



Business Archives Council Newsletter

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Chair's blog

A Happy New Year to everyone. I hope that it has been an enjoyable and relaxing festive break. No doubt many of us are now regretting that excess of archive cake and chocolate over the last few weeks...

Since my last Blog, we have held a very successful annual Conference and BAC Wadsworth Prize reception. I don't know what the actual numbers were, but attendance at both events certainly seemed to be the best that I can remember. So, a big thank you to Prudential for hosting the Conference (what a fantastic building!), and to Lloyds Banking Group for providing the venue for the Wadsworth. And special thanks to the organisers, Bryony Leventhall and Owen Munday.



BAC Chair, Mike Anson with the conference bursary winners (image courtesy of Mike Anson)

Your feedback consistently puts networking with others working in business archives as one of the main benefits of the Conference, and I myself made an effort to speak to as many delegates as possible. I was reminded of the importance of all this when talking to students on the UCL masters course in December. This was a session with ARA and IRMS representatives highlighting the advantages of getting involved with professional organisations. In fact it was encouraging to see how many students already were involved, including some of our Conference Bursary winners.

As you know, I do like to visit business archives whenever I can. Recently I was in Glasgow to speak at a BAC Scotland training event on oral history (an excellent day by the way), and also I took the opportunity to visit the Diageo Archive in Menstrie, near Stirling. It is a fantastic example of a business archive working for the business, and many thanks to Christine McCafferty for showing me around. By the way, contrary to popular belief I don't just visit drinks-related business archives...



My sort of business archive! In the strongrooms at the Diageo Archive (image courtesy of Mike Anson)

Business records at risk have always been a concern for the BAC and I have been to a couple of events which have concentrated on particular sectors. The first was a seminar held at the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies which is running a project on legal records (see Clare Cowling's *Business records at risk: rescuing private sector legal records* article later in the Newsletter). The second workshop was concerned with an area closer to my own heart, banking records. Both days highlighted some common themes, with digital records unsurprisingly to the fore.

Anyway, that's enough looking back to 2015. What does 2016 hold? What are we looking to achieve? Coming up in the next few months are the regular 'Meet the Archivists' event and the BAC Business Archives training day. We will also be considering the next steps for the National Strategy on Business Archives. Personally I will continue to get out and about on visits, to meet people, and to advocate for business archives. Oh and a new 5K PB would be nice.

Mike Anson
BAC Chair

Hunter Gatherers: Collecting Today's Business Archives



Panel session at the BAC annual conference 2015 (image courtesy of Matt Naylor)

Collecting business archives was the topic of the 2015 Business Archives Council Conference held on 10 November at The Prudential Assurance Company Building, Holborn Bars, London. Speakers and contributors covered three key themes which outlined a wide range of collecting activities, from records transfers to documentation initiatives and surveys, and from digital deposits to purchases. Implications and challenges of different collecting activities for archives, depositors, historians and other users were debated.

Isobel Hunter, The National Archives, gave the Keynote *Shifting Landscapes: The challenges facing business and independent archives and the buying and selling of business archives*. Isobel spoke from her prior experience as archivist at Marks & Spencer where customers donated items together with memories of products. One donor reminisced over the ease of washing underpants made from nylon! Isobel reflected that business archives have 'the power...to take us back into our own lives' and are a growth area: in-house corporate archives are increasingly engaging with wider audiences by making catalogues available online; safeguarding archives of liquidated businesses will always be a challenge; business archives can attract an immense wave of support such as The Minton Archive, a ceramics collection which was put up for sale in March 2015 - the successful fundraising effort was assisted by local people in Stoke on Trent.

The first theme, *Collecting from inside the organisation* was covered by Claire Tunstall and Ruth Loughrey, *The Records Journey in Unilever Archives and Records Management*, and Claire Twinn and James Mortlock, HSBC Archives, *The Same but Different: Collecting in the Digital World*. The Unilever case study emphasised the importance of securing records through close working records management and archive teams and good working relationships with departments, promoted through their 'buddy' scheme, and setting appraisal days to review the bulk released from records management. HSBC emphasised that the same key processes in collecting paper records apply to digital material. By using digital preservation software Preservica, HSBC can ingest and maintain records, although bank security measures have posed major challenges. Future systems will allow the

cataloguing and management of both copy and born-digital records all in one. John Porter of Prudential followed this with an introduction to the concept of gamification and their new interactive history map with games, and tours of the Prudential archive through lunch.

The second theme focused on oral history projects which proved to be very popular with delegates. The speakers argued that oral histories should not be defined as alternative collecting. Dr Rob Perks, Lead Curator of Oral History and Director of National Life Stories, British Library, gave an overview highlighting their importance as a source in exploring the ethos and culture of a business, revealing personal relationships, hierarchies and power structures, and can be a tool to help prevent corporate amnesia by connecting a business with past precedence. Dr Katharine Haydon, National Life Stories, spoke about the Barings Bank oral history project and Dr Michele Blagg, Institute of Contemporary History, King's College London, spoke about the project *Voices of the London Bullion Market*, and both talks highlighted the importance of capturing memories before it is too late, the value of the 'Life Story' approach in capturing details from the whole of an interviewee's life and the unique information which can be gained by hearing the sound of the human voice.

The final theme looked to national collecting strategies, starting with M Stephen Salmon, Canadian Business History Association "... *to the amount of \$600*": *A Brief History of Business Records at Library and Archives Canada*. Stephen's presentation illustrated with images from logging archives emphasised the issues for archive repositories in accepting collections including costs for preservation (stating 'If it's so mouldy that it's walking out the door is it worth it?'), space, staff and other resources. The significance of a firm should be assessed against document quality and likely research value of the records. Cheryl Brown, Ballast Trust and University of Glasgow *From Boom to Bust: documenting Scotland's business history* spoke about the role of Business Archive Council Scotland survey work in promoting the preservation and use of business archives.

Final Group discussion *Just say no?": The challenges of collecting business archives* was chaired by Isobel Hunter, The National Archives. Debate highlighted the core role of records management in ongoing collections development, the importance of good relations and engagement with the wider community, diversifying collections through oral histories, and sustaining resources for collecting, including digital preservation tools through advocating the outcomes as well as the needs linking to company objectives.

The conference was followed by a reception for the presentation of the BAC Wadsworth Prize for Business History, taking place nearby at Lloyds Banking Group. The Business Archives Council would like to thank speakers, delegates, exhibitors, venue and host for their hard work in making the day go so well. Special thanks go to the organisers Bryony Leventhall and Owen Munday, and support provided by the bursary winners including their note-taking which will be edited and published in the coming months as the Council's second Guidance Note publication.

Richard Wiltshire
BAC Trustee

For the presentations of the speakers, please visit the BAC website at www.businessarchivescouncil.org.uk/activitiesobjectives/conference

And for the Storify see

storify.com/bacconference/bac-conference-2015-56943dff1d5481e354afa727

2015 BAC Wadsworth Prize

Following the Conference last November, a reception was held at the Gresham Street offices of Lloyds Banking Group in order to award the 2015 BAC Wadsworth Prize for Business History. The BAC was delighted to welcome friends old and new for a very enjoyable evening where John Turner's book *Banking in Crisis. The Rise and Fall of British Banking Stability, 1800 to the Present* was announced as the winner. Neither John Turner nor BAC President Terry Gourvish could attend the ceremony, so instead BAC Vice-President Edwin Green presented the cheque for £500 to Michael Watson, Executive Publisher, History and Area Studies at Cambridge University Press.



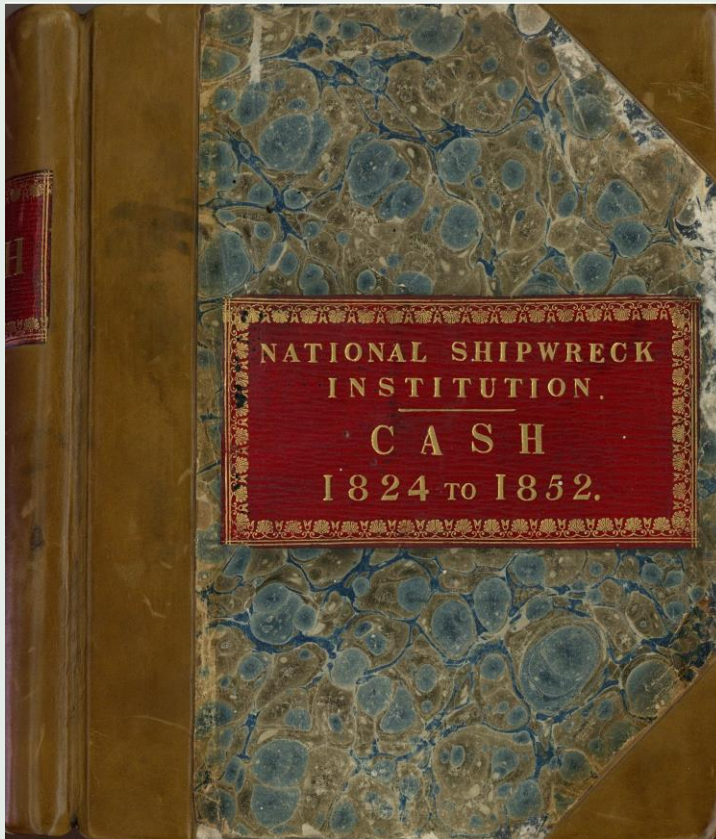
BAC Vice-President, Edwin Green, presenting the cheque for the Wadsworth prize to Michael Watson, Executive Publisher, History and Area Studies at Cambridge University Press (image courtesy of Mike Anson)

Many thanks to our judges Professor Richard Roberts, Dr Judith Rowbotham and Clem Brohier for reading all of the books, to Kate Murphy for coordinating the Prize, and not least to Lloyds Banking Group for generously hosting the reception.

The venue for the reception was particularly appropriate given that 2015 was the 250th anniversary of Lloyds Bank. 2015 also saw part of the bank's history unearthed when a team led by TV historian Dan Snow excavated a crashed Second World War Spitfire 'The

Black Horse’ which had been built with funds raised by directors and staff of Lloyds. The engine from the plane was on display in Gresham Street.

The RNLI Archive: Preserving 191 Years of Saving Lives at Sea



RNIPLS Cash Book 1824
(image courtesy of RNLI
Archive)

The RNLI is the charity that saves lives at sea. It has saved more than 140,000 lives since its foundation in 1824.

Sir William Hillary (1771–1847) founded the National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck. After witnessing the destruction of dozens of ships from his home on the Isle of Man, and getting involved in rescue attempts himself, Hillary appealed to the Navy, the government and other ‘eminent characters’ for help in forming ‘a national institution for the preservation of lives and property from shipwreck’. With the support of London MP Thomas Wilson and West India Merchants Chairman George Hibbert, the Institution was founded as a charity on 4 March 1824 and received Royal patronage later the same month. The charity’s name was changed to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution in 1854 and today provides a 24-hour lifeboat search and rescue service and a seasonal lifeguard service. The RNLI depends on its network of more than 31,500 volunteers on lifeboats, at lifeboat stations, on beaches and as community fundraisers, in RNLI shops, education presenters in schools, at events, sea safety officers in coastal communities,

museums and across its offices. The charity is proud of its history and of the RNLI's achievement of saving lives over nearly two centuries.

The archive of the RNLI contains records from the charity's establishment right through to the present day. They are largely held at the RNLI headquarters in Poole, Dorset, but also at the RNLI's six museums and individual lifeboat stations. The archive records include committee minutes, photographs, crew records, fundraising material, press cuttings, publications and other records relating to the RNLI and lifeboats. The archive also contains a wealth of information about the rescues carried out by thousands of brave volunteers as well information about those who lost their lives endeavouring to save those in peril in the sea. It also contains fascinating information relating to the many ways the RNLI has innovated over 191 years with records of the development of lifeboats, safety equipment, safety campaigns and fundraising - the RNLI was the first charity to carry out street collecting, with the first street collection held in Manchester in 1891.

The importance of the RNLI Archive collection has been recognised by UNESCO with the inscription of the early records of the institution on the UK Memory of the World Register in 2014.

The RNLI's first archivist was appointed in 2013. Prior to this the collection had been looked after by Barry Cox, RNLI Honorary Librarian. He began work in March 1987, initially on secondment from NatWest Bank. He was tasked with bringing together, sorting and producing a catalogue of library and archive material. Some disposal work was carried out as well as conservation and preservation of archive material. Barry continued as Honorary Librarian as a volunteer on his retirement and remains in this role answering enquiries, hosting researchers and ensuring the library stock is kept up to date. The RNLI Heritage Team at the RNLI was established in 2005 and became responsible for the management of the Library and Archive. In 2013 the National Archives were asked to visit and prepare a report on the archive collection. In light of their recommendations a qualified archivist was appointed. The priority has been to improve the storage conditions of the collection which culminated in the opening of a small archive store in 2014. The archivist is supported by a small team of volunteers who help to answer the large number of enquiries received each month as well as carrying out other research, preservation work and listing. The focus is now cataloguing the collection and fully exploring the potential of the collection for research and engaging staff, volunteers and supporters in the fascinating story of the RNLI.

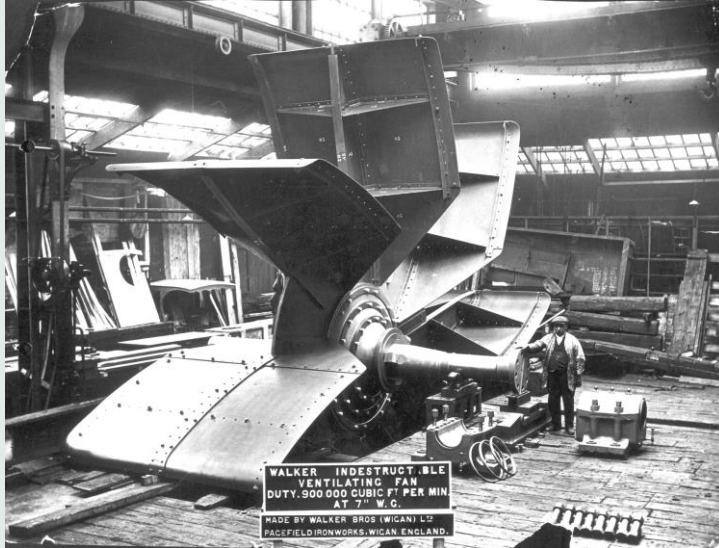
Further information www.rnli.org/aboutus/historyandheritage

Email heritage@rnli.org.uk

Hayley Whiting
RNLI Archive

The Original Powerhouse: Made In Greater Manchester

The archive collections relating to business and industry in Greater Manchester are second to none, documenting the development of industries and the lives of the people in these urban communities. Our project - Made In Greater Manchester (MIGM) - aims to bring these collections alive, engaging volunteers and new users in creating a set of collection catalogues and new digital resources that share information about business history in the area.



Walker Brothers, Wigan,
Ventilating Fan (image courtesy
of Wigan Archives Service)

For many people around the world, Greater Manchester is synonymous with industry. The Greater Manchester that we know today is built upon the foundations of industry, and the growth of Greater Manchester went hand in hand with the arrival of people of many nationalities and ethnic groups, drawn to an area that promised employment and prosperity.

These businesses have left a legacy of archives and photographs which document not only business transactions, products and industrial processes but the working lives of men, women and children across the city region.

The MIGM project seeks to bring the archive collections of local businesses to a wider audience by producing a new catalogue of the records of one important business in the ten districts in Greater Manchester and digitising key items from each collection selected. This will be a unique collaboration between local authority archive services across the city region and will build upon work already undertaken as part of the Greater Manchester Archives and Local Studies Partnership (GMALSP) - made up of services in Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Salford, Trafford, Stockport, Rochdale, Tameside and Wigan.

The project has been generously funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and in the coming months we will be recruiting a Project Co-Ordinator to lead on the day-to-day management of the work. In each of our districts volunteers will be working with the Archive services to catalogue an unlisted collection of business records. These collections cover a wide range of industries and operations, including brewing in Bolton at Magee, Marshall & Co. Ltd., dyers at Thomas Robinson & Co Ltd of Ramsbottom, Clegg and

Mellor in Oldham who supplied the cotton industry and Walker Brothers of Wigan, mining machinery engineers.

Our volunteers will receive training in box listing and basic archival conservation, as well as digitisation in the later stages of the project - in this way we hope to develop the skills of our existing volunteers, who between them won the 2015 Archives & Records Association, Archive Volunteering Award. Upon completion, all catalogues will be uploaded to our shared online catalogue, GM Lives, and new historical guides produced for each business archive collection.

We aim to use business records to support the wellbeing agenda across the City Region and to develop community engagement by encouraging participation and reminiscence, to promote a sense of local pride and identity and to ensure that the records are brought to new audiences. In turn we hope that the project work will help to raise the profile of business archives across Greater Manchester and will encourage businesses to consider donating their records to archives - a key element of our joint GMALSP collections development plans.

For more information on the MIGM Project, please contact Alex Miller, Archives Manager, Wigan Archives & Local Studies, a.miller@wigan.gov.uk

Alex Miller

Wigan Archives Service

Business records at risk: rescuing private sector legal records



Legal records in unsuitable storage (image courtesy of Derbyshire Record Office)

Why legal records?

The Legal Records at Risk project, based at the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, University of London, commenced in September 2015 to:

- Broaden the concept of "legal" records from their traditional definition as court records or deeds to the business records of private sector institutions specialised to law (ISLs), including arbitration and mediation services, barristers, insolvency practitioners, legal executives, licensed conveyancers, multi-disciplinary practices, notaries, patent attorneys, pro bono legal services, scriveners, solicitors, trade mark attorneys and providers of ancillary services such as law publishers and legal stationers.
- Identify and facilitate the rescue of legal records of potential value which may be at risk through globalisation, digital obsolescence, physical neglect, lack of interest on the part of information owners or reduced archival resources to preserve and provide access to the records.
- All business records in the UK face similar challenges, but modern legal records (C20-C21) are particularly vulnerable due to recent developments in legal services which are transforming the nature, organisation, regulation and economics of legal services. It follows that the traditional processes by which legal records are managed, disposed of or preserved for posterity also need to change.
- The project will build on and take forward, in collaboration with the BAC, the British Records Association, The National Archives and others, the valuable work already done to identify and save business records at risk through a focussed study of one sector.

What do we hope to achieve?

The project will not collect records but will act as a conduit through which legal records of value (in all formats and media) are identified, preserved and made available for research. In doing so we hope to raise the awareness of the information owners of legal records as to the value of their records and assist them to unlock the potential of the records for both internal business reference and external research use.

How will we achieve this aim?

By:

- Creating a census of private sector ISLs in England and Wales, with details of what, if any, provision has been made to preserve their archives.
- Identifying legal records of research value and relevant repositories.
- Facilitating the process by which information owners deposit with or donate records to repositories.
- Providing generic recordkeeping advice to information owners.
- Recognising and advocating best practice.
- Working with the archives community towards a co-ordinated strategy for the identification and preservation of business records of value, including legal records.

How can you help us?

We need input from providers of legal services as described above. We are asking you to contact us - tell us about issues you may be facing in managing information; ask for advice on particular challenges such as digital continuity; seek guidance on how to identify records

of value both to your business and for external research; request contacts to relevant archival repositories. Any and all information and/or questions are welcome.

What's in it for you?

- Advice on recordkeeping to facilitate efficient and compliant business practices.
- Reduced management and storage costs as records are systematically disposed of.
- Identification of ISLs with similar issues, developing a community of practice.
- An enhanced reputation for openness and transparency plus a better understanding of importance of ISLs in the development of the UK's business and legal framework.

The project is being led by Clare Cowling, an experienced archivist and records manager. You can contact her at clare.cowling@sas.ac.uk. For the latest project news see our website: ials.sas.ac.uk/research/lrar/lrar.htm, which includes details of our introductory seminar/workshop. Further workshops are planned – watch this space!

Clare Cowling

Legal Records at Risk Project

Negotiating Art: Dealers and Museums, 1855-2015

We are pleased to announce that tickets and a complete conference programme are now available for Negotiating Art: Dealers and Museums, 1855-2015, to be held on Friday 1 and Saturday 2 April (Sainsbury Wing Lecture Theatre, National Gallery, London) in association with the University of Manchester.



Portrait of Martin Colnaghi by
John Calcott Horsley, 1889
(image courtesy of The National
Gallery)

The conference has its origins in the acquisition of the Thos. Agnew & Sons archive by the National Gallery, and presents an array of experienced professionals, established scholars, and emerging researchers who are exploring the complex, complementary and conflicting associations between art dealers and museums. We look forward to welcoming you to an event promising lively debate and discussion between disciplines!

For more details, please refer to: www.nationalgallery.org.uk/whats-on/calendar/negotiating-art-dealers-and-museums-1855-2015

Business Archives Access Guidance Note

The BAC will be developing guidance notes for the use of archive managers, staff and researchers. The first guidance note highlights access issues relating to business records and is based on the presentations and discussion at the 2014 BAC conference *'Let the right one in? Challenging perceptions of access to business archives'*.

The four sections of the guidance are: Business Archives and Social Media (jointly produced with BAC Scotland); Delivering and Opening Up Archives in the Arts Sector

- case studies; Let The Right One In? Gaining and Allowing Access; and Access-Past, Present and Future.

Take a look at Business Archives Access Guidance Notes here:

www.businessarchivescouncil.org.uk/materials/bac_access_to_business_archives_guidance_notes.pdf

Business Accessions 2014

One of the regular features of our journal *Business Archives* was the annual listing of business accessions based on information provided by The National Archives and arranged by business activity. Although the journal is no longer being published, the compilation of the business accessions has continued and the listing for 2014 is now available:

www.businessarchivescouncil.org.uk/materials/business_accessions_2014.pdf

Derek Charman

The Council is sorry to report the death of Derek Charman on 13 January 2016, at the age of 93. Derek was a member and supporter of the Council from the late 1960s onwards and his appointments included County Archivist at East Suffolk Record Office, Kenyan Government Archivist, and Corporation Archivist at British Steel. He and his wife Jill later established their own records management consultancy. Derek, along with Len McDonald, Michael Cook and other senior members of the Council, was a major influence on the development and theory of records management over many years. His enthusiasm and his concern for professional standards were also made clear in his attendance at our conferences and in his contributions to *Business Archives*. The Council sends its sympathy to Jill and to Derek's family and friends.

How to print out the BAC Newsletter

For those of you who would like to print out the newsletter there is a link at the top called 'View this email in your browser' which then allows you to save it as a PDF and print.

Alternatively all the newsletters are available as PDFs on the BAC website at

www.businessarchivescouncil.org.uk/publications/newsletters

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