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THE BUSINESS ARCHIVES COUNCIL

The objects of the Council are to promote the preservation of business records of historical importance, to supply advice and information on the administration and management of both archives and modern records, and to encourage interest in the history of business in Britain.

The Council’s publishing programme includes Business Archives, which is published half yearly, and a Newsletter which appears quarterly. Business Archives. Principles and Practice covers various aspects of managing archives and modern records. Business Archives. Sources and History considers business archives as source material for historians. Other Council publications include Managing Business Archives and A Guide to Tracing the History of a Business. In recent years surveys of the archives of brewing, banking and shipbuilding have been published, as has a survey of the archives of 1,000 of the oldest registered companies in Britain.

The Council is a registered charity and derives much of its income from the annual subscriptions of its members. These include business organisations, libraries and other institutions, and individual archivists, records managers, business people and historians. An annual conference gives members the opportunity to meet, as well as to hear papers on themes of current interest. For details about membership and about the work of the Council generally, please write to the Business Archives Council, c/o Karen Sampson, Lloyds TSB Group Archives, 5th Floor, Princess House, 1 Suffolk Lane, London, EC4R 0AX or visit http://www.businessarchivescouncil.org.uk

Prospective articles (authors should apply for notes for contributors in the first instance) together with comments on Business Archives are welcome and should be sent either to Dr Mike Anson, Editor, Business Archives. Sources and History, The Bank of England Archive, Threadneedle Street, London, EC2R 8AH; email: michael.anson@bankofengland.co.uk, or to Dr Valerie Johnson, Editor, Business Archives. Principles and Practice, email: valerie.johnson@nationalarchives.gov.uk.

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Over the last ten years, increasing attention has been paid to the economic impact of museums, libraries and archives. In part, this may well be a response to the political pressure, noted by Selwood, to develop and then deliver against targets. However, it is not yet clear that a single way of speaking about the economic impact of the sector has been defined and agreed upon by the various interested parties. This piece of research is an attempt to add to existing contributions and to develop our thinking as a sector about how we can describe our economic impact.

The ‘contingent valuation’ methodology, well used in the evaluation of other public goods such as the environment, has been applied to the cultural sector only relatively recently. This technique, which asks people to identify their ‘willingness to pay’ for a service which is currently free, or ‘willingness to accept’ money instead of the provision of that service, aims to quantify the financial value that stakeholders or users place on services. A recent study undertaken by Bolton Metropolitan Council found that on the whole, people are willing to pay more than they currently do (through national and local taxes) for cultural services.

However, questions have been raised about how much contingent valuation can really tell us about the true value of cultural assets. Noonan identifies three kinds of problem affecting contingent valuation of cultural assets. First, there are those which affect any contingent valuation study, such as the fact that respondents are asked to consider public goods in isolation rather than as part of wider government spending – and that in fact the choice is not in reality about more or less taxation, but rather choosing between various services that are provided by national or local government. Second, there are issues such as low respondent numbers and poorly-defined ‘goods’ which are exacerbated in the cultural sector by inadequate funding for research projects. Third, there are certain problems that are unique to the cultural sector, including the fact that people are rarely indifferent to cultural assets (unlike other sectors such as the built environment) and therefore are more likely to have extreme reactions.

Other research attempts to quantify the impact of the sector more
directly. The City of London Corporation published a report on the economic impact of the City Arts Cluster, which looked at the value of cultural institutions as businesses, with supply needs, and at the tourism they bring into the City of London. A similar piece of work undertaken for MLA London looked at the supply and demand side impacts of museums, libraries and archives. Such research captures effectively the economic activity driven by the sector, but fails to take into account the less tangible economic benefits of engagement with cultural activity.

One way of expressing these less obvious benefits is through the idea of the ‘knowledge economy’. The rise in conceptualisations of knowledge as an economic good, and of an economy based on knowledge rather than, for example, manufacturing has, as Brinkley argues, not been accompanied by an ability to define exactly what that new economy looks and feels like. Nonetheless, attempts have been made to slot the cultural sector into this discourse, most notably by Clayton and Hepworth who looked at the role of public libraries in the knowledge economy. This work used a very broad definition of the knowledge economy, including adult basic skills, which did not permit a detailed investigation of how knowledge in sector organisations might be valued.

Therefore, the MLA London Knowledge Transfer Programme set out to establish the role of the museums, libraries and archives sector in a much more business-oriented area of the knowledge economy – that of knowledge transfer. Knowledge transfer, though by no means enjoying a single straightforward definition, is much more obviously bounded than the knowledge economy, since it focuses on activities which support business innovation. The concept of knowledge transfer originated in higher education, where research findings, particularly in scientific disciplines, could be used by businesses to develop profitable products. Knowledge transfer has now spread to other areas within academia, and also outside in, for example, further education colleges.

The intention of MLA London’s research was to establish to what extent museums, libraries and archives can be a knowledge base to support business innovation. The researchers set out to establish what is currently happening in this area, what the sector could do to further support businesses, and what kinds of barriers are preventing successful knowledge transfer between museums, libraries and archives and businesses. Innovation, in this research, was taken quite broadly to mean something new to a specific business or sector, not necessarily new overall, and relating to both products and processes.
Business archives formed a core element of the research, providing as they do knowledge and information from which businesses can benefit. The value of business archives to their parent companies has been articulated through, for example, the public relations or internal compliance roles that a business archivist can play. Other roles of the archive – such as employee engagement – may also be considered knowledge transfer under the definition adopted within this research. Thus, the concept of knowledge transfer provides an interesting and potentially useful way of talking about the various roles that a business archive plays within its parent company: or, in some cases, with other companies as well.

**Methodology**

This piece of research was undertaken as a narrative enquiry; collecting and analysing peoples’ stories and experiences to develop a fuller understanding of how museums, libraries and archives can and do support businesses. This was largely due to the expertise of Sparknow, the consultants commissioned to undertake the research. We began with the understanding that any relationships between the sector and business are likely to be complex, nuanced and in many cases unique to the individuals and organisations involved. The research question did not seek to measure the quantity of such relationships within London: rather, it set out to unravel how and why those relationships do or do not develop, and what benefits they can bring to the organisations involved.

Narrative research is particularly appropriate for this kind of enquiry as it permits interviewees to define the phenomenon being investigated. Rather than go into the research with a pre-conceived idea of what constitutes ‘knowledge transfer’ for museums, libraries and archives, we developed the concept of ‘knowledge transfer events’, or moments when a business found, used or exchanged knowledge from a museum, library or archive. We invited interviewees to talk about these, and used their descriptions to reach our own definition of knowledge transfer, which shaped our findings and conclusions.

Research participants were selected for their ability to tell us something illuminating about their experiences, rather than to form part of a representative sample. This reflects a critical-realist approach to research techniques which suggests that a purposive, carefully-selected sample can tell us in some depth about a phenomenon under investigation, while a representative sample survey is more useful for exploring the breadth of such a phenomenon. We began by mapping organisations on two axes, one
representing a scale from ‘businesslike’ to ‘academic’ and the other
showing how ‘engaged’ they were, which we used as a shorthand for their
level of sophistication with regard to the kinds of activity we were labelling
knowledge transfer. This map allowed us to check back periodically as we
conducted our research, to ensure that we were gaining a range of
perspectives, thereby ensuring that even though our sample was not
representative, it was not limited to one set of opinions.

We used a variety of techniques to collect the stories and experiences of
participants, including interviews, postcards, workshops and a specially-
constructed discussion website. Interviews were originally envisaged as a
relatively minor part of the work, though a critical aspect of developing our
understanding. However, it became clear quite early in the research process
that we needed the richness and depth of understanding that an interview
can give in order to use our other enquiry tools effectively. Therefore, we
ended up interviewing a total of 44 people. The interviews helped us to
frame the questions and discussions we put before a wider online audience,
where we were less able to discuss or probe, but had to express things
correctly at the first attempt. This move to a more interview-based
technique had certain negative impacts as well, including the work burden
of analysing dozens of hours of spoken material without the benefit of
written transcripts.

Initially, we planned to use postcards as a remote collecting technique,
in the same vein as the website. They were designed to elicit responses to
broad and open questions, allowing people to offer as much or as little
information as they wished. Owing to problems with the Freepost system,
we did not receive as many postcard responses as we had initially
anticipated. However, the postcards proved very useful as a discussion tool
in the seven network and group meetings that we attended. The format is at
once private and public, and sufficiently informal that people feel
comfortable sharing what might seem trivial experiences.\textsuperscript{12}

The project website, too, evolved from a general collecting tool to a
more targeted forum which allowed research participants to debate and
probe our initial ideas. Through the website, we developed a community of
almost 120 people with an interest in the research project. These people
commented on our blogs, responded to our questions and helped us to
develop a more refined set of proposals to take forward to the next phase of
our work.

The website was also our primary analysis tool. As well as providing
the public face of the enquiry, it held a large database to which we uploaded
all the information we had collected, as audio or text files. The database allowed us to break down each piece of information so that we could pull out, or ‘snip’, the most relevant parts – usually between ten seconds and two minutes long. These snippets could then be reconfigured into sets, grouped around a particular theme or idea which was emerging from the research as significant. The sets could also be grouped. In this way, we were able to build up a full picture from our research data, while still maintaining links back to the original testimony in its full context.

During the analysis phase, we also worked with some research participants to ‘sanity check’ our findings, using their expertise to ensure that we had not gone too far off course with our analysis. The website was an important tool for this communication: we used blogs and questions to test ideas and gather feedback. We made extensive use of the project’s advisory group, particularly in the design of the pilot projects. These were also examined by a specially-convened group of interested experts, who used a ‘backcasting’ technique to imagine an ideal future relationship between museums, libraries and archives and business, and to map the steps that need to be taken from the present situation to reach that future.

This highly participatory approach to research and analysis is central to the narrative method, and is also found in many other qualitative techniques. It is important to note that the mix of techniques meant that not all contributions were recorded in the same format, and that therefore some of the quotes in the following ‘findings’ section have been edited slightly for clarity and brevity.

**Findings**

The findings presented here relate to museums, libraries and archives. Our research treated the sector as a whole and sought commonalities between the three domains in terms of their relationships with business. Two clear themes emerged from our research. First, that museums, libraries and archives can play an important role in business innovation. And second, that the quality of relationships is not currently as good as it could be.

1. Museums, libraries and archives and business innovation

The specific instances where museums, libraries and archives have supported business innovation are in most cases unique to the institutions and companies involved. Nonetheless, some common traits can be distinguished among quite separate knowledge transfer events – as such interactions were termed during this research.
One identifiable – and unsurprising – subset of business support from museums, libraries and archives relates to information provision. There was some debate as to whether this qualified as knowledge transfer, given that it rarely in itself leads directly to, for example, new business practices. However, within our broad definition of innovation such interactions do play a role, providing as they do the building blocks for a new way of doing things for a particular worker or business. Therefore, it has been retained within the analysis as a kind of knowledge transfer between the sector and businesses.

In our research sample, information-seeking behaviour was found most frequently in relation to libraries, although it is true that the business interviewees were, for the most part, unlikely to be in a position that would make extensive use of the information available in a corporate archive. Use by business people ranged from opportunistic and casual to systematic and integrated into the business itself. The following small business person illustrates how use can stem from something as simple as a spare hour, and be unexpectedly rewarding:

I was in York the other week, I went into the public library for an hour. You know, the people there were incredibly helpful and I spent an invaluable hour there… The woman in York, I wanted something and she found it in three different places, which I would never have found in the catalogue.

A professional researcher, on the other hand, made a more structured or planned use of libraries, albeit infrequently:

I visit the British Library perhaps once or twice a year to check information in books that I can’t afford to buy, or which I don’t have access to on the internet. I’ll usually bring a list of things that they have which I can’t find anywhere else, and then I’ll usually do it all at once.

This information professional also noted something which appeared to be a concern for many of our interviewees: the quality of information that is found and used by business people:

A lot of the information I see, things that are produced internally, is poor quality. The problem is that stuff is freely available on the web, but it’s rubbish. People are using the wrong material and not realising it, when they get it off the web. You would hope that books are distilled,
Business people’s uncritical use of the internet was mentioned as a problem by several interviewees – including the business people themselves. The possibilities of the information age have made business people into self-sufficient searchers, and this is in many ways beneficial for businesses. However, to find the right information to answer a question – or even to formulate that question in the first place – requires specialist skills which are by no means the same as the ability to undertake a Google search. A similar idea is represented in the literature on corporate archives, which suggests that ‘our best bet for survival will be the ability to demonstrate our information management skills and a familiarity with internal information networks’.

A second subset of business use of museums, libraries and archives relates again to information, but here more emphasis is placed upon the way in which such information is used. The responses of individuals and businesses to the information in their own collections, or the collections of other people, and the ways they put this to use for commercial benefit, were diverse. It is worth noting that business archives were prominent among this particular type of usage.

One important use of collections was for communications or public relations purposes. An investment bank, for example, used its CEO’s collection of contemporary art to decorate the annual report. Our interviewee – the bank’s chairman – said:

It’s all about image and all about differentiating ourselves from the competition. We parallel that by taking clients to modern art galleries, modern art openings. So always the message is, we’re more than just a trader, we’re a complete person, and we’re forward looking – we’re in the future, not in the past.

We found that business archives often play a similar role in the promotion of their parent company. This can range from annually providing the PR department with a list of anniversaries to working with specific media enquiries. Again, this is usually focused on helping the company to differentiate itself in a crowded market.

The role of the business archive in product development is emphasised by Alison Turton. Again, we found considerable evidence of this within
our research, often crossing over with the previous aim of differentiating
the company within a market. One large retail firm used its archive to
inspire young fashion designers who had entered a competition, run by the
firm, to sum up a decade in a single outfit. This was done partly to raise the
company’s profile, and partly to make links with colleges to get access to
the newest and most interesting designers.

Designers and makers are particularly prominent among these kinds of
users. Interviews at a Crafts Council event revealed that most designers
were very clear about their relationships with museums, libraries and
archives: either they took no inspiration from objects in cultural collections,
or that their working practices depended on them. One ceramics designer
told us: ‘I sit in Manchester Museum drawing collections of their stuffed
animals, you know, taxidermy – then that’s the starting point for the whole
narrative of my collection.’ This attitude extended into companies that are
bigger than single-person enterprises, which is how most creative
practitioners operate. For example, the same large retail firm was
redesigning one of its shops, and the architect asked for a sample of fabric
from the archive to etch onto the glass that would cover the shop frontage.
Again, this was very much about making it stand out from the competition.

The response of individuals to collections is absolutely critical to
activities within this subset. Unlike those seeking and using specific pieces
of information to answer a known question, these individuals are treating
the objects in collections as a source of inspiration – albeit for a predefined
purpose. They approach the collections with, perhaps, a more open mind as
to what they might find in there. There is thus a close link between this
subset and the third subset of responses, which relates to the highly personal
responses of individuals to the collections and spaces in museums, libraries
and archives. With some of these there is a very clear business benefit to
their responses, as in the case of the change manager taking a public utility
through a very difficult change programme. His management board
struggled to support the programme, with some considering it impossible.
The change manager remembered going to the Science Museum in London
as a child, and seeing an exhibition on the Apollo moon landings. Drawing
parallels between that seemingly-impossible task and his own, he revisited
the museum and designed a field trip for his management board which
would help them to discuss their concerns in a less combative environment.
The strategy paid off and they eventually united behind the programme.

In other cases, the benefit is less immediately apparent. Many business
people talked about the importance of what one interviewee called ‘the
quiet space of the library’ in supporting their reflection and thinking. There was a general sense that something, difficult to define, was beneficial about working in a museum, library or archive as opposed to other spaces: ‘A meeting in a library is different. Something leaks out of the books.’ These responses to museums, libraries and archives can all be seen as part of wider changes and innovations in working life. As one interviewee put it: ‘Many, many people now are sole traders, working from home. I suspect that a public library could do a lot for them.’

Indeed, it seems that small business people are make significant use of public libraries as workspaces, finding not just the information resources but also the atmosphere conducive to effective working. One small businessperson said: ‘I use my local library to work. I like the wifi, even though I have wifi at home. There aren’t any distractions in the library, you know, you can go in the morning and leave in the evening having done a full day’s work.’ This use of libraries, in particular, links into a wider change in the way that people work. With the advent of wifi, Blackberries and the ‘mobile office’, people have become more adept at colonising small parts of the city as temporary offices. Several interviewees made reference to ‘somewhere to work that isn’t Starbucks’. Others used cultural organisations, most often museums, as ‘stopping points’ within their daily routine.

The mobility of workers is not confined to their relationship with physical space. Increasingly, people move from business to business, taking their valuable skills with them but losing the sense of continuity and tradition, as well as the informal knowledge about the business that they work in, which holds companies together. As Smith and Steadman identified over 25 years ago, corporate archives in particular can be extremely helpful in instilling this ingrained understanding of what a business is, where it has come from and where it is going.15 We found several examples of such use of business archives.

Some interviewees went further, and suggested that museums, libraries and archives could be useful more broadly to orient people within a sector. One, for example, said that businesses could use the British Library’s enormous collection of annual reports to help graduate trainees in banks understand the complex history of their sector – even down to looking at the changes in the way that annual reports have been designed and produced. Another talked about museums at the hub of a business network, providing people working in a particular sector with a chance to meet, talk and exchange knowledge.
2. Relationships between museums, libraries and archives and businesses

The second major finding from our research was that the key to successful knowledge transfer in museums, libraries and archives is the relationships involved, and that in many cases these are not as effective as they could be. Interviewees from both worlds identified various reasons why relationships fail, and most seem to centre around a lack of understanding or ability to engage with each other.

One reason for this problem is that businesses do not necessarily see museums, libraries and archives as suitable suppliers to meet their needs. As one business interviewee told us:

I think that businesses have a – and this is one of the things, actually, which I do think is quite interesting – have a tendency to leap to the commercial solution. I think it’s partly because commercial organisations are more proactive in getting out there, but I just don’t think it even strikes some people in business to go and look for that non-commercial option.

Similarly, museums, libraries and archives rarely seem to explicitly consider business people as an audience for their exhibition, learning and outreach activities. As several business interviewees pointed out, when they visit a library with their children or go to a museum as a tourist, they are having experiences that impact upon their identity as a business person as well. This is not usually acknowledged. Some interviewees went further, wondering why museums, which are so good at developing and running learning events for children and young people, have not considered business people as a potential audience. They believed that the collections and expertise in museums could be used to bring to life business issues such as leadership, innovation and risk management.

These comments reflect a broader reality that both businesses and museums, libraries and archives are slow to move beyond the established boundaries of their relationships. These boundaries tend to be established by habit, and are strengthened by the fact that both parties do not always understand what they could do for each other.

Many relationships between the sector and businesses focus around using a museum to host an event. Sometimes this is to celebrate an existing relationship between the museum and the company – for example, sponsorship of an exhibition – and sometimes it is merely backdrop for the company’s other activities – for example, a product launch. Many of our
interviewees, from both the sector and businesses, felt that this was underselling the potential of museums. As one business interviewee said:

I think sometimes it’s no more than a nice bit of decoration around the sides, if I’m honest. So I could be going to the British Museum for an event and I am absolutely sure that that is because it is a nice room with interesting objects around the outside. And I’ve done similar things at the Science Museum. But then again, I can think of one event where it was in the British Museum and I think that the fact that it was a highly intellectual environment probably was a factor in the decision-making for that organisation. But it’s pretty, pretty intangible, if I’m honest… I think it just adds – it’s brand association, gravitas.

Another business interviewee indicated that museums are not necessarily opposed to changing this model – indeed, in her experience, they have welcomed suggestions which, for example, involve the curators in an exhibition launch, or provide a more personalised experience for a smaller number of guests. However, it takes a conversation between two people at a fairly senior level to enable such change to happen, and those people need to have the right kind of personalities and interests:

I think with the very large organisations, because the person in charge is probably a fairly junior person, they just don’t have the clout or the mandate to suggest something different. There has to be something internal… someone who really cares and has the confidence, because, you know, art’s so big, there’s all these fields and periods and styles and, a lot of people, I think, feel embarrassed, they don’t want to open their mouths because it will be obvious that they don’t know anything about art.

The importance of individual personalities in transforming the relationships was evident in some of our other interviews: the change was not always positive. In one case, a large multinational was working with a local authority reader development librarian to run a book group for its staff. When the person at the company who had helped established the project moved to another location, the project began to falter. The librarian said:

It was quite difficult, I have to say it was quite difficult to get commitment from her, I did feel that often I was sort of pushing for meetings and seeing how she wanted to develop things and how we
could support it but I didn’t feel that there was perhaps as much coming back.

However, where individuals are determined the change can be quite astonishing. One librarian working within a large law firm, for example, moved the entire library (or knowledge management) function physically and organisationally to the heart of the business. During a large-scale office move, she put a librarian in an office at the centre of each practice group, and encouraged them to go and seek out the lawyers, finding out what they needed. The change in attitude as people became more familiar with what the librarians could offer was huge. During later cutbacks, one of the lawyers said to her: ‘Cut no more staff. Because I would rather have [a librarian] in a room with a phone and a computer and have no books than have the books without [a librarian]. Because he makes my life easier.’

The success of schemes like this, however, depend upon the ability of librarians, archivists and curators to go outside their usual comfort zones and to actively engage with the various functions of a business, rather than waiting patiently to be sought out. Not all interviewees felt that the sector was really equipped to do this. The librarian mentioned above said, in relation to another business, ‘Librarians don’t have a culture of selling themselves, of being run like a business.’ This timidity can limit their ability to influence the choices a business makes and to demonstrate the value of their services to that business: perhaps a similar problem to that identified for business archivists by Levy and Robles back in 1984.

It is clear that although museums, libraries and archives have a great deal to offer businesses, they are not currently acting on their potential. The primary problem appears to be a lack of communication between business people and the sector, which prevents cultural organisations from understanding what the needs of businesses might be, let alone thinking about how they might attempt to meet them.

Pilot projects

As a result of this research, MLA London has developed four pilot projects that will further explore and support effective relationships between museums, libraries and archives and businesses. The pilots will run between April and November 2009, and will be designed to address a specific issue identified during the research phase. Two of the pilots are designed for museums and archives, and two for libraries.

The headline pilot project for museums and archives is the exchange
programme. This will take around six sector professionals and a similar number of business people, and place them on a six-month learning programme. Through structured monthly meetings, each focussing on a different aspect of the possible knowledge transfer relationships between the sector and business, we will create a space where both groups can begin to think more strategically about their relationships with each other. Graduates from this programme will, furthermore, be able to spread their learning and become advocates for new ways of working as they develop their careers and move to new organisations.

The second project for museums and archives is the innovation fund. This will offer a small amount of capital, with relatively few constraints, to museums and archives with an idea that they wish to develop into a business offer. The money will serve a practical purpose of freeing up time and paying for new resources. However, it will also place value on this kind of work, helping entrepreneurs in museums and archives to build the case for investment in their ideas. Any museum or archive funded under this stream will have to work with a business as part of their project: it will not be enough simply to develop the offer.

The headline library pilot, the modern local business library, operates in a similar way to the innovation fund. However, in this instance, there will be slightly more funding available and so the change is likely to be larger and more durable than with museums and archives under the innovation fund. Four libraries will be given the opportunity to pioneer an improved business support service, with funding from MLA London. They will also be the hub of a wider network of librarians who are interested in learning from the experience of the four pilot participants.

The second library project will look at information literacy training for businesses. MLA London will commission a librarian, or group of librarians, to develop a training programme which helps business people to think more rigorously about the information they find and use in their working lives. Ten librarians will be trained to deliver this course; we expect that each one of them will deliver it at least once before the project finishes in November.

All these projects will go some way towards addressing the relationship problems that were identified in the research. However, they will only really affect the organisations involved. To achieve a more lasting change, the relationship-building role must be embedded more firmly into the sector. For this reason, and to support the successful delivery of the four pilot projects, MLA London will employ a ‘bridge builder’.
This role is based upon that of the knowledge transfer officer in higher education, who liaises between academics and business to ensure that research expertise which could have commercial value is actually utilised. Negotiating the boundary between the two worlds is certainly a challenge. Several interviewees mentioned the different expectations, priorities and even working speeds of the business world and the cultural sector: a tension that will probably be familiar to business archivists. However, finding a person who can successfully reconcile these differences will be fundamental to the success of the entire programme.

The bridge builder will also be responsible for building awareness with other key stakeholders about the value of museums, libraries and archives to business innovation. The aim is to build a body of evidence which enables the sector to clarify its role in knowledge transfer, and to become eligible for the support and funding streams that are provided for these purposes. In the case of business archives, we particularly hope that it will demonstrate the many ways in which archives can support a company’s work, and that it will support the business case for the retention and use of archives within a company.

Notes

6 Ian Brinkley, *Defining the knowledge economy* (London, 2006).
10 See www.sparknow.net


THE BRITISH STEEL ARCHIVE PROJECT:
FORGING NEW KINDS OF PARTNERSHIPS TO
PRESERVE SIGNIFICANT BUSINESS ARCHIVES

DR JOAN K. F. HEGGIE
British Steel Archive Project, University of Teesside

Introduction
The British Steel Archive Project, which officially started in April 2008, prompted a new kind of partnership between Teesside Archives (the local authority archives service covering the former county of Cleveland) and the University of Teesside in Middlesbrough, to find a solution to the inaccessibility of the British Steel Collection, a large and significant industrial archive. Although not the ‘owner’ of the Collection, the University of Teesside is leading the project, offering organisational support, leadership, management resources and a successful track record of delivering large, externally funded, projects. Teesside Archives, as the ‘owners’ or custodians of the Collection on behalf of the public, have the responsibility for its continued safe keeping and accessibility. In addition to seeking funding from more traditional sources, the partners invited Corus, as the current steel industrial presence on Teesside and inheritor of the British Steel Corporation’s Records Centre in the North East, and Community trade union (formerly the Iron & Steel Trades Federation) to contribute financially to the project. This was seen as a crucial indicator of their commitment to the preservation of this resource for future generations and to the importance of promoting the industrial and social heritage of the region. In addition, Corus’s financial contribution and sponsorship emphasised the company’s willingness to acknowledge their corporate responsibility for the Collection, the maintenance costs for which were passed to the ratepayer by being gifted to the public. This article outlines how the project came about and the progress made to date, the strategies employed by the partners to make the Collection sustainable, to improve access and to raise the profile of the importance of Teesside’s iron and steel heritage both nationally and internationally.

Background to the project
Despite being gifted to Teesside Archives by British Steel plc (now Corus) in the early 1990s, the British Steel Collection was virtually inaccessible.
Lack of space at the Archives building meant that the bulk of the Collection remained at the Corus Records Centre in Middlesbrough. Although technically not closed to the public, the lack of a catalogue at either site meant that researchers had to rely on the specific knowledge and skill of the local archivists to trace relevant records, a time-consuming and often frustrating process. Teesside Archives, although keen to offer wider access to their holdings, found it difficult to do so without a comprehensive list of its contents, but lacked the resources to create one.

The University of Teesside was aware that the British Steel Collection was held at Teesside Archives and wanted to encourage its use by students and academics for research and teaching purposes. Driven by the desire to try and get the Collection catalogued, the University (Dr Barry Doyle and Dr Joan Heggie) approached Teesside Archives in late 2005 to discuss how that could be achieved. During early 2006, a Working Group of interested individuals met regularly to establish what options were available for funding to pay for the catalogue. Unfortunately this coincided with the dissolution of the Resources Enhancement Grant offered by the Arts and Humanities Research Board which closed off what would have been an obvious funding route. It soon became clear, however, that a greater understanding of the importance, the size and the content of the Collection was needed to support any applications for funding.

Two separate grants from the University totalling £10,060 enabled the team to carry out a Feasibility Study of the Collection. An assessment of the Collection by the Business Archives Council (Scotland) was requested to ascertain its importance, the significance of its contents as a business and industrial archive and to establish a plan of action for the future.1 The grants also paid for a trainee archivist to be employed for four months to assess its size, extent, complexity and physical condition by compiling a shelf listing. Encouraged by the potential for progress after so many years of frustration, Teesside Archives were able to create sufficient space within its existing building to house the entire Collection and transfer of the remaining records from the Corus Records Centre was achieved by May 2006.

Working under the supervision of the Principal Archivist at Teesside Archives and the Working Group, the trainee archivist worked steadily through each bay and shelf, numbering them on the way, and compiled an Excel spreadsheet database, cross-referencing where possible to accession data and the hardcopy transmittal lists which had accompanied the transfer of the records from the Records Centre. The shelf listing was designed using ISAD(G) principles and under the advice of the Business Archives
Council (Scotland). Core information recorded included the location (bay & shelf number); the format (for example, box, plan, bundle); the extent (number of each format type); any reference numbers used; the overarching title of the records; and the condition. Although not as comprehensive a record as that which would be entered into a CALM catalogue, it was designed to be compatible. The completion of the Feasibility Study created, for the first time in its history, a searchable finding aid to the British Steel Collection.2

The Feasibility Study confirmed that this resource is a significant business archive of national and international importance and a decision was made to seek funding to catalogue it. Researching the potential sources, however, soon confirmed that cataloguing alone would not fulfil the objectives of many major funders which required community engagement to be incorporated alongside other core activities. User groups were consulted about what they would require from such a project and asked to provide letters of support. Accordingly the project was adapted to include both a conservation plan and a large community engagement programme. Accessibility was paramount and so the catalogue, whilst vital, would represent just one way of achieving it.

The application to the Heritage Lottery Fund took over a year to compile and submit and included a full business plan, timetable of activities and responsibilities, an outline funding strategy and a risk assessment. The time and effort invested in consultation and seeking advice finally paid off in January 2008 when we heard that the HLF was willing to fund the British Steel Archive Project.

The British Steel Collection

The British Steel Collection contains the records of almost forty iron and steel companies based in the Teesside area of the North East of England covering the period c.1840-1970. Middlesbrough’s history, especially, is directly linked to the expansion of the railways from Darlington and Stockton towards the mouth of the Tees estuary and the subsequent discovery of ironstone in the Cleveland Hills which attracted iron companies to the area. No other town in Britain could match the spectacular demographic and economic growth that transformed a small collection of farms into one of the nation’s leading industrial centres.3 The population of 154 residents in 1831 had grown to almost 40,000 by 1871 and more than doubled twenty years later.4 The ‘documentary legacy’5 bequeathed by these companies through a complex maze of business
mergers, amalgamations and take-overs not only explains the history and business relationships of the organisations involved but also tells the story of the growth and decline of Teesside itself. At one point, over a quarter of the all iron and steel companies in the United Kingdom were located in the North East.6

The Collection includes selected company records of companies such as Bolckow & Vaughan, Bell Brothers, Cochrane & Co. Ltd., Dorman, Long & Co. Ltd., South Durham Steel & Iron Co. Ltd., and Skinningrove Iron Co. Ltd. In addition, records of associated institutions such as the Middlesbrough Exchange Co. Ltd. and the Cleveland Mineowners’ Association have been preserved. In its current, un-catalogued state, the Collection fills nearly 700 linear feet of shelving and it is anticipated that, once the repackaging is complete, it will double in size. As such, it is the biggest single deposit held by Teesside Archives.

The majority of the records consist of conventional business records such as:

- accounting and financial records, including ledgers, journals and balance sheets;
- corporate records, such as Memorandum and Articles of Association, Minutes of Meetings and Directors Reports;
• property records, such as plans, title deeds and correspondence;
• share records, including Registers of Shareholders, Transfer Registers and un-issued share certificates.

In addition, there are legal records and documentation demonstrating the internal administration of the different companies.

The richness and variety of the Collection is demonstrated by the substantial amount of employee-related material, including wages and salaries documentation, pension records and other material contained within the operational records, such as accident documentation and correspondence files.

Over 25,000 images exist in a variety of formats, for example, glass plate and sheet film negatives, lantern slides and prints. These images, once digitised and accessible to the public, will help to bring the companies, the communities and the workers to life again and contribute to raising awareness of the vibrant history and enduring legacy of the iron and steel industry, especially the physical inheritance of bridges and buildings around the world. Hundreds of the photographs record the progress of many of these construction projects, such as the Sydney Harbour Bridge, the Forth Road Bridge and the Bangkok Memorial Bridge. Coupled with publicity
and marketing materials such as press cutting albums, company magazines and stock catalogues, the jigsaw puzzle of what these companies achieved in a highly competitive global market can be appreciated.

Several thousand maps, plans, engineering drawings and blueprints relating to various worldwide civil engineering projects offer unique opportunities for enhancing awareness of the scientific and engineering contributions made by these companies. Although more challenging to preserve and conserve, many of these plans relate to iconic and recognisable structures which many people are unaware were manufactured and/or constructed by Teesside companies. This kind of information will also be used to promote the national and international importance of the Collection. Lastly, and quite unusually for an archives collection, several objects are included in the British Steel Collection. These include over 100 cine-films, several company seal machines, brass name plaques from company offices, catalogue printing blocks, share certificate templates and even some artwork.

The complexity and variety of the records in the British Steel Collection is both exciting and challenging but has the potential to provide a comprehensive and representative archive of the iron and steel industry on Teesside from the mid-nineteenth century. The completion of the catalogue will not only offer access to local people but anyone with access to the internet, thereby extending the reach and impact of the project.

A new kind of partnership
This project has facilitated a partnership working arrangement between the organisations involved. Teesside Archives, as the ‘owner’ or custodian of the Collection on behalf of the public, realised its importance and significance but did not have the resources to catalogue it or make it fully accessible to users. The University of Teesside, as potentially one of the main end users of the Collection, had the experience and organisational ability to lead the project but no ownership rights which so often are a criteria of funding opportunities. By pooling their resources and forging a new and different kind of partnership, the project has benefitted immensely. This has been ratified by the agreement of both Corus & Community to financially support the project to the amount of £60,000 each and contributed to the success of the £250,000 Heritage Lottery Grant application.

Teesside Archives is funded and managed through the Joint Archives Committee made up of representatives from four borough councils -
Hartlepool, Stockton on Tees, Redcar & Cleveland and Middlesbrough. Full and ongoing support for the project was sought from the Committee at the earliest opportunity. It was also recognised that the project had a responsibility to deliver the planned activities in all four boroughs.

The vision for this project has grown from the original desire to achieve a catalogue into a three year, £1.6 million, programme with ambitious outputs and a wide ranging plan of activities. The partners’ commitment to the project means that approximately one third of this amount, £600,000, is ‘match funding’. As the lead partner, the University of Teesside is the employer of all the new project staff and the bulk of the match funding represents the overheads of employing and providing resources for the team, as well as the value of the time, effort and resources invested prior to the start date. Teesside Archives’ contribution includes providing the CALM cataloguing software, server and adequate storage for the Collection after cleaning, repackaging and other conservation work has been carried out. The Conservator and Archivist are also based in the Archives building and are provided with furniture and IT support to facilitate their role.

Aims of the project
One of the reasons that this project is ambitious is that cataloguing, conservation and community engagement activities must happen concurrently. This is necessary to fulfil the accessibility objectives of the project plan but only gives a two to three year window of opportunity for delivery. In some circumstances it could be argued that this is a weakness of the project; that it would be better to complete the catalogue first, thereby guaranteeing primary level access and then move on to prioritise conservation work and build accessibility activities thereafter. This is not an option, however, as funding for cataloguing backlogs is limited and vastly over-subscribed. There are, of course, challenges to adopting this strategy, which are outlined in more detail later in the article, but there are great benefits too. Community engagement can be driven more clearly by the communities themselves when the resources are less prescribed and the activities more fluid and adaptable.

The aims of the project are to:
- Catalogue the entire Collection and create a searchable, on-line resource;
- Preserve and conserve the contents of the Collection, including the targeted digitisation of records;
- Make the Collection accessible, useable and relevant to a wide variety of end users through a major programme of community activities.
Project management

The management of the project, the building of effective working relationships and the effective delivery of the aims and planned outputs are of vital importance to both partners. A Memorandum of Understanding has been drawn up and the split of responsibilities agreed. The Project Manager and the team are supported on a day to day basis by the Principal Archivist at Teesside Archives. Team meetings are held bi-weekly and a representative from Teesside Archives attends and contributes to these. These meetings are held alternatively at Teesside Archives and the University and agendas and minutes are produced.

A Steering Group supports the Project Manager with the financial management of the project budget and the funding strategy. This group includes a representative from the Finance Department and the internal funding support team at the University and is held quarterly to coincide with the reporting and claim periods for the main funder, the Heritage Lottery. As part of the application process, a Business Plan, timetable and Funding Strategy were compiled, together with a list of key milestones to assess progress. Each quarter a report is submitted to the HLF and progress is measured against these key milestones.

Lastly, an Advisory Board was formed to include representatives from sponsors, user groups, local history and genealogy societies, heritage centres and museums, libraries and local councils and individual academic researchers. The Project Manager reports to the Advisory Board on a quarterly basis and, in return, gains from the expertise, skills, contacts and advice of members who are all keen to support the project. The Advisory Board currently has over twenty members, including two international members from Japan and Australia who, although unable to attend the meetings in person, have the opportunity to contribute to the meetings in writing and are kept up to date with progress through the distribution of meeting notes.

The project team for year one consists of the Project Manager (part-time), Project Administrator (full-time), Archivist (full-time), Conservator (full-time), Community Engagement Manager (part-time) and Community Access and Education Officer (full-time). Each member of the team is responsible for a group of trained volunteers (see section on Volunteer Programme below) and, where necessary, contributes to project events and activities in addition to their primary role.

In year two (2009/10) a history PhD student will come to work two days per week on the project to learn new skills as part of a collaborative
doctorate funded by the Arts & Humanities Research Council and supervised by Professor Barry Doyle, now at the University of Huddersfield. Primarily this will involve working alongside the archivist to learn cataloguing and archival skills, which will help to deliver the CALM catalogue by the end of the project. In addition, the student will contribute their research skills to the generation of hardcopy and on-line resources about the contents of the Collection for the public. The inclusion of a PhD student in the model enabled an innovative approach to managing costs while still supporting the archivist with the main aim of cataloguing the entire Collection.

Should the required funding be raised, a further full-time conservator and two further part-time Community Access and Education Officers will be recruited during 2009 to help to ensure that a greater proportion of the Collection is surveyed, cleaned, repackaged and repaired. The two new Access and Education Officers will concentrate on delivering activities based around Science and Engineering, and Arts subjects to a wide variety of communities across all four borough council areas involved, thereby enabling the existing Officer to concentrate on heritage based activities.

Funding
The principal external funding has been raised from the Heritage Lottery Grant (£250,000) with a further £120,000 committed by Corus and Community. In addition, monies have been raised from the Economic History Society, corporate and individual donations, as well as other match funding such as the Collaborative Doctorate. So far, about £450,000 has been raised of the £1 million needed (excluding match funding). Raising the balance of the funding required will be a challenge, especially in the current economic climate, but every effort is being made to do so and to respond flexibly to the opportunities available.

How are we getting on?
At the point of writing this article (February 2009), the project has been underway for less than a year. A considerable amount of progress has been made, however, and some of the key achievements are outlined below:

Storage space
Due in part to the success of the Heritage Lottery Fund application and the growing support for the project, Middlesbrough Borough Council agreed to increase the storage space available to Teesside Archives. This involved substantial building and renovation work and the extending of IT facilities
into the new area which the project was able to include as match funding since it was, at least in part, to facilitate the expansion of the Collection.

**Recruitment of the team**
Recruiting the team members took several months, with the Archivist and Conservator taking up their posts in August 2008, five months after the official start date. This was partly due to the rigorous recruitment system in the University which requires a full job description and person specification and adequate funding to be in place before advertising any vacancy. All posts had to be graded to assess the relevant pay scale and delays were experienced in this process due to the archivist and conservator being new posts in the University. Despite these delays, the project team have achieved a substantial amount in such a short time and contributed greatly to the eventual success of the project.

**Publicity and marketing**
Within weeks of the project beginning, the decision was made to ‘brand’ the project for all publicity and marketing materials. The colour schemes for project stationery, including business cards, marketing materials and the website were chosen with assistance from internal and external design teams. This included selecting the text size and shape for the ‘British Steel COLLECTION’ brand which formed the core of the marketing strategy. The steelmaking woodcut by Viva Talbot⁹ was incorporated as the project logo with permission from her family at no charge as a gesture of support to the project.

A mini-disc was also developed with an external sleeve to provide a quick and easy source of information about the project to potential funders, sponsors and the public. Inserted into the CD drive of a computer, it traces the background to the project and outlines the core aims and the funding needs. Donation forms and legacy forms are embedded in the disc, as are many images from the Collection and a 2006 broadcast about the project courtesy of Tyne Tees news. As the disc is not sold but used as a publicity vehicle, Tyne Tees were happy to grant permission for the recording to be used in this way.

Other marketing items available include leaflets and exhibition stands, pens, pencils and badges. A 2010 calendar is also currently under development which will be put on sale in the summer to take advantage of local and family history fairs in the run up to Christmas. Proceeds from the sales of pens and calendars will be channelled back into the project.

**Website**
The project website was one of the first outward facing means of raising awareness about the project. A strategic decision was made to buy a domain
name and web space specifically for the project rather than have a page within the University of Teesside’s or Teesside Archives’ existing facility. This has been key to the success of the website as a means of publicising the project and updating information quickly and efficiently. The project website is www.britishsteelcollection.org.uk which facilitates the site remaining ‘live’ after the official end of the project as the name is connected to the Collection itself.

Designed by the same company who created the mini-disc, the project branding was incorporated from the outset. Content management is carried out by the Project Administrator and/or Manager with assistance from skilled volunteers or professionals where necessary. As the project progresses, the website content is becoming more diverse and sophisticated in response to the requirement to make more information and resources available to the public, as well as demonstrating the wide and varied content of the Collection. At present, web galleries are being designed to hold the digitised images from the Collection and these will be linked to an embedded search facility. As the volume of digitised images grows, the galleries will offer more categories and sub-categories to assist in the selection of relevant images. Subject to copyright restrictions, shopping cart facilities will also be added to the web gallery page to allow the public to purchase copies of the images. The proceeds from these commercial activities will also be channelled back into the project.

**Cataloguing**

One of the main benefits of carrying out the Feasibility Study in 2006 was the opportunity it afforded to bring the whole Collection into one site and compile a basic shelf listing. The archivist’s main responsibility has been to move this on to the next stage and compile a box list of the entire Collection which will help to:

* ‘Identify the creators of the records and the archival *fonds* within the Collection*
* Fully understand the often complex relationships between the various companies and understand how this will affect their arrangement and priority for cataloguing*
* Decide on how ...[to] arrange the records of each company*
* Catalogue the records to recognised archival standards*.10*

To date, over a third of the Collection has been listed in this way, which amounts to over 70 shelves and nearly 1100 items. The archivist will shortly begin to enter the depositor and accession information into CALM, which was installed in Teesside Archives in late 2008. In addition to these
key responsibilities, the archivist leads the ‘Indexing’ volunteers. Seven volunteers have been fully trained and six are actively submitting indexed material, with two also checking the work of others. Eight more volunteers will be trained in February 2009.

**Conservation**
The conservator’s main responsibilities have been to design a survey form to be completed for each item in the Collection and to carry out the survey. The form is now in use and 36 shelves of the Collection have been surveyed. Sourcing and ordering necessary equipment, tools, consumables and packaging materials has also been a key task for the conservator. This has now been completed and a system drawn up to manage these resources. The conservator leads six ‘Collection Care’ volunteers who have been trained to assist with the conservation survey and the systematic re-boxing and re-labelling of items to new archival storage containers. All of the volunteers are also able to carry out basic cleaning of items.

**Digitisation**
The original digitisation strategy included in the project plan was to microfilm the majority of the Collection. Capital costs were included to facilitate this but had to be removed when it was realised that the purchase of such equipment would place an unsustainable financial burden on Teesside Archives after the project ended and the capital items were transferred to their ownership. After researching what other projects were doing, it was felt that the digitisation of the majority of the large and outsized items would have to be outsourced but that smaller items (up to A3 in size) could be done ‘in-house’ by volunteers with a modest investment in equipment.

Teesside Archives generously provided a room in the newly renovated store rooms and the necessary equipment was installed by October 2008. The basic equipment includes a copy stand and lights, Digital SLR camera (Canon 40D) with 28mm, 50mm and 100mm Macro lenses, as well as a standalone PC with additional storage capacity. Transfer of the images from camera to PC is swift and efficient and Adobe Photoshop CS3 has been installed to facilitate the basic manipulation of each image. Information about each image is entered into a bespoke database which allocates a unique number to each one. The Project Manager leads the ‘Digitisation’ volunteers, seven of whom have been trained in digitisation and Photoshop techniques, with six working on a regular basis.

**Community engagement**
The Community Engagement team have been principally involved in
raising awareness of the Collection and developing materials for activities, displays and exhibitions. They are also actively building up a network of contacts across the four boroughs to facilitate the involvement of schools, community groups, families and individual users with the Collection. They have led the development of the Volunteer Programme, including the compilation of procedures and policies and the organisation and delivery of training. These efforts have been key to the success of the Volunteer Programme and the early achievement of one of the overall outputs of the project – that of training and actively employing 50 volunteers. To have achieved this objective in such a short time is both testament to the team’s enthusiasm and skill in managing the volunteers and the interest that the British Steel Collection is generating in the local communities.

A key objective of the community engagement element of the project was to establish an oral history programme or ‘memories project’ which would ‘...collect the experiences of people from the iron & steel communities about their work, living conditions, family life, environment and health.’\(^\text{11}\) This has proved to be very popular and, even before the project officially started, over 100 people had registered their interest in taking part. Eight volunteers have now been trained to carry out oral history interviews and the policies and procedures have been designed and put into place to support them. Pilot interviews are now underway and several more volunteers will be trained in the near future. Copies of the interview recordings and an electronic and a printed copy of each full transcript will be deposited in Teesside Archives after the project ends, thereby adding a valuable new resource to the existing Collection which will help in its interpretation.

Among the many outreach activities which the Community Engagement team have developed, the science & engineering activities have perhaps the most potential to re-educate the public about how an archival project, often perceived as only of historical significance, can be relevant in different disciplines and within the current schools’ curriculum. Activities include bridge-building challenges using K’nex kits,\(^\text{12}\) which coincidently, contains a model of the Sydney Harbour Bridge constructed by Dorman, Long & Co Ltd, Middlesbrough. The team also have qualified engineers working alongside them as volunteers to help deliver these activities, thereby drawing on the skills of the volunteers to the benefit of the project.

Lastly, the Community Engagement team have trained several volunteers to carry out small research projects on topics of interest and relevance to the project. Often these volunteers are recent undergraduate or
post graduate students from the University who already have some understanding of the research process and the requirements of referencing sources correctly. Other volunteers are keen to learn more about their local history and to contribute their own experience and knowledge. Most volunteer as individuals but the local history section of the Saltburn U3A group volunteered *en masse*!

**Volunteer programme**

Encouraging volunteers to be part of the British Steel Archive Project has always been a main objective but the response has been almost overwhelming. Fifty four volunteers have now completed the Induction Training Course and specialised training for their chosen occupation. Further training will be provided as necessary. The contribution each volunteer makes to the project is invaluable as they will share their experiences with family and friends and therefore raise the profile of the project and awareness of the Collection.

Working with volunteers can be extremely rewarding for all concerned but it can also be a difficult relationship to manage if activities are not fulfilling, or the volunteer feels unsupported and under-utilised. Likewise it is important that the team members feel that the work the volunteers are carrying out has some direct benefit to their role. Although many of the team members had no previous experience of managing and co-ordinating volunteers, the decision was taken to allocate a number of volunteers to each team member. By doing so, each team leader is encouraged and supported in the development of effective management, communication and interpersonal skills, while the volunteers are able to bond together in their smaller teams.

As with any funded project, volunteer time can be counted as match funding, as well as demonstrating to funders and sponsors the level of interest and commitment being offered. Developing robust policies, training programmes and systems for tracking and logging volunteers’ time is vital to the success of any project. Investing the time to get it right from the beginning will pay off in the long term when the volunteers return again and again to benefit the project. The project team organised a Christmas Party for the volunteers and over thirty attended.

**Looking ahead**

**Challenges**

The main challenge to the sustainability of this project centres on raising sufficient funds to compete what we have set out to achieve. The economic
downturn has not helped the situation and many sources of funding may now dry up as charities and other organisations earn less and from their investments. However, the University is well placed to exploit what opportunities there are and to assist in sourcing income from other avenues.

Losing team members is always a risk to any project and changes in personnel can be challenging. Unfortunately like most externally funded projects, I could only offer temporary contracts for twelve months initially as all the funding had not been secured. The conservator recently left the team to take up a permanent post and the project will be without a conservator until a new one is recruited. As well as losing the knowledge about the contents of the Collection, the risk to the project is that the conservation element of the project falls behind the others. Sufficient funding has now been secured to enable me to offer all team members extensions to their contracts until June 2010.

Delivering the planned activities and raising the profile of the British Steel Collection across all four boroughs remains a challenge, especially if funding does not become available to recruit new staff. To offset this, some activities are being developed and promoted through the extended schools programme, which facilitates outreach activities in before and after school clubs.

Strategies for sustainability
The sustainability of the British Steel Collection is dependent on continuing to target specific areas as is outlined below:

- Continue to increase accessibility to the Collection via the creation of the catalogue, the website and community activities;
- Effectively market and promote the Collection for key events such as Open Days, events and exploit opportunities around key dates, for example, the 75th Anniversary of the Tees (Newport) Bridge on 28th February 2009;
- Develop national and international connections to promote the Collection and link archival deposits and catalogues relevant to the iron and steel industry;
- Promote international collaboration for future events (for example, the 80th Anniversary of the opening of Sydney Harbour Bridge in 2012) and activities to connect ‘steel communities’ across the world;
- Develop ideas for publications and research projects and other outputs;
- Encourage the inclusion of British Steel Collection resources in teaching materials in schools, further and higher education;
• Exploit (where appropriate) the commercial potential for the Collection, reinvesting the money in the project to make the Collection more sustainable;
• Adopt a flexible approach to raising funding and exploit new opportunities for sponsorship and donations.

Conclusion
The British Steel Archive Project is an exciting and interesting project which has successfully adapted to changing circumstances to achieve its primary aim of making the Collection accessible. It is important that it is relevant as a resource for current and future generations and that the outputs generate a source of pride in Teesside’s heritage. The contents will be invaluable as educational and research material, and will also facilitate the bringing together of communities and the empowering of individual volunteers. This significant and important business archive presents an opportunity to connect the present with the past and envisage new ways of looking to the future. The partnership forged between the University of Teesside and Teesside Archives offers a new model for the preservation of business archives.

Notes
1 Business Archives Council (Scotland), Recommendations for the preparation, arrangement and cataloguing of the archives of British Steel held at Teesside Archives (Glasgow, July 2006).
2 University of Teesside, British Steel Collection feasibility study (Middlesbrough, 1996).
5 Business Archives Council (Scotland), Recommendations for the preparation, arrangement and cataloguing of the archives of British Steel held at Teesside Archives (Glasgow, July 2006), p.4.
6 Ibid.
7 Memorandum of Understanding between the University of Teesside and Teesside Archives for The British Steel Archive Project, dated 8th April 2008.
8 See Advisory Board membership at www.britishsteelcollection.org.uk
9 Viva Talbot ‘Pouring liquid metal into a Steel Furnace’, in Steelmaking woodcuts (Hoods of Middlesbrough, undated). Viva Talbot (1900-1983) was the daughter of Benjamin Talbot (1864-1947), who was Managing Director and Chairman of the Board of both Cargo Fleet Iron Co Ltd and South Durham Steel & Iron Co Ltd.
10 Business Archives Council (Scotland), Recommendations for the preparation, arrangement and cataloguing of the archives of British Steel held at Teesside Archives (Glasgow, July 2006), p. 2.
University of Teesside Application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (July 2007), Section 3b.

For information about K’nex construction kits, see http://www.knex.com/About_KNEX/ [accessed 9 June 2009].
LET’S CHANGE THE RECORD: HOW THE NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR BUSINESS ARCHIVES CAN DELIVER A BETTER OUTCOME FOR COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE IN THE UK’S ARCHIVAL RECORD

KATEY LOGAN
Logan McCabe Ltd

A gripping story untold…

The body of UK society is supported by a commercial and industrial spine that underpins every move, pulse and thought. The phenomenal force and drive of commerce is evidenced at one extreme by UK corporations generating more capital than some national economies, and at the other by the best-selling children's author who can allegedly amass more wealth in ten years than the British monarchy managed in ten centuries.

In the current economic climate, the co-dependence of commerce and state is clearly visible and many people are seeing for the first time how a fault in an overseas financial market can affect employment, social services and pensions at home. There has not been since the Second World War, a more compelling time for economic and social historians to study, measure and capture what is happening to Britain's economic development and its consequent social impact. Yet without access to the records and archives of British businesses, research can only happen at a superficial level. Valuable and in-depth analysis has to come from researching archives that are at present embedded within businesses, hidden from academics, but in increasing danger of being destroyed as firms pursue cost-savings and do not realize the potential of their historical records.

The value of business history

Even without the current spotlight on the business community and its impact on society, we have long overlooked in the UK the value of our commercial and industrial heritage and have made little argument for its proactive collection and management. While the great possessors of land-based wealth in the past – the church and the aristocracy - are well
represented in the UK archival record, the archives of industry and commerce, created since the Industrial Revolution catapulted Victorian Britain to the apex of world power, are badly under-represented amongst our national archival heritage and exist in regional centres largely through the foresight of local archivists who have diligently rescued records discarded by failing companies. As the new strategy for business archive states in its introduction,

Socially and culturally, business is inclusive; it drives and funds national and local economies, touching the lives of all British citizens whether they are business employees or consumers. Business success and failure also defines communities – economically and physically - and consequently the people of those communities. It is critical for social cohesion and cultural identity that the business legacy is neither forgotten, nor captured only in transient human memory.

If archives are about inclusion and realistic representation of contemporary culture we need to make sure that business life is properly captured in the archival record, and the stories of industrial and commercial communities are not lost. If the record of country estates and churches remains the primary historical indicator of our socio-cultural heritage, then it is time to take action to change the record.

**Risks to archives in businesses**

To move business archives to a more prominent position as accessible research sources and to increase the pool of resource, the risks to existing business archives in public and private sectors need to be overcome. Risks are summarised below.

1. **Vulnerability of business archives**
   - Most businesses are unaware of the potential benefits of keeping archives which are at risk of being destroyed as they are can be seen as a financial burden;
   - The business community does not regard its privately owned business archives as potential cultural property for public access. Businesses are unaware of the processes or benefits of depositing their records in public sector archives;
   - There is no systematic or statutory provision for business archives at risk;
• Business records are increasingly created in digital format and maintaining them beyond their operational life is costly and complex.

2. Corporate archives' sustainability
Around 20% of FTSE and some private companies currently invest in professional archive management, yet there are over one million small, medium and large businesses that are or could potentially be managing their archives [see Appendix 1]. In the case of established corporate archives, many may not be sustainable in the long-term since:
  • They can fail in the face of company merger, relocation or organisational change when there may be difficulty competing for internal resource;
  • They are often too reliant on the support and funding of key sponsors (for example, enthusiastic chairmen or directors) whose influence is transient;
  • Many corporate archives do not have integrated records management programmes so their long-term future is compromised because there is no process in place to ensure new accessions, and without RM activity they lack comprehensive company influence and engagement.

3. Collections management issues in public sector archives
For some businesses, depositing their archives has been a good way of ensuring long-term preservation, but accepting business collections can pose problems for public sector archives as:
  • They do not have the capacity to take in vast collections of business papers. Many public sector archives are still dealing with the legacy of the 1970s meltdown of the traditional 'heavy-industry' sector in the UK;
  • The voluminous nature of business collections causes not only storage, but also access, appraisal and usage issues;
  • Business records have a level of complexity that requires special skills in cataloguing and appraisal untaught at the majority of post-graduate schools,² so there is a skills gap to be addressed.

Support for the national strategy
A national strategy for business archives has been in gestation for a number of years. In 2003 the Archives Task Force published Listening to the Past, Speaking to the Future which included a recommendation for a national strategy, while the following year the Goodison Report³ further highlighted risks to business archives. These initiatives culminated in 2007 with the
commissioning of a national strategy for business archives by a consortium of strategic, professional and academic bodies. Strategy development included significant stakeholder research and consultation across public and private archive sectors, as well as support from an advisory committee drawn from practising business archivists and records managers to sense-check ideas and actions. In addition the funding consortium will continue to provide support by providing representatives to sit on an implementation committee [see Appendix 2].

**Strategy goals**
The goals of the strategy are to promote, manage and exploit the archival legacy of British business by:

I. Raising awareness among businesses of the value of their records and archives, and providing guidance and support from the professional archive community;

II. Increasing the number of corporate sector business archives and of business collections in public sector repositories;

III. Raising the profile of business records with the public, and throughout the national archival network, while promoting wider usage and exploitation;

IV. Raising standards in the care of business archives through best practice exemplars, professional training and an improved funding and support infrastructure.

**Strategy implementation**
Strategy implementation focuses on the actions needed to deliver the four broad strategic goals. These actions will be implemented by professional organisations and archive and records practitioners. The specific actions, published in the strategy document are summarised below.

1. *Increase the number of businesses that keep archives by*
   - Promoting the value of managing archives to the business community through business organisations such as CBI and Institute of Directors, as well as show-casing case studies and testimonials of companies already exploiting their archives;
   - Creating an on-line best practice website to provide practical guidance to business managers on how to go about managing their archives, including information about collaborating with public sector and university archives;
• Creating a dedicated post at The National Archives to support the business archives community and strategy implementation. These measures work on the principle that it is relatively easy, cheap and practical to give business managers the tools and guidance to manage archives themselves.

2. Recognise and evaluate business archives by
• Identifying location and accessibility of existing business collections;
• Identifying existing and potential places of deposit, that is, creating a UK-wide network of national centres for business archives within current public sector archives, museums, and libraries;
• Recognising corporate archives, through a Best Practice\textsuperscript{5} registration scheme.

3. Develop stronger networks and partnerships by
• Encouraging and promoting collaboration between public and private sector professionals: a pre-requisite for companies aiming for Best Practice registration;
• Offering direct support to the business community from professional archivists and records managers as promoted on the Best Practice website;\textsuperscript{6}
• Knowledge-sharing with other information professionals with responsibility for archive collection.

4. Improve leadership, education and professional training by
• Establishing a crisis management team to deliver a rapid response where business records are at risk;
• Improving general and professional education by increasing student exposure to business archives across the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors;
• Encouraging cross-domain advocacy, and training and support among libraries, museums and archives.

Communicating the message
While the focus of research and consultation during strategy development has been within the archive profession, the focus of implementation will be with the business community. The communications and PR strategy targets business audiences and by working with business groups and associations (such as the CBI, Institute of Directors and Regional Development
Agencies) the strategy should gain credibility and promotion within the business community. Figure 1 shows how the strategy is being communicated.

The key tools for communicating the strategy message are:

1. **Strategy launch events**
   The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Archives will host a launch event in July 2009 at the Houses of Parliament. Aimed at MPs and the business community, the event will create media coverage for the new national strategy and will show-case companies that are already using their archives for commercial gain. A second launch event is planned for September 2009 for business archive practitioners, business groups and organisations. In addition The Society of Archivists and Business Archives Council conferences will provide a platform for the launch of the strategy to professional audiences.

2. **Advisory leaflet on managing business archives**
   Intended for promotion by business organisations this leaflet captures the business case for managing company archives and uses case studies to demonstrate how archives are currently being used by successful businesses. The leaflet highlights six areas where archives management supports business growth, differentiation and protection:
Brand knowledge & marketing
Archives can be used to develop brand awareness both to customers and to company employees through PR and marketing campaigns [see Appendix 3: Case study, Diageo].

Employee recruitment & engagement
The company history is a great tool for disseminating company culture to new employees and, through literature, websites and events, to maintain the loyalty of existing employees.

Corporate identity
Archives are used as public relations tools providing information and imagery to underpin and promote corporate identity and reputation management [see Appendix 4: Case study, John Lewis Partnership].

Corporate responsibility
By investing in archive management and allowing research access or showcasing history projects, companies can boost their corporate responsibility credentials [see Appendix 6: Case Study, BT].

Innovation
Commercial teams use archives as inspiration in the creative process of brand and service development, saving significant development costs.

Evidence & management information
Archives have a unique informational value as evidence, and can be used to counter litigation claims, and to support trademark and intellectual property rights. [see Appendix 5: Case study, BP].

3. Business Archives Best Practice On-Line website
This on-line 'how-to' guide to starting up and managing company archives aims to give business employees the tools and knowledge to manage their archives, assuming no previous experience in archive management. The website will also encourage business archivists to share case studies, and give newly-qualified or inexperienced archivists both basic and advanced-level information about working with business records. The site is structured into key areas:

Setting up an in-house business archive
How to get professional advice, sources of funding, options for archive management, recruiting a professional archivist, records surveys, preservation, storage, cataloguing and access, legal considerations and examples of companies with professional teams and the services they provide.
**Key records to keep and the information they hold**
A breakdown of the types of records found in company archives and the information they contain – e.g. corporate, communications, HR, property, research & development, sales & marketing – and external sources.

**Exploiting business archives**
The business benefits of archive management illustrated by structured case studies on brand knowledge & marketing, corporate identity, corporate responsibility, employee engagement, evidence & management information [See Appendix 7: Case study, Boots UK.

**Sustaining business archives – modern records management**
Capturing archives, the benefits and process of records management, records retention scheduling, electronic records (challenges and solutions) and best practice in relation to record-keeping during the acquisition and disposal of subsidiaries.

**Partnerships and collaboration in archive management**
Transferring business archives to a public sector partner, creating a charitable trust, legal and financial considerations, outsourcing records storage and retrieval, commissioning a company history, oral history or research project.

**External accreditation for business archives**
An outline of key principles for archive management.
Creation of a Best Practice affiliation scheme – for companies endorsing the key principles and wanting basic-entry to the business archives community.
A Best Practice accreditation scheme (in development) – for companies with professional teams pursuing nationally-recognised accreditation from The National Archives.

**Measuring success**
It is imperative for the strategy that we measure success both in the short and longer term so that we can see what sort of impact the strategy is making and where we need to target future resource.

All organisations and individuals tasked with implementing the strategy will have formal implementation plans and will be asked to report on delivery at regular update sessions. Criteria for measuring success will be devised and monitored and will likely include measures such as feedback and business interest in the website and the affiliation and registration schemes, rate of identification and mapping of business collections, enquiries handled by the new Business Archives Advice Manager at The
National Archives, and numbers of new professional posts created or business collections deposited in public sector archives.

**Strategy aspiration and impact**

This is the first opportunity for business archives professionals in the UK to get behind and support a national strategy for their sector. Beyond an initial five-year implementation, the aim is to have a comprehensive and more integrated public and private sector management of business archives. This will take longer to deliver, and depends entirely on the commitment and support of practising professionals.

Enthusiasm needs to go hand-in-hand with a shift in attitudes, more cross-sector advocacy, and better leadership and professional education. This along with the single-minded pursuit of implementation plans, is intended to deliver a significant improvement in the completeness of the UK’s archival record of commerce and industry.

**Appendix 1: Business context for business archives strategy development**

Analysis of recent Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform data gives an insight into the structure of the UK business community, and can be used to ensure that the strategy is targeting the most appropriate and representative sections of British business.

There are approximately 4.5 million private sector enterprises in the UK, of which 3.3 million have 'no employees' (in other words, consist of sole proprietors). This strategy is targeting the remaining 1.2 million enterprises that have employees, broken down in the traditional classification of large (over 250 employees), medium (50-249 employees), small (10-49) and micro (1-9 employees) enterprises.

The data below shows that as company size grows so does the number in employment, and economic value. Focusing implementation of the strategy on large enterprises would capture around 48% of the number of people in employment and over 52% of the turnover generated in the private sector. Extending this to encompass medium and small sized enterprises increases coverage to 80% of the number of people in employment and 84% of turnover generated, respectively.

While the strategy focuses on large businesses, where many in-house corporate archives exist, it also addresses medium and small businesses. This targets the key players; but it also captures businesses that are large in terms of economic contribution, but small in terms of employee size (an
increasing phenomenon of modern business in the 'knowledge sector' as well as traditional industries where fewer people are employed as non-core activities are outsourced).

**Business data**

Figure 2 shows a breakdown of the 1.2 million enterprises that 'have employees' using the groupings:

- Large enterprise: Over 250 employees
- Medium enterprise: 50 to 249 employees
- Small enterprise: 10 to 49 employees
- Micro enterprise: 1 to 9 employees

![Comparison by number of employees](source: Dept for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Statistics, 2007)

**Appendix 2: Organisations funding and supporting the National Strategy development**

- Association of Business Historians
- Business Archives Council
- Economic History Society
- Society of Archivists (Business Records Group)
- Museums, Libraries and Archives Council
- The National Archives
Welsh Assembly Government through CyMAL: Museums Archives and Libraries Wales

Companies represented on the Advisory Committee:
- Astra Zeneca (Mark Weaver)
- Boots UK Ltd (Sophie Clapp)
- BP plc (Peter Housego)
- BT Group plc (David Hay)
- Diageo plc (Christine McCafferty and Sue Garland)
- John Lewis Partnership (Judy Faraday)
- News International Limited (Eamon Dyas)
- Lloyds Banking Group (Karen Sampson)
- Unilever PLC (Jeannette Strickland)

Appendix 3: Brand knowledge & marketing

'The impact of having the archive materials in market to support the launch was huge.'

Sarah Castillo, Johnnie Walker Blue Label Brand Manager 2008

When Diageo Spain launched a limited edition premium blend whisky, the marketing campaign focused on the product's exclusivity of the blend and the Walker family's unrivalled history and skill in blending. Nineteenth and twentieth century documents, images and artefacts from the company's archive were used to enhance internal stakeholders' knowledge and awareness of the new brand. In addition, archives were presented at customer and PR launch events to illustrate and underpin the provenance, heritage and 'luxury' status of the new brand. Media interest was exceptional, and Diageo brand managers successfully delivered the marketing strategy to position the Johnnie Walker blend as a luxury brand.

Appendix 4: Corporate identity

'Our customers will literally be amazed at the modern, progressive but distinct retailer that’s landed in their city.'

Andy Street, Managing Director 2008

In 2005 the John Lewis Partnership appointed architects to build a
flagship store in Leicester as part of a major development project to regenerate the city centre. The brief was to design a unique and dramatic frontage reflecting the city's long and significant heritage in the production of textiles. The architects adapted an original sample design from the John Lewis textile archive and reproduced it on the glass cladding of the building. Not only does it meet the brief, but it communicates an innovative and modern company identity for John Lewis, and is regularly used in media coverage.

Appendix 5: Evidence & management information

'We regularly need to provide our legal team with historic sales and marketing information, when trademarks are being infringed.'

Peter Housego, Global Archive Manager 2009

Castrol GTX is one of the best-known engine oil brands in the world, but with commercial success comes the threat of counterfeit. Where trademarks are infringed, the BP legal team is regularly called upon to prove that Castrol GTX has been continuously advertised and sold in particular territories. They do this by exploiting the comprehensive Castrol archive of historic packaging, pricing and advertising material that was set up in the 1990s. Although the intellectual property in the archive is historic, even material perceived as out-of-date can be used as evidence of commercial development over time, and is invaluable for protecting current brands, and ultimately BP's business.

Appendix 6: Corporate responsibility

'As the world's oldest communications company, we recognise and attach value to our rich heritage and this is an integral part of BT being a responsible company.'
**Caroline Sheridan, Director Corporate Responsibility 2009**

BT’s Heritage Policy is a published commitment to safeguard and give widest possible access to the company’s unique history. BT Heritage encompasses BT Archives, which manages the company's historical records, and the Connected Earth museum initiative. This tells the story of communications, from the telegraph to the internet, through online galleries that make extensive use of BT's archives, and through a network of UK museums that showcase BT's dispersed collection of historical artefacts. This leadership in corporate responsibility provides an invaluable resource for researchers. It also supports business operations by promoting the BT brand and identity to customers, and positively differentiating BT from its competitors.

**Appendix 7: New formula for beauty**

- **Company:** Boots UK
- **Sector:** Retail
- **Impact:** Innovation

Brand knowledge and marketing

'This range brings back to life the best of our amazing formulation and packaging archive, celebrating the tradition and history which makes Boots the great brand it is today.'

*Annabel Franks, Head of Boots Beauty Brands 2009*

'The beauty industry and press …absolutely loved it.'

*Clare Stafford, Public Relations Team 2009*

Project brief: To produce a new global brand, a 'modern beauty classic', that has the authentic look and feel of a 1920s beauty product range in terms of formulation (traditional ingredients) and merchandising (vintage packaging, nomenclature and style). Collaboration between archives and product development teams needs to deliver authenticity and integrity in product identity, without compromising quality or efficacy.

**Sponsor:** Head of Boots Beauty Brands
Timescale 2 years from concept to point of sale

Business archives used by project team:

- sample product packaging, showing colours, layout, typeface and dimensions of packaging of beauty and healthcare products, 1920s and 1930s;
- photographic records of company founding partner, Florence Boot, 1899–1925;
- merchandise committee minute books, showing product quantities, point of sale and marketing information, 1924-1935;
- packaging committee minutes showing detail of product tooling, embossing, materials etc, 1924-1935;
- formula committee minute books, showing product ingredients, 1924-1936;
- price lists and product catalogues, showing lists of products sold in Boots shops – names and prices and illustrations, 1912-1935.

Outcomes and business benefit:

- Creation of a new Boots brand - Original Beauty Formula - with first ever global product launch into European and North American markets;
- Promotion of heritage and corporate values to new international customers through marketing and PR initiatives;
- The brand has 15 new face, body and bath products;
- Design costs minimised by using in-house archive resource - significant development savings made by having access to original 1920s formulations;
- Speed to market benefits realised by using in-house resource;
- The association of Florence Boot’s philanthropic activities with the new brand allows cause–related marketing opportunities with The Eve Appeal;
- “Fantastic” PR benefit of having a great story behind the brand, including the positive corporate responsibility aspect;
- Greater awareness in the business of the commercial potential of the company’s archive collections.
Notes

1 Unlike many European countries the UK does not have a formal network of dedicated national or regional archive repositories for business records.

2 At time of publication Dundee, Glasgow and Liverpool university post-graduate courses are teaching dedicated modules on business records.

3 Sir Nicholas Goodison’s report to the Treasury, January 2004, entitled *Securing the Best for our Museums. Private Giving and Government Support.*

4 The National Strategy for Business Archives is available from The National Archives and will be published on-line on the website of the Business Archives Council.

5 This scheme is being devised by The National Archives in association with the Business Archives Council in 2010.

6 The Business Archives Best Practice On-Line website will be available via the Business Archives Council website at http://businessarchivescouncil.org.uk

7 The website is in construction phase and final content may vary.
OUT FROM THE STACKS AND INTO THE LIMELIGHT:
THE ARCHIVES OF HBOS PLC AND THE MUSEUM ON THE MOUND

RETO TSCHAN
HBOS plc Group Archives and Museum*

Many archives routinely participate in the creation of temporary exhibitions, often in conjunction with other heritage bodies. These exhibitions may be in-house, off-site, virtual, or may go on tour. Once considered peripheral, such activities are now considered part of the ‘core’ complement of a full archive program.1 A related, and apparently growing, trend is for archives to mount and curate permanent exhibitions of original archive material in dedicated display areas. ‘Permanent’ in this sense means display for the foreseeable future, measured in terms of several years, or until the display is altered or refreshed, rather than for the limited duration of a specific exhibition. The subject of these displays is often not some particular historical topic, event or personality, but the records’ creator or records’ repository itself. In business archives these displays often take the form of corporate histories, for example, the new Guardian News and Media Archive.2 Or they might consist of a selection of star objects from the archive, as with The National Archives’ new ‘Museum’ which displays Domesday Book, among other treasures.3 A number of other records repositories have included the provision of permanent exhibition space as part of recent refurbishments.4 Such facilities remain rare, due to cost and space constraints, but also because this particular type of service has not previously been prioritized. But if, as seems likely, this is to become a broader trend in future it is worth considering some of its implications.

This paper looks at the example of HBOS plc whose archive service has, in the form of the Museum on the Mound, a purpose built exhibition facility where some of its most valuable and historically interesting records can be placed on permanent public display.5 The aim of this paper is to explore what having the Museum on the Mound has meant for the archives, both theoretically and practically. The paper looks first at the effect which

* The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not represent those of HBOS plc Group Archives and Museum.
public display has on the archival record itself. It then goes on to explore what the implications of display are for areas such as preservation, access, outreach and custodianship. While the archival literature on exhibition addresses issues of preservation, the rationale for and potential benefits of mounting exhibits, or how to evaluate their success, archivists have written very little about the effects of selecting and placing records on public display. This paper’s main concern is with the new environment within which a record finds itself once placed on display and about how the context of display influences the interpretation not only of the record but of the archives as well. While primarily concerned with the display of archives within a museum environment, and with examples specific to the Museum on the Mound and the business archives of HBOS, it is hoped that some of its observations will have bearing for other types of archival exhibition.

**In the Museum**

The Museum on the Mound is not simply the archives on public display – it is a museum in its own right. It operates under its own terms of reference and is interpreted by the public as a cultural institution separate and distinct from the archive. Indeed, nowhere in the Museum is the archive mentioned. Nevertheless, a third of the items on display in the Museum are classed as archive items and in many galleries archive material predominates. It is precisely because the museum is not the same thing as the archive that it is worth considering the implications of displaying archive material therein.

Archive material has always featured in museum displays. Few museums limit themselves to ‘artefacts’ and the odd record adds historical verisimilitude or can be an exhibit in its own right: as Taylor points out, ‘museums are quick to recognise the iconic nature’ of archival holdings. Some records, those whose archival bonds have been irretrievably broken, what Jenkinson terms ‘isolated specimens,’ are arguably more suited to museum rather than archival custody. Jenkinson’s reasoning is based on the fundamental difference between archives and museums. The Museums Association defines ‘museums’ as ‘institutions that collect, safeguard and make accessible artefacts and specimens, which they hold in trust for society.’ More poetically, Cannizzo describes museums as ‘symbolic structures which make visible our public myths: the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves are institutionalised and materialised in our museums… [they are] artificially constructed repositories.’ Museums, then, are *artificial collections*. In contrast, an archive is a complex of
documents which has arisen naturally as the result of specific activities. Their value lies in the fact that they were generated by some purposive action and have not been collected. An archives is, in fact, ‘the antithesis of a collection.’

A consideration of the concept of provenance highlights this distinction. In archival theory, provenance refers to the creator of the records. It defines the ‘organic unit’ within which records were created and used and is the foundation upon which archival arrangement and description is based. Provenance outlines the contextual relationships – the archival bonds – between and among records and it is this context which renders records understandable. The nearest analogy is with archaeological excavation:

...for instance, in the case of many stones casually found or removed from their place. They are nothing other than stones, with very little interest or value. But, if these stones are left where they originally were, or if their original position can be reconstructed, we do not any more have a heap of stones but the foundations of a temple, arena, or town. The stones provide us with direct and immediate evidence of civilization, tell us of their history, and evoke the organization and life of a population.

Without the ability to establish its provenance, a record ‘becomes a simple curiosity’ which ‘can tell us very little – if not even deceive us.’ Jenkinson realised that such records continued to have value as historical artefacts, as exemplars or signs of the past – but no longer as archival records.

For museums, an artefact’s ‘archaeological provenance’ is important for initial identification and classification. This is sometimes reflected in museum displays which attempt to simulate an object’s physical context of creation and use, or of eventual discovery: grave goods in a grave, breast-plate on a soldier, sarcophagus in a tomb. There are many variations on the theme, though it does appear to have become less fashionable. It is harder to imagine this sort of thing being done successfully with records on display – what is the physical context of creation and use which is being recreated: the filing system, the registry office? Museums are, in fact, more concerned with ‘artistic provenance’; that is, with an individual object’s history of ownership, primarily as a means of authentication. This is analogous to the archivist’s concept of custodial history, but crucially, it is concerned with the item as a discrete item – not as part of a larger whole.

While the apparent aim of exhibition is to situate objects within their
historic contexts, provenance is, in fact, rarely respected. Displays which acknowledge archaeological provenance are simulacra: they are obviously recreations but more importantly rarely do the items in a single case or display share a common origin. An individual item’s label may acknowledge the immediate source of acquisition, the bequest or donor which led to an item coming to the museum, but these items now form part of not only a completely new collection, but of a new interpretive context created by their display:

A museum is a cultural warehouse. It is a place for things to be taken out of their natural context to be stored, reclassified and exhibited. When objects become exhibits, they necessarily take on new meanings: they are transformed … [They] twist in meaning between two worlds, the world of their origin and the world of significance created by display.20

A display is never a simple ‘unravelling’ of the past, it is always a creation.21 As the past does not speak for itself, it must be interpreted. As such, a display is always part of a larger meta-narrative – the rise and fall of civilizations, human evolution, the secret life of plants – into which objects are made to fit.

The origins of the various fonds held within the HBOS archive are well understood. Their provenance is well documented, the archival bonds remain – largely – intact. These are not, obviously, ‘isolated specimens.’ But this is true only so long as the records remain in the archive, or so long as access to them is facilitated by means of an archival finding aid, whose purpose is both to identify and thereby explicate the relationships which exist among records and to facilitate an understanding of the record. Once placed within the particular context of a display, a record is divorced from this apparatus and becomes something else. It is like the vase which, in situ as an archaeological find, can be interpreted in context, but which, once it becomes an exhibit, is divorced from its original context, becomes part of an artificially constructed context and necessarily takes on new associations and meanings.

The transformation of the archival record into this ‘something else’ was implicitly understood during the creation of the displays in the Museum on the Mound. It is evident in the preferred selection of two particular kinds of records: the iconic and the ephemeral. Examples of ‘iconic’ archive items on display include Bank of Scotland’s Founding Act, the first mortgage
issued by the Halifax Building Society, the oldest surviving Scottish banknote and the first life assurance policy issued by Clerical Medical. The ephemeral is everywhere in the Museum: advertisements, cheques, deposit receipts, a petition by staff for ‘beer money,’ stock certificates, customer passbooks etc. At seemingly opposite ends of the spectrum, both iconic and ephemeral records function particularly well in isolation. They are either striking enough, or weighty enough, to have an individual presence. Or, the mere fact that they have been selected for inclusion in a display affords them artefactual significance. In both instances, the result is that these items have the potential to act as symbols.

Because of this ability, both kinds of records were preferentially selected to support and interpret the exhibition’s narrative. Along with images and text, the objects provide the fabric out of which the Museum’s story is woven. Because records function primarily as artefacts or symbols within the Museum, Bank of Scotland’s first General Ledger\(^\text{23}\) can be displayed \textit{closed} (for preservation reasons). Its function within the case is to act as an illustrative example of past accounting practices. But it might equally well illustrate 17\(^\text{th}\) century bookbinding, the Bank’s antiquity, or acquisitive capitalism itself. Of course, the record had these and other, almost limitless, meanings in the archive as well. But once on display the ledger is no longer a \textit{record} in the archival sense. It has become something else. And what this something else is is largely beyond our ability to control.

Selection for display is based on the ability of items to respond well to the following questions: what is the story being told? what items best tell
this story? are they visually interesting? can they be displayed? But it is the first of these questions – what is the story being told – which is crucial in determining which items are selected for display. Museums claim to exhibit a representative selection of what might be termed the ‘significant past’.24 But they are also products for mass consumption: ‘The past is the most popular tourist destination on earth.’25 And what most people want from the past is an idealized ‘anti-modernist refuge, viewed in the light of nostalgia…a source of confidence in uncertain times.’26 The past, as it is depicted in the Museum on the Mound, is an idyllic place – even when the Jacobites are at the gates of Edinburgh, or the slums of industrial England are the subjects. The depiction is idyllic in the sense that there are no controversies, there are no hard questions about the company’s past: the Bank grew and prospered, building societies eradicated slums, equitable assurance was provided to all and throughout the staff attended balls and played football together. The point is not to be overly critical of the Museum on the Mound. It is merely to point out that in the certain amount of omission and gloss, and in the largely nostalgic picture which it presents of the past, it is no different from most other museums or exhibits. Museums, after all, are about myth-making. The point is that this is not the story(ies) the archives might tell you, it is the one story selected for mass consumption.

Museums struggle with the unwritten rules about what it is and what it is not acceptable to address or portray in public exhibitions.27 But collectively, museums tend to suppress or omit the ‘bad’ in favour of the ‘good’ – exceptions being branded ‘controversial.’ These exceptions to self-censorship are products of another vision of the museum as ‘a timely argument with its society.’28 An example is the recent ‘Taking Liberties’ exhibition at the British Library which presented a conflicting story of Britain’s struggle for its rights and freedoms. In contrast to a more triumphalist depiction, the documentary past was presented in such a way as to ‘question the narrative, rather than revere it.’29 Whether it is possible to question the narrative in the domain of the corporate branded exhibition is doubtful, and will most likely remain untested.30

Archivists have been urged to ‘flaunt’ their records as a means of raising our professional profile.31 The trend towards mounting permanent displays, however, raises important theoretical concerns of interpretation, representation and contextualisation. It also raises a number of practical considerations, which are addressed in light of the preceding discussion.
Preservation

‘…nothing more stimulates the archivist to break, albeit unwittingly, all the tenets of conservation than the mounting of an exhibition.’ When discussing exhibitions, archivists have been primarily concerned with mitigating the potential physical effects to the record. While Jenkinson argued that an ‘Archives Museum’ might be a suitable repository for intrinsically valuable or very fragile items, he also makes cased displays contingent on ‘the frequent and regular inspection and changing of their contents.’ For Jenkinson, and later writers, exhibition remained a modest activity, subordinate to the physical defence of the archives. Combined with the emergence of low-cost photo-reproductive technologies, archival exhibitions tended to place an emphasis on both smallness and a preference for reproductions. The following passage from Keeping Archives is typical:

> A small display area exhibiting some aspects of the archival collection in the reading room or outside it will attract attention….Special restrictions as to light levels and necessary fire protection measures make it very hard to find suitable areas for display of original material. Copies of archival material magnified to a suitable size with labels and text are often a more satisfactory solution… reproduced archival material makes perfect exhibition material.

Such modest displays with numerous reproductions will not satisfy the new display spaces. Their prominence, their incorporation of recognised environmental and security standards, their narrative force and the significance display bestows on the ‘authentic’ and the ‘real,’ has made it is less likely that reproductions will be considered suitable for display. Jenkinson recognised that the prime candidate for display was ‘the more spectacular specimen’ whose exhibition would be of educational ‘benefit [to] those who do not desire to come in as regular students.’ Filling these new display spaces with the ‘spectacular specimen’ is hard to oppose – indeed, it is often the stated raison d’être. Once woven into the exhibition’s narrative, and often dominating their cases, it is hard to imagine the display without them. Though volumes may have their pages turned, or discrete items substituted for other similar items, for items privileged with star status there is by definition no alternative to the original. The intention of such displays is to promote the archive service and to draw visitors. Should the display succeed in becoming a ‘destination point,’ to begin to draw
visitors itself, it becomes even harder to justify an items’ removal from public display.\textsuperscript{36} One of the Museum on the Mound’s star attractions is the oldest surviving Scottish banknote, a £12 Scots note issued by Bank of Scotland in 1716. No other examples are known and its uniqueness has been emphasised in promotional materials. It is the point at which the story of Scottish banknote design begins, and its absence would deprive the narrative of a key illustration. It seems destined to remain on permanent display.

Archivists recoil from the notion of permanent display. The argument is that by their very nature archives are unique and irreplaceable and so must be protected from the inevitable degradation which exhibition will cause. Light damage, temperature and humidity variations and the increased risk of theft are the main concerns. But the reluctance to create permanent displays must also be a product of a time when archives had only less than satisfactory display facilities. The 1716 banknote in question, however, is displayed within a locked, bandit-proof case in a suitable and stable monitored environment under low-level lighting which is only triggered on approach to the case.\textsuperscript{37} Given the incorporation of such specific environmental controls and security precautions, and taking into account the physical vulnerabilities of specific records, why not display archives permanently? Compared with art galleries, museums and libraries – many of which exhibit unique records and artefacts of immense historical and cultural value – are we as archivists simply overcautious? In part, the answer must be our particular devotion towards the physical defence of archives – though surely no museum or gallery curator or librarian would wilfully damage material entrusted to their care. But perhaps more important is the different emphasis which these cultural institutions have historically placed on public access.

Access

There is always a balance between preservation and access. By placing items on public display, the balance is shifted away from a focus on preservation towards access. The city centre location and high visitor numbers at the Museum on the Mound have obviously greatly improved access to some of our records.\textsuperscript{38} Here they are freely available to the public, six days a week, without the need to book a place in our searchroom in advance. For example, two cases which chart the development of building society advertisements over the course of the twentieth century are, on the one hand, a bit of nostalgic fun which make a visually interesting display,
but on the other hand, a useful retrospective of advertising themes conveniently grouped together.

But while it is true that many more visitors are able to view material in the Museum than would make the trek to our suburban archive store, it is worth considering what kind of access exhibitions facilitate. Exhibitions are a form of ‘standardized fare,’ they provide ‘structured, even entertaining, historical experiences for visitors.’ Records on display illustrate a particular narrative and it is as part of this narrative that the records are made understandable. The danger is that this setting provides ‘too much interpretation’, that in structuring records within the context of displays we ‘drown out the ‘voices’ of the artifacts [sic] themselves.’ While physical access has been increased, intellectual access, or the ability to interrogate and interpret the record as a record, is limited. This is also practically true as producing records in the searchroom which are currently on display is complicated by the fact of their display. To remove a volume from a case for consultation might, depending on the existence of loaned items within the same case, involve the attendance of a curator from a separate organisation. And prolonged access would begin to conflict with the necessity of restoring items to their displays. Ultimately, the access which is facilitated by museums is a passive one:

The [museum’s] objective is to present authoritative information in an engaging way. The result should satisfy intellectual curiosity, or at least provide a pleasant afternoon’s experience. No other product results from the visit. Visitors read labels, view artifacts [sic] or reproductions, watch a film, toy with the interactive elements, have coffee, buy a souvenir and leave.41

This may appear to be only an issue where the exhibition is physically removed from the archive. But in fact the experience will be essentially the same even where a display is located within the archive repository itself. The only exception would be instances where the display led to further investigation of the relevant archive materials themselves. Which, perversely, the existence of the exhibition might actively prevent.

**Outreach**

Exhibitions are undertaken as a means of promoting the archive and the services that it provides. One of several hoped for scenarios might be that a ‘person’s first experience…may be of an exhibition display; the second may be to donate an important set of records.’ To a certain extent this is true of
the Museum on the Mound. Acting as the public face of the Group’s heritage, it is a prominent advertisement for the continuing value of these records and has functioned as a first point of contact for those interested in depositing material with the archives. Given the discussion above, however, there are two potential dangers. The first is that the nostalgic picture presented by museums is in many respects unrepresentative of the types of records which archives actually seek to acquire. Business archives have tried to distance themselves precisely from this association with nostalgia, attempting to position themselves instead as intrinsic elements of a business, as ‘unique corporate asset[s] that can be used for important legal, marketing, communications and business decisions.’\textsuperscript{43} The second, and related danger, is the risk of confusion between the very public mandate of a museum and the internal obligations of an archives as part of a business process. That is, will there be reluctance on behalf of the creator to deposit sensitive and confidential records with a department perceived to be operating in the public domain?

There is a further danger which arises from the fundamentally different context of public display. As Ian Wilson notes, exhibitions are defined by their ‘pre-planned’ and ‘highly structured’ nature, ‘Visitors are shown, or allowed to browse, through defined exhibits. A limited number of items…are selected, placed in an interpretive context and offered…to the public.’\textsuperscript{44} This is very different from the typical experience of a visitor to the archive, where records are arranged by creators, not subjects. Moving from galleries filled primarily with Bank of Scotland to Halifax Building Society to Clerical & Medical material, there are no collection level descriptions, nothing to inform the visitor that they have moved from one fonds – from one unique creation – to another. It all appears as part of one seamless whole without regard to provenance. By showing only a simplified end product, minus all of the lacunae, false leads and frustrations which inevitably occur during the pulling together of a particular narrative, do we project a false picture of how research might be undertaken in an archive?
More than just raising unrealistic expectations among users, are we also misrepresenting something essential about what an archive actually is? There is undoubtedly a need for archivists to engage in outreach:

While heritage may be valued in a general way, too few people understand the role of archives in enhancing that heritage. Fewer still understand other functions and uses of archives; for example, their legal, fiscal and administrative value. This, in part, is the result of our continuing failure to explain our profession and the significance of the records in our custody.45

Exhibitions are excellent promotional opportunities, but by employing methods of display familiar to museum visitors, we suggest parity between the artefact and the record. We need to ensure that our displays are about more than just the material we hold, they also need to promote an awareness of the function and purpose of archives.46

**Custodianship**

The effect which public display might have on the role, or perceived role, of the archivist as trusted custodian was briefly raised above. It is in thinking more specifically about our role as custodians that some of the issues raised by exhibition come most sharply into focus. For Jenkinson, custody is the safeguarding of the ‘essential qualities’ of archives; namely their naturalness, interrelatedness, impartiality and authenticity.47 Viewed in isolation from the archive, an exhibition or display appears to compromise these elements. An archive which is an organic accumulation is presented as its opposite: a collection of discrete things. Records appear in isolation, in newly constructed contexts or with impossible connections to other records. Most significantly, perhaps, impartial records are made to support a particular interpretation of the past. Can we be considered trusted custodians when we begin to draw conclusions and present our records in only a flattering, or at least uncontroversial, light?

The apparent difficulty for archivists, trained to act as custodians who facilitate the use of records, arises in the moment when we ourselves begin to use the record. As archivists, can we do both? In truth, we cannot avoid doing both – we are not simply custodians, we are ourselves also always creators of the archives: ‘the fonds as a whole no longer exists and what remains are the fragments that have survived, either by accident or design, out of which the archivist attempts to construct some semblance of a whole.’48 The archive as it is represented by the finding aid – the end
product of archival appraisal, arrangement and description – is necessarily an abstraction. Comparing museums and archives, Ian Wilson notes that in the manner in which archival finding aids ‘structure and present information in context’ they are ‘in a sense…our exhibits.’ The processes of archival arrangement and description as well as the mounting of exhibitions of archival material both act as mediators for the record. Both provide a lens through which records are interpreted and understood. Is what we do in the museum or exhibition so different from what happens in the archive? Are these not comparable instances of the construction out of fragments of an ‘ideal’ text? The difference is that in the archive description acts as a tool for making users aware of the process of selection undertaken by the archivist in the creation of the ‘whole.’ It is precisely this description, the gloss of the archivist as editor, which is rarely present in exhibitions and displays.

**Conclusion**

Ultimately, archives will continue to create displays of original material – some of temporary duration, some more permanent – because of the numerous obvious benefits which arise. The Museum on the Mound is, perhaps, an extreme case. Few archives will be given the remit to display on such a large scale. Regardless of scale, however – whether the display under consideration consists merely of a few cases in the archive repository’s reception area, an exhibition of treasures, a display at a corporate ‘visitor centre’, a temporary display at a local heritage event – whenever we place items physically within cases and intellectually within the context of a particular display we are creating something quite alien to the archives, we are, in fact, creating ‘museums’. Archivists are not well trained in the kind of difficult questions which exhibitions raise and in fundamental ways display is difficult to reconcile with archival theory and practice. Exhibitions should be undertaken with consideration of the record paramount, and with an awareness that there will be unintended consequences: that our understanding of what an archive is is not well communicated in a display; that a display may promote ‘heritage’ generally but also gives a misleading picture of what archives are and how they operate. We should try, despite their inherent interpretive difficulties, to convey not merely the artefactual or material heritage value of records in exhibitions, but also to educate the public about the nature and value of archives at the same time.
Notes

2 See ‘Read all about it’ which includes a review of the Guardian’s new visitor centre, Museums Journal (February 2009) pp.35-37.
4 Christopher Kitching, Archive buildings in the United Kingdom 1993-2005 (Chichester, 2007) p.23. The American Declaration of Independence, Constitution and Bill of Rights at the Rotunda, The National Archives in Washington D.C., is one of the better known examples of iconic archival treasures on permanent public display.
5 The archive and museum collection includes records and artefacts created and used by HBOS plc, Bank of Scotland, The Union Bank of Scotland, Halifax plc, The Halifax Building Society, The Leeds Building Society, Clerical Medical and a large number of smaller related companies.
6 For a stimulating discussion of the relation between archives, museums and material culture more broadly, see Hugh A. Taylor, ‘“Heritage” revisited: documents as artifacts [sic] in the context of museums and material culture’, Archivaria, 40 (Fall 1995).
7 Items in the collection are classed as either belonging to the Archive, Museum, Library or Art collection. On display there are: 522 Museum items, 196 Archive items, 8 Art items and 9 Library items. However, the Museum collection includes a large number of coins and banknote printing plates. Discounting these, there are 183 other museum items, which is actually fewer than the total number of archive items on display.
8 Taylor, ‘“Heritage” revisited’, p.15.
10 The full definition is: ‘Museums enable people to explore collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. They are institutions that collect, safeguard and make accessible artefacts and specimens, which they hold in trust for society’. See http://www.museumsassociation.org/faq [accessed 28 Jan 2009].
13 Provenance is defined as ‘the person or persons, family of families, and corporate body or bodies that created and/or accumulated and used records in the conduct of their personal or business life’; see Laura Millar, ‘The death of the fonds and the resurrection of provenance: archival context in space and time’, Archivaria, 53 (Spring 2002) p.4.
14 Millar, p.4.
16 Lodolini, note 17.
17 ‘The British Museum, for example, has a collection of Administrative documents which is formed out of the wreck of hundreds of earlier sets of muniments: an interesting, valuable, and beautiful accumulation … [But] no Archivist, even in the cases where these documents have been taken over direct from the original owners and custody has consequently been preserved unbroken, could possibly allow full Archive value to documents which have been violently torn from the connexion in which they were originally preserved, a connexion which in nine cases out of ten is important, if not vital, for the full understanding of their significance’ (Jenkinson, p.42).
The terms ‘archaeological provenance’ and ‘artistic provenance’ and my interpretation and use of them in this section are based on Laura Miller’s definitions and arguments in ‘The death of the fonds’.

Hugh Taylor suggests we should consider precisely this type of display: ‘With the increasing emphasis by archivists on the functional approach, perhaps there are ways of displaying to the public how these instruments were used in the conduct of affairs, instead of always reserving selected documents to grace an encased theme. Our thousands of shelves and containers mask from the public how documents that are now archives worked when they were “active.” Museums are rather better at this kind of thing. Perhaps we can learn from them. Why not show how the old systems worked and how inappropriate they now are?’ (Taylor, p.11).


‘Museum galleries are almost always designed around cognitive order in the minds of curators. There is an idea – like the evolution of the horse – that the designer writes in physical form across the museum’s floor and walls. Objects (and words) are his words’, (Annis, p.24).

Bank of Scotland General Ledger, 1696-1703 (GB1830 BOS/4/4/1/1). The early volumes of the General Ledger record customer accounts in full, for both investors and those borrowing from the Bank. Along with customer accounts, the General Ledger also includes the Bank’s charges general, profit and loss, interest and stock accounts. In short, every financial transaction undertaken by the Bank from its creation is recorded in great detail.

Cannizzo, p.26. The term ‘the significant past’ comes from ‘Base and superstructure’ by Raymond Williams.


Of public museum programming Michael Wallace writes: ‘Sometimes, I think, we do to much self-censoring, too soon. We adhere to an unwritten understanding that there are limits on what can be said, even if they have not been explicitly laid down’; Michael Wallace, ‘The future of history museums’, in G. Kavanagh (ed.), Museum provision and professionalism (London, 2003) p.78.


David Horspool, ‘Statutes of Liberty’. See http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/ the_tls/article5514732.ece [accessed 17 Feb 2009].

The point is easily made: what more appropriate public forum than the Museum on the Mound for an exhibition on the recent Scottish banking crisis – an exhibition which will only ever take place, if at all, when the present has become the ‘safely distant’ past (Wallace, p.76). In fairness to the Museum, closure periods ensure that the archives will not be able to tell this story, publicly, for at least another 30 years.


Ann Pederson ed. Keeping archives (Sydney, 1987) p.239.

Jenkinson, p.83.

the conservation viewpoint, it is preferred that the exhibition of originals be avoided and facsimile copies substituted. Environmental standards are then outlined ‘If originals must be displayed...’ (Pederson, p.239).

35 More realistically, and obviously lacking Jenkinson’s ‘spectacular specimens,’ Margaret Cross Norton writes almost embarrassedly of the small displays she occasionally curates: ‘...those who have followed our exhibits in the state archives are aware that very few of our records are sufficiently photogenic to make an interesting display’, Margaret Cross Norton, ‘Services and resources of an archives’, in T.W. Mitchell (ed.) Norton on archives (Chicago, 2001) p.70.

36 Wilson, p.94.

37 Routine environmental monitoring indicates a stable temperature within the case of 18° to 20° and a stable RH of 45% (+/- 2%). Light levels are maintained at less than 50 lux.

38 In its first two full years of operation since its renovation in 2006, the Museum has attracted on average of around 37,000 visitors each year.


40 Taylor, p.15.

41 Wilson, p.94.


43 See, for example, the definition of business archives provided by the Business Archives Council of Scotland: ‘An archive is then a unique corporate asset that can be used for important legal, marketing, communications and business decisions that form part of a historical business context. Rather than being a matter of nostalgia, an archive is an important investment in the future of the company’. See http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/archives/bacs/servicestobusiness/whatarebusinessarchives/ [accessed 23 Feb 2009].

44 Wilson, p.94.

45 Blais and Enns, pp.104-105.

46 Blais and Enns, pp.104.

47 Naturalness: archives arise naturally as the result of some purposive action and there is a necessary relationship between its parts – this contrasts with Museums and Libraries which are artificial collections; Interrelatedness: records are necessarily composed of the record and the whole, the archival bond among records provides the context which allows records to be understood; Impartiality: records are impartial because they are created to act, or to fulfil a particular function; Authenticity: a record is what it claims to be (its identity) and has not been altered or corrupted (its integrity) - records which have remained in archival custody are considered authentic because an archive is considered a responsible custodian (Jenkinson, pp.11ff).


49 Wilson, pp.94-95.

50 MacNeil, p.270.

51 Ibid., p.278.
BUSINESS ARCHIVES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR: STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING COLLECTIONS AT GUILDHALL LIBRARY AND LONDON METROPOLITAN ARCHIVES

RICHARD A WILTSHIRE
City of London Corporation

Summary
This article presents four case studies of initiatives which have been used by Guildhall Library and London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) to promote the extensive business collections held by the City of London Corporation. An introduction to the archives service is given, together with a description of the role the City plays in acquiring business archives, and the advantages which accrue when these collections are set in a wider regional archive context.

The first case study presents LMA’s involvement with the archives of Bogle-L’Ouverture Publications Limited as an example of the diversity of the archive service’s community archives. The second explores education events held at LMA, designed for young and old, and inspired by the archives of Peal and Company and J Lyons and Company. The third outlines the ways in which partners and volunteers are helping to increase access to insurance records, and extend the service’s holdings of the records of occupational pensions. The fourth looks at an exhibition at Guildhall Library which showcased the international relevance of City business archives.

Future plans in response to the economic downturn and a programme for increasing academic readership are outlined. It is concluded that elements of the strategies covered in the case studies could be adopted by practitioners to help develop and promote collections held elsewhere, regardless of whether they are held publicly or privately.

Introduction to the City of London Corporation and its business collections
The City of London Corporation provides local government services for the financial and commercial heart of Britain, the ‘Square Mile’ of the City of London. It is committed to maintaining and enhancing the status of the City
as the world’s leading international financial and business centre. The City has two archive services, the Manuscripts Section of Guildhall Library in the City of London, and LMA in Clerkenwell just outside the City. Guildhall Library began collecting archives in the 1820s. The Manuscripts Section is the record office for the City of London. LMA is the regional archive for Greater London housing the former Greater London Council’s Record Office. These two services were merged in 2007 and are now managed within the Heritage Division of the City’s Libraries, Archives and Art Gallery Department.

In total the City preserves and provides access to over 101 linear kilometres of shelved collections dating from 1067 to 2008. The archives are Designated by the Museums Libraries and Archives Council as being of national and international significance as the ‘History of London Collection’. The main aims of the service are to continue to develop and maintain an archive collection that tells the story of London and its people, provide the best possible access to the widest range of people, and build an environment where learning is fun. The Heritage Division includes well-established Conservation, Image and Design, and Interpretation sections which help the service meet these goals.

The combined holdings at Guildhall Library and LMA comprise the largest single collection of business archives held by a local authority in England and Wales. In recognition of this a dedicated Senior Archivist post was created in April 2008 with responsibility for developing these collections. Of the current 10.3 linear kilometres of archives held at Guildhall Library, approximately half are business records dating back to fifteenth century. The major strengths of the business records at Guildhall Library include the archives of City-based insurance companies, such as the Hand in Hand, Royal Exchange and Sun Insurance Office, all fire insurers, and Lloyds of London, the market place for marine insurance; the records of stockbrokers, such as Cazenove and Company; and other nationally important organisations such as the London Stock Exchange. There are also several key archives covering clock making including Thwaites and Reed and other trades.

Many companies, whose records Guildhall Library holds, had a global reach, whether as bankers such as Morgan Grenfell, Antony Gibbs and Sons and Standard Chartered or as multinational concerns in timber, tea, rubber, mining, shipping and telegraphy such as Harrison and Crosfield, Wallace Brothers, Inchcape and Globe Telegraph. These are complemented by collections of business associations such as British Insurance
Association, Coal Meters Committee, London Chamber of Commerce, Association of British Chambers of Commerce and Corporation of Foreign Bondholders. There are also the records of the City of London livery companies (trade guilds) who sought to control entry to their trade as well as quality of goods produced in and around the City.5

LMA’s business collections are particularly strong in the brewing and building industries. There are over 20 brewery archives including substantial collections from important London brewers such as Courage, Truman Hanbury Buxton, Watney Combe Reid, Whitbread and Allied Breweries. The building industry is represented by major companies such as John Mowlem and Higgs and Hill. Further strengths lie in the utility companies. The region’s supply of electricity, water and gas is documented extensively in the predecessor company archives of the London Electricity Board, Thames Water6 and the Gas Light and Coke Company. Catering and clothing are trades where LMA has fewer collections, but those held are of outstanding quality. For the catering industry these include J Lyons and Company, Smith Kendon, confectioners and British Vinegars. The clothing industry is represented by J Lock and Sons, hatters and Peal and Company, bootmakers.

The service’s growing number of collections relating to publishing and pensions, across both sites, are detailed in the case studies outlined below.

Business archives within a wider context
Like all public sector local authority archives, the business collections held by the City are stored alongside the records of associations, charities, courts, families and individuals, hospitals, local authorities, religious institutions, prisons, schools, printed and graphic sources.7 This juxtaposition allows businesses to be researched within a wider regional context and among complementary sources. For example, the brewery collections at LMA are supported by substantial print and photographic collections such as those held in the Greater London Council Photographic Library, which includes images of public houses and brewery sites. In addition the Jones-Jones collection of amateur photographs represents a ‘census’ of public houses and their signs in 1980s and 1990s. Extensive court and local authority licensing and planning records include submitted plans of public houses and theatres. Trade directories, other printed business and secondary sources help complete the picture. Substantial reference libraries are maintained on both sites. The nationally significant collection at Guildhall Library is managed by the Printed Books Section. It specialises
in the history of London and has extensive sources on brewery and general business history, as well as holding Lloyd’s of London Marine Collection some archival material of which is held in the Manuscripts Section.

The research of some business collections is supported by religious holdings. For example the recently acquired archives of Dixons Group, electrical retailers, and personal papers of Lord Kalms of Edgware, life president and former Chairman of the Group, can be viewed at LMA alongside substantial Jewish holdings which include the Office of the Chief Rabbi and the United Synagogue. Lord Kalms of Edgware has had a key role in the Jewish Community, establishing educational foundations and advising on the future direction of the United Synagogue. The important point to emphasise here is that businesses do not operate in a vacuum. Local authority archives allow their context to be researched, enabling researchers to appreciate more fully the social, political, religious and economic factors which affected decision-making and development of companies’ operations.

**Acquisitions**

As a local authority, the City of London Corporation has powers under the Public Records Act 1958 and 1967, to acquire by gift, deposit or purchase original records. The service collects archives relating to the City of London, and to the Greater London area which are of London-wide significance. The service prefers to accept collections as gifts, although deposits are taken. When a deposit is accepted, a charge is normally made for packaging and cataloguing of the collection. Should a depositor wish to withdraw their collection permanently a fee is normally payable. This measure is now formally written into deposit agreements to help ensure that public money is used to benefit long-term publicly-held collections. Records presented as gifts are normally maintained at the City’s expense, except where considerable expenditure is required for reconditioning, rebinding and other conservation work, and where collections are voluminous.

There is a high acquisition rate of over 200 linear metres a year for all types of collections. An Acquisitions Group of archivists and conservators meets regularly to make decisions about potential deposits, considering conservation, access and storage requirements. The Group firmly believes that the role of a public sector archive services, such as the City’s, is to provide a future home for archives at risk or which cannot be easily accessed or maintained by their owners.
Some collections are offered to the City as a ‘last resort’ before their destruction. This has been particularly the case with business archives where companies do not wish to retain them. In these situations appraisal has to be made at speed. Routinely, cut off dates are imposed to reduce overall bulk and to ensure that recent records are not acquired which will be subject to access restrictions and required for administrative purposes by the depositor. Bulk, confidentiality, accessibility of formats and the relevance of the collection policies of other archive repositories are all practical factors which affect decision making concerning newly offered collections. Comment on the impact of economic downturn on acquisitions is given in the conclusion.

The service has developed ways of managing the impact of the high acquisition rate of collection whether an archive of a business or another type of organisation. One strategy which helps the service prioritise collections for sorting and cataloguing is to log enquiries about uncatalogued collections. The public interest is balanced against the complexity and importance of collections following the ‘log jam’ principle to ensure key archives in demand are given priority. In addition, techniques have been developed to help staff respond quickly and efficiently to requests for access to uncatalogued collections. Box or ‘interim’ lists supplied by depositors or created by staff upon acquisition are used. At LMA, each storage format within deposits is given a numbering system which is also applied to the lists and to the service’s location indexes. This preparation work enables staff to respond where necessary to users’ requests for information on the contents of uncatalogued deposits and for appointments to consult items from these collections. In consequence, the pressure on cataloguing is reduced. The work also provides cataloguing archivists with more definite information on the extent, complexity and location of series of records within deposits. These basic techniques can be applied at any archive repository whether in the private or public sector.

**Case Study One: Business acquisitions and diverse communities**

Over the past four years, LMA has been collecting businesses archives from the Black and Caribbean community. This began with the acquisition of the archives of Bogle-L’Ouverture Publications Limited, Black publishers. It is important first to provide a background to the acquisition of Bogle-L’Ouverture to show how this work has been developed.

Eric and Jessica Huntley, a Black Caribbean couple, emigrated from
British Guiana, now Guyana, to London between 1957 and 1958. In 1969 they founded Bogle-L’Ouverture Publications Limited, a radical Black publishing house, as a reaction to the ban of their friend Dr Walter Rodney, academic and political activist, from Jamaica in 1968. The Jamaican government had banned Rodney for teaching students and Rastafarians about African history. The business was used to publish important post-colonial texts by Rodney including ‘The Groundings with my Brother’ and ‘How Europe Underdeveloped Africa’ which have publicised the message of black empowerment all over the world. The Huntley archives document the publishing business and also a rich variety of political, educational, community and family activities which the business supported. The collections are a good example of how a business archive can tell a wider story, in this case that of the Black Caribbean community in London and beyond between 1950 and the 2000s.

Prior to the deposit of the archives in February 2005, the Huntleys wanted to establish their own repository, but had been prevented by a lack of funding. The archives were increasingly at risk from mould damage caused by poor storage conditions in a garden annexe. The Huntleys’ friend, Yinnon Ezra, Director of Recreation and Heritage at Hampshire County Council, helped establish the initial connection with LMA through Jan Smith, Head Archivist of Hampshire Record Office. In summer 2004, Jan asked if LMA would be in a position to advise the Huntleys on their records. LMA was aware of the lack of deposited archives from the Black community and quickly understood the significance of this unsolicited contact. Initial meetings were held with the Huntleys at their home in Ealing. These allowed staff to explain LMA’s services and related existing collections, learn more about the Huntleys’ history and needs, and survey and assess the records. This process also allowed a level of trust to be developed. The outward-facing nature of their business and other community activities, and the Huntleys’ belief in the power of the written word and importance of history in education, are further factors which motivated the couple to keep archives and deposit them in a mainstream, accessible public sector repository.
The Huntley’s archives were the first deposit from the Black community in the City’s collections. The service benefitted from a high quality collection of over 40 linear metres. Cataloguing of the archives has been led by the author and carried out by two members of staff. The opportunity was taken to employ staff with demonstrable experience of the Black and Caribbean community to work on the collections. The recruitment process proved highly successful in selecting dedicated staff with knowledge and interest to bring to the cataloguing and organisation of events based on the collection.¹³

Eric and Jessica Huntley have committed a high level of sustained involvement in helping staff promote LMA and the archives. Their friends and contacts have also been vital, through the Huntley Archives Advisory Group, in planning annual conferences based on the collections. Held mainly at LMA, these conferences have showcased the value of archives and LMA’s services, and have brought in new audiences. The conferences received additional input from celebrity keynote speakers including Moira Stuart, newsreader and Kwame Kwei Armah, actor and playwright. Other new audiences have included African Caribbean and African pupils of Park View Academy, Haringey who visited LMA in 2007 as members of the Black Experience Archive Trust (BEAT). They drew inspiration from the collection to help them explore their own family backgrounds and key figures in Black history to create an exhibition which was later displayed at the 2008 Huntley Conference. BEAT continues to support the archive service’s work, in particular by filming the conferences and providing recordings for the archives. Here is an example where business archives are made relevant to the wider community and how they can support community involvement and learning.

LMA’s involvement with the Huntley archives is also a good example of the crucial link between outreach and collections development, a relationship which can help repositories in all sectors develop their collections in new areas. As a direct result of the Huntleys and the

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Black Experience Archive Trust (BEAT)
pupils looking at London County Council Bomb Damage Maps.
conferences, the service has developed its Black business and related community archives. In 2007 the Huntleys’ friend Arif Ali, Director of Hansib Publications Limited, Black and Asian publishers, gifted The Caribbean Times and other publications produced by his business. In 2008, another friend, Sybil Phoenix MBE, deposited her papers. These document her involvement in the community, Methodist church and youth clubs in London, the cat walks and jewellery sales from Phoenix Afro-European Fashions Limited, her dressmaking business in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and also her role as a trustee of First Love Radio Limited, a company which managed a radio station in Lewisham. The records of Clapton Youth Centre, a Black youth centre were also gifted in 2008 by a conference attendee who also ran a Black book business called Spark Books in the 1950s. The Huntley events and archives have therefore already had a major impact on the diversification of the City’s collections.

Case Study Two: ‘Nippies’ and ‘Someone Else’s Shoes’

The archives service has an established programme of education activities which are advertised in the Heritage Division’s events guide. Two successful events have been held recently which have been based on the business archives of J Lyons and Company and Peal and Company held at LMA. They are outlined in turn and given as examples of how simple themes can be drawn from business collections and used in an effective way for different age groups.

The archives of J Lyons and Company Limited, food and tea retailers, include dinner menus, advertising and photographic material of exceptional quality. In order to promote this collection a free talk titled ‘J. Lyons & Co Ltd: talk at the London Metropolitan Archives ‘Nippies’ and Afternoon Tea!’ was held in 2007. An archivist gave a presentation on the company’s history, its relevance to the history of London, and also a summary of the collection with examples. The talk was followed by afternoon tea and cakes which were served by staff dressed as Lyons Corner House and Tea Room serving waitresses, known as ‘Nippies’. This gave variety to the afternoon and supported an atmosphere which was conducive to informal discussion between attendees and staff, and the opportunity for some to fully indulge in a nostalgia trip.

The event proved very popular and was attended by 40-50 adults. The episode of BBC television series ‘Who Do You Think You Are?’, featuring Nigella Lawson, food writer, journalist and broadcaster and her connection with the Salmon family who built the Lyons empire, which was shown prior
to the event, may have contributed to its popularity. Attendees included former Lyons employees and their relatives, those interested in the business’s buildings, and others who were familiar with Lyons from their own past. One attendee’s father had worked in the accounting section using the electronic counting machines for which the company is well known. The event was overbooked, and because it was well received it was repeated later in the year.

‘Someone Else’s Shoes’ was a family fun learning event held in October 2008 at LMA. It was advertised through a flyer which was distributed to libraries and some schools in London. The subject of the day was inspired by the archives of Peal and Company, bespoke boot and shoe makers. The collection includes 620 ‘feet books’ dating from 1870s until the Company’s closure in 1965. Each volume contains outlines which were drawn round clients’ feet and stored for reference as part of the fitting system. The firm’s customers included royalty and film stars, and the series includes shoes made for Fred Astaire, Theodore Roosevelt and Sir Laurence Olivier. One of the exercises involved matching up the famous person with their footprint. Art and craft played a big part of the afternoon with designs being created as drawings and three-dimensional shoe models. Completed shoes were presented as a fashion show and the day was concluded with story-telling and songs with a foot-focused theme. The event proved highly successful with 25 children, parents and grandparents attending. Feet are an important element in children’s experience of growing up. It was felt that this made the day particularly relevant to them. The adults commented that they particularly liked the mix of different activities and some parents offered to advertise a similar event to their children’s schools. A repeat of this activity is due to be held in April 2009.

For both events, inspiration was drawn from the simple themes presented by the company archives. They also demonstrate how business
archives can be unlocked and used in creative ways for all age groups beyond the realm of one-person research. The importance of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policy within private sector businesses and also a growing number of business archives held by Charitable Trusts, mean that privately-held business repositories have to find ways in which they can benefit the wider community. The type of events held at LMA are therefore of relevance to private as well as other public sector archives in promoting collections and reaching wider audiences.

**Case Study Three – Help at hand**

**Volunteering in the Sun**

The archives service runs an established volunteer programme where individuals can take part in a variety of projects ranging from document cleaning to identifying Black and Asian Londoners in parish registers. A successful example of ongoing volunteer involvement with business archives is the indexing of the policy registers of the Sun Insurance Office (formerly Sun Fire Office). This project shows how volunteers can help a repository unlock bulky underused business collections and increase user numbers. The example also demonstrates how a project can be maintained within existing resources after funding runs out.

The indexing began with the establishment in 2003 of the ‘A Place in the Sun’ project which was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and led by the former London Archives Users Forum in partnership with Guildhall Library. Since the initial sources of funding ended, work has been managed by the former project leaders on a voluntary basis with continued assistance from Guildhall Library. The policy registers contain detailed information on policy holders and their property. The registers are arranged by policy number only and are un-indexed which makes searches in this series very difficult. Volunteers have been indexing each policy entry extracting the date, policy number, policy holder’s name, occupation and details of the property insured.

By March 2009, 125 volumes covering the period 1800-1838 (more than 218,000 policy entries) had been indexed and made available online. At the time of writing, there are 15 ‘Sun’ volunteers with at least two indexers in the Manuscripts Section search room on a daily basis. The project has been sustained by the enthusiasm of the project leader and volunteers, ongoing support from staff, and the facilities provided by Guildhall Library. ‘Sun’ newsletters have been published and distributed to allow volunteers to share their experiences, news on interesting entries and general project updates. Regular ‘Sun’ lunches have also enabled volunteers
to socialise with each other and staff and to discuss their work. These aspects have been important in motivating the volunteers’ work and acknowledging their contributions.

The impact of the project cannot be understated. The Sun Insurance Office was perhaps the most prominent fire insurance company in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and insured many layers of society from washerwomen to the aristocracy. The policy registers therefore have considerable scope as a record of the population in London and beyond and have been heavily used by family, social and local historians. Online guides have been published by the Manuscripts Section on the collection to support use. Use has also been encouraged by exposure of the archives in articles published in family history magazines as a key genealogical source for the period before civil registration.19

The number of researchers undertaking lengthy study on the earlier un-indexed volumes has also increased, as has use of other series such as endorsement books, which are referred to in the main policy registers. The project has therefore promoted the value of the whole series and related records. The index has proved especially popular with overseas researchers who can order copies for a small charge. The increased use of the volumes and provision of copies have now raised the question of future digitisation to preserve the originals from overuse.

**Pensions Archive Trust**

The archive service values partnerships it has formed with other organisations in the development of its work. One particularly successful relationship has been LMA’s partnership with The Pensions Archive Trust (PAT). PAT was founded in 2005 to promote the study of the history of occupational and personal pension provision in the United Kingdom. One key objective has been to collect records relating to pensions in order to provide a current and future resource for researchers. In 2006 PAT entered into discussions with the City and it was agreed that LMA would assist by providing storage for collections deposited on long-term loan by PAT and by developing education initiatives. The partnership was launched in 2008 at the Guildhall Art Gallery. PAT funds a full-time archivist based at LMA who works on acquiring and cataloguing collections. The direction of the relationship is assisted by a Joint Liaison Committee. The monthly Committee meetings give an opportunity for PAT’s Trustees and members to receive a report on cataloguing progress, and discuss arrangements for events and other relevant issues with LMA staff.
PAT’s involvement has helped the service promote existing records relating to pensions within archives of businesses and other organisations. For example, education events with young people at LMA have used workhouse records to show the importance of the development of state pensions in the twentieth century. Work with PAT has emphasised how pension schemes are managed by Trusts which are often separately run from the business or businesses they relate to. For this reason pension scheme records may not always join an organisation’s main archive. In addition, PAT’s members have brought their knowledge and contacts from working in the pension sector to promote the initiative and wider archive agenda. For example, the Chairman of PAT has helped raise the national profile of pension archives by speaking in November 2008 at the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Archives held at the House of Lords to mark the centenary of the 1908 Pensions Act.

In turn, the archives service has provided facilities and professional expertise in the acquisition and cataloguing of the archives. Teaching staff at LMA have also helped develop events relating to the history of pension provision in the City’s education programme. As a direct result of the partnership, substantial collections have been deposited for research. These include records of key organisations such as the National Association of Pension Funds, and businesses including LSF (Lloyds Superannuation Fund) Pensions Management Limited. Deposited in December 2008, the latter’s archive complements the existing Lloyd’s of London collections already held at Guildhall Library. There has been a beneficial learning curve for both partners. Staff have gained a fuller appreciation of pensions records, and PAT has acquired knowledge of best practice from professionals. The service is dependent on partnerships like that with PAT to continue to develop archive work in new ways.

Case Study Four – ‘Venture Abroad’
The business archives held by the City have a global reach. The international scope of the collections reflects the world-wide activities of the City-based companies. Transactions and information about far away countries were documented by company agents who were instructed to send reports back to their London Headquarters. At Guildhall Library it has long been recognised that the collections are of relevance to researchers across the world and there has been an ongoing drive to promote the business collections to an international readership.

A highlight in the Sun Insurance Office archives is a series of foreign
agency memoranda books. Consisting of 309 volumes dating from 1830 until 1970s, these volumes were compiled by the staff of the company’s Foreign Department in London.21 The books contain reports from agents abroad on the potential of providing fire insurance in countries across the world. They act as ‘diaries’ and scrapbooks of the agents, containing their personal experiences, printed leaflets, newspaper cuttings and photographs depicting the places the agents visited. They are a good source on vernacular construction because detailed information can be gleaned on the condition, structure and type of buildings, and on the growth of settlements. For example, the volume for Napier, New Zealand22 contains photographs taken in 1877, only twenty years after the City was colonised, and shows views of new main streets with shops and other businesses. Napier was levelled by an earthquake in 1931. Therefore none of the buildings depicted survive today.

To celebrate this series and other collections an exhibition titled ‘Venture Abroad: Images from Guildhall Library’s Business Collections c1868-1929’ was mounted at Guildhall Library in 2006. Launched by an evening event, the display showcased for the first time early photographs from around the world, taken from the archives of the Bank of British West Africa, the Borneo Company, Guardian Assurance, Harrisons and Crosfield, Steel Brothers and the Sun Insurance Office. The images took the visitor from Accra to Zanzibar and from Damascus to Sarawak, and included street scenes in Shanghai and Puerto Rico, the Grand Bazaar in Constantinople and elephants in Burma. The business activities portrayed ranged from gold mining and rubber tapping to coconut harvesting and teak extraction. The exhibition was accompanied by a published catalogue.23 This exhibition demonstrates the display value of business collections and the way in which they can be used to deliver an archive service’s message to their audience.

Flyer advertising 'Venture Abroad' exhibition at Guildhall Library in 2006.
Conclusion and future

This article has outlined an example of a publicly-funded local authority’s role in working with business archives. The four case studies have shown examples of how the City of London Corporation’s archive service has promoted and exploited its business holdings through acquisitions, education events, partnerships and volunteers, and an exhibition.

The first showed how the service’s relationship with Bogle-L’Ouverture Publications Limited, Black publishers, developed and led to the City’s first deposit from the Black Caribbean community. It emphasises the importance of the careful nurture of trust in negotiations with potential depositors in acquisitions work. It also highlights how a significant business collection together with subsequent related conferences and other events can broaden the diversity of a repository’s audiences and community archive collections. The second showed how simple themes presented by business collections can be used beyond the bounds of academic research to inspire varied education events for all age groups. The third outlined how City has been given a real helping hand from volunteers indexing the Sun Insurance Office policy registers. It emphasised how the ‘A Place in the Sun’ project has been sustained well after initial funding ran out and how the results have led to increased use of a large series. The City’s partnership with The Pensions Archive Trust has raised the profile of pension archives and assisted collections development. It has also been shown how this partnership has been strengthened by a two-way learning process. The fourth emphasised how the City has promoted the international relevance of the capital’s business archives by displaying photographs taken by company agents in an exhibition.

As business archive repositories in the private sector are increasingly subject to policy objectives relating to Corporate Social Responsibility, or managed by Charitable Trusts, they have to be more inclusive and outward facing to their audiences. Similar strategies to those outlined could therefore be adopted by practitioners for developing collections held elsewhere, regardless of whether they are held publicly or privately.

The City faces two key challenges in the coming years. The first concerns future directions of work in response to the current economic downturn. The impact of the ‘Credit Crunch’ has already seen the increased demise of firms and the threat of redundancies to staff managing established corporate archives. The service is keeping a watchful eye on the local and business press, on developments in the business world and on risks to companies. It has already been proactively contacting key
businesses threatened with closures. The pace of these scenarios will increase and the City, like other public sector archives, will need to be prepared to meet them. The service has experience in responding swiftly and appraising often bulky business archives at speed to allow for their acquisition. However, the service will also need to expand its strong room capacity in order accommodate large archives. The City has been supporting the National Strategy for Business Records due to be launched this year. It is hoped that the Strategy’s encouragement of increased dialogue between businesses and suitable archive repositories will help prepare both parties for exit strategies for collections at risk, as well as help in the exchange of expertise.

The second challenge is to increase the usage of relatively under-used, and often complex and bulky, business collections by academic researchers. The City already participates in the Business Archives Council’s annual ‘Meet the Archivists’ event which is aimed at encouraging academic students to learn more about the collections available. This gives an excellent opportunity for archives to promote their collections, explain how their services work and learn about current research trends. It is the City’s desire to see even greater use of the collections by the academic sector, and to develop closer relationships with universities in this work not only in United Kingdom but also further afield. Building on a suite of online catalogues and guides to business holdings, a concentrated programme of publicity is planned and will be targeted at universities, research associations and other interest groups. The securing of funding is fundamental in supporting future cataloguing and the full exploitation of the business archives. A panel session, ‘Joined Up Thinking in Business History Research: Cooperation Between Archivists and Historians in the Pursuit of Funding’ at the Association for Business Historians (ABH)’s annual conference in July 2008, highlighted the potential funding opportunities which archives could benefit from following closer dialogue with the academic sector. This will be explored further by the service in the coming years.

There are other bodies of users who could find great riches in business archives, if only they knew what was there. Local government archivists have not traditionally pointed family historians in the direction of large business collections but that is changing. Such an important group of users deserves to have all relevant sources brought to their attention, as do local historians and people researching particular trades and manufactures as a leisure interest. The City archive service has given talks and published
articles focusing on the relevance of business archives to leisure historians and has used its electronic newsletter to highlight the cataloguing of business records, aiming at both the traditional academic user and at the leisure user, with particular series recommended for different research purposes.

The City welcomes involvement in new initiatives such as Museum Libraries and Archives Council (MLA)’s Knowledge Transfer Programme. This began in June 2007 to look at the ways in which museums, libraries and archives can contribute to business innovation. The programme aims to establish what kinds of relationships already exist between the sector and business, and how they could be developed and improved. It is intended that participation in this programme will help the archives service develop its relevance to the wider business community, by becoming a knowledge base that can be tapped by businesses to help them develop in a more innovative ways.26

Alongside these new initiatives, the City’s archive service will continue to ensure that business archives are embedded into its wider brief of collecting and providing access to archives documenting the history of London and its people.

Notes
1 This article is based on a paper given by the author at the Business Archives Council’s Conference ‘Beyond the Ordinary: Strategies for Sustainable Business Archives’ held on 12 November 2008.
2 The archives of the City of London Corporation itself (formerly managed by Corporation of London Records Office) are currently held at LMA and will be transferred to Guildhall Library by 2010. This will necessitate the relocation of certain collections currently held by the Manuscript Section to LMA.
3 This position is currently held by the author.
4 The earliest business record held by Guildhall Library consists of two pages from an account book of an unidentified draper concerning cloth deliveries to customers, 1497-8, Guildhall Library Ms 23734.
5 The Manuscripts Section’s Business archives guide to the collections is available online and is updated regularly, see http://www.history.ac.uk/gh/22i.htm. Detailed descriptions are currently available on the Guildhall Library Catalogue, http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/librarycatalogue.
6 Thames Water Predecessors archives alone are over 3.2 linear kilometres in extent.
8 ‘Brewery History’ and ‘Business History Resources’ guides to collections held by the Printed Books Section are available online, see http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/guildhalllibrary .
9 Current resources for businesses available at the City Business Library will move to Guildhall Library by 2010.
Donated in December 2008 by DSG International plc, this collection is accessible by prior appointment at LMA, accession references B08/199-202.


The archives are available for consultation. For Bogle-L’Ouverture Publications Limited and related publishing organisations, see LMA/4462. For Huntley, Eric and Jessica, see LMA/4463.

This collection is currently accessible by prior appointment at LMA, accession reference B07/079.

This collection is currently accessible by prior appointment at LMA, accession reference: B08/211.

Collection reference: ACC/3527 and further collections.

Collection reference: LMA/4454.

The completed index can be searched online for the policies issued between 1800 and 1838 (GL Ms 11936/418-560) on the web page, http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a.

See for example, Richard Howell, ‘A merchant’s tale’, *Family Tree Magazine* (March 2009), pp. 42-44. This article investigates Howell’s slop selling family in Wapping.

For full details of PAT’s work and list of collections see their website http://www.pensionsarchive.org.uk.

GL Ms 31522/1-309.

GL Ms 31522/187.

This can be purchased from Guildhall Library Bookshop.

See note 11.

For further details on The National Strategy for Business Archives see http://www.businessarchivescouncil.org.uk/.

For further details on the Knowledge Transfer Programme see http://mla.sparknow.net.
The question of leadership is one of the most pressing for the world of record-keeping today, and just what is the difference between leadership and management is one that concerns most of us. Looking back at the origins of our work organisations might suggest that leadership counted most in the early days, when powerful people and money sources had to be convinced, while management became more significant once the new systems had been established. Today we are facing new challenges, undergoing new controls, and the demands made on us to show striking outcomes may mean that once again leadership is the main question. Here is a book that may point out some pathways.

Leading and managing archives and records programs is a composite volume, with chapters by thirteen prominent practitioners, as well as three chapters provided by the editor. All are established figures in the archives and records management (ARM) world; all but two are from the USA, and although the publisher is the British-based CILIP (through its subsidiary), the general atmosphere and assumptions made in the writing are strongly American. This is not necessarily a drawback for European readers in this globalised world, but we do have to make some mental adjustments.

The contributors come from four different sectors. The only contributor to be wholly based in a private business is Philip Mooney, at the Coca Cola company; but he is concerned mainly with business archives, and in his chapter the main emphasis is ‘selling history’ to senior executives. Certainly this is an important, and perhaps growing, sector among business ARM enterprises. Mooney’s advice on placing the archives within the firm, outreach and marketing, and evaluating the contribution it makes to the firm’s image and activities, is freshly and succinctly given, even if there is little in it that is not available elsewhere. This chapter will be useful also to professionals concerned with records management. The emphasis on leadership is applicable in this field too.

Tanya Marshall and Gregory Sanford work in the Vermont State Archives, and they therefore represent the most traditional career stream in archives work, the public service. Vermont is a particularly interesting case, as the development of its archives service has been of constitutional interest. Their concern in this chapter is with changes impressed on the service by modern conditions: the integration of records and archives management, and the notion of evidentiary values and accountability. This important aspect of public service ARM work stands in useful contrast with the way these services have developed in the private sector. In addition, Christine Ward writes on the educational work of the New York State Archives.

In the private sector, the main alternative to archives services based within the firm is provided by those run by independent agencies. Several of the American contributors work or have worked for prestigious collecting bodies. They thus had the advantage that they are not dependent on the patronage of individuals in the upper echelons of current management, and do not find it necessary to put continuing effort into persuading senior personnel, or fitting the archives into the corporate structure. James Fogerty is head of documentary programmes at the Minnesota Historical Society which, with the Hagley Museum and Library, Delaware, is the most prominent collector of business records in the USA. Mark Greene directs the American Heritage Center at the University of Wyoming. Edie Hedlin
was director of the Smithsonian Institution archives. Leon Stout is based in the Family Collections Library at Penn State University. The contributions of these colleagues build up to a comprehensive and convincing account of a body of practice. The account contains analyses of failed programmes as well as the requirements visualised for successful projects; it is certainly a valuable experience to read these. Edie Hedlin, in particular, confides to the reader what she sees as her failures, in a manner that could be specially useful to younger colleagues. The experience of failure, or partial failure, is generally the most important means of learning for aspiring professionals, but it is not often possible to find descriptions of it in the public domain.

Other contributors have acquired their experience as independent consultants. Eugenia Brumm is a director at the Huron Consulting Group. Diane Carlyle has advised on ARMA and ISO standards. The remaining contributors hold academic positions. The editor himself, Bruce Dearstyne, is a professor at the University of Maryland. Carol Choksy lectures at Indiana University. Their contributions to the topic are logical, concise and, it is interesting to note, consistent with the experience of colleagues embedded within corporate structures.

The two British contributors are Peter Emmerson, who provides an account of his operation at Barclays Bank, and Kelvin Smith, who gives an analysis (substantially available elsewhere) of the ‘Seamless Flow’ project at The National Archives. Emmerson’s contribution is, in the light of recent events, strikingly important. As it happens, he was appointed to initiate a records management system at Barclays in 1987, the year in which the banks were deregulated in the UK, and, as we know now, Barclays turned decisively away from retail banking and towards investment banking. They then appointed a tax avoidance expert at a salary (reportedly £40 million per annum) that outdistanced by a staggering proportion the emoluments of anyone else below the boardroom – a disproportion that still challenges the imagination (The Guardian, 6 February 2009). Most of the contributors to this book, and certainly Emmerson, emphasise the importance of getting to know the interests and responsibilities of the leading personalities in the firm. He succeeded over twelve years in setting up a records management system that was probably the largest in the UK if not in Europe, and that, despite setbacks and difficulties, rendered significant measurable benefits to the company. But as we can now see, he failed to penetrate the hidden upper levels of the business, and this proved a significant flaw. This meant that all his achievements came to be disregarded – not even acknowledged - when new personnel at top level decided to adopt a ‘new’ RM system based on an American model and managed by new people at enormously enlarged salaries. This little moral tale has great significance for all of us when we consider the question of leadership in the ARM sector. If we cannot penetrate the secretive inner circles at the top, we may be wasting our time. To put it another way, if we believe in and support the published aims and programmes of the ‘honest’ business, we exclude ourselves from the Mafia-like ‘real’ business that the firm has become. Who, working in the private sector, can honestly say that they have penetrated through this invisible screen? If they have not, then the content not only of the RM project but also that of the archives is meaningless.

What have we to learn from this compilation? Will it be useful to intending or existing leaders and managers in the ARM business? There are some interesting features. All contributors, whatever their background, agree that ARM professionals must ‘be players in the game’, ‘work with ... the goals of the organisation’, be aware of the personalities and interests of the leaders above them. They agree that successful programmes demand leadership rather than merely management, and that leadership can be needed and can be effective at intermediate and lower levels as well as at the top. The downside of this is that a
programme can fail on the departure of a leader; indeed Emmerson concludes his chapter with the remark that 'most large records programs in the UK corporate sector have ended in relative failure...This is particularly true when outcomes are neither tangible nor visible'.

Bruce Dearstyn concludes the book with a useful summary of the leadership qualities required and a compendium of sources for further information and study. His summary will be helpful to those who see the need to inject ideas and orientations towards leadership within management programmes. However from the viewpoint of the present day – 2009, after the collapse of the financial bubbles of the previous decade, some adjustments must be made. One of his principles, ‘people can do anything not explicitly prohibited’ now looks distinctly dodgy. Perhaps we should recognise that ARM work succeeds best in a public service context (remembering that most commercial enterprises, when not distorted by adventurism and greed at the top) fall within this description. If we do indeed recognise this limitation, there are consequences in the nature of the mission statements, aims and outcomes of our programmes.

MICHAEL COOK  
Centre for Archive Studies, University of Liverpool


This book review was written collaboratively on a Wiki site and through email discussions by the records management group of the Continued Communication research project. The project is analyzing how to maximise the potential business benefits of information created within computer mediated communications, taking into account the impact of the individual. The views represented within this review cannot be taken to be representative of any one individual within the group as the comments were evolved over time and in the case of the Wiki entered anonymously. The records management members of the group are: Rachel Binnington, Teresa Blackmore, Leanne Bridges, Chris Campbell, Emma Davies, Sarah Demb, Paul Dodgson, Susan Em, Rachel Hardiman, Emma Jarvie/Johnson, James Lappin, Elizabeth Lomas, Samantha Mansfield, Christopher Marsden, Suzie Mereweather, Cicely Poulton, Laura Robertson, Martin Sanderson, Jon Shepherd, Jeanette Wordsworth, Lynn Young, Jane Zibarras and seven additional anonymised participants. This text has been edited by Sarah Demb and Elizabeth Lomas.

Steve Bailey is the senior adviser on records management issues for JISC infoNet, an advisory service for managers within the HE and FE sectors. As many Web 2.0 technologies were developed from within academic communities, and their take-up across this sector has been high, he is well placed to pen a book on how records management principles align to Web 2.0 technologies. However, though a former employee of the pharmaceutical company Pfizer, Steve Bailey has written for a much wider audience and this book is of relevance to records and information managers across all sectors, including the business community.

This is an important text, as it is the first records management publication focusing on the Web 2.0 world. It is written in the style of a lengthy opinion piece rather than a definitive academic tome. It is also light on references compared to other popular texts in this field such as Andrew Keen’s The cult of the amateur and Don Tapscott and Anthony Williams’
Wikinomics: how mass collaboration changes everything. However it is an easy, quick, enjoyable and thought provoking read (it was reported from within the group that it took on average three hours to read the volume.) Its style and content has also produced a text that is already being used outside of the normal records management sphere and this is to its great credit.

The book is a cogent response to the widening gulf between traditional records management principles/processes and the issues surrounding Web 2.0, and other electronic records or digital environments. It is a proactive and thought-provoking work meant to challenge assumptions and raise questions rather than provide definitive solutions. Bailey is deliberately provocative, setting the scene by imagining ‘a records management future where the user community collectively describes the value and properties of a record using the wisdom of the crowd; where records retention, description and purpose are determined by their users, within general boundaries defined by the records managers’. The text poses many challenging questions. These are questions that have been raised by communities addressing the first phases of managing information on the World Wide Web and electronic records more generally, but which Bailey reinforces and develops in the Web 2.0 context.

The book is split into three parts. In part one Bailey defines the nature of the changes in IT, digital records and Web 2.0, posits an ‘Office 2.0’ environment to underline his concerns, and asks if records management is fit for purpose. The latter question is addressed in part two, in which Bailey also addresses our definitions of records, the role of centralised control of records, appraisal and retention and Web 2.0 issues. Finally, in part three, he reviews the defining principles of current records management and posits the 10 principles of ‘records management 2.0’. The latter includes the following requirements: scalability, comprehensiveness, hardware/software/location independence, extensibility, universal applicability, flexibility, benefits-led experience, marketability, willingness to embrace change, and being driven by records management community and practitioners.

Bailey argues that Web 2.0 content no longer represents just the tools, but also the filing cabinet, ‘the combined outputs from our domestic and work life’. This allusion struck a chord with the group about the decreasing distance between ‘work’ and ‘personal’ records. It was noted by those in the archive and heritage sectors that professionals often mixed both types of information in one document, thus providing a richer archival record for researchers a century later. In the contemporary context this can present a legal mine field, but to the historian it is a gold mine.

Bailey also addresses the tension between the idea that FoI negates the concept of ‘records’ as it applies to all information, and the S46 Code of Practice that recognises the utility of traditional records management processes and tools such as retention schedules.

The review group was intrigued by Bailey’s statement that ‘in the pre-Office 2.0 world, the act of content creation has been distinct from the act of storage’. It can be argued that in the pre-Windows environment, the application and content were stored on separate floppy disks - leaving us with a different, although not necessarily more difficult, set of access, retrieval, storage and preservation issues. Whilst Bailey is justifiably concerned that we may not have the tools to keep a Web 2.0 world, he doesn’t overtly state that we aren’t even keeping the Web 1.0 world - many organisations are only just starting to think about addressing Web 1.0.

Bailey reviews and rejects a variety of traditional approaches as the means to address appraisal of Web 2.0 information and then suggests using Web 2.0 to automate and increase user capacity to deal with its consequences - the role of the user is to take advantage of perceived increased interest in managing, for example, ‘tagging’ information in that
environment. This is a radical concept that goes beyond the often pro-forma consultation with users that records managers are used to and which bears serious consideration as we start to address managing Web 2.0 in active and archival contexts. By most commentators, although not all within the review group, it was felt to be totally unworkable. One commentator took the view that ‘any kind of taxonomy or classification that requires human intervention is doomed’.

There was some disappointment that Bailey’s book fails to provide answers. Bailey’s short history of the ‘r/evolutions’ in IT and technology are useful, although some short technical explanations pertaining directly to the preservation concerns of records management might have clarified some of the issues raised. It would have been helpful to have seen a small outline of the technical specifications for a sample Web 2.0 application to better understand how the information is kept, for example CSS, HTML, databases and so on. For archivists, there is limited information on preservation issues, as this was clearly too large a subject for Bailey to sensibly cover within the scope of this work. From within the review group those fully engaged with Web 2.0 technologies in the workplace would have liked to see a more detailed analysis of how businesses preserve provenance and manage access and usage when deploying these technologies. It was recognised that the potential and risks were both huge and that test environments for the technologies were critical. One person commented that the key was not flooding the world with information which was poorly designed and more difficult to extract than was currently the case.

Those looking for definitive answers to the questions posed will be disappointed, as there is more work to be done. However there was generally group agreement that Bailey’s book asked the right questions and that there was a critical need for RM to shift its perspectives from twentieth-century paper-based systems to address the exponential creation of electronically-born information. This is a timely text and Steve Bailey has done the records management community a great service in putting together this publication. It is recommended reading for records managers and the wider information sector. Now records management research and practitioner communities must continue to work together to address the challenges posed and to present answers.


In November 2008 a number of archivists met at the University of Manchester to discuss the possibilities of forming a group to represent the interests of institutional university archives in Britain and Ireland. James Peters, the archivist of the John Rylands Library, University of Manchester, who convened the meeting, used his introductory paper partly to contrast the situation of university archives here and in the United States. Unlike this country, university archivists in America have for years been organised in their own section within the Society of American Archivists (SAA). Nicholas Burckel emphasises the influence of university archivists within the SAA in the opening chapter of College and University Archives, a volume of thirteen essays produced by the Colleges and University Section of the SAA. By 1990, university archivists outnumbered every other category of American archivist. A glance at the SAA website reveals that the University Section has its own web page,
discussion list, Council and even bye-laws. Clearly, university archivists here have some
catching up to do.

So, how useful are the contents of *College and University Archives* for archivists in the
higher education sector? Chapter six, *Assessing the Value of Faculty Papers and Defining a
Collecting Policy*, by Tom Hyry, Diane Kaplan and Christine Weideman, addresses an issue
which has faced most university archivists, namely how to make appraisal decisions about
the papers of academics. The chapter, which was originally published in the *American
Archivist* in 2002, is based on a study of appraisal techniques at Yale University Library
archives. In 1997, Yale University Library archives had no appraisal guidelines in place. The
authors designed a collecting strategy based on the Minnesota Method developed by Mark
Green, Todd Daniels-Howell and others at the Minnesota History Society. The Minnesota
Method includes surveying existing holdings together with some functional analysis and
consultation with research communities.

The resulting appraisal process at Yale involved functional analyses of faculties and the
development of a hierarchy of academic significance. Hyry and his colleagues talked to
heads of department and academic peers to determine the quality of an individual’s research.
They were pro-active, contacting current researchers rather than waiting to be approached.
The Yale archivists would target the papers of academics whose work was judged to have
made the most impact on the wider world. The number of protégés inspired by the academic
was also taken into account. The problem with this approach to appraisal, however, is that it
perpetuates transitory academic hierarchies and promotes fashionable research trends at the
expense of the work of more maverick figures. It is also extremely labour intensive.
Nevertheless, Hyry and his co-authors have done their colleagues in the profession a favour
with a stimulating discussion of a thorny issue. The chapter also contains some sensible
advice on weeding out secondary sources and concentrating on collecting raw data, oral
interviews, and field notes.

Some passages in this collection of essays appear calculated to provoke. Christopher
Prom examines the speed of processing in the context of large backlogs of uncatalogued
archives and concludes that many university archivists are fussily insisting on unnecessary
levels of description. He makes a legitimate point about prioritising the compilation of
summary descriptions (as opposed to detailed catalogues) but Freedom of Information
legislation has already forced archivists in the UK to re-evaluate these priorities. Many ill-
resourced university archivists will be unconvinced by Prom’s suggestion of a
comprehensive audit of work patterns within a repository. The managers of properly
supervised university archives should have a pretty good idea of how their colleagues are
spending their time – workflow analyses are unlikely to be seen by them as anything other
than an unwelcome, jargon-ridden distraction.

Detailed cataloguing and indexing are vital in making archives more accessible to
researchers. Furthermore, many archivists on short-term contracts are funded specifically to
provide this. Encoded Archival Description, blamed by Prom for encouraging inefficient
cataloguing, is an invaluable tool for disseminating finding aids to a wider on-line audience.
Prom asks uncomfortable and therefore useful questions about backlogs. He also writes well.
As a result, his chapter, which could have been very heavy going, isn’t hard to read – no
mean feat, given the topic. But workflow analyses aside, his other proposals are unlikely to
meet with unanimous approval. Is it really realistic to attempt to complete ‘necessary’
descriptions during the appraisal and accessioning processes, for example? Yes, it’s
reasonable to expect collection-level descriptions to be compiled at that point, but box-
listing? Surely not. It all depends on the definition of ‘necessary’, of course.
Some transatlantic differences emerge. Kenneth Crews’ chapter on copyright is comprehensive but, sadly, mostly irrelevant to a British audience, although he does emphasise the advantages of acquiring the copyright of deposited papers. Ellen Swain describes in detail an oral history project, undertaken full-time by an archivist supported by two graduate students, which involved interviews with 44 alumni in 6 states. The result undoubtedly adds a great deal to the archives of the University of Illinois. It is difficult to imagine a proposal to provide oral resources for an institutional university archive being funded on such a scale in this country, however – more’s the pity. Likewise, Kathryn Neal writes about how university archives should represent the diversity of a student community and that, presently, archival collections often mirror dominant hierarchies. She is quite right. But many university archives this side of the Atlantic are shamefully under-funded: an archivist who is hard-pressed to keep a basic service going will struggle to find the time for a sufficiently pro-active approach. There is no discussion in this chapter about restricted shelf space: every university archive I have worked at in this country has been desperately short of storage for new accessions. There is some hope, however. Neal’s list of potential accessions to reflect diversity includes many items which should be covered by a comprehensive records management system.

Other chapters cover subjects such as the Open Archives Initiative, electronic records, the archivist’s role in improving research outcomes, privacy issues (from an American perspective), and Encoded Archival Description. Robert Spindler valiantly makes the case for archivists to be involved in the electronic publishing and preservation of academic journals. I wasn’t convinced though. Elsewhere in the volume, Tamar Chute discusses outreach and makes the point about the importance of promoting archives within as well as outside a university, not least by linking archives to syllabi. (The website of the Modern Records Centre at the University of Warwick shows how a repository can forge useful links with lecturers). By ensuring that they are indispensable within an institution, archivists are making their services less vulnerable to cuts. In a similar vein, Nancy Kunde’s chapter contains sage remarks about the importance of locating records management personnel within a powerful university department and ensuring that records managers are heavily involved in electronic data creation as well as management. There are plenty of philistines within university administrations waiting to pounce, alas. This book provides useful advice on how to keep them at bay.

RICHARD TEMPLE

Senate House Library


This third edition of Keeping Archives shares with its predecessors the aim, boldly declared in its preface, of ‘trying to simultaneously serve as a practical manual for the novice archivist, a textbook for students and a refresher for the experienced archivist’. I applauded this ambition when I reviewed Anne Pederson’s ground-breaking first edition of Keeping Archives on the pages of this same journal over twenty years ago and I applaud it now. For what this guiding principle delivers, once again, is a pragmatic handbook of particular value
to business archivists. Such archivists may well have archival training and generous resources, but may equally be toiling to preserve a company’s documentary heritage more modestly with very little knowledge, experience or budget. Throughout the book looks at affordable as well as ideal solutions; it examines the practical alongside the theoretical.

Published by the Australian Society of Archivists, *Keeping Archives* is divided into four sections – Getting Started, Managing the Archives, Promoting the Archives and Managing More than Paper. Each section, overseen by a separate editor, is divided into a handful of chapters written by eighteen eminent Australian archivists, records managers and conservators with a wealth of experience in a variety of archives – including national, state, business, university, school, religious and specialist repositories. Each chapter, introduced by a useful abstract, is itself broken up by the use of sub-headings, bullets and boxes, making the book easy both to browse and, with the help of its very adequate index, to use as a work of reference.

This kind of broad overview of archival principles and practice by a range of contributors is incredibly difficult to structure and write in a way which both covers the ground and follows a clear and logical sequence. *Keeping Archives* has managed this challenge well and the chapters are broadly complementary and harmonious in tone and style. Inevitably there is some repetition, as between the chapters on buildings and storage and preservation, but such duplication has been kept to the minimum required to allow each chapter also to stand alone.

Of course, much has changed in the years since the previous and second edition of *Keeping Archives* was published in 1993. The records continuum model has eclipsed that of the records life cycle, a mass of professional literature has been written and email, electronic recordkeeping and the World Wide Web have transformed the way we keep, use and promote archives. As a result there is plenty of new ground to cover and the third edition of *Keeping Archives* builds cleverly on the content of the two editions that preceded it.

The first and second sections in the book contain the core information for novice archivists and sweep through the key areas of archive management for the more experienced practitioner. The chapters here cover buildings and storage, preservation, appraisal, acquisition, accessioning, arrangement and description, documentation and using computers. The substantial chapter on appraisal runs to some seventy pages taking in approaches ranging from Jenkinson and Schellenberg to macro-functional appraisal, and documentation strategies such as the Minnesota Method and the University of Melbourne’s own Minnesota Lite. It also poignantly highlights the importance of appraisal in shaping the collective memory through examining the need to revisit archival appraisal in post-Apartheid South Africa.

The book’s third section is probably the least useful in a corporate context. Entitled Promoting the Archives, it ranges across access and reference services, finding aids, digitisation and imaging, and advocacy and outreach, but is directed towards archives with a public focus rather than a primarily inward facing in-house archive. Even so there are some useful ideas and information to be gleaned. ‘It’s not just a case of “build it and they will come”’, notes the introduction, ‘you have to let people know what wonders you have in your custody’.

The fourth and final section deals with digital material and other types of non-paper record formats often held in business archives, such as maps and plans, photographs, objects, sound recordings and moving film. The inclusion of objects is explicit recognition that ‘many small archives in particular act as the de facto museum for their parent institution’ and that ‘it can be challenging to apply archival principles … to these “other”
records’. The chapter on digital recordkeeping provides a short but useful introduction to DIRKS (Designing and Implementing Records Keeping Systems) methodology, metadata, the OAIS (Open Archival Information System) framework for digital archiving and other issues relating to the preservation of digital records. It also clarifies the stages of designing and implementing a recordkeeping system through the fictional case study of an independent school archivist keen to overhaul recordkeeping generally in order to ensure that key electronic records flow into the archive.

The book is readable, using accessible language to describe complex models like the records continuum and OAIS simply and clearly, as well as touching on the latest professional debates and theories. It is also well designed with good use of colour to highlight and give clarity to case studies, diagrams and tables. The occasional cartoon even adds a touch of humour.

Tucked into the back cover Keeping Archives also offers a CD-ROM containing a range of sample forms, policies and procedures along with useful tips and checklists, many of which are in formats that can be edited and adapted. These include such material as accession forms, archive and acquisition policies, tips for oral history interviewers and exhibition planners and a list of further reading. It is a useful and practical add on.

Certainly Keeping Archives is based on Australian experience, case studies and law, but in recent years the archival profession has become a global family sharing principles, standards, models and literature more than ever before. Australia has provided records professionals with ground-breaking archival models and approaches and there is a lot to be learned from this book.

The new National Strategy for Business Archives (England and Wales) seeks to increase the number of corporate sector archives, and books such as this provide invaluable and up-to-date one-stop-shop guidance which can help to widen and deepen awareness of archival principles and practice. I have always had Keeping Archives close to hand as a book of reference. I will be pleased to give shelf space to this new volume.

ALISON TURTON
Select Bibliography of New Publications
Jan-Dec 2008

Compiled and edited by Emma Stagg

The Classification Scheme

A General Works and Bibliographies

B Archival Functions
Access
Appraisal and acquisition
Arrangement and description
Preservation and security
Public relations and outreach
Uses of archives

C Record Formats
Audio-visual material
Electronic records
Micrographics and optical storage
Paper-based textual records
Sound recordings
Visual material

D Types of Repositories
Business archives
Government archives
Specialist repositories

E Administrative Concerns
Buildings and equipment
Disaster control
Ethics
Information technology
Laws and legal issues
Management issues

F Archival Profession
Current condition and issues
Education and professional development
Historical development
Professional organisations
G Related Professions
Conservators
Librarians
Museums
Records Managers
Researchers

H Descriptions of Holdings
UK
International

I Records Management
General
Electronic records management
Retention scheduling

J Information Management

1 Overseas publications unavailable last year are included in this year’s bibliography.
2 Adapted from the bibliographic classification scheme published in American Archivist.

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