



Business Archive Council
Cataloguing Grant
2018

FINAL REPORT

April 30th, 2019

Introduction

In July 2017, the Clevedon Pier and Heritage Trust (CPHT) began a project to create a community archive. The project started from scratch and is run entirely by volunteers. It is led by a volunteer project manager who is a member of the ARA and has undertaken paraprofessional archive training. A start up grant of £5,000 was obtained and a room was allocated in the Trust's HQ to be the designated home for the archive project.

During the sorting and inventorying process a collection of material began to emerge which we called the Business Collection. It included the business records of two community groups – the Pier Supporters Club (PSC) and the Pier Preservation Trust (PPT) - who worked to save and restore the pier after the catastrophic failure of one of the spans in 1970 caused its closure and threatened its very future. By the late 1980s the repair and restoration work had been completed and the business records of running the pier from 1989 onwards - including the absorption in 1998 of a local heritage museum – were also found. The archive project was fortunate to also be offered the opportunity to digitise a private collection of 19th century business papers related to the Clevedon Pier Company (CPC). The CPC was formed to raise money to build a pier for Clevedon and to run it as a business, which it did until it was handed over to public administration at the end of the 19th century. The public administration records are held, primarily, in the Somerset Records Office. Other earlier records are held by The National Archives.

It began to emerge that the CPHT was in the fortunate position of holding, or having access to, an almost complete business archive dealing with the original building of, subsequent restoration of and final running of Clevedon Pier - the only Grade 1 listed pier still in daily operation in the UK and a well-loved heritage site.

The archive project manager submitted an application for the BAC Cataloguing Grant 2018 and the CPHT were delighted to be awarded the grant. The aim was to use the grant to pay for professional cataloguing advice, for a project worker to work alongside the volunteer project manager to sort the collection, create a catalogue and begin to catalogue the collection and for training the archive volunteer team in order to continue the work once the project was completed. With hindsight, this was a big aim for a small, volunteer-run archive but the £4,000 BAC grant made a huge impact and the project has achieved more than was originally hoped for.



The starting point of the archive.
Lots of boxes to sort through.



Setting up the Project

The grant was awarded at the end of September 2018 and the volunteer project manager began the setting up the project, work with the volunteer team, seek to appoint a professional advisor and a project worker and begin to investigate cataloguing solutions. The Trust's chairman acted as project sponsor and advisor.

In October 2018, work began to appoint a professional advisor and project worker and ultimately the TNA's South West Development Officer was approached to provide guidance. The archive had recently had a new volunteer team member – an MA graduate from the University of East Anglia – and they joined the project as project worker in December. A professional advisor was appointed soon after, ready to start work in January 2019. It was felt that although slightly later than hoped, the project was firmly underway.



Professional Advisor and Project Worker

In late October 2018, TNA's Archive Sector Development Team approached the Trust offering the opportunity to be an exemplar in the roll out of their Manage Your Collection cataloguing programme. The offer involved being given our own account on the MYC webpage, access to TNA-designed Excel spreadsheets for cataloguing, two days on-site training plus online support and advice after that. The first training day with the TNA team took place in December 2018 and included the project manager, the project worker and all bar two of the volunteer archive team. This proved to be a full but very enjoyable two days of work.



TNA MYC Cataloguing Training Day

That training event was written up in the ARC magazine's Community Archives Special Issue in February 2019 and the Clevedon Pier Business Archive project was presented at an Archive Sector Development training day at TNA in Kew during March 2019. It will also be included in a presentation at the Community Archive and Heritage Group's Conference in Glasgow in July 2019.





Running the Project

Three priorities for running the project emerged:

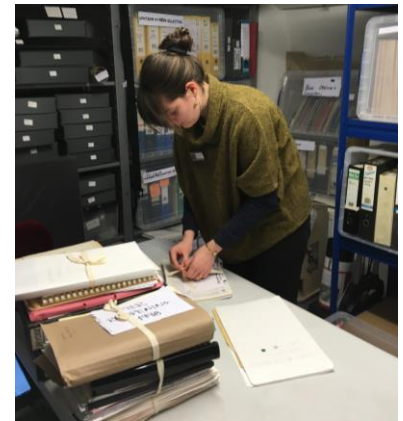
1. To sort through and order the 1970 to early 21st century collection which included a large number of the business records associated with saving the pier, the restoration of the pier and the subsequent running of the pier as a heritage visitor attraction.
2. To design a catalogue structure ready for uploading to TNA Discovery and undertake cataloguing to File level as the ultimate aim of the BAC grant funded work. Also to create a step by step guide to cataloguing using the MYC Excel spreadsheets as a training manual for use by the archive volunteer team.
3. To create a sub-project to deal with the 19th century collection of the Clevedon Pier Company which is held in private ownership to which the Trust had been given permission to digitise and catalogue.

It was decided that the project worker would lead on the first two priorities -supported by the project manager - whilst the project manager worked on Priority 3.

Delivering Priorities 1 and 2

Report of Project Worker, Rachel Coleman

Following the training session from the TNA Archive Sector Development Team, I began by creating an audit of material held in the business archive to gauge how the archive should be structured. Although there was material from the 1850s to present day, it was clear that most of the material held by the Trust dated from 1970 to 1998, from the year the pier collapsed to its reopening after restoration, and then on to the present day. It was agreed that I would focus on this part of the 1970 to 21st century collection with the aim of cataloguing the post-2000 material after the project was finished. It had already been agreed during the training with the TNA team that the high level structure of the catalogue should be:



Fonds: Clevedon Pier and Heritage Trust Archive
SubFonds: Community Archive
SubFonds: Business Archive

Rachel Coleman, Project Worker

To further develop the Business Archive structure it was decided, with the help of the professional advisor, to take a chronological approach, based on identifying the 'responsible body' at any particular period of time. The advisor referred to this as an 'archaeological' approach which meant that a similar catalogue structure could be translated into each series. Responsible bodies and six strata were identified and these would become the Business Archive Series levels described below:

Series BA/1 covers material from the first mention of plans for a pier in Clevedon (pre-1850) to 1891 when the pier was transferred to public administration. This is the material being subject to digitisation and cataloguing under Priority 3.



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Series BA/2 covers material from 1891 up to 1970, the year the pier collapsed. Much of that material is in public record offices but there is also relevant local history collections now included in the collection. However, from 1970 onwards, two local 'responsible bodies' emerged; the Clevedon Pier Supporters Club (CPSC) and the Clevedon Pier Preservation Trust (CPPT) for which there are extensive records. These two groups campaigned for the pier to be saved from demolition and for its restoration.

Series BA/3 covers their campaigns from 1970 up to 1981 when a public inquiry resulted in the pier being saved from demolition and the Clevedon Pier Trust (CPT) took the lead on rebuilding and restoring the pier and, ultimately, becoming the responsible body. The series is divided into two sub-series representing the two campaigning bodies:

- BA/3/1 The Clevedon Pier Supporters Club
- BA/3/2 The Clevedon Pier Preservation Trust

Series BA/4 is a collection of papers from 1981 to 1991 covering the first phase of the restoration project. Around 1991, there were several changes in the function of the CPT; the first phase of the restoration project was complete and work began to be referred to as the 'Pier Completion' project. These changes meant that the material from 1991 to 1998 looks quite different from 1981 to 1991 and it was decided to create a further series BA/5.

Series BA/5 is a collection of the papers from 1991 to 1998 similar to that described above but also, importantly, including material dealing with the expansion of the CPT through its absorption of the Clevedon Story Heritage Centre set up by the Victor Cox Museum Trust. As a consequence the CPT became the Clevedon Pier and Heritage Trust Ltd. – the current responsible body whose business records continue to the present day.



The material in Series BA/4 and BA/5 includes minutes of meetings, financial reports, project documentation, engineering reports, funding applications, share issues and correspondence with engineers, solicitors, accountants, local authorities, funding bodies etc. As items were sorted into files it was decided to divide each chronological series into sub-series that described the functions of the Trust as follows:

- 'Administration' covers the general running of the pier and includes statutory documents, legal documents, minutes of meetings and correspondence.
- 'Projects' covers the correspondence, plans, proposals, engineer's drawings and reports etc. related to projects carried out by the Trust (in BA/4 and BA/5, this material largely relates to the restoration project) and;
- 'Finance and Funding' covers all matters to do with financing and fund raising.

It was realised that this file structure of 'Administration', 'Projects' and 'Finance and Funding' could be applied to the earlier series in the business archive and was therefore carried through and used in cataloguing Series BA/1 – BA/3. It will also be used to catalogue Series BA/6.



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Cataloguing to file level has been achieved up to BA/5 by the end of the formal BAC Grant funded project and will continue onto BA/6 after project completion. The step by step 'how to catalogue' manual for the volunteer archive team is also nearing completion to support cataloguing to item level going forward.

Rachel Coleman, Project Worker

Delivering Priority 3: Digitisation and cataloguing of the 19th century collection

This tranche of work involved setting up a digitisation project – again entirely run and delivered by volunteers. For initial cataloguing purposes an audit was undertaken (on-site where this private collection is held) by one of the archive volunteers who is a local historian and very familiar with this private collection. That audit showed the collection comprises:

- Ledgers containing minutes of meetings, shareholder details, financial records and, in some cases, copies of letters
- Ledgers containing records of shares, share transfers and shareholders
- Bundles of share documents and transfer of share records
- Records of mortgages and mortgagees and transfer of mortgages
- Land sale documents and the statutory order for a pier to be built
- Appointment documents for the employment of pier masters
- Legal documents and solicitors correspondence
- Fragile engineering drawings for the original pier construction
- Engineering reports, specifications and certificates
- Contracts for the engineering and building works for the pier.



Volunteer Digitising Officer



Cataloguing is being undertaken in tandem with digitisation using the structure described above but, in most cases, to Item level.

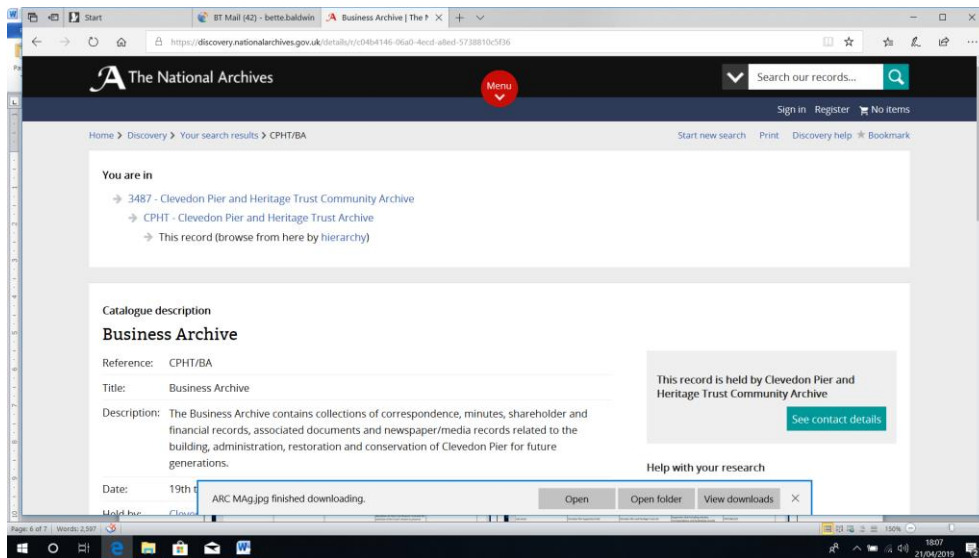
Level Of Description	Title	Name Of Creator(s)	Scope And Content	Reference Code	Count
sub-series	Private Pier Archive	Anonymous	Digitalised collection of documents from circa 1864 to 1891 held in a private pier archive. Digitisation is an ongoing project.		186
file	Administration	Anonymous	Collections of ledgers, letters, documents including minutes of meetings, correspondence etc to do with the building of Clevedon Pier.		
file	Funding and Finance	Anonymous	Collection of ledgers, letters, documents including shareholder information, mortgages and loans for the building of Clevedon Pier.		
file	Contracts and Projects	Anonymous	Collection of documentation, including contracts, specification of works, engineering drawings related to the building of Clevedon Pier.		
sub-series	Local History Collections	Various	Material and information collated and collected by local historians and donated for inclusion in the Clevedon Pier Archive.		185
file	Newspaper Cuttings	Lilly Collection	A selection of newspaper articles with relevance to the building of the Pier.		
file	Selected minutes of the Clevedon Local Health Board.	Lilly Collection	Selected minutes abstracted and transcribed by local historian from minutes of the Clevedon Local Health Board and which relate to the building of Clevedon Pier.		



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Cataloguing to Series level is now live on TNA Discovery enabling public access to our catalogue and the opportunity to contact the Trust for further information. The Clevedon Pier and Heritage Trust Business Archive can be found via this link:

<https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/c04b4146-06a0-4ecd-a8ed-5738810c5f36>



Cataloguing to file level is now complete for Series BA1 to BA5 and will, in due course, be uploaded to Discovery. This work is ongoing and two sample pages are shown below:

ID	Title	Date	Other
1981	Compendium with English Heritage regarding building project between 1981 and 1985	1981-1985	CPHT/BA/1/1
1981	Compendium with the National Heritage Commission 1981 and 1985	1981-1985	CPHT/BA/1/2
1981	Pages of English Trusts books	1981-1985	CPHT/BA/1/3
1981	Collection of documents from 1985 to 1988 of the Clevedon Pier Trust including minutes, financial statements, reports, and other papers including the Change record. Includes description of the Clevedon Pier and the building of the Trust's relation to general heritage	1985-1988	CPHT/BA/5

ID	Title	Date	Other
	building administration, restoration and conservation of Clevedon Pier for future		CPHT/BA/1
1981	Collection of documents relating to constructing, purchasing and developing the pier up to 1981	1981-1985	CPHT/BA/2
1981	Documents relating to maintaining the pier after its public administration, including a plan for the pier and its administration	1981-1985	CPHT/BA/3
1981	Collection of documents from the Clevedon Pier Trust 1981 to 1985	1981-1985	CPHT/BA/5

Refresher training on cataloguing, using the MYC spreadsheets, was given to the volunteer team in March 2019 and the project worker is preparing a simple, step-by-step guide on how to complete the MYC spreadsheets. The work started under the BAC Grant will now continue to achieve cataloguing of the entire business archive to item level.

The BAC Grant budget of £4,000 was spent as anticipated, 25% for the time of a professional advisor and 75% for the time of a project worker to undertake the sorting, catalogue design and cataloguing to file level. Input 'in kind' was given by the volunteer project manager who has worked on the project from its inception to completion.

In conclusion, reflections on being awarded the BAC Cataloguing Grant are given by Phil Curme, Trust Chairman and Project Sponsor; Rachel Coleman, Project Worker and Bette Baldwin, Project Manager.



Reflections on the project

From the Trust's Chairman and Project Sponsor

The professionalization of our archive work under the leadership of our excellent volunteer Project Manager (Dr Bette Baldwin) and our dedicated Business Archive Project Worker (Rachel Coleman) has been a real journey of discovery for me. It's fair to say that whilst I had an acute awareness of the need to preserve our unique collection of ephemera, artefacts and pictures it wasn't until last year that I came to appreciate the immense value of our historic business papers. I was not alone in seeing the benefits of this work - the team has received plaudits from many sources ranging from local people through to exemplar organisations like the National Archives.

The cataloguing of this collection has allowed even the casual enquirer to begin to appreciate the scale of effort required to build, maintain and run a 150 year old Grade 1 listed Pier. Interestingly, as the team have built credibility and generated interest then so too the collection has been consolidated. Hitherto there were key figures who felt that important papers were safest in their lofts and garages. Not any more - the Community Archive team's reputation is such that all key players see the virtue of preserving prime sources relating to the business history of the Pier to professional standards.

The fact that much of the work was incepted and undertaken using volunteers makes the achievement even more impressive. Furthermore, the Community Archive is operating in a highly commercial environment insofar as the Trust's overriding priority is to generate a cash surplus of £100k per year to maintain the Pier. To be brutally honest, I started off privately thinking about the Archive as a 'nice to have'. Now I see it as an integral part of the Trust's activities - enhancing our community engagement, enthusing volunteers and providing insight and collateral for our visitor proposition. This outcome could not have been achieved without the support of the Business Archive Council and we are very appreciative of the grant funding that they provided.

Phil Curme, Chairman, Clevedon Pier and Heritage Trust

From the Grant Project Worker

My professional and academic background is in museums rather than archives but I do have experience in cataloguing museum objects and accessing collections for research. This experience informed the way I approached my work on the project which began with creating an audit of the collection dating from 1970 to present day which revealed that many organisations were involved in saving and restoring the pier. Considering how and why the Trust was in possession of this business archive became important when working out how it should be catalogued. This line of thinking led to the concept of an archive being generated in three stages, which informed my work throughout the project.

- Stage One: The material is created. Documents are produced and record history.
- Stage Two: The material is collated. Collectors see value in material and group it together.
- Stage Three: The material is archived. The archivist orders and stores the material (used as historical evidence by researchers) and in doing so continues the legacy of the creators and collectors.

This process is close to the way many museum collections come about: collectors see value in gathering particular objects and museums showcase these collections to represent history and culture. In archiving and cataloguing the Trust's business material it is intended that the value it had to those people who initially created and stored it will transcend long into the future.



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Using chronology as a basis for structuring the business archive was important in navigating the many organisations involved in its story. Our structure allows for researchers to carry out 'archaeological digs' into the pier's history, perhaps by following the same engineers, funding bodies or local societies through time and in doing so demonstrate the administrative, financial, and practical elements of running an organisation with the responsibility to build, run and restore a pier.

The project work has been a perfect opportunity for me as a recent graduate in Cultural Heritage and Museum Studies and will be an important stepping stone in my career and has been incredibly satisfying to be involved in. What was a pile of boxes has evolved into a (nearly) fully catalogued collection that will allow people to connect with the pier's story in ways not before possible. I hope it has done justice to the creators and collectors of the business archive.

Rachel Coleman, BAC Grant Project Worker

From the Volunteer Project Manager

This has been a fascinating, challenging and satisfying project to work on and as project manager, I have learnt an enormous amount to carry forward as the team continues to build and develop the Clevedon Pier and Heritage Trust Archive. Recognising that we had a 'business archive' was an interesting starting point and this project has helped to bring our business archive to life.

The support of the BAC grant has gone a long way to help in delivering the hope that this resource could be made accessible for use by researchers and local historians, for engaging with the Trust's users and stakeholders as well as to make this material more readily available for outreach and engagement activities run by the Trust.

The 150th anniversary of the building of the pier is to be celebrated over the late May Bank Holiday 2019 and it is pleasing that some of the business archive content, which has 'come to light' through this project, will be put on show at a dedicated Archive Exhibition being staged as part of the Pier150 celebrations. That exhibition material is being created so that it can be stored and re-used when future opportunities arise to share our business archive with a wider audience emerge and it is planned to showcase it particularly as part of this year's TNA 'Explore Your Archive' week in November. There is still a long way to go but we are well and truly on our way and I would like to finish by saying, thank you to:

- The Business Archive Council for trusting us with this grant which has achieved more than could possibly have been hoped for. As a volunteer team we have all learnt new skills, understand what cataloguing is all about and feel girded up to 'carry on cataloguing'.
- Our professional advisor, Adrian Nardone, who has been so generous with his knowledge and experience and pitched his professional advice at exactly the correct level for non-professional archivists. We have learnt so much from Adrian who has offered his continued support post-project and for whom, we hope, a stroll along the pier and cup of tea in the pagoda at the end of a busy day working in our small archive project room, has been some small reward for his kindness and knowledge.
- Tim Powell and Caroline Catchpole from The National Archives. As South West Development Officer, Tim has been a solid source of advice and generous with his time and offers of help. As MYC Development Officer within the TNA Archive Sector Development team, Caroline and her team have been overwhelmingly helpful and taken a group of spreadsheet-phobic volunteer archivists to now having our own page on TNA Discovery.
- Phil Curme, the Trust's chairman, who has always been there – a rock when a rock is needed.



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- to Rachel Coleman, our project worker, who came to us fairly fresh from completing an MA in Cultural Heritage and Museum Studies and has brought a wealth of knowledge, enthusiasm, doggedness and support to delivering this project. She has not only helped create order out of chaos but created a catalogue which will form the basis for all future cataloguing work for the Pier Archive.
- And last, but most certainly not least, the Clevedon Pier and Heritage Trust archive volunteers without whom the archive project would never have got off the ground or achieved what it has in the past two years.

Bette Baldwin
Archive Project Manager for Clevedon Pier and Heritage Trust
Project Manager for the BAC Cataloguing Grant Project
30th April, 2019