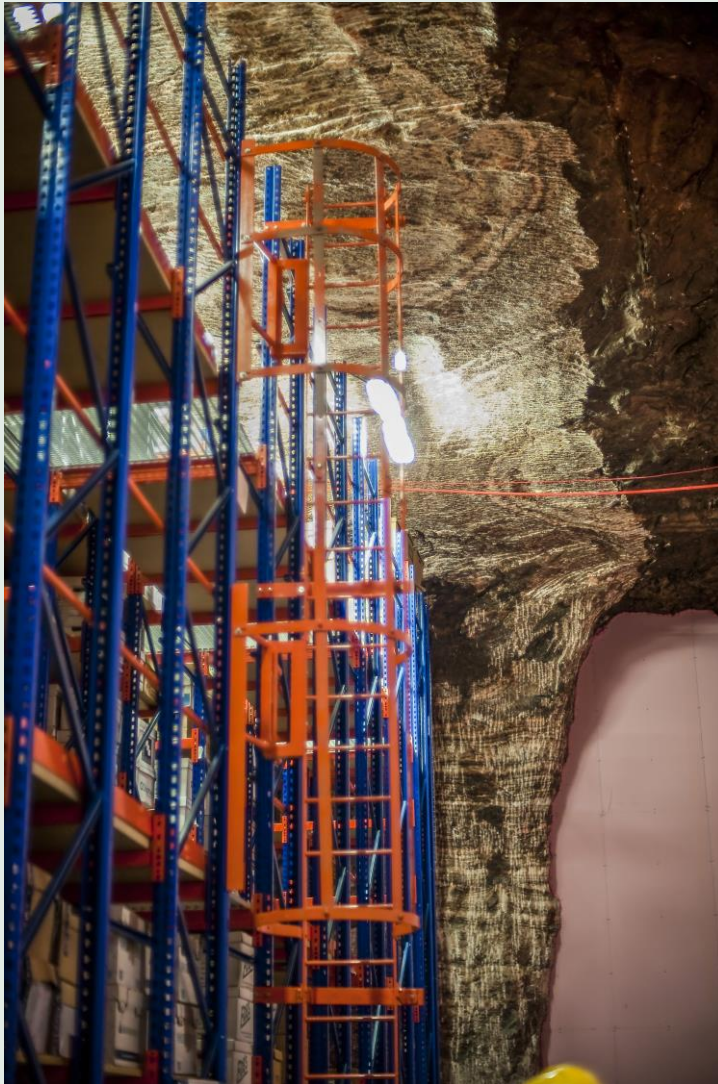
Welcome to new members

The BAC is pleased to welcome the following new member

- DeepStore Records Management

Archives and more kept in underground store

Imagine an area 700 times the size of Wembley football pitch and you get an idea of the scale of the space managed by DeepStore, the UK's largest underground storage company.



Underground in the DeepStore salt mine, Cheshire (image courtesy of DeepStore Records Management)

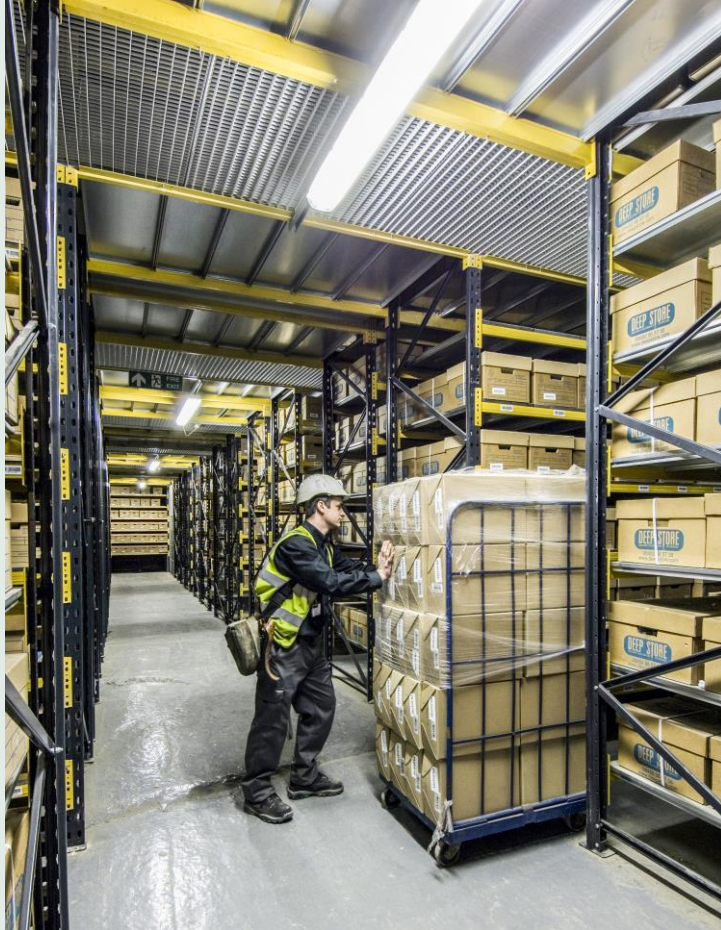
The creative use of the pre-existing space in Britain's largest salt mine in Winsford, Cheshire - owned and operated by parent company, Compass Minerals, provides a unique storage environment 150 metres below ground - free from vermin, mould, flooding and UV light. The mine is the perfect environment for storing documents as it has consistent temperature and humidity levels that meet the highest specification requirements for the storage of archive material.

The company combines comprehensive storage solutions, state-of-the-art technology, PD 5454 compliance and unmatched security to provide an unrivalled service to organisations nationwide DeepStore is the preferred choice of many archivists, records managers, librarians, museum curators and historic environment managers.

It has more than 1,000 security-minded public and private sector clients, including pharmaceutical, legal and financial organisations, as well as police forces and the healthcare

industry. These include The National Archives, the Royal Society, MOLA, Costain, SOAS and the Wellcome Trust.

DeepStore currently has 2.5 million boxes under management equating to 3.25 million cubic feet and has recently expanded its facilities by an extra 32,549 square metres of space. There is the capacity for future expansion into an area of over 500 million cubic feet so there will never be a shortage of space.



Shelving in the DeepStore salt mine, Cheshire (image courtesy DeepStore Records Management)

DeepStore holds ISO 27001, the recognised international standard for information security management systems. The company is also ISO14001 certified, assuring its commitment to minimising its impact on the environment wherever possible and to continually improve its ecological performance.

The environment in Winsford is particularly suited to media storage, electronic media and disaster recovery materials. Bespoke cold storage facilities are also available on site providing refrigerated and sub-zero environmental conditions.

An online software portal allows remote access for clients to accurately manage and track assets securely, providing significant improvements in workflow efficiencies. DeepStore offers same-day and next-day hard copy retrievals combined with tailor made Scan-on-Demand electronic delivery services. Data room facilities are also available at its above-ground premises in Bromley-by-Bow, London.

Geraldine Turner
DeepStore Records Management

***Appraisal in the digital era* – an invitation to an eabh Workshop**

You are kindly invited to the next eabh workshop *Appraisal in the digital era* which is being held in cooperation with BNP Paribas and Banque Lombard Odier on the 22 June 2017 at BNP Paribas, 14 Rue Bergère, 75009 Paris.

This workshop will draw on the practical experience of the frontrunners in the field. It is targeted for archivists, records managers, information professionals, researchers and other users of digital archival material. You can download the programme [here](#)

Registration is open at 2017eabh.eventbrite.co.uk

The workshop is part of eabh Annual Meeting. Programmes of all events are available [here](#)

The Crisis Team reaches 100 cases

The Crisis Team, first set up in 2009 as part of the National Strategy for Business Archives (England & Wales) to deal with the consequences of business failures, has now passed the milestone of its hundredth case. The issue of 'at-risk' business records was always a major priority in the preparation of the strategy, but it was given a special urgency following the banking collapse and the broader financial crisis that ensued. The failure of Woolworths in 2008-09 signalled challenging times on the British high street and for the embryonic Crisis Team. There were only three team members at the beginning, which has now risen to nine, augmented by the launch of a parallel Scottish strategy allowing for wider national and regional coverage. The number of deposits of business archives in archive repositories, resulting from its work, has reached 18, with other cases still in progress.



In 2010, the Crisis Team was given less than two hours to gather the records of William Verry Limited in Docklands, London before the keys were handed over by administrators to the new owner of the premises. (image courtesy of London Metropolitan Archives, City of London)

Some sectors suffered more than others during the recession. Retailers were in the front line and the embattled building and construction sector accounted for no fewer than 14 of the cases investigated. Apart from the economic downturn there were other trends at work, as in the closure of Kemble's factory in Milton Keynes, when production by Britain's last piano manufacturer was moved to the Far East. Wine merchants such as First Quench became casualties largely due to long-term competition from supermarkets. Takeovers were also an area of concern, particularly that of Cadbury by Kraft and BMI by British Airways. But these did not, in the event, pose any threat to records.

The use of the term crisis in the team's title is somewhat misleading. There is a whole range of scenarios that can occur and time is not always of the essence. Sometimes a situation needs to be monitored but no further action is needed. There are also situations where the placing of a collection can involve protracted negotiation and we can work to a timetable of months or even years. At other times company administrations set off a race against time to secure records from accidental loss. This can end well, as with the electrical retailer Comet, whose records were swiftly deposited with Hull City Archives. It can also be frustrating, as with British Home Stores or Austin Reed, where there has been no clear outcome in both cases and the fate of the records remains a concern.



One of the small fleet of vans used to deliver recharged batteries to Comet customers parked outside their premises on Dock Street, Hull c. 1939 (image courtesy of Hull City Archives at the Hull History Centre)

It is always surprising how the records of a large company can simply go missing, only to turn up again in due course. This was the situation with the chemical manufacturer Laporte plc, which was once a constituent of the FTSE 100. Their records had been surveyed by the Business Archives Council, so they were a well-documented collection, but for a long time their whereabouts were unknown. It even seemed possible that they had been lost altogether. Happily, they were re-discovered and now reside in the Science Museum. Another happy ending involved the Woolworth archive, deposited at the University of Reading in 2015, which proved to be a much more extensive collection than had been expected.

There are also orphan collections, consigned to a facility where there was once spare space and then forgotten until the building was to be cleared. In one case, a stray directors' minute book was discovered during a house clearance in mid-Wales. Why some material has ended up in a particular place may remain a mystery, but for the Crisis Team it is a welcome opportunity to place it with a suitable repository.

The banking crisis still casts a long shadow, as was shown recently when Airdrie Savings Bank announced that it was closing its doors. While the bank itself is perfectly sound, the new and burdensome regulatory environment was considered an impediment to continued trading. The records, which have been surveyed by the National Register of Archives for Scotland, will no doubt be found a safe home. That would be a satisfactory outcome to case number 101.

Alex Ritchie

Crisis Team Co-ordinator, The National Archives

The journal of the British Records Association – a request for articles in relation to business archives

Members might like to know that **ARCHIVES**, the journal of the British Records Association, welcomes submissions about business archives.

The British Records Association aims to promote the preservation, understanding, accessibility and study of the recorded heritage. Its journal, **ARCHIVES**, is published twice yearly and serves the needs of both practitioners and users by providing information about the whereabouts, interpretation and historical significance of records in all media.

The coverage is eclectic; recent articles have included:

Mark Dunton, *Probing the 1970s – a case study: Inflation, Public relations and the Heath Administration 1972*

Brian Barber, *The ‘Learned and Curious’ Charles Hornby (1670-1739), Public Servant, Tory Polemicist and Political Prisoner*

Anne Summers, *Gaps and Bias in the Records: Researching Christian – Jewish Charitable Collaborations, 1880s – 1920s*

Lisa Spurrier, *The Broadmoor Archive: A Preliminary Survey of the Historical Records of Broadmoor Hospital and their Research Potential*

ARCHIVES welcomes submissions that:

- provide case studies in the use of archival resources
- promote scholarly analysis of the history of archives and the impact on users of record keeping practices, past, present and future
- report projects and discoveries
- provoke discussion of archival issues within the user community
- provide guidance about the use and meaning of archival resources and the linkages between them
- communicate archival trends, theories and practices to a wider audience.

For further information and a copy of the style guide please contact Ruth Paley, the Hon. Editor: editor@britishrecordsassociation.org.uk

Booking is now open for the ARA's Section for Business Records Summer Seminar 2017

How to Promote and Market your Archive

Thursday 11 May 2017 at The Peel Group Archives, Manchester

Location:
The Peel Group
intu Trafford Centre
Manchester M17 8PL

Registration is now open for the ARA's Section for Business Records (SBR) second annual summer seminar. An event which has been made possible by the generosity of The Peel

Group, the seminar will explore the theme of '*How to Promote and Market your Archive*'. Primarily aimed at archivists, and marketing/branding professionals within the heritage sector, the programme features four speakers from a variety of business archives. Presentations will be followed by a panel session chaired by Mike Anson, Chair of the Business Archives Council.

The seminar will also include the SBR AGM whereby new officers will be elected to the following posts: Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Training Officer, Communications Officer and non-portfolio. Consideration for an officers' post can be done in person at the AGM, or by arranging a nomination by proxy.

How to book

Go to the ARA's Event page (www.archives.org.uk/events/viewevent/436-section-for-business-records-summer-seminar-2017-how-to-promote-and-market-your-archive.html) and complete the seminar registration form which is attached to the programme. Return the completed form to: emily.weeks@leonardocompany.com

Please note that this seminar is for ARA Members only. Places are limited, therefore please return forms promptly.

Saved from the ashes of the credit crunch's largest retail liquidation: the Woolworths plc archives



A section of the Woolworths plc archives prior to preservation
(image courtesy University of Reading Archives)

The twenty-first century has not been kind to the archives of firms that have failed for bankruptcy or otherwise ceased trading. Liquidators – who once constituted important allies in the fight to preserve corporate archives, now appear to almost uniformly adopt a “shred everything” strategy – a stance that their professional associations apparently do nothing to temper. The recent failure of BHS is just one example of a major corporate liquidation being rapidly followed by the apparent destruction of its heritage archive. It is thus refreshing to report one major success for archival preservation – the Woolworths plc archives, which are now preserved, catalogued, and available to researchers and the general public at the University of Reading Archives, located in its Museum of English Rural Life (which also holds the W.H. Smith archives).

Thanks to the generous help and support of the new owners of the Woolworths brand, Shop Direct Group, the archive was transferred to the University of Reading in 2015 (some seven years after Woolworths’ liquidation in December 2008). Following extensive cataloguing and preservation work a launch event to celebrate the archive becoming available to researchers was held on March 10th, attended by representatives of several leading retail archives, former Woolworths staff, academic researchers, and people with a more general interest in Woolworths’ history. Visitors were able to look at a selection of materials from the archive, together with the archive catalogue. This covers some 50 pages and lists documents that chart the firm’s history from the opening of Woolworths’ first UK branch in 1909, through its rapid growth - becoming Britain’s largest retailer from the 1930s to 1968 - and its subsequent long decline (with the most recent materials dating to around 2004). The records include an extensive collection of accounting records (including ledgers showing the locations and annual trading figures of each store); administrative and legal records, including Board and Executive Committee minutes; promotional and advertising materials; and audio-visual records. It is hoped that this initiative will also encourage more donations of Woolworths-related material to further enhance the collection.

The years since Woolworths’ liquidation have seen an upsurge in historical scholarship on its history, including Paul Seaton’s *A Sixpenny Romance* (2009); Barbara Walsh’s history of Woolworths in Ireland (north and south of the border): *When the Shopping Was Good* (2010); and, most recently, Kathryn Morrison’s *Woolworth’s: 100 Years on the High Street* (2015) – which was based on another, architectural, archive for Woolworths, held by Historic England. The opening of Woolworths’ corporate archive is likely to see a further dramatic expansion of research on Woolworths-related topics, given its status as Britain’s largest retailer for much of the twentieth century; Britain’s main book seller (in terms of volume, if not value) during the 1930s, and one of Britain’s best-loved high street ‘social centres’, where people of all classes could happily spend much time browsing the wide array of attractive and moderately-priced merchandise, originally sold for no more than sixpence. Woolworths also played an important role in the development of the British high street clothing sector (with its iconic Ladybird brand) and was one of the first moderately-priced high street caterers, developing cafes (typically on the floor above the sales area), from the inter-war years.



A display of materials from the Woolworths plc archive at the 10th March launch event (image courtesy of University of Reading Archives)

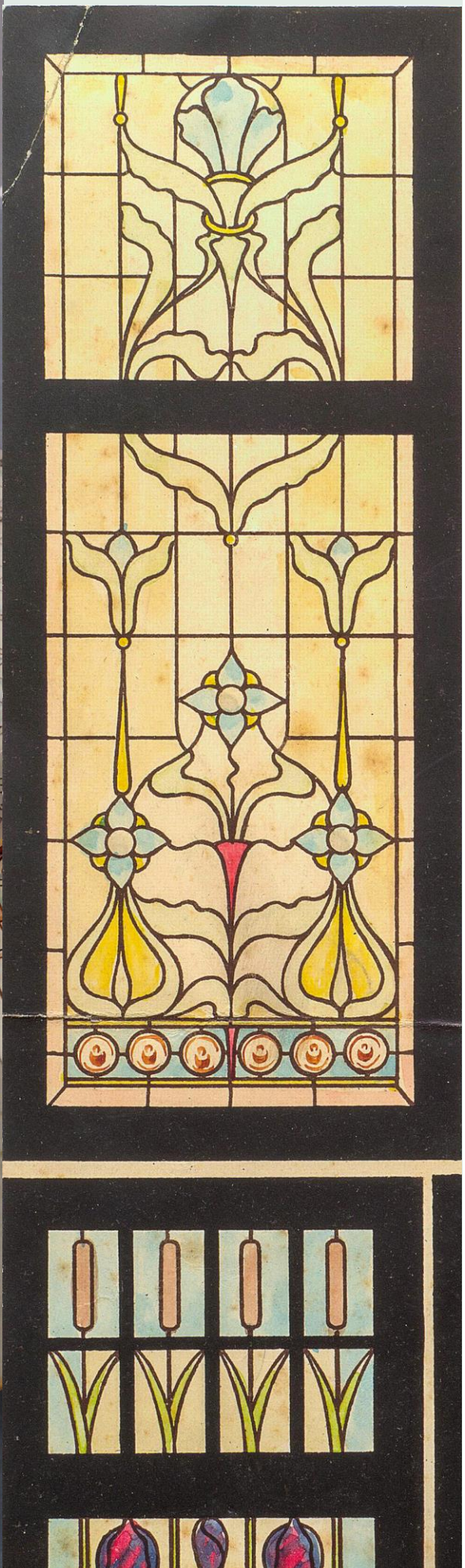
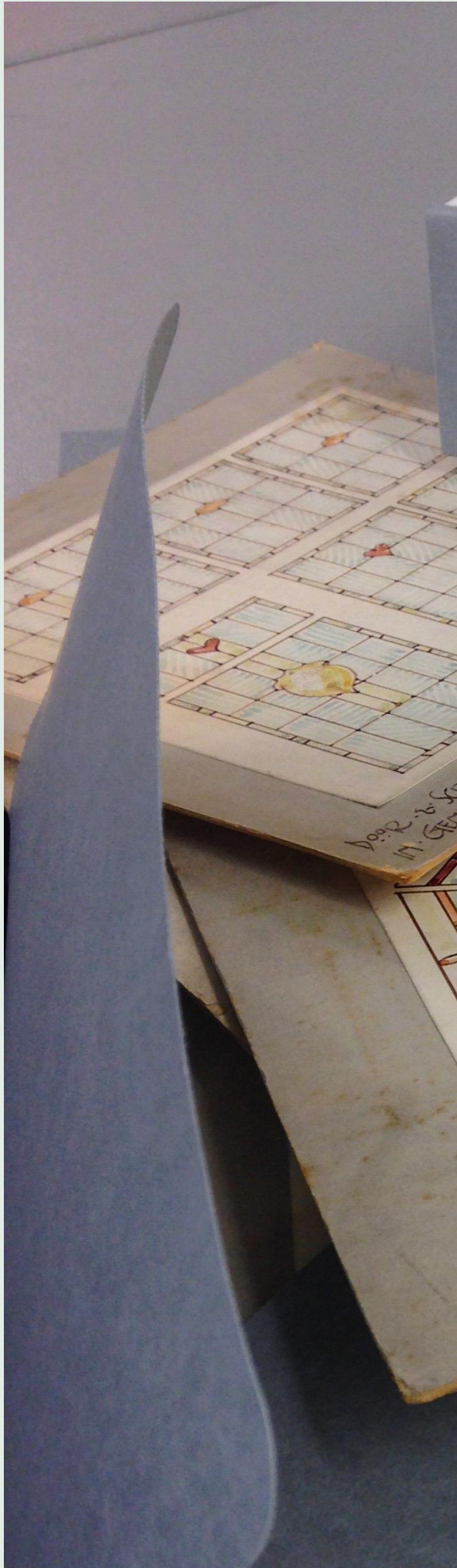
The Woolworths archive illustrates the importance of corporate archives to preserving not only Britain's business history, but also its social and cultural history. At a time of rapid change on the British high street, with many archives disappearing following the closure of the firms in question, or ending up in what seems to be a permanent limbo of inaccessibility (as has happened, for example, with the Lewis's of Liverpool archive) it is indeed refreshing to report one notable success.

Peter Scott

Henley Business School at the University of Reading

Announcing two £3000 BAC cataloguing grants for 2017

The Business Archives Council (BAC) is delighted to announce that for 2017 its general cataloguing grant for business collections and its cataloguing grant specifically for business archives related to the arts will each remain at £3000.



The Abbott and Company of Lancaster archive, winner of the BAC's general cataloguing in 2016

(images courtesy of Lancashire Archives, Lancashire County Council)

The aims of both grants, in funding the cataloguing of business collections in either the private or public sector, are to:

- Provide financial support for institutions/ businesses that manage business archives
- Reach collections that have not yet been prioritised but have potential academic or socio-historical value
- Create opportunities for archivists or para-professionals/ volunteers to gain experience in listing business collections
- Increase accessibility to business archives.

We envisage that each £3000 grant will be used over the equivalent of a six-week period to fund an archive intern or temporary staff member (under professional supervision) to catalogue a discrete collection of business records. This work should produce either a detailed catalogue of a small collection or a top-level catalogue of a more substantial collection. Grant recipients will be asked to produce a short report on the project outcomes for the BAC newsletter and website. In addition, the catalogue should be made available on The National Archives' DISCOVERY database.

The Cataloguing Grant for Business Archives (2017) launched on 1 April 2017. The deadline for applications is 26 June 2017.

The Cataloguing Grant for Business Archives related to the Arts (2017) launches on 27 April 2017. The deadline for applications is 27 July 2017.

For more information – criteria and application forms – see the BAC's website at:

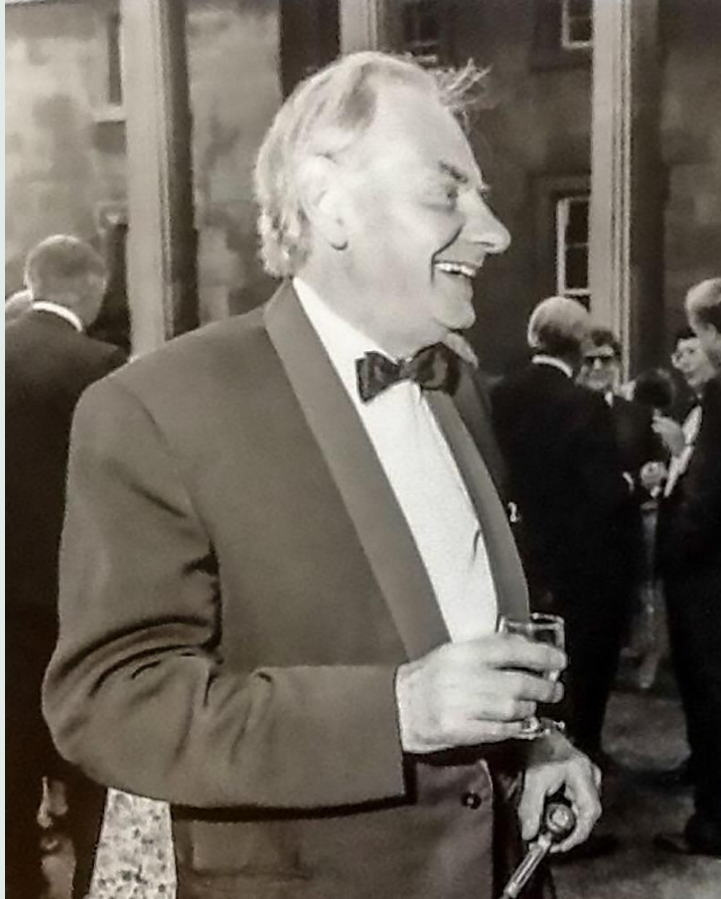
www.businessarchivescouncil.org.uk/activitiesobjectives/catgrant/ and
www.businessarchivescouncil.org.uk/activitiesobjectives/catgrantarts/

Any questions about the Cataloguing Grant for Business Archives (2017) should be addressed to Jenny Willis, Administrator, BAC Cataloguing Grant.

Email: Jenny.Willis@postalmuseum.org Telephone: 020 7239 2562.

Any questions about The Cataloguing Grant for Business Archives related to the Arts (2017) should be addressed to Anne Archer, Administrator, BAC Cataloguing Grant. Email: anne.archer@bt.com Telephone: 07484 539199.

Professor Peter Payne



Professor Peter Payne (image courtesy of Terry Gourvish)

It is with great regret that the Council reports the death of Peter Payne, a Vice President of the BAC, on 10 January 2017 at the age of 87. He had been in touch with us as recently as November 2016, wishing us well for the Conference and the Wadsworth Prize reception. We send our condolences to his widow Enid, son Simon, daughter Samantha and their families.

Peter's achievements in business history and business archives were truly outstanding. He was at the forefront of business history as it continued to develop as a discipline in its own right in the USA and UK in the late 1950s and 1960s. After a period as lecturer in history at Nottingham, in 1959 he took up the new Colquhoun Lectureship in Business History at Glasgow University – an appointment which was innovatively funded by the local business community under the inspired leadership of Robert Smith. Then as now, Glasgow had a strong team in economic history. That line-up included Sydney Checkland, Roy Campbell and later Tony Slaven and Terry Gourvish.

The Glasgow school of business history proved to be very productive and influential in the 1960s, building a distinctive reputation during Peter's time there. He was the editor of *Studies in Scottish Business History* (1967), still one of the key texts in business history and business archives, particularly in its attention to the rescue and listing of business records. Based in the University's Economic History Department, the Colquhoun Lecturer also threw himself into the hands-on work of surveying company archives in the West of Scotland. It should be remembered that there was nowhere to store the records which Peter collected. On one occasion the ledgers of a leading Scottish engineering company were

stacked up in a lecture theatre. The records fell over during a lecture, to the fury of a professor lecturing at the time who demanded that the records should be cleared from the university immediately.

Peter's work in rescuing the sources was usually in co-operation with the Business Archives Council of Scotland, our sister council which had been formed in 1960. Peter remained in close contact with BAC(S) for the rest of his life – he was the Council's vice president and then president for many years. Peter moved to the chair in economic history at Aberdeen in 1969, where the three main subjects of his research were Colville Steel, company registration and the Hydro energy group. His book, *Colvilles and the Scottish Steel Industry* (1979), had the distinction of being only the second winner of our BAC Wadsworth Prize. This study had the enthusiastic support of the leaders of the industry, anxious that Peter should record accurately their trials and tribulations in the face of often confused government priorities. Meanwhile his textbook *British Entrepreneurship in the Nineteenth Century* (1974) became a mainstay of reading lists for economic history and business history. Although invited to leave his northern retreat for more prestigious chairs, he remained loyal to Aberdeen for the rest of his life.

Peter became more directly involved with the BAC in London when he agreed to be the representative of the Social Science Research Council in the BAC's very ambitious Company Archive Survey from 1980 to 1984. He was an inspirational and heroic figure for all of us who participated in that huge project, regularly attending our committee meetings, advising our team of archivists and steadying our nerves. His introduction to the resulting *Company Archives* (1986) by Lesley Richmond and Bridget Stockford is a masterly contribution to the survey tradition in business archives. For Peter influenced archivists as well as historians, always understanding and sympathising with the demands of locating, rescuing and deploying business archives. It was very fitting that he became a vice president of our own Council in 1991, continuing in that role until his death.

Peter was in many ways a modest man, shy of his achievements and reluctant to take credit for his pioneering work. As John Orbell explained on hearing the news of this loss, Peter 'was quite the nicest and most approachable senior historian of his generation'.

Edwin Green and Michael Moss

Our President writes:

I first met Peter Payne when I joined the staff of the University of Glasgow's economic history department (in 1967). I was aware of Peter's contribution to business history, both at Liverpool University, where the journal *Business History* began its life, and at Glasgow, where he was the holder of the Colquhoun Lectureship, the UK's first earmarked post in business history. Peter led Glasgow's major effort in saving, preserving, and using the archives of the companies associated with Scotland's industrial revolution, at a time when those industries were in terminal decline. He also drew on his experience as a young scholar in the United States, where he made an impressive contribution to business history with a model case study, co-written with Lance Davis, of the *Savings Bank of Baltimore* (1956). In the year I joined the Department Peter published an edited collection, *Studies in Scottish*

Business History, which impressively demonstrated how business archives could be utilised and how the resulting analyses could be presented to a wider audience.

As a railway historian I had read the excellent monograph which Peter had published in 1961, utilising the Spencer papers, *Rubber and Railways*, a pioneering work on technology transfer applied to railways. But ironically, Peter advised me not to rely solely on the study of this industry, where he said, the great danger was that I would be typecast as a ‘trainspotter’. His own career exemplified a willingness to embrace a wide range of subject matter, including the nature of entrepreneurship, limited liability, the nature of the corporate economy, steel, and hydro-electric power.

Peter was a wonderful mentor to me in my early career as an economic and business historian, encouraging me to widen my interests and embrace new challenges. The only problem in our relationship was that he insisted on subjecting me to long discussions on the travails of Millwall FC, which were many. But that was a very small price to pay.

Terry Gourvish

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