



Business Archives Council Newsletter

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Chair's blog

Welcome to the Winter BAC Blog! When I last wrote, we were in the run-up to the BAC 'Unconference', the Awards Evening and the AGM. I am pleased to report that these all went very well. The Unconference was a great mix of thought-provoking papers, challenging debate and the opportunity for face-to-face networking. The topic of businesses dealing with difficult pasts was addressed in a very open way by the speakers, and left us with plenty to think about. However, what really stuck with me was the value of being able to meet both old friends and new faces in person, and in a relaxed atmosphere. After the networking event we headed straight to the BAC Awards Evening. This was the first occasion on which we have announced the winners of all three of our prizes and grants at the same time: the BAC Wadsworth Prize; the BAC Cataloguing Grant; and the BAC Research Bursary. If you missed the details, you can find out more here: https://businessarchivescouncil.org.uk/news/2022/10/bac_awards_winners

Overall, I think that this new format worked very well, and I'm sure that we will repeat it in the future. Obviously, all of this took a large amount of planning and I would like to thank, in particular, Helen Swinerton for her huge contribution in organising the event. Also, a big shout out to Claire Tunstall at Unilever and Nathan Voogt from Preservica for their support. As I write, there is quite a bit of snow on the ground in North London, so it's definitely beginning to look a lot like Christmas (as someone once sang). May I take this opportunity to wish you an enjoyable and relaxing festive period, and I look forward to catching-up with as many of you as possible in 2023.



(Courtesy of Mike Anson)

Mike Anson
BAC Chair

Musings of a novice – My first time at iPRES

iPRES, the longest-running conference series on digital preservation, has been held world-wide since 2004. When I heard that this year's conference was being hosted by the Digital Preservation Coalition in Glasgow, being based in Scotland I couldn't pass up the chance to attend five days of digital preservation chats and learning.

As the company Archivist for abrdn, my day job varies between physical and digital records, and I don't have as much time as I would like to focus on the in-depth details of digital preservation. I don't mind admitting that after reading the programme, I felt quite intimidated and unsure how much of the conference I would understand. Many of the speakers were digital preservation experts who focused on the subject full-time and had contributed to the sector in a range of ways. However, as the conference progressed, I quickly realised that my fears had been unfounded.

The Monday began with a day of workshops, and I had signed up for a day focused on file format registries. This workshop format was a great way to start the conference as it allowed for a relatively small group to come together with a singular focus on topic and talk about current and future developments. The first session included presentations by those involved in producing and maintaining file format registries. This session also posed a key question that was discussed later on: what can be done to encourage others in the sector to get involved in file format identification and help identify new formats while also decreasing backlogs? Many great ideas and

suggestions were compiled and with a group promise to follow up after conference from the workshop facilitator, I left feeling part of a community and keen to see what the next few days would hold.

That evening the digital preservation awards took place and abrdn had the honour of sponsoring the event. The range of projects being celebrated was huge and it was an inspiring occasion which only made me more excited for the coming days.



*abrdn sponsored the Digital Preservation Awards at iPRES 2022
(Courtesy of the Digital Preservation Coalition)*

The keynote speakers from each day were thought provoking, suggesting new ways that digital practitioners could think about their work, what communities should be involved in digital preservation that aren't already and how we can focus more on sustainable global digital preservation. The Tuesday morning was taken up with my own small contribution to iPRES, the presentation of *File Format or Fake*, a game designed to teach newcomers to the subject about file formats and how to use PRONOM, the National Archives' hosted online resource that provides impartial and definitive information about the file formats. The game went down well and is now available for anyone who wants to test their knowledge and find out more.



*My presentation of File Format or Fake at the Conference
(Courtesy of the Digital Preservation Coalition)*

The variety of topics being discussed at iPRES was wide-ranging; throughout the conference I attended presentations on environmental sustainability, emulation, digital records transfer, standards, email preservation and more. I came away with a book full of notes and a brain filled with ideas I could implement at my own service to help with our digital preservation journey. As our own system is open-source, the presentations focusing on open-source software were of most interest to me, particularly the workshop on use of ePADD for email preservation by Tricia Paterson. Despite knowing very little about the subject, my favourite presentation was by Euan Cochrane about software emulation as it was a clear and precise talk which showed me that emulation could be a viable option and may also be easier than migration of records.



*Over 600 people attended the conference over the five days
(Courtesy of the Digital Preservation Coalition)*

The main thing I took away from my time at iPRES was the sense of community and the willingness that everyone had to work together to help those with questions or looking for help with their digital preservation work. The sense of community I felt on the first day had only strengthened by the end of the conference and I am still in touch with many of the people I met who offered me support and guidance.

Karyn Williamson
Company Archivist, abrdn

The call for contributions for iPRES 2023 is now open

The iPRES 2023 Program Committee is pleased to announce its call for full papers and short papers, as well as proposals for workshops, tutorials, posters, and panel discussions is now open.

The Committee invites original contributions that will develop new directions for preservation research, practice, and policy; discuss trends in the field that will influence future work; and explore new ways of understanding the changing nature of information. All submissions are welcomed, especially those which relate to the overall conference theme *Digital Preservation in Disruptive Times*.

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and the Chicago Collections Consortium will host iPRES 2023 from 19 to 23 September 2023. iPRES 2023 will be a hybrid conference, and whilst the Committee strongly encourages on-site participation for those presenting on the programme, a limited number of remote presentation opportunities will be provided.

You can find details about the submission process and the conference topics at <https://iPRES2023.us/>. Please note, this Call will close on 10 March 2023; there is no intention to extend the Call for Contributions beyond this date.

A call for ad-hoc contributions will be opened on 8 May 2023.

DPC launch a digital preservation guide for small businesses

The Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC) is pleased to announce the launch of [*Digital Preservation for Small Businesses: An Introductory Guide*](#).

Digital information plays a central role in most aspects of all our lives and running a small business is no exception. Important information that would once have been produced on paper is now created, shared and maintained digitally.

Created for the Archives and Records Council Wales (ARCW), supported by The National Library of Wales and funded by The National Archives' *Covid-19 Archives Fund*, this introductory guide focuses on common sense management of digital information and highlights actions which can be incorporated into the day-to-day working practices of small businesses. And while the guide was written with small businesses in mind, it will be helpful for any small-medium organization interested in starting to better manage their digital information for the longer term.

'Earlier this year I was pleased to work with the Archives and Records Council Wales on a basic introduction to digital preservation aimed at small business owners,' says co-author Jenny Mitcham, Head of Good Practice and Standards for the DPC.

'The guide was intended to provide some practical and actionable advice and guidance for businesses who perhaps had not considered digital preservation before. Though the original guide was aimed specifically at businesses in Wales, we were keen to release the guidance in a more generic form for the international community. We are very grateful to ARCW for their support with this and hope that others find this advice helpful.'

Providing online resources like *Digital Preservation for Small Businesses: An Introductory Guide* is just one of the ways the DPC supports the digital preservation community. An international

charitable foundation which supports digital preservation, the DPC helps its members around the world to deliver resilient long-term access to digital content and services through community engagement, targeted advocacy work, training and workforce development, capacity building, good practice and standards, and through good management and governance. Its vision is a sustainable future for our digital assets.

For more information, click:

[Digital Preservation for Small Businesses: An Introductory Guide](#)

[Discover DPC's other online resources](#)

The winner of the BAC Wadsworth Prize for Business History 2022 announced!

The BAC Wadsworth Prize is awarded annually by the Business Archives Council for a book judged to have made an outstanding contribution to the study of British business history. After two years of being online, the Prize event was held in person this year. It took place on 18 October 2022, hosted by Unilever at Unilever House.

The winner of this year's £500 prize is Dr Greg Finch for his book *The Blacketts: A Northern Dynasty's Rise, Crisis and Redemption*, published by Newcastle Libraries and Information Service. The book tells the story of the first three Sir William Blacketts who, from humble origins, developed a highly lucrative and successful lead and coal business in the area around Newcastle. In his acceptance speech, Greg Finch spoke about his delight that, for the second year running, a book that deals with the Early Modern period had won the prize. The judges this year were Dr Thomas Leng, Senior Lecturer in History at Sheffield University and the winner of last year's prize; Dr Andrew Smith, Senior Lecturer in International Business at the University of Liverpool Management School and Charlie Turpie, former Principal Archivist at the London Metropolitan Archives.

A second book was also highly commended, *Crossing Continents: A History of Standard Chartered Bank*, by Duncan Campbell-Smith, published by Penguin Allen Lane.

Wadsworth Prize – Submission Guidelines for Publishers

We welcome submissions for the Wadsworth Prize for Business History.

For books to be eligible, they need to be published in the year prior to the Award ceremony. For example, the 2022 Wadsworth Prize was awarded to a book that was published in 2021.

These are the criteria we use to judge the prize:

- The book should be well-researched, well-written and accessible,
- It should engage with business records and other archival material,
- It should expand the 'debate' in business history,
- It should make an outstanding contribution to the history of British business,
- It should be the book that both academics, and the wider public, would want to read.

Please send details of any books that you wish to submit using this form:

<https://businessarchivescouncil.org.uk/contact/>

Lesley Marion Richmond, 1956 – 2022



(Courtesy of University of Glasgow)

Lesley Richmond, who died on 26 September 2022 at the age of 65, was a remarkable figure in the field of business archives, both in the United Kingdom and internationally. Her achievements as a university archivist and in archival research and professional training were considerable, but the tribute that follows is particularly concerned with her work as a business archivist and her steadfast support for our national Business Archives Councils.

Lesley was brought up in Edgehead, Midlothian, where her father, Stewart Millar, was an agricultural labourer and her mother, Marion, was a primary school teacher. The elder of two children, she was educated at Dalkeith High School and was a keen orienteer in her youth. She attended the University of Edinburgh, graduating with an MA in Scottish Historical Studies in 1978. Soon afterwards, in November 1978, Lesley became a research assistant on a Manpower Services Commission project to catalogue the engineering drawings of Andrew Barclay & Co at the University of Glasgow Archives. She must have shown promise as three months later she was appointed as survey officer to the Business Archives Council of Scotland (BACS), based at the University of Glasgow Archives. There was a long tradition of business archive surveying in Scotland and the BACS post, part-funded by a Treasury grant-in-aid through the Scottish Records Office, had been set up in 1977 to succeed the Western and Eastern archive surveys. Lesley was the second surveyor and, although she was to hold the post for just six months, crammed in a great deal. Travelling the length and breadth of Scotland, she undertook surveys of farmers and woollen manufacturers in the Borders, seedsmen in Dalkeith, printers in Glasgow, painters and decorators in Bathgate and Oban, whisky distillers in Aberdeenshire, confectioners and art dealers in Edinburgh and solicitors in Portree.

Lesley's time in Glasgow was to prove formative, it shaped her as an archivist and fostered a career-long interest in business archives. This was in large part due to the influence of university archivist Michael Moss, the former Western surveyor, who led an invigorating and hectic department of talents working on a range of projects, including archive surveys of the

shipbuilding sector, House of Fraser department stores and Greater Glasgow Health Board, as well as managing the university's own archive and Adam Smith business records store. Michael organised a brief training period for Lesley at the Scottish Records Office in Edinburgh, but otherwise encouraged her to get on with surveying in her own way, thereby creating an independent and empirical archivist grounded in practical experience.

In autumn 1979, Lesley moved to London to become survey officer and acting director of the business records advisory service for the BAC. The post provided her with broader opportunities in the same field. There she planned and implemented scores of surveys and took over the Council's liquidations monitoring service, building upon and honing the skills she had developed in Glasgow. Assured, competent and immediately likeable, Lesley was extremely good at the job. As Edwin Green, then an executive member of BAC, noted later: 'In the long history of the BAC, the recruitment of Lesley in the late 1970s was one of the BAC's greatest pieces of good fortune. Lesley shone in survey work and she was also adept at persuading businessmen to take their records seriously.' Indeed, she was never happier than when digging around in old factories and office basements unearthing and rescuing interesting business archives and she was certainly more than a match for anyone who dared to wonder if she could lift a heavy box of records or who doubted their value.

Her personal qualities, expertise and dedication made her an obvious choice to lead the BAC's most ambitious survey, the *Company Archives Survey*. Funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, its aim was to survey the historical records of 1,000 of the first registered companies in England and Wales, survivors of some 30,000 companies that had been registered between 1856 and 1899. Lesley was appointed as the survey manager in 1980, supported by a survey officer. For four years the project sought out the records of 1,006 companies and compiled 674 survey lists of the core companies – the largest hundreds of pages in length – and of over 1,000 of subsidiary and associated businesses. The project was described in the final report as 'by a long margin the largest single survey of business records yet achieved in the United Kingdom' and resulted in 63 collections being deposited in public repositories. It was a huge achievement and testimony to Lesley's prodigious capacity for hard work, her natural management and leadership skills and her competency as an advocate for and surveyor of business archives. *Company Archives*, jointly authored with Bridget Stockford, which published the findings of the *Company Archives Survey* in 1985, was to become the first of Lesley's many business archive publications.



*Working on the Company Archives Survey at the BAC's office in the early 1980s.
(Courtesy of Alison Turton)*

The survey brought Lesley into contact with safe makers Chubb & Son which held archives dating back to the 1810s. Persuaded by her enthusiasm for the collection and obvious expertise, Racal Chubb Ltd was quick, in 1984, to offer her a job as its first professional archivist at their offices in Feltham in west London. Lesley welcomed this opportunity of a permanent job - a chance to build a new corporate archive and to ensure that an important collection was organised, developed, preserved and used by the business. For the rest of her career Lesley could readily distinguish types of old Chubb safe from afar in record storerooms.

When the *Company Archives Survey* ended in 1984 Lesley was invited to join the BAC executive committee. She was to remain a proactive and important committee member for 17 years. Having worked together in both Glasgow and London, in 1986, Lesley and I embarked upon our first professional collaboration for the BAC, compiling a directory of corporate archives and beginning a survey of the archives of the brewing industry. The latter became the first in series of six sectoral business archive surveys, the findings of which were published between 1990 and 2004, under our joint editorship, in a BAC series entitled *Studies in British Business Archives*. The series included surveys of brewing, shipbuilding, banking, chartered accountancy, the pharmaceutical industry and the veterinary profession. Lesley was co-holder of significant funding awards from The Wellcome Trust for the two latter surveys, jointly managing them as a member of the BAC's survey committee. Never a nine to five archivist, she frequently worked late into the evenings and at weekends – as her family can amply testify – on publications and other projects. Certainly, much midnight oil was burned planning, managing and publishing these six archive surveys and guides.

In 1983, Lesley married David Richmond, whom she had first met in Glasgow. They made their home in South Ascot, but moved back to Glasgow in 1987 when Lesley was appointed by Michael Moss as deputy archivist at the University of Glasgow Archives. For Lesley, a fiercely proud Scot, it was a welcome opportunity to return north of the border and to take up a senior post in what had remained an extraordinarily busy and innovative archive department. There, working closely with Michael, she was responsible for looking after what became the Scottish Business Archive, one of Europe's largest collections of business archives, and moving it to new premises; managing successive BACS survey officers; providing a home for the Scottish Brewing Archive; and looking to develop the management and use of the university collection as a whole. She was fearless in adopting new technologies and approaches, using EAD to develop an online meta-level guide to the archive's holdings. In 1998, HMC recognised the University of Glasgow Archives as a centre of excellence for 'its collecting and scholarly activity in the field of business records'.

In the meantime, in 1987, Lesley became Britain's representative, on behalf of the BAC, on the Business Archives Committee of the International Council on Archives. It was the beginning of a long association with what, in 1990, became the ICA's Section on Business and Labour Archives, a group of senior business archivists from countries around the world who worked to support the global preservation and use of business archives by sharing best practice. Lesley's amiability and willingness to share her knowledge and to help get things done, gradually made her a mainstay of the section, eventually becoming secretary from 1996 to 2004 and chair from 2014 to 2016. She built enduring friendships with business archive colleagues from Europe, the US, Japan and Australia and represented the section by attending and presenting at conferences worldwide. In 1996, Lesley compiled an *Overview of Business Archives in Western Europe* for the Section, enlisting the support of the University of Glasgow to get it published. Organised by country it allowed the comparison of different national provision for business archives for the first time and provided a model for subsequent similar global reports. For Lesley the ICA work was not only professionally invigorating but provided her with relished opportunities to experience many new countries and cultures, ranging from China and Japan to Iceland and Norway.



*With the steering group of the ICA's Section on Business Archives in Genoa in 2007.
(Courtesy of Becky Haglund Tousey)*

The ICA work, and her awareness of the activities of the new European Association for Banking History, played to Lesley's natural openness to new ideas and influences and persuaded her of the benefit of international dialogue on business archive matters. Accordingly, in 1997, she instigated a three-day joint conference of the BAC, US Business History Conference and UK Association of Business Historians in Glasgow exploring current initiatives in business archives. It attracted some 300 delegates – mainly from the UK and US – and was an eye-opener for many of the attending business archivists as it demonstrated, as Lesley noted in the published proceedings, 'that there is a network, of like-minded professionals around the world ready and eager to share experience, establish methodologies, develop standards and reflect on developments'.

In the meantime, Lesley and David had had two children, Susanna (1991) and Mark (1993), and made a welcoming home in Newton Mearns in East Renfrewshire. There, despite a hectic work schedule, Lesley raised a family, created a bountiful garden and preached regularly at the United Reformed Church in Shawlands. A faithful Christian from her youth, Lesley was involved for more than 40 years as a member and later as a lay preacher and Synod of Scotland committee member for the United Reformed Church.

In 2001, Lesley succeeded Michael as university archivist. By instinct and experience she had always regarded the university archive as a corporate collection that should be proactively used to engage and promote as well as to provide institutional memory. As university archivist she continued the professionalisation of the service that she had begun with Michael, improving the archive's policies, catalogues and online presence and instigating and participating in many important initiatives like the *Gateway to Archives of Scottish Higher Education* project, Wellcome

Trust-funded explorations of the university's medical collections, the rescue of the Stoddard-Templeton archive and the development of Scottish postgraduate archive training. She was also a prolific writer, authoring more than 60 books, book chapters and journal articles, as well as numerous book reviews. Lesley retired from the university in 2016 after nearly 30 years of service. The following year an ARA distinguished service award recognised her outstanding career-long achievements.



*Receiving the ARA distinguished service award from fellow archivist Karl Magee in 2017.
(Courtesy of University of Glasgow)*

Whilst Lesley had remained on the BAC executive committee until 2001, latterly becoming the library adviser, she became increasingly active in the BACS after returning to Glasgow. She was sole editor of its journal, *Scottish Industrial History*, from 1987 to 1995, and was an active member of its executive committee until 2016, serving as convenor from 2013. For many years Lesley was the principal link between the two Councils, working to ensure mutual understanding and collaboration. In 2002, she also became a trustee of the Johnstone-based Ballast Trust, which provided a rescue, appraisal and cataloguing service for technical business records. Closely involved in the development of the *National Strategy for Business Archives in England and Wales* prior to its publication in 2009, Lesley responded robustly to the draft strategy issued by The National Archives in 2004, appealing for it to be extended to Scotland. When that did not happen, she urged the BACS and Ballast Trust archivists to draft a separate parallel strategy for Scotland which proved hugely successful. Then, in 2011, when the Treasury funding for the BACS survey officer post was withdrawn, Lesley was instrumental in influencing the Ballast Trust

and others to fund the renewal of the very post that had first brought her into business archives in 1979. That role continues to this day.

Lesley maintained a lifelong passion for both horticulture and industrial archaeology, including a particular interest in water mills. It was therefore with great excitement that she retired with David to a property in Gatehouse of Fleet in 2017 with a mill lade reservoir in its garden, as well as copious space for growing fruit, vegetables and flowers. Apart from remaining a trustee of The Ballast Trust, Lesley largely left the world of archives behind when she retired, typically throwing herself wholeheartedly into a brand-new life and becoming a community stalwart in Gatehouse – volunteering at the Mill on the Fleet and YCMA drop-in centre and related charity shop, guiding town heritage walks, acting as a local roving reporter and preaching at a nearby church. Her flowers and vegetables won prizes at the town's horticultural show and she enjoyed exploring the heritage sites of Galloway, researching and writing a history of the quirky Coo Palace near Kircudbright.

Throughout her career Lesley had championed the importance of business archives. She was a hero in the heroic age of business archives in the final decades of the twentieth century when a few outstanding archivists had a disproportionate impact on forging sectoral consciousness and laying the foundations on which the later national business archive strategies could and would build. Her innovativeness, energy and determination to push projects through was extraordinary and she undoubtedly saved a great many business archive collections that would otherwise have been lost. Never interested in personal kudos she constantly worked behind the scenes, bringing people together and removing obstacles, so that others could shine. She appeared to effortlessly juggle a huge number of initiatives and activities, but never forgot that it was the people that make things happen. Her inclusivity and her care for the development and wellbeing of her reports and colleagues was ever apparent. There are a large number of archivists, and historians, that owe a great deal to her inspirational and thoughtful mentorship, leadership and collaboration, and perhaps that is her greatest legacy.

Alison Turton