



Business Archives Council Newsletter

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The editor of this newsletter is Benjamin White. The next issue will appear in Winter 2021. Prospective copy should be sent to Benjamin White, email: Benjamin.White@bankofengland.co.uk

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Chair's blog

Welcome to the latest Chair's blog, which for the first time in ages is being written on a train. I'm heading to Devon from where I will be monitoring the annual conference of the Archives and Records Association (and my last as Chair of the Conference Committee). By the time you read this, the conference will be over, but the programme includes good representation from business archives: the key note is by Deirdre McParland (Electricity Supply Board, Ireland), plus sessions on saving the Thomas Cook Archive, and contributions from TfL Corporate Archives and a panel on collaboration between academics and business archivists. Great to see all this experience being shared with the wider sector!

Elsewhere, the Crisis Management Team has been busy with the Debenhams archive, and there is an encouraging update below. Rather like Thomas Cook, there has been plenty of support on this from our academic friends. I also hear that the BAC Cataloguing Grant judges have made a decision on this year's award, again further details appear in this edition of the Newsletter.

Going back to conferences, we have decided that this year the BAC conference will again be a virtual one. There is still too much uncertainty in terms of venues and attendance to make a commitment to a physical event. Fingers crossed for 2022...! There does appear to be an

appetite for some form of face-to-face networking event and we are looking into this, possibly linked to the Wadsworth Prize Reception.

Meanwhile, the call for papers (CFP) for this year's conference has been issued and you can find details of this elsewhere in the Newsletter. The theme is business archives and the climate crisis. It's a hugely important issue at the moment, and one to which I have been giving a lot of thought recently. Not least, the fact that many business archives do relate to long-standing companies whose activities have been carbon-intensive. Please do take a look at the CFP and submit a proposal if you can. I look forward to seeing you online in November.

Mike Anson

BAC Chair

The Archive of Market and Social Research (AMSR)

The Essence of Modern British History?

Market research is not only about Opinion Polls – though that tends to be the public perception – from its beginnings in the 1920s market research grew to be a significant sector after World War Two, when it was the only way that businesses and the government could connect with real people. In fact, Tim Harford has named market research as one of the *50 things that made the Modern Economy*. Through its work, the industry has a truly unique and continuous insight into what was happening to attitudes, behaviours, opinions, living styles - in fact pretty much everything to do with life in Britain since the 1950s.

What is AMSR?

The Archive of Market and Social Research (AMSR) is a charity that was established in 2016 by a group of the UK's well-known, senior market researchers. The charity preserves the documents, papers and other research materials of the industry's achievements over the past 70+ years, making them available in digital format via its website: www.amsr.org.uk

The Archive is maintained and operated by over 40 volunteers working together on the *Contents, Marketing and Development Committees* and in the 'engine room' of the Archive: scanning, cataloguing, and indexing.

Until now, we have focused mainly on the collection of paper-based material, since this was at the greatest danger of being lost, and we have built up a collection of about 6,000 documents.

Political Opinion Polls

*Interviewing in Parliament
Square in 1970
(Courtesy Mary Teer)*



Who are our Users?

When we started we only had the vaguest idea of who our users might be, but once we had a critical mass of documents we turned our minds to thinking about who might find it helpful. We started researching our market!

Firstly, we talked to modern British historians, and found that they were interested in post-war British culture, consumerism, changing gender roles, youth, politics, attitudes - in short all the things we had! And we've subsequently had great fun helping them with their teaching materials, PhD theses, and coursework. Reports from the 1970s and 1980s on changing eating habits monitor the decline of the great British breakfast, and the move away from set meal times and 'set' tables to more of a 'running buffet' style of family eating. Research on the 'continental quilt' (it became known as a duvet) in 1978 highlights women saving time on housework, or not able to justify the expense because they are 'housewives' and therefore 'should' do the housework. Changing attitudes to immigration and race-relations can be tracked from opinion polls. All are invaluable to modern-social historians – particularly as they are scientific studies. They demonstrate not only what real people thought at the time, but also the attitudes of businesses to their customers. They are 'gold', as one Professor put it.

We also conducted research with St Mary's University into the needs of Marketing and Business Departments. These academics are more interested in marketing and branding issues. The development of marketing to children, for example: we have lots of case studies on the marketing of sweets to children - it seems that in the 1970s people were worried principally about their effect on the children's teeth - no-one foresaw the obesity avalanche that this would all eventually lead to!

We're now looking at what we could do for schools - starting with the A-level history curriculum. There are options for studying modern British history and we can help with coursework on questions such as: 'how far did Britain become a 'permissive society' in the 1960s?', or 'Assess the reasons for Margaret Thatcher's downfall in 1990'. We have a lot of surveys on subjects like the Abortion Act, attitudes to capital punishment, corporal punishment of children, obscenity on the radio and TV. And a multitude of polls on attitudes to Mrs. Thatcher over time! Students have to show that they can access a range of sources, and our collections being free-to-access and digitised makes us a helpful resource for them.

The Future?

We are now moving on - to safeguard the future of the Archive - by establishing 'Modern collections', and are starting with three new Specialist collections covering all the research done into some very current issues: COVID Research, Diversity, Inclusivity and Equality Research, and Brexit Research. There is a real growth area in contemporary histories of the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s, so collecting recent material including online content is particularly important.

Could BAC members help?

One thing that holds us back is that market researchers are sometimes reluctant to contribute work to the Archive without explicit client permission - but there is no-one left working for the client willing to give that permission. We would love to work with other BAC members to develop a market research collection within their own Archives, building from what they already have with contributions from the industry. As Archivists we help shape history – by saving the materials necessary for future generations. We know the value of preservation. It would be wonderful if we could work together to save more market research.

Phyllis Macfarlane

Chair, Contents Committee, Archive of Market and Social Research

Save the Date and Call for Papers: Business Archives Council Conference 2021

In November this year, all eyes will be on Glasgow as it hosts COP26 – the United Nations Climate Change Conference. We are pleased to announce that the BAC's annual conference will take the same theme for its 2021 conference.

Titled: *The Day After Tomorrow: Business Archives and the Climate Crisis*, the BAC conference will be held on **24 and 25 November**, and given the subject we are discussing, and the success of our Zoom conference last year, we will again be offering a virtual format this year with short papers and sessions spread over two half-days.

We welcome papers and contributions about, but not limited to, the following themes:

- Involvement in your parent organisation's own environmental/climate targets
- Collecting the records of climate change and businesses in new sectors such as green energy and technologies
- Collecting the records of traditional hydrocarbon industries and their changes and adaptations for the future
- Measuring and mitigating the environmental costs of digital preservation
- Controlling energy use in archive stores through repository design and minimising use of climate controls
- Working with community or sector groups on action plans to combat climate change
- Planning for extreme climate change events and their impacts on archives
- Decolonisation, decarbonisation, extractivism and reparative social justice

We hope that this conference will provide a productive space to advance these conversations and share best practice.

Please submit proposals to conference@businessarchivescouncil.org.uk, stating your name, institution (if applicable), and abstract (no more than 250 words). Honorariums may be offered in specific circumstances.

The deadline for responses is **27 September 2021**.

For an informal chat or to discuss a proposal, please contact Sara Kinsey, conference coordinator, at sara.kinsey@nationwide.co.uk

The Debenhams Archive is safe for now – how you can help with future plans!

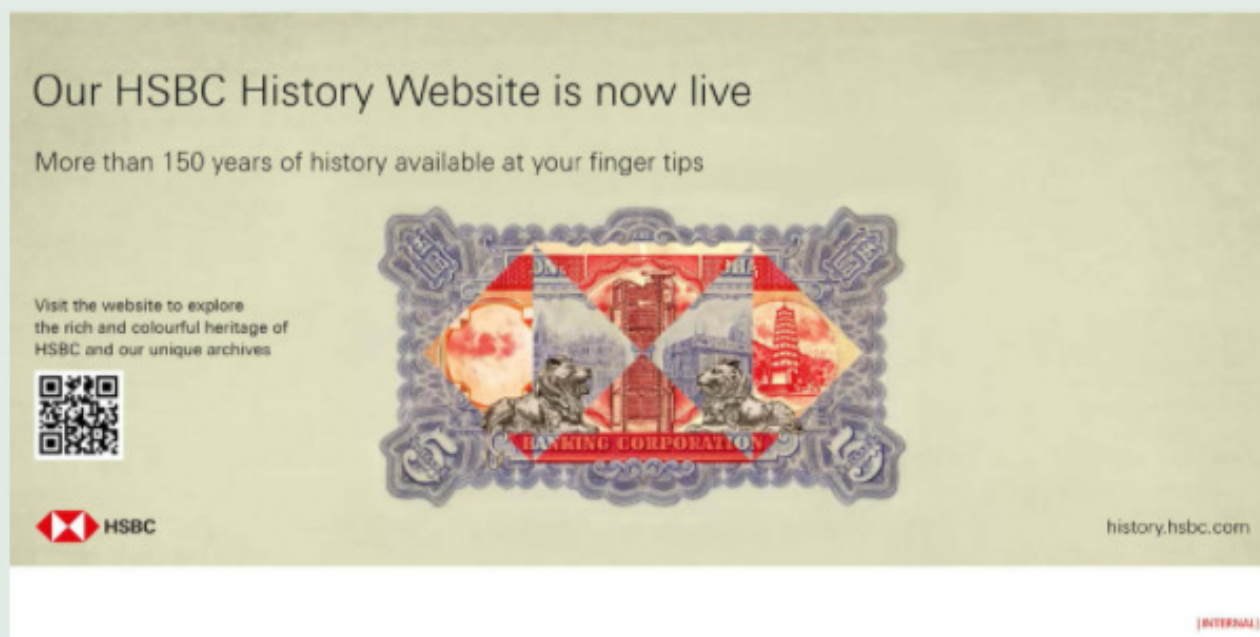
The Crisis Management Team (CMT) has been working closely with liquidator and asset managers of Debenhams, The National Archives and the wider archive sector to secure a positive future for the archives of Debenhams. The collections, which date from the eighteenth century, includes corporate and photographic records, store plans, ledgers, printed material, estate property deeds, and paintings. The material covers head office as well as records from branches across the country which were often originally their own companies. It also includes key items from Debenhams' history identified from a Debenhams artwork auction sale.

The collections had to be removed from storage on Debenhams' premises before the end of August when the site was due to be handed back by the liquidator to the owner. The CMT would like to thank representatives from The National Archives for their invaluable assistance onsite; the removal firm, for making the transfer; and especially South West Heritage Trust for kindly providing emergency temporary space at very short notice. Without this joint support and the assistance of the liquidator and asset managers, the future of the archives would have looked bleak.

A future project to assess and distribute the collections to archive services will take place over the next six-to-nine months. The CMT is looking into funding streams and has been collecting evidence in support of applications. Statements on the importance of the archives have been received from [Professor Deborah Sugg Ryan](#) and [Professor Peter Scott](#), as well as other researchers and individuals for which the CMT is very grateful. If you would like to write to express the importance of Debenhams history to you, or if you have funding ideas on how to help support the future of this important collection, these would be very welcome. Please contact [Richard Wiltshire](#) with submissions, or if you have any questions.

HSBC History: sharing over 150 years of story, culture and brand heritage



HSBC have announced the launch of a new history website that explores the financial organisation's unique heritage since its initial foundation in 1865. The website explores over 150 years of the organisation's history and draws upon their extensive archive. The website was launched on 6 July 2021 and will enable access, research, exploration and discovery of the history of HSBC.



Our HSBC History Website is now live

More than 150 years of history available at your finger tips

Visit the website to explore the rich and colourful heritage of HSBC and our unique archives



HSBC

history.hsbc.com

[INTERNAL]

The website has a number of features to help explore the history of the bank, including a collections search tool. In addition there are virtual tours and online exhibitions that explore a diverse range of topics including HSBC's pioneering women, and its role in banking innovations. The website will create an opportunity for employees, customers and other stakeholders to engage with the brand and immerse themselves in the HSBC story.

To discover more please visit the website [here](#).

The website is being managed by and shared via the PastView platform.

About PastView

The PastView platform has been built and developed specifically for the needs of the cultural heritage sector, providing tailored solutions and opportunities for the management and showcasing of born digital and digitised collections. For more information please visit the website [here](#).

The ICA-SBA's *Business Archives in International Comparison* (Third Edition) is out now

The International Council on Archives's Section on Business Archives (ICA-SBA) is pleased to share a new and third edition of *Business Archives in International Comparison*. This publication aims to raise awareness of the very different national approaches to identifying, preserving and managing the historical records of business that have developed around the world.

Further information can be found at: <https://www.ica.org/en/ica-sba-business-archives-in-international-comparison>.

BAC cataloguing grant – winner announcement

BAC is delighted to announce that the winner of the 2021 cataloguing grant for Business Archives is Friends of the Huntley Archives (FHALMA) Foundation at the London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) for cataloguing important additional archives of Bogle-L'Ouverture Publishing Eric & Jessica Huntley's business records: The Ananse Society papers.

In this, a bumper year for the grant, BAC was pleased to have received several applications with a very high standard of entries. After much discussion, the judges came to a unanimous decision and felt that FHALMA's cataloguing project would make a real difference, was achievable and realistic, and would lead to further projects and initiatives. The educational outreach programme was well planned and clearly thought out to achieve a number of outcomes.

The Eric and Jessica Huntley records were the first major deposit of archives of Black British publishing received by LMA, and significantly one of largest collections of business documents from the African Caribbean community, coming from one source. The *Black Lives Matters* campaign and the outpouring of interest in the Windrush generation have placed a focus on the need to serve requests from academics, PhD students, filmmakers, broadcasters and community organisers requesting access to the records. FHALMA is a voluntary organisation that benefits from the support and archive expertise from LMA, their strategic archive partner, who catalogue, archive and document the Huntley records. FHALMA is responsible for bringing the archive materials to life by creating heritage animation projects, workshops and conferences, research opportunities.

Beverley Mason, Chief Executive, FHALMA Foundation commented:

"It's a great privilege to have been awarded this year's Business Archives Council grant. The funding supports the important ongoing work of documenting more of the 50 years' of community activism by Eric and Jessica Huntley, but also for the massive potential that the grant has to ignite "A-ha" moments of self-discovery for young people whilst underpinning the necessity of African storytelling to be part of building confidence in their identity, heritage and cultural background. With thanks to our valued partners, the City of London/London Metropolitan Archives (LMA), for their support and the contributions from FHALMA's community of volunteers, this project grant pump-primes a new programme of online educational outreach activity – and this is of great significance – the BAC grant enables us to make tangible links and strong connections to existing business records across the wider, physical Huntley collections housed at LMA.

"In order to open up the Archives to wider audiences, working together with LMA, we plan to produce a digital Schools/Creative learning resource, making it available online through our partners and in a range of community workshop sessions. We anticipate that the sharing of some of the key discoveries in the business records, and in particular to focus on the vision that The Ananse Society had around underpinning the significance of African folklore to the Caribbean community, will unlock the roots connections, explanations about identities that are missing elsewhere - driven by the emotional and political impact of suppressed cultures and heritage during slavery and colonial regimes.

"Serving an intergenerational audience, we believe that our new catalogue project is an important catalyst for all to learn from – especially pertinent to those interested in understanding more about Black British heritage – this initiative it is destined to help fill specific research needs and connect gaps in our shared cultural history, sparking interest in developing new creative forms of engagement and ways to communicate learning."

BAC is proud to support this project, particularly at a time of increased pressure on cultural resources when the need to develop, promote and encourage greater use of such resources has never been more important.

For more information on the FHALMA Foundation please follow this link: <https://fhalma.org/>

Any questions about the grant should be addressed to Natalie Attwood at:
natalie.attwood@rothschildandco.com

Previous winners of the BAC Cataloguing Grant:

- 2020 - West Sussex Records Office
- 2019 - Northern Ballet
- 2018 - Clevedon Pier and Heritage Trust
- 2017 - British Motor Industry Heritage Trust (BMIHT)
- 2016 - Lancashire Archives
- 2015 - University of Manchester Library
- 2014 - Gloucestershire Archives
- 2013 - West Sussex Record Office
- 2012 - Durham County Record Office
- 2011 - Norfolk Record Office
- 2010 - Dorset History Centre and The National Railway Museum

Membership subs for the year commencing 1 September 2021 now due

If you've not already received an invoice for your membership subscription it will be with you shortly.

The Council's annual subscription rates for the year 1/9/2021 – 31/08/2022 are as follows:

- Patron £500
- Corporate £175
- Institutional £55
- Individual £35
- Student FREE

Thank you for your prompt payment. After careful consideration, and following many years of no increase to subs, we've changed the corporate subs from £145 to £175 per annum.

Any queries regarding membership, including updating contact details, etc. to the Honorary Membership Secretary, Natasha Richards via email

membership@businessarchivescouncil.org.uk

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