



the national archives

Autumn 2006

RecordKeeping

Inside

Richard Burton papers
Business records in the Black Country
North East Inheritance project

Records Management

Records management for businesses
Dorset County Council

Archives

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Lambeth Palace Library

For all those interested
in archives and records

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Cover photo:

A frontside furnace worker pictured at Bilston Steelworks in 1977. Reproduced by kind permission of Nick Hedges, Photographer. (Wolverhampton Archives and Local Studies, P/3415)

Note from the Editor

Welcome to the Autumn edition of *RecordKeeping*.

I would also like to give you all advance notice of next year's proposed special edition of RecordKeeping to coincide with the bicentenary of the British Parliamentary abolition of the transatlantic slave trade. If you are involved in related activities and would like to feature in RecordKeeping next year, I'd be very interested in hearing from you.

In the latest edition of *RecordKeeping*, we bring you the latest developments from the archival and records management community.

Our front cover comes from the 'Documenting the Workshop of the World' project, digitising business records and photographs from archives in the Black Country. This striking image is of a furnace worker at Bilston Steelworks, taken in 1977. Continuing the business theme Peter Kibby from Bramble.cc explains the benefits of good records management in present day business.

In *RecordKeeping news* we bring you highlights from the Accessions Survey 2005 including the papers of the actor Richard Burton, now held at the University of Wales, Swansea.

It's been a busy time for conferences. We bring you highlights from the Society of Archivists Annual Conference, Records Management in Government Conference and travel abroad to the

Nordic Archives Conference where Michelle Foggett promotes the Moving Here Project.

Elsewhere Margaret Crockett discusses Continuing Professional Development and its relevance to archives and records managers, whilst Heather Boyns looks at increasing training for those outside the core archive community.

Our case studies section makes this feature the largest so far with articles from the Royal Botanic Gardens Archives, Kew; Lambeth Palace Library; the Foreign and Commonwealth Office; Dorset County Council and the North East Inheritance Project – we hope you enjoy them.

As ever, thank you for reading, and please get in touch with any comments or ideas.

Catherine Guggiari
Editor
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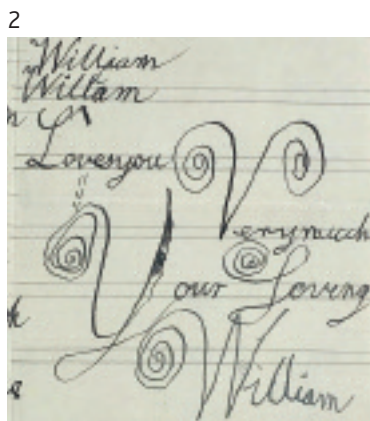
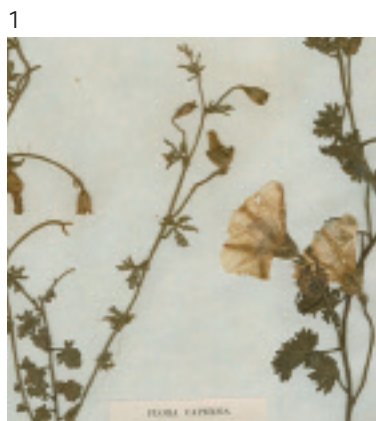
RecordKeeping is published quarterly by The National Archives (TNA) to provide news and informative articles for all involved and interested in archives and records. *TNA Update* provides news on activities and developments at TNA; *RecordKeeping news* contains information from the wider archives and records management communities; *Case studies* are practical examples of archives/ records related projects; and *Standards and guidance* gives up-to-date information on the latest standards and best practice.

RecordKeeping is distributed free of charge to custodians and stakeholders in the archives and records management sector. It is also available to download for free from our website:
www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/services/recordkeeping.htm

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TNA update

Self-assessment of local authority archive services in England and Wales: emerging findings

The National Archives staff are hard at work analysing the self-assessment returns from local authority archive services in England and Wales. The National Advisory Services greatly appreciates the effort so many archive services, especially small ones, have had to put in to turn around the questionnaire within the timetable we set. With all the returns now scored, a picture is beginning to emerge of the pattern of results, and the following emerging findings may be of interest.

1
Nick
Kingsley

In the summary of the results so far, the figures quoted are based on raw figures which are subject to moderation by the Self-Assessment Panel. Individual institutions will be advised of their scores as soon as possible.

The average overall score is 55%. This masks a range in overall performance from 26% to 80%. The median (middle) score is 55.5%, and the boundaries of the top and bottom quartiles fall at 62.5% and 46.5% respectively, indicating that there is a fairly even spread of results around the median point. Results in the five sections of the questionnaire (governance, documentation of collections, access, buildings and

security, preservation and conservation) are generally fairly similar, except that there is a rather stronger performance on the questions on access than in other areas (the average score for this section of the questionnaire was 63%). If the top 10% of repositories are rated as 3* services, it would be necessary to score 70% or above to secure that rating. If the bottom 10% of repositories are rated as no* services, it would be necessary to score less than 42% to be in that bracket.

All of these results provide encouragement that the exercise is providing a robust measure of overall service quality. The wide



range of scores suggests that the questions are successfully discriminating between strong and weak performance; the fact that the range of scores, and the averages, on each section of the

questionnaire are generally similar suggests that the questions on each area are equally demanding.

Services with relatively new purpose-built or converted accommodation tend to score well on the section relating to buildings, security and environment. Services that are known to struggle with large cataloguing backlogs and other related issues perform relatively weakly on the questions about documentation of collections. There are, however, a few surprises among the results. The issue that sticks out most clearly is the relative weakness of the planning and policy framework for many services. Improvements in this area would be of considerable benefit to many archives, offering them both greater clarity in workload prioritisation and leading to more engagement with senior officers and members of their parent authorities. The size of the cataloguing backlogs revealed by the survey is significantly greater than previous national surveys have indicated. I think this reflects the additional knowledge we have gained from the regional cataloguing surveys undertaken in recent years, but while harder evidence is clearly welcome, it makes the problem of cataloguing backlogs seem more urgent among the many priorities facing record offices.

Better news comes from the access sections of the questionnaire, from which it is clear that most services are putting a good deal of energy

and resources into addressing the broader access agenda. There is evidence of creative new projects in many places, and also of increasing provision for the educational use of archives and online access to catalogues. There is also good news in the plans of many services to relocate to new premises, or to improve their existing facilities. Whilst the survey has not revealed schemes of which we were previously unaware, seeing them pulled together in this form makes it clear that the surge in archive buildings witnessed in the 1990s is continuing.

One of TNA's purposes in introducing the self-assessment process was to enable some greater targeting of our on-site inspection regime. We have identified a number of services that were not previously on our list of repositories to visit this year, but which are clearly in need of the external support that can flow from a TNA inspection, and we will be making arrangements to add them to our programme over the coming months.

Above all, what emerges from the self-assessment returns is the continuing enthusiasm and dedication of local authority archive staff. Whilst the financial circumstances, buildings and inherited problems of many services are challenging and demanding, encouragingly many local archives continue to make measurable progress towards better standards of care, greater

accessibility, broader audiences and stronger governance.

We have been hugely encouraged by the strength of the response in this pilot year. Almost every authority has made a return, and the vast majority provide us with additional and contextual information that will be of great value to TNA's advisory work. We hope that CIPFA (The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) can use this information to avoid duplication of effort, and that in future, the burden that self-assessment represents will be reduced by reusing unchanged data from the previous year. In addition to the value of having for the first time a relatively objective basis for the comparison of overall service quality (which we hope can be fed into the Audit Commission's CPA process in England) we are now looking at what further useful analysis the data will support. We intend to produce a report, based on this analysis, which we hope will be revealing of regional and other trends, and highlight areas of strength and weakness within the sector. This should be of interest and value to archivists in local government, and we hope it can also be used to good effect in developing a programme of advocacy for local archive services within central government.

Nicholas Kingsley
Head of National Advisory Services
The National Archives

The National Register of Archives makes networking breakthrough

The National Register of Archives links to the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, the Scottish Archival Network (SCAN) and the National Archives of Scotland catalogue.

The National Register of Archives (www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/nra/) has recently achieved two significant breakthroughs in its development as an online resource discovery tool. The NRA now links to biographies on the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (www.oxforddnb.com/). Links are also in place to collection level descriptions on the catalogues of the Scottish Archival Network (www.scan.org.uk/) and the National Archives of Scotland.

The development of links between individual entries on the personal index of the NRA and the *Oxford DNB* is a key first step in the creation of a National Name Authority File, based on the indexes of the NRA. The initiative has resulted in 17,938 links being created between the NRA and the *Oxford DNB*. The *Oxford DNB* has linked to the NRA since its launch as an online resource in 2004. The establishment of reciprocal links should be a useful tool for researchers.

Examples of links can be found at:

- William Ewart Gladstone, Statesman
www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/nra/searches/pidocs.asp?P=P11355

- William Wordsworth, Poet
www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/nra/searches/pidocs.asp?P=P31227

Access to the full *Oxford DNB* is by subscription. Most public libraries in the UK subscribe to the *Oxford DNB*, following an agreement between the Oxford University Press and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council. For further details please see www.oup.com/oxforddnb/info/freeodnb/libraries/.

Links from the NRA to the Scottish Archival Network and the National Archives of Scotland catalogue were developed as part of a successful pilot initiative to form links between the sub-records of the NRA and collection level descriptions on CALM catalogues. The project has resulted in 5,632 new links being formed and has brought the total number of links between the NRA and archival

catalogues to 62,106. In linking to SCAN the NRA has made its coverage of the national archival networks complete. The project has also proved that the NRA can straightforwardly link to CALM archival catalogues, used by a large proportion of local record offices.

Examples of links can be found at:

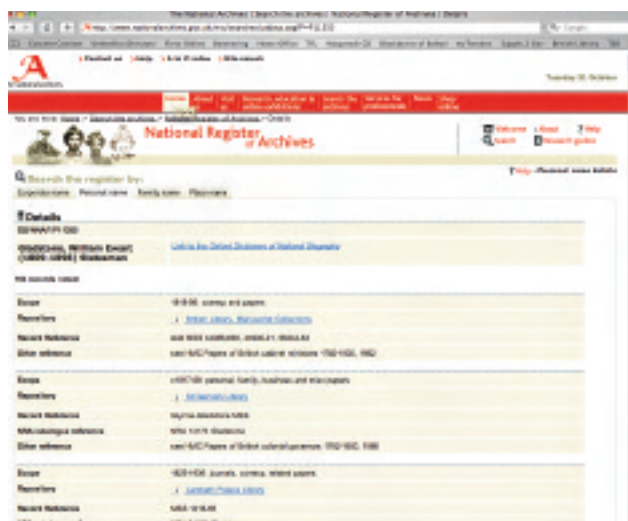
- Ayr Burgh
www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/nra/searches/sidocs.asp?SIR=O74949
- James Leslie Mitchell
www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/nra/searches/pidocs.asp?P=P19949
- Graham family, Dukes of Montrose
www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/nra/searches/fedocs.asp?FER=F8763

The next step is to amend the record structure of the NRA to enable it to hold full ISAAR (CPF) compliant name authority data with a view launching an online Name Authority File for corporate, personal and family names in the new year.

We are now keen to extend this project to link to other archive catalogues who use CALM version 7.1. and Dserve 2.

If you are interested in taking part please contact Amy Warner, amy.warner@nationalarchives.gov.uk

National Advisory Service,
The National Archives, Kew,
Richmond, Surrey TW9 4DU



What's in store for Archives 4 All

2

Veteran Sid Richardson using his own experience of Palestine and Libya during the Second World War to identify and index photograph albums and scrapbooks of the wartime campaigns of the Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey)

Archives 4 All, the fourth phase of the Access to Archives (A2A) programme, began in September 2005 and is set to run until March 2008. The aim is to develop partnership projects between archive holders and users. In order to help establish and reinforce connections between archives and the local community, repositories are being encouraged to work with community groups. The catalogues, digital images and other resources from the projects outlined below will be available via the A2A website www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a



2

The purpose of this article is to highlight some of the exhibitions, oral history projects, educational material, and digitisation that will be created over the coming months by the community groups, organisations and archives involved in the Archives 4 All programme.

Earlier in the year the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) awarded a grant of nearly £48,000 to the Surrey History Centre in partnership with the Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Museum for their project 'Buried Battles and Veteran Voices, Records and Reminiscences of the Queen's Royal Surrey

Regiment'. This project will enhance the existing collection by recording the memories of the surviving veterans of the regiment. The Queer up North Theatre group have also received HLF of just over £49,000 for their project 'queerupnorth'. Queerupnorth was the UK's first Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) arts festival and the queerupnorth project aims to release the potential of their archive and make it available to a wide and diverse audience. In partnership with Manchester Archives and Local Studies,

queerupnorth will use volunteers from the local community to record the memories of those involved in queerupnorth, as part of an oral history project.

East Riding Record Office in association with local partners has successfully bid for two projects 'Rural Roots' and 'Blood, Thunder and High Society: The Strickland Constables of Wassand Hall' receiving just under £100,000 to complete both. Each initiative is a community outreach project both focusing on the remote rural communities of the East Riding and improving access to two related family and estate collections. Both projects aim to develop the collections as educational resources for schools and to select and digitise content for community information resource packs. Likewise HLF have awarded over £49,000 to the Open University, Milton Keynes for their project 'Using Police records in Education'. Two teaching packages for schools will be prepared, the first concentrating on social history as seen through the eyes of Second World War serving officers and the second will be based on the values of citizenship using material from the Association of Chief Police Officers deposit.

3

Mauretania and Lusitania fairground swingboats, illustrating the iconic nature of the ships (Twas 944/2803)



3

4
Project
researcher
Colin Boyd
with maritime
historian Dick
Keys looking
at a 'dazzle
painted' model
of Mauretania
from World
War

Tyne and Wear Archives have received £38,000 funding from HLF for their project the 'Centenary of the launch of the Mauretania'. Tyne and Wear Archives Service will showcase an exhibition about the construction of the Mauretania and the history of shipbuilding in Tyne. The Lesbian and Gay News Archive (LAGNA) for '1967 and all that' will receive just under £50,000 to help improve access and raise awareness of important archival collections that record the hidden history of LGBT communities in Britain. This will be a joint project led by LAGNA housed at Middlesex University, and the London School of Economic Archive. A travelling exhibition will be created to promote the awareness of the importance of gay history as well as telling the story of the campaign for decriminalisation.

Digitisation will also feature highly on the Archives 4 All agenda. 'Buried Battles and Veterans Voices' will create a 'virtual archive' of clips from the veterans' interviews, photographs and documents, which will then be available on the Internet. 'What's beneath your feet?' led by Gloucestershire Record Office was awarded over £49,000 to



digitise a series of inclosure maps and awards for Gloucestershire in order to preserve and make them widely available. Steam and Agriculture led by the Museum of English Rural Life received £50,000 HLF funding to catalogue archives of Wallis and Stevens, International Harvester and Massey, and to preserve and digitise Wallis and Stevens' glass negatives held by the Road Locomotive Society.

This is just a small taster of what is in the pipeline for Archives 4 All. More information is available about

these and other Archives 4 All projects as well as further information about A2A, the Community Access to Archives Project (CAAP) and the Caribbean Studies and Black and Asian History (CASBAH) project at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/partnerprojects/

The A2A database can be found at: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a

Rosie Logiudice
Regional Liaison Co-ordinator
for A2A

The National Archives and The Office of Public Sector Information have merged

Under the name of The National Archives, the combined organisation aims to lead on information policy and support effective delivery of records and information management across government and the wider public sector – a role which is increasingly important in a digital age.

OPSI and Her Majesty's Stationery Office, which were previously

attached to the Cabinet Office, will continue their work in setting standards, encouraging re-use of public sector information and managing Crown Copyright, operating from within The National Archives. The National Archives will continue to operate as a government department and as an executive agency of the Department for Constitutional Affairs.

"Bringing our two organisations together, and combining our expertise, creates a stronger organisation with a consolidated position within Government," says Natalie Ceeney, Chief Executive of The National Archives. "Together with OPSI, The National Archives is helping to realise the true value of information – as well as capturing the records of today for tomorrow's researchers."

RecordKeeping news

Highlights from Accessions to Repositories Survey 2005

Every year in its annual 'Accessions to Repositories' survey The National Archives (TNA) collects information from over 200 record repositories throughout the British Isles about manuscript accessions received in the previous 12 months.

The information received as part of the Accessions survey is added to the indexes of the National Register of Archives (NRA) and the Accessions database on TNA's website. When manorial records are included in an accessions return, the information is added to the Manorial Documents Register. In addition, the data is used to compile a number of thematic digests which, as well as appearing on the Accessions web

pages, are distributed to specialist repositories and published in a number of learned journals and newsletters.

The information received through the Accessions exercise ensures that the material available on the NRA, and the other National Advisory Services information resources, are kept comprehensive and up-to-date. Accessions highlight the scale and variety of

new material received by archives each year. 2005 has been a record year for Accessions, with responses received from 228 repositories and 5152 new entries added to the Accessions database. Here we have case studies of three collections accessioned by archives in 2005.

Amy Warner
Accessions Editor 2005

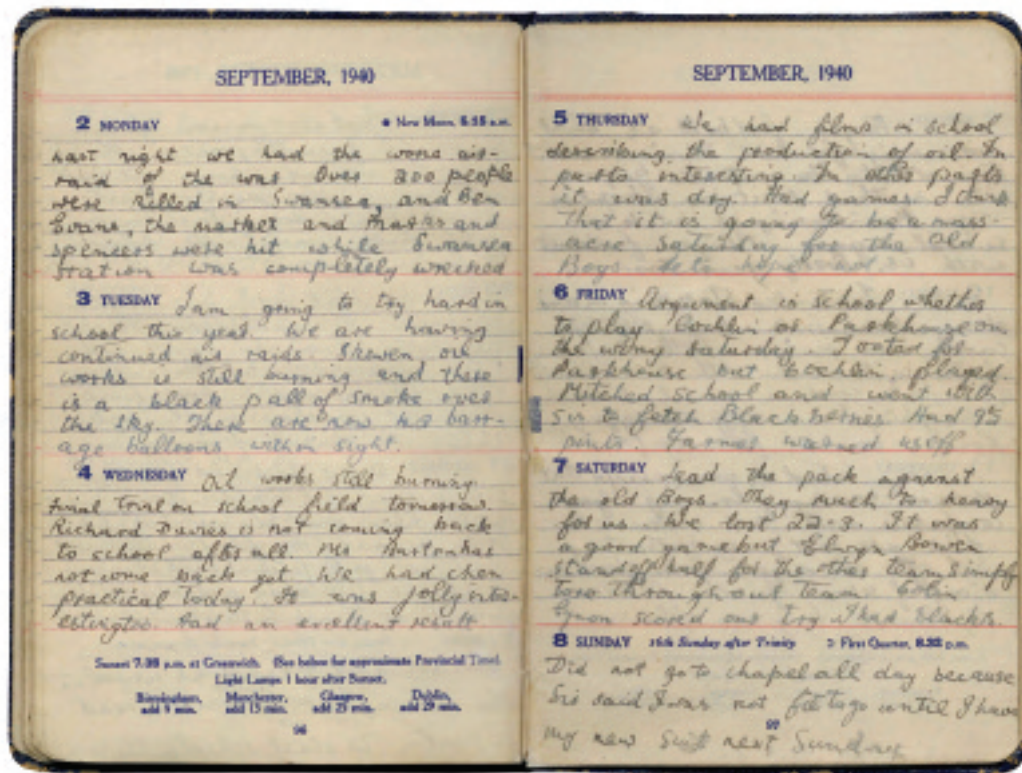
The Richard Burton Collection (Acc 2005/14)

The Richard Burton Collection was deposited in the Archives at Swansea University by his widow, Sally Burton, and contains a diverse range of material which spans the length of his career in theatre and film until his death in 1984. The collection includes: Burton's diaries, a large amount of both personal and professional correspondence, photographs including prints of Burton in costume, studio portrait prints and family prints, audio-visual material comprising

recordings for film, television and radio, press cuttings, scripts, Burton's address book and various personal items such as his book bag, name-stamp and various drama awards. The deposit also includes some of Burton's personal library.

At the heart of the collection are perhaps the diaries, whose coverage is most concentrated during the 1960s. They offer, among other things, detailed records of the day-to-day experiences and processes of dramatic production. This series also contains a diary from 1940, kept by Burton between the ages of fourteen and fifteen, while he

was living at the home of his sister and her husband in Taibach, Port Talbot. The entries are short but frequently vividly evocative: a narrative of daily life (school, playing rugby, going to Chapel) is juxtaposed with glimpses of the impact of wartime on the life of the immediate community and beyond, as Burton records his experiences of air raids and of receiving letters from his brother on active service alongside his observations on radio reports of the resignation of Neville Chamberlain and fears over the German army's advance. The diaries were used by Melvyn Bragg when writing his biography of Richard Burton, *Rich*, and the



1
Diary from the
Richard Burton
Collection
© Sally Burton

University intends to publish a scholarly edition so that the full extent of the diaries can be appreciated.

The collection sheds further light on well-publicised aspects of Burton's life, such as his marriages to Elizabeth Taylor, his struggle with alcohol and his often ambivalent attitude towards his profession. However, and perhaps more interestingly, it also affords perspectives on his life and work which are less generally known, such as his scholarly interests (apparent, for example, in his recording of *The Days of Wilfred Owen* and in his diary commentaries on his reading) and his ambitions as a writer. His correspondence files include preliminary drafts and final versions of various published articles on Dylan Thomas, rugby and the Welsh language and the later diaries suggest his unfulfilled intention to write an autobiography or a novel.

As well as its significance for film and theatre history, the archive also has research potential for the study of social history.

Furthermore, in documenting his strong affiliation with the political and cultural landscape of South Wales, it offers considerable

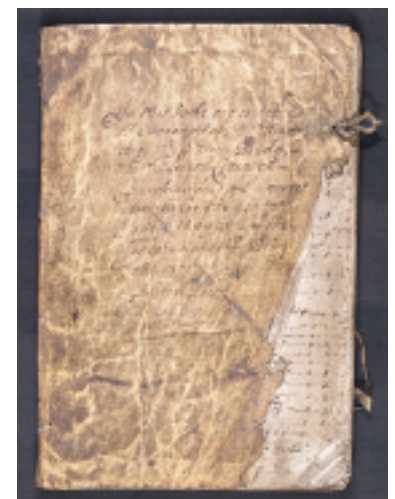
insight into the importance of Burton's Welsh identity, which was to prove a pervasive influence in his life and work.

The University plans to establish an international centre based on the Collection for excellence in scholarship in the arts and humanities. These plans are still at an early stage but it is intended that this building will house not only the Richard Burton Collection but also the other archives held by the University, notably the South Wales Coalfield Collection. The University also wishes to use the Collection to reach out to the local community through a range of community-based activities and is working in partnership with Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council to bring this about. Pontrhydyfen, where Richard Burton was born, and Taibach where he was raised, are both in the area of Neath Port Talbot and it would be appropriate to base such activities there. Sally Burton is keen that the Collection should inspire young people in the area in the same way as he was inspired by his teacher Philip Burton.

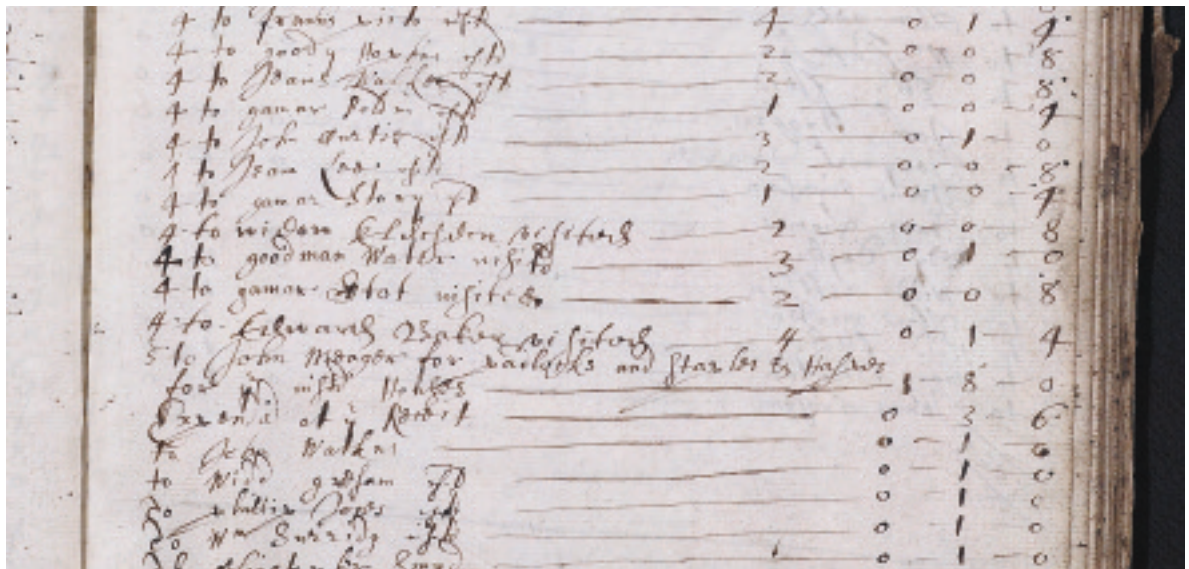
University of Wales, Swansea
Archive, Library and Information
Services

Church Wardens Account Book, 1665 – 1666: Saint George The Martyr, Southwark (P92/Geo/383)

Early church wardens account books provide evidence of the civil administrative responsibilities of parishes before the establishment of local authorities. The accounts of the wardens of Saint George the Martyr, Southwark for 1665-1666 illustrate the additional pressures placed on London parishes as plague raged through the capital at that time.



2
Church
Warden's
account book



Then, as now, services in the community had to be paid for. The expenses that church wardens William Boyd and Edward Cranwell authorised in this year included direct cash aid to plague victims and their dependents and payments to people nominated to monitor the occurrence and spread of the disease, through the 'watching' of houses.

The contemporary street addresses of most of these households were carefully recorded, offering a geographical perspective to researchers. On 4 October 1665 John Meager is paid £1 8s for 'padlocks, staples and haspes' for shutting up houses where plague had struck, the contemporary approach to the control of this devastating disease. Inevitably there was also the cost of carrying away the dead for burial. The final parish account for the year came to over £365.

available for public consultation until microfilming is complete.

Jane Muncaster
Catalogue Editor
London Metropolitan Archives

The Personal Diaries of Edith Sinclair Hall, 1899-1950 (Acc. 7306)

In 2005 Shropshire Archives acquired a series of diaries which provide a fascinating insight into the life and times of a daughter, wife and mother of the professional classes, literally day-

by-day through the first half of the 20th century.

Edith Sinclair Hall (1882-1975) was the daughter the Revd. George Thomas Hall (1843-1931). In 1912 she married Dr. Paul Mathews (1880-1919), a university graduate and clergyman's son and they had one child, Mary in 1916. For most of her life she lived either in Shrewsbury or the surrounding countryside. Her daily record begins in 1899, when she was just 17, and continues virtually unbroken through to 1950, preserved in a series of 41 diaries.

The depositor was able to provide useful background information on Edith, as well as a précis of her

Cared for by the parish and then deposited at London Metropolitan Archives in October 2005, this fine example of an account book showing plague disbursements is now fragile and showing signs of wear and tear. It is currently being treated by conservators to ensure its long term survival, after which it will be microfilmed to facilitate access to the information it contains. The volume has been catalogued under the reference P92/GEO/383 although due to its physical condition it will not be



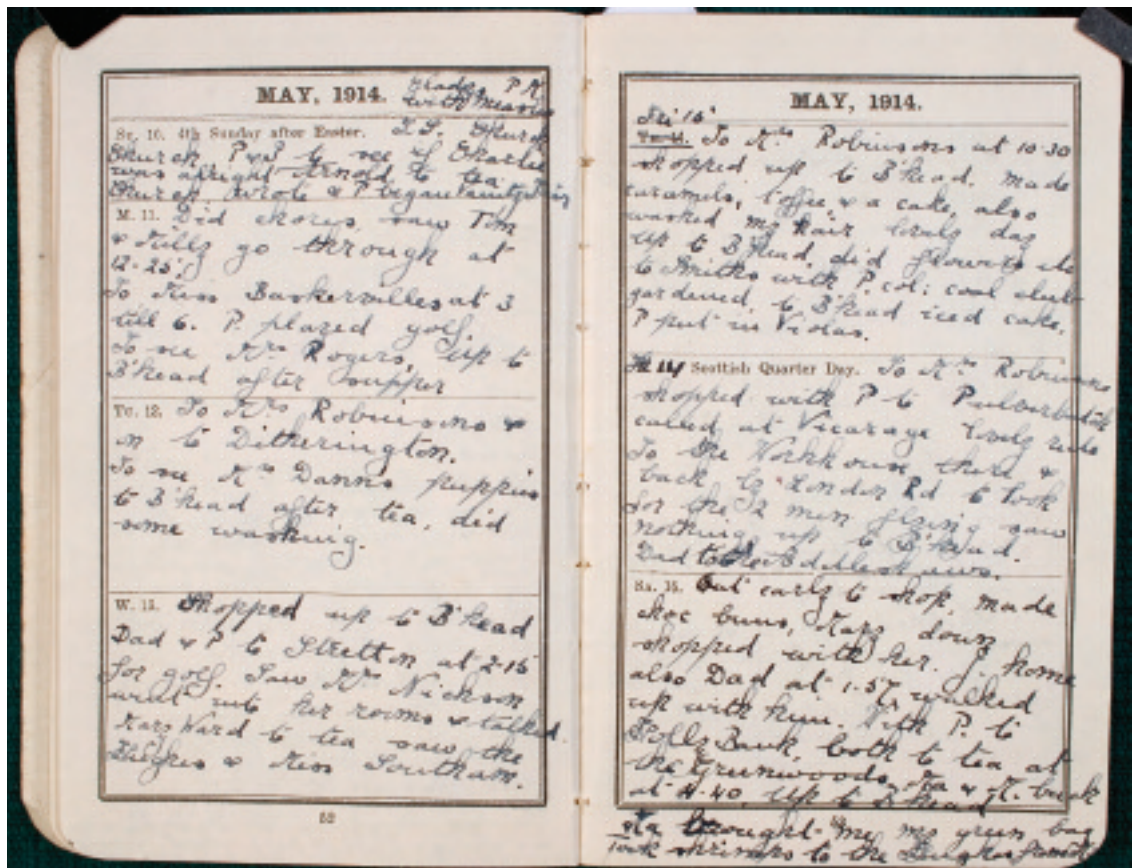
diary entries which he describes as follows:

"Financially secure but far from wealthy and possessing no occupational skills of her own, Edith devoted her time to household, social and spiritual matters. No stranger to illness and bereavement she was constantly active in the Church. She sustained a complex family network. An early and enthusiastic car-driver she evidently promoted the mobility of friends, patients and parishioners. Her quotidian round is recorded as it

happened, including housewifery, childcare, and financial management; visits to theatre and cinema; parlour games and sports (especially as a spectator at cricket, soccer and rugby football); and frequent trips by bicycle and train. Politics and the professional lives of her men folk are referred to only obliquely. The effects of both Wars clearly impinged on her life, but they are passed over with much the same laconic stoicism as her own personal difficulties (a note on the palatability of wartime 'synthetic cream' reads as a triumph of will over experience)."

Two photograph albums, a volume of recipes, examples of creative writing and various incidental family papers accompany the diaries. The photographs include some wonderfully informal shots which are very evocative of the era and really do help to bring the diaries to life.

Samantha Mager
Senior Archivist
Shropshire Archives



Conisbrough Court Rolls



The website launch of the Conisbrough court rolls on May 17 2006 marked the end of a pilot project to transcribe and put in to historical context some significant parts of the Conisbrough court rolls. In 2005, the Conisbrough and Denaby Main Heritage Group obtained a grant from the Coalfields Regeneration Trust to work on this exciting and innovative project in partnership with Doncaster Borough Archives, and the Humanities Research Institute at the University of Sheffield.

The Conisbrough Court Rolls website provides free access to a wealth of material online about the manor of Conisbrough for local and family historians and also serves as

a valuable resource for social and economic history. It provides a snapshot of the lives of the people of Conisbrough manor, an important royal manor in Yorkshire, which extended across a vast area of South Yorkshire, including significant parts of what are now Doncaster and Rotherham boroughs.

The project was fortunate that such an extensive series of court rolls survived covering a large chronological span. This makes them uniquely valuable as a historical source as for many manors the survival is patchy or nonexistent. There is a complete run of registers from 1717 to 1935, many of which are indexed for

personal names. Before 1717 individual court rolls survive and there are a large number from the mid-14th to the mid-16th centuries. The earliest roll is that of 1265, from the reign of King Henry III.

This project is a pioneer in its field, making available online documents that have been transcribed and translated and a database, which searches across them. The court rolls selected for the website relate to well-known historical events, such as the Black Death (1348/50) and the Pilgrimage of Grace (1536). This means that historical events can be seen at both a national and local level and one can learn how national events impacted upon local communities. It is hoped that school children visiting Conisbrough Castle will have their experience enhanced by knowledge gained from the rolls. The website also features other related resources, from the entry for Conisbrough in the 1086 Domesday Book to a survey of Conisbrough and Conisbrough Park in 1805-06. There is still a long way to go however, '500' skins are still left to be transcribed and translated, and ideally, to be made available online.

To discover this new project, please visit the website at www.hrionline.ac.uk/conisbrough/

Liz Hart
Information Resources Officer
The National Archives

Many thanks to the members of the Conisbrough and Denaby Main Heritage Group for their hard work and perseverance in getting this project off the ground.

DANGO: Database of Archives of UK Non-Governmental Organisations since 1945

A new project at the University of Birmingham is helping researchers to find out all they can about the archives of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), in a bid to encourage the growing interest in bodies such as Oxfam, Amnesty, and Greenpeace, and the contribution they make to our society and politics.



DANGO, the Database of Archives of UK NGOs since 1945, is an online, free database, enabling researchers to identify NGOs that interest them, and then access both existing and new information about the content, location and accessibility of archival holdings relating to those bodies.

DANGO is an Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded project, based within the Centre for Contemporary Governance and Citizenship in the UK (CenConUK) in Birmingham's Department of Modern History. The team is made up of the principal investigators, Prof Matthew Hilton and Dr Nick Crowson, the project officer, Dr James McKay, the archival officer, Dr Jean-François Mouhot, and the administrator, Sarah Davies. An advisory panel of Chris Cook, Melinda Haunton of the National Register of Archives (NRA), and Chris Penney, formerly Head of Special Collections, University of Birmingham, meets with the rest of the project team at regular intervals.

Although the project is still ongoing (it is currently funded until October 2007, and its online presence assured until at least 2012), the information collected thus far can be accessed through the DANGO website www.dango.bham.ac.uk where users will find a prototype database, being updated with new information on a daily basis.

In conceiving the project, the team had two precedents in mind.

Essentially, it wanted to marry the flexibility and accessibility of an online format, with the depth of information given by Chris Cook's guides to archival sources (the most recent of which was published by Routledge in 2006).

In doing so, the team was consciously following in the footsteps of projects such as the BARGE database of archives relating to German-Jewish refugees www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/cgjs/barg/trial.html and the Mundus project on missionary sources www.mundus.ac.uk

Users of the database will be able to search for NGOs in various ways, such as name (including previous names and the names of related organisations), and areas of interest. Having done so, they are presented with a brief profile of the organisation's history and activities (typically 50-100 words), plus contact details (if applicable), attributed keywords, previous names, related organisations, key dates, and so on.

Once users have identified an organisation they are interested in, they are then able to access data regarding that body's archives. Links to online catalogues are provided, as well as summaries of information held elsewhere, such as in the NRA's catalogue collection, with the aim being to bring together everything that is currently in the public domain. All the essential information for researchers, such as location, extent

and access conditions, is also provided.

However, the DANGO team is not stopping there. The database also includes a large amount of new information, both on collections that were already known to exist, and on hitherto unknown archival sources.

This information is being sourced through questionnaires to current NGOs. These ask, amongst other things, about papers both held by the organisation and deposited with external bodies, access conditions, and a thumbnail guide to the content and scope of the collections. In all, DANGO expects to send out 2-3,000 questionnaires during the lifetime of the project. Although the team was initially uncertain about the response their questionnaires would receive, it now looks like a fruitful approach, and many of the featured collections contain entirely new information. Archives completely unknown to researchers are being uncovered regularly, as the returns roll in.

The goal of guiding researchers towards NGOs' archives, of making the task of assessing their contribution to modern Britain easier to undertake, reflects the wider rationale for the project. While the 'new social movements' of the '50s, '60s and '70s, such as feminism, environmentalism, and the peace movement, have (deservedly) attracted a great deal of scholarly attention, and much is

known about high-profile organisations within those movements, such as the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, the DANGO project was motivated by a sense that there was still a lot missing from the historical record. Many groups made the headlines, and many groups rebelled against 'the system', but there was also an army of less radical, less high-profile bodies; organisations that did not want to change the world or, at least, only wanted to improve a little bit of it. DANGO is a bid to facilitate research that captures the coalition nature of socio-political action, where famous groups are set alongside their less well-known (but maybe equally influential) counterparts.

With this in mind, the DANGO team is organising an academic

conference on the role of NGOs in British society since 1945, to be held in Birmingham in July 2007. As well as exploring this fascinating and emerging area of historical research, it is hoped that the conference will produce an edited collection that could act as a textbook for the topic. The conference call for papers can be found on the DANGO website.

The DANGO website is also intended to act as an ideas-shop for all those researching NGOs. Reading lists for specific areas are available, as are guides to sources and particularly interesting archives, alongside advice for NGOs looking to deposit and preserve their papers and a placement service for trainee archivists interested in working with an NGO.

In fact, the site is full of information about the project. Visitors can view the questionnaire, get an insight into how DANGO defines exactly what an NGO is and, of course, have a go on the prototype database. The team is hungry for feedback so, if you do visit the site, please don't keep your thoughts to yourself!

If you would like any more information on any aspect of the project, or would just like to be kept updated, the team would be delighted to hear from you at dango@contacts.bham.ac.uk

James McKay
DANGO Project Officer

Archival boxes: test results now online

The first results of an initiative to test materials used in conserving library and archive collections have been released by The National Archives (TNA).

Different types of board used to make archival boxes have been tested in the first phase of a programme established with support from the British Library. The aim is to provide accurate and reliable information about materials in common use by conservators, archivists and librarians. The detailed results of the tests are now available on TNA's website: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/

preservation/research/conservation.htm

Although a number of agreed standards have been published for paper, no such standards exist for the board used to house library and archival materials. Since there is no legal definition of the term 'archival quality', products can be described by manufacturers as being of archival quality without any reference to objective evidence of chemical stability or physical durability. Archivists, librarians and conservators need to make informed choices about the materials most appropriate to particular collection items. Boxes chosen to house and display unique and valuable artefacts must be both stable and durable in the long term.

The tests aim to provide key information for professionals to use in making the right choices for their needs. Six types of board were evaluated in relation to their permanence and durability. A full summary of the

tests carried out is given on the website. Also included are the specifications for the three categories of board used within TNA depending on the context of use:

- Grade 1 Board – Permanent and Durable
- Grade 2 Board – Permanent
- Grade 3 Board – Durable

These may be helpful to other institutions in defining their own requirements.

The tests are carried out by independent laboratories in accordance with internationally agreed testing standards. All results will be made widely available by publication on TNA's website. The next results to be reported will be on adhesives.

Visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/preservation/research/conservation.htm for full details.

For further information contact:
nancy.bell@nationalarchives.gov.uk



Records Management in Government Conference 2006

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Successful DCPS students with TNA Chief Executive, Natalie Ceeney (4th from right), and their Liverpool University tutor, Margaret Procter (centre)



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the second day. His presentation – on Transformational Government – explained how modern, efficient and effective knowledge and information management is not only a requirement of the government's new strategic vision but also an important enabler for the achievement of the strategy in the key areas of customer service transformation, shared services and professionalism. Also on the second day Nick Westcott of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office entertained the audience with tales of the challenges faced by the FCO (and others) in information management, and Michael Hoyle of the International Records Management Trust made us all aware of how fortunate we are in the UK by presenting case studies of the records management situations in Sierra Leone and Bangladesh.

The final day of conference provided an interesting mixture of subjects – record keeping in the nuclear industry, information strategy in the Environment Agency and what the introduction of ID cards means for records management. It ended with the formal presentation of certificates and diplomas to successful students on the DCPS: Records and Information Management programme (formerly the rm3 programme) – a just reward for all the hard work that they have put in over the past two years.

All in all it was a highly successful conference with an overwhelming positive response from those who attended. Even the fact that the team led by the Department of Health won the quiz for the third year running didn't detract from its success!

Kelvin Smith
Records Management &
Cataloguing Department
The National Archives

This year's Conference for departmental records officers (DROs) and records managers in government was held at the Hilton Hotel in Gateshead – a new hotel with spectacular views of the Tyne Bridge in Newcastle. It was significant for two reasons – the furthest north that the conference has ever been and the venue for the 21st conference. It was in October 1986 that DROs in government first gathered for this annual event (at Herstmonceux Castle) and over the years we have seen tremendous changes in government record keeping.

The theme of this year's conference was *Sharing to Succeed* – a reflection of some challenging and exciting developments over the past year, not least the Shared Services Initiative and that part of The National Archives' vision that focuses on leading and transforming information management in government. Both were the subject of much debate in the formal sessions of conference and in the bars and corridors afterwards. The delegates (nearly 200) and their colleagues back home are gearing up to deal with the tremendous challenges that we are all facing in the information management community and with the ambitious strategy that TNA is developing over the next five years.

Over the years the conference has evolved into a mixture of workshops, seminars and plenary sessions. This format was continued this year and again appears to have been well received by attendees. There was no surprise in the coverage of the workshops and seminars, which included the Seamless Flow Programme, appraising electronic records, implementation of electronic document and records management (EDRM) systems, and unlocking the potential of public sector information. A central theme, also much talked about by delegates, was the upcoming Information Management Review – assessing how compliant public authorities are with the Code of Practice under section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Impressive speakers

The line up of speakers for the plenary sessions was as impressive as ever. Apart from delivering the opening address to conference, our Chief Executive, Natalie Ceeney, drove the conference in impeccable fashion, keeping speakers to time and ensuring that they did not avoid the difficult issues! Andrew Stott, Deputy Chief Information Officer and Head of Service Transformation in the Cabinet Office gave the keynote speech on

Society of Archivists Conference 2006

This year's Conference was held at Lancaster University on 5-8 September. The theme was the ways in which the archives world is changing, and the implications of this for the profession in terms of education, training and development.

Several speakers suggested that the profession was failing to engage successfully with current developments in archives and the purposes and audiences they serve. The growing importance of community, user-led archives, the dominance of the internet as a source of information, and the complexities of identifying, let alone preserving, the record in the digital environment are rapidly changing the scope of what the profession does, and these themes were explored in a number of papers.

The existing framework of education, training and development is starting to respond to these changes, opening up opportunities for entry to the profession through various forms of distance learning and research,

positive action traineeships, new structures for vocational qualifications and other developments.

Speakers from France Sweden, Malta and Australia gave an international perspective in the light of EU proposals for common competency standards and certification for professions.

Two international case studies looked at different approaches to workforce development through competency standards: the ARMA records and information management standard currently under development in the USA, and the Australian national system which includes a series of 21 competencies in record keeping, mapped to ISO15489, stretching

from school to undergraduate level. The tension between practical application and underpinning theoretical knowledge was a key theme here.

As always, the conference was a good opportunity for Society members to look beyond their own immediate concerns and to debate some fundamental aspects of the archives and records world.

Kevin Mulley
National Advisory Services
The National Archives

New Online Guide to using Manorial Records

As part of the Cumbrian Manorial Records Project, a new online guide for users of manorial documents has recently gone live.

The project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and local sources in Cumbria, was a partnership between the History Department at Lancaster University, The National Archives and Cumbria Archive Service.

Led by Dr Angus Winchester, head of History at Lancaster University, and Dr Eleanor Straughton, as Project Officer, the project has compiled the online Manorial

Documents Register for the historic counties of Cumberland, Westmorland and that part of Lancashire north of the sands of Morecambe Bay, as well as creating the online guide and running a series of workshops for local and family historians, aimed at raising awareness of manorial records and their potential for historical research.

The online guide aims to be a 'toolkit' for users of manorial records, providing advice on their use and interpretation. It includes introductions to manors, manorial administration, and the major

classes of manorial record, a glossary of technical and obsolete terms and a gallery of images showing examples of all the major classes of manorial records, with translations and transcriptions (where necessary), and a commentary explaining the form and content of each document shown.

The guide also advises which classes of manorial records can provide evidence for community, environmental and family history. Since the project concerned Cumbria, other sections of the guide provide useful tips for users of the records of Cumbrian manors, including a guide to superior lordships.

Though the site draws most of its examples from Cumbria, it will be of use to anybody interested in using manorial records, and is, of course, accessible to researchers anywhere in the world.

The guide will be found on the Cumbrian Manorial Records web pages at www.lancs.ac.uk/depts/history/cmr/index.htm



Archivists share skills with museum staff

The Renaissance Sharing Skills programme was put in place to encourage the exchange of skills in various areas of the museum world. A new dimension was added when a project was set up for a professional archivist to look at archive collections held in museums in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

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This shows the strongroom at Dimbola Lodge before my first visit. They especially wanted advice on how to upgrade this storage area

The *Understanding Archives in the South East* report, 2005, highlighted among its findings the need to create training opportunities to increase awareness of archival principles and practices amongst those working outside the core archive community, with the aim of raising standards in collections care and access. Many smaller museums are run wholly or largely by volunteers or those with no professional qualifications, and few qualified museum professionals have had any archive training. And yet many of these museums hold substantial archive holdings, including original manuscripts, photographs, newspaper cuttings, audiovisual material and a large number of rare books and journals.

The Sharing Skills Archives in Museums Project was established to address this identified need, with a pilot running in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight (HIOW).

The project has been implemented by Heather Boyns, a professional archivist already employed part-time as Archive Project Officer for the National Motor Museum Trust (NMMT), Beaulieu, through Designation Challenge Fund (DCF) funding. Therefore Heather already had a practical knowledge of the challenges facing archive collections in museums. The project is hosted at Beaulieu and co-managed at MLA South East by Regional Museum Development Manager, Laura Williams. Partnership working also took place, with the Hampshire Record Office, Isle of Wight Record Office and the Museum Development Service for HIOW all contributing to the project.

A Steering Group, formed of Laura Williams, the Museum Development Officers for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, Andrea Bishop (Collections and



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Information Manager, NMMT) and Heather Boyns was established to guide and evaluate the project in practical terms.

Phase 1 of this project (a pilot running from October 2005 to March 2006) was funded by the SE Museums Hub as part of a Renaissance funded programme managed by MLA South East. An initial mapping exercise was undertaken to establish the current situation in HIOW, with a questionnaire sent to all Registered or Accredited museums in the sub-region, which initially achieved an 88% return rate.

The participants for the training days came from a variety of museums:

- 74 participants attended the five training days;
- with 13 people attending more than one, including one person who attended all five sessions;
- 97 attendances were recorded for the five sessions;
- participants came from 41 different museums, with four Isle of Wight museums and 11 military museums being represented;
- 32 HIOW museums were represented, constituting 37% of all museums in the sub-region.

The valuable information gathered from these questionnaires was analysed and used to inform the training programme which was organised as part of the project. The programme for the five training sessions was put together by the steering group and in partnership with the staff of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Record Offices. These covered general archive-related subjects, including:

- a structured visit to Beaulieu for the seven museums who received visits from the Archive Project Officer, to give an insight into project work, using the DCF projects at the National Motor Museum Trust as a case study
- interpretation of archives (use in exhibitions, education programmes, and the preservation issues raised by this use), involving staff from the Isle of Wight Record Office in a skills sharing exercise

- cataloguing of archives: theory and practice, including international standards
- general stewardship of archives (preservation, conservation, storage, handling) undertaken entirely by the staff of Hampshire Record Office, linked to their outreach programme
- a session on digitisation and copyright when putting collections online

From the evaluation from all the sessions 100% of participants from all sessions indicated that they would recommend the training session; 100% stated they would attend future sessions; and 93% of all attendees rated the sessions overall as excellent, very good, or good.

Alongside the training programme and in line with the need to target resources effectively, a group of seven museums in the sub-region

were selected, to benefit from site visits from the Archive Project Officer. These seven museums were: Army Physical Training Corps Museum; Classic Boat Museum; Cowes Maritime Museum; Dimbola Lodge (Julia Margaret Cameron Trust); Gilbert White's House & The Oates Museum; Jane Austen's House Museum; and Petersfield Museum. These museums were given feedback in the form of a report with recommendations on a number of areas, including storage, preservation, cataloguing, and exhibition of material. The reports have been used by the museums for a variety of uses such as a basis for a grant application or as advocacy to present to museum trustees.

A Resource Pack was also produced and given to each of these museums; this constituted a collection of information to help the museum with the care and use of their archives including information on archive related grant programmes, policies relating to archives, and various publications from institutions such as The National Archives and the National Preservation Office. One museum stated on their evaluation form that "The Resource Pack is extremely useful." It is the intention that these information packs will help to ensure the sustainability and ongoing benefit of the project.

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These two photos show the transformation of the strongroom following the advice given through the Sharing Skills Archives in Museums project



The storage of the archives at Petersfield local history museum was assessed as basic on the first visit in December 2005

Based on the proven success of the first project, Phase 2 is currently underway, funded by MLA South East, under the Renaissance banner. Running from April to December 2006, this second phase will see more visits to museums (this time the focus being on military museums) alongside repeats to those museums visited in the first phase of the project, to acknowledge and evaluate any changes/improvements and offer continuing advice.

More training sessions will be run, including a number of taster sessions in the other sub-regions of the South East, looking at preservation, storage and digitisation of archive material, using the collections at NMMT as a case study. There will also be a new phase of sessions run in HIOW, offering sessions on marketing an archive service, funding available for archive collections, and looking specifically at the conservation issues relating to rare books.



This Sharing Skills Project has been an incredible success so far, thanks to the involvement and engagement of the museums in HIOW. Most importantly,

demonstrable benefit has been delivered to HIOW museums through Renaissance funding. Staff and volunteers from HIOW museums have actively engaged and expressed positive feedback. A model of successful partnership working has been established, involving the Hub, Regional MLA, Regional Museums Development Service and an independent museum with Designated collections, showing the value of co-managing and delivering Renaissance initiatives from non-hub museums with specialist staff.

By the time of the repeat visit in July 2006 improvements had been made with the use of acid-free boxes and folders



It is hoped that the project will be rolled out across the whole of the SE region from April 2007 given museums in the other sub-regions the chance to engage in and benefit from this project. An 'Archives in Museums' Subject Specialist Network (SSN) is also being explored, following a successful bid for an MLA Exploratory Grant, to develop a national support network promoting the exchange of skills between professional archivists and museum staff working with archival collections.



For more information about the project, or to get involved in the SSN, please contact Heather Boyns: heather.boyns@beaulieu.co.uk 01590 614759

Continuing Professional Development: who needs it?

As a profession, do archivists and records managers get the status and remuneration we deserve? We do seem to be well-respected by our colleagues, the public and academic researchers – but do we yet have the prerequisites that entitle us to call it a profession, on a par with that of doctors and solicitors? This article looks at whether CPD is a vital part of professionalism as well as what it entails and whether it offers any benefits.

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Margaret
Crockett

What makes a profession?

"Professional membership carries with it a responsibility to maintain professional standards through acting ethically, adhering to the profession's code of practice, and keeping up-to-date through ongoing development."
(Professional Accreditation of Conservator-Restorers website).

A profession could be defined as the skills and expertise to carry out the range of functions within an occupation. The word profession implies the necessity for more background knowledge than perhaps a trade, which is a similar entity but usually regarded as being more practical, less intellectual. If we look at the teaching, legal and medical professions, there seem to be a number of elements to qualifying as a professional:

- Theory (education, study)
- Practical application (training, practicals)
- Probation (the newly educated/trained phase)
- Keeping up with new developments, techniques and practice

- Membership of an advocacy body for the profession
- Voluntary or compulsory 'policing' by a regulating body to an agreed or accepted standard

We already have most of these elements for our profession: the entry post-graduate qualification carries a prerequisite of work experience in the field as well as (albeit limited) practicals as part of the course; the course of study itself provides the theory along with the techniques and skills considered to be the base-line requirement for practising; a proportion of qualifying archivists/records managers undertake the Society of Archivists' registration scheme, which is analogous to the probation phase – the resulting body of work is reflected upon and analysed to provide a benchmark of knowledge and expertise; there are a variety of professional bodies which represent members of the profession and advocate the care of archives and records (although it would be useful, another time, to examine whether these organisations are meeting the needs of the modern profession).



The main piece that appears to be missing is the keeping up with new developments, techniques and practice. In reality the vast majority of us do attend the occasional training course, go to the odd conference, read some of the professional literature – but there is as yet no formal way of recognising and assessing it so an outsider could be forgiven for thinking that there is a danger that many in our profession stagnate after registration. The regulating body would of course be closely linked to this and we do have a number of organisations that might be developed in this direction. Of

course those of us who look after and provide access to archives and records will never have the profile and status of doctors and lawyers but I would really like to see the establishment of more formal CPD as part of the requirement for professional membership together with a body to regulate it. After all, if the conservators have found the resources to establish their Institute, there is no reason why we shouldn't be able to.

What does Continuing Professional Development entail?

So, what would a formal CPD scheme consist of? A little piece of internet research resulted in some examples of requirements:

- Dentists must keep up skills and knowledge throughout their working life by law. They have to complete 250 hours of continuing professional development every five years .
- The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) has a revalidation scheme which allows its chartered members (the gold standard for library and information management practitioners) to gain "evidence and recognition of their commitment to personal professional development" . There are no specific requirements regarding the time or range of CPD activity, candidates submit a personal statement reflecting on the outcomes of their CPD since the last revalidation and provide evidence of CPD activity.
- The Professional Accreditation of Conservator-Restorers (PACR) scheme is both an initial professional qualification (whereby the scheme examines conservators to ensure they can practice to the agreed standard) and a CPD vehicle. To remain accredited conservator-restorers are required to carry out regular reviews of ongoing learning and development and identify areas for further development – 10% of the accredited membership is randomly selected for review each year. As with CILIP, the

guidelines are not specific about quantity or range.

We can see from these examples that requirements vary from a very specific number of hours to the less structured requirement of a personal statement (albeit backed up by evidence of CPD activity). Both CILIP and PACR provide good literature and templates for documenting CPD on their websites (delving too closely into what dentists do seemed unnecessary for the purposes of this article!). But in short, it could be argued that if we wanted to go for formal CPD, we could also help to select a scheme with the requirements most appropriate for our profession.

What are the benefits of CPD?

So much for requirements, what would be the benefits to individuals and the archives and records management profession? The benefits of CPD to dentists are very clear: without participation in the CPD scheme, they are unable to practice. The benefits to CILIP members are less obvious, but if candidates have successfully completed two rounds of revalidation, they are eligible to apply for Fellow status in a better position than fellowship applicants who have not reflected on their professional development in the same way. Conservator-Restorers are able to add the ACR designation after their names, use the PACR logo on their correspondence and literature and their "status will be raised to a level comparable with other professions [they] may work alongside" (PACR website).

Do we need these kinds of benefits? Obviously we are not and have no need to be a regulated profession like dentists. The CILIP scheme fits very firmly into a graded membership structure along which members may progress. The PACR scheme's selling pitch is around status and peer recognition among fellow heritage sector professionals.

As long as the public and employers are content with the service they receive from us and are not exercised by the

professional credentials of their archivists and records managers, there is no compelling impetus to embrace a compulsory CPD scheme. The main benefits of CPD remain intangible. In focusing on CPD, professionals keep a watching brief on their skills, expertise and knowledge covering both specialist areas and more general, contextual issues. They are able to identify achievements, areas where they are challenged or have difficulties and acknowledge mistakes or things they could do better. All this helps them to grow in their current job and role as well as affect any changes they need to make to achieve future career ambitions. Even if many of us do this already, CPD enables us to focus more and thereby attain more of our career goals.

In conclusion

I am a great advocate of CPD, since I believe it is one of the key requirements for us to claim we are professionals. I also think most of us are doing it, even if it is rather informal. However, many of us seem to be very reluctant to accept any compulsory CPD scheme – the Society of Archivists withdrew proposals for such a scheme in the face of membership opposition before it came to a vote. It is now running a pilot scheme , which I am participating in, but which I think has a very low participation and lacks decisive direction.

The latest profession to adopt compulsory CPD is the Records Management Association of Australasia (RMAA). This organisation's press release states: "A mandatory CPD Program is a global trend amongst professional practice." This generation of archivists and records managers may not see the benefits of CPD in terms of enhancing our status and professionalism, resulting in better pay and more respect and "clout" in the workplace. But we have to start somewhere, and if we are not careful we risk lagging behind our sister professions in this country and abroad.

Margaret Crockett
Consultant Archivist and Records Manager

The 21st Nordic Archives Conference

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Conference
delegates



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Besides keynote speeches from intellectuals/authors outside the profession but with a relation to archival sources (think people like A.S. Byatt and Julian Barnes) and a panel-discussion with the national archivists led by a TV-journalist, there were four parallel themes for the meeting: 'Risk assessment and security matters', 'Long term digital preservation', 'Uses of history' and 'How archives relate to the surrounding society'. This article will focus on the last of the themes.

The session 'How archives relate to the surrounding society' was opened by Arne Skivenes, Municipal Archivist of Bergen, former chairman of the Norwegian Association of Local and Private Archives and member of the Board of the ICA/Section of Municipal Archives. He noted that the perception of the role of archives in society is under discussion and in change. In Norway the debate during recent years has taken its starting point in the concept 'service to the public' and it has become evident that there are very different views on what it covers and includes. Enjoyment, documentary evidence and democratic rights have been central parts of the discussion. There are differing views on to what extent one should stick to the distinctive character and specific functions of archives or how much the common experience of the memory sector (museums, libraries and archives) should be made relevant to archival institutions. The question has wide implications: the balance between efforts towards public or private material, how we handle appraisal and disposal, common design of premises and services, just to name a few. The different views on questions like these often stem from differing opinions on the

Since the late 1940s the National Archives of the Nordic countries have met for conferences every third year hosted in circulation between Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Originally intended for the public sector, it has grown into a concern for the whole archival community. In August 2006 it was time for the 21st conference to be held in the Swedish city of Uppsala. For three days 460 Nordic archivists listened to presentations and took part in discussions and socialised for the benefit of the archival cause.

societal role of archives and lead to different consequences with regard to the relations between archives and the surrounding world. The societal demands on archives which are feasible today will in many cases call for change in established notions, priorities and work methods within the archival community.

Bente Jensen, Municipal Archives of Aalborg, and Charlotte S.H. Jensen, State Archives of Denmark, went on to discuss the objectives, methods and concepts in outreach work. They argued that it is necessary to develop precise definitions and objectives, not at least because the concepts cover

quite different forms of activities that could be aimed at different groups of the public. Michelle Foggett, Community Partnerships Manager for the Moving Here project, presented the ideas behind, the work process and the results of the project. The experiences drawn are of great interest to the Nordic countries where museum, library and archive and multicultural perspectives are becoming increasingly relevant.

Finally, Christer Bogefeldt made an introduction to the following panel discussion by mentioning some of the problems and possibilities connected with The Archives Day, which has been a yearly event in

Sweden since 1998 and since a couple of years ago is all-Nordic. The International Council on Archives works to establish an International Archives Day with UN approval and status. But there are critical voices – is it worth the trouble? What is our experience and how could we get more value for the money? Comparisons could – and should – be made with the Archives Awareness Campaign in the UK!

For further information on the Conference and its content please contact Christer Bogefeldt, Cultural Affairs Officer, National Archives of Sweden, christer.bogefeldt@riksarkivet.ra.se

Moving Here at The Nordic Archives Conference

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Michelle Foggett explains the Moving Here Project

The Moving Here consortium and The National Archives were recently represented at the 21st Nordic Archives Conference in Uppsala, Sweden. Michelle Foggett, Community Partnerships Manager of Moving Here (www.movinghere.org.uk), discussed the project and how archives, museums and libraries can work together to empower individuals to become their own record-makers.

Michelle explained how working in partnership, Moving Here has created a single point of access to digitised content about migration history to England. The Moving Here partnership, through funding by the Heritage Lottery Fund, has now used this content to overcome barriers to the direct involvement of minority ethnic groups in recording and documenting their own history of migration and to ensure that this history is passed on to the next generation through schools. The website has been the source for inspiration for hundreds of oral history recordings.

Over the past two years, Moving Here partners around England have

been using the Moving Here website as a tool for teaching basic skills such as computer and English literacy. Museums established good relationships with community groups. Libraries, through the People's Network, provided resources for training. Archives will hold the permanent memory of this project and the migration stories it has generated. Lasting links between local community groups and local services have been made.

The Moving Here website has been the inspiration for online education resources for key stages 2 and 3. In March 2007 a new e-learning site and hundreds of migration stories will be added to Moving Here. The website will truly be a place where users of all ages can engage and interact, in a personal way, with the history of immigration in England and their own memories of migration.

The partnership has resulted in new museum, library and archive users. It has empowered new users to be active participants in record-making while learning basic skills. The partnership has left us a richer



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website, richer museums, archives and libraries and we hope, richer communities where connections with new migrants are forged and flourish.

For more information please contact Michelle Foggett, Community Partnerships Manager, michelle.foggett@nationalarchives.gov.uk

Case studies



The Royal Botanic Gardens Archive has for the last two years been involved in a large digitisation project relating to African plants, artefacts and archive material held at Kew.

This article provides a case study of the African Plants Initiative (API), the largest digitisation project of its kind, focusing on information about the flora of an entire continent. The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew has played a key role in the API, digitising and cataloguing both plant specimens and non-specimen archival material, including one the archive's most important collections, the Directors' correspondence.

Opening the doors on the world of African plants



In September 2003, at a conference of African botanists held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, an idea was debated which proposed taking the taxonomic world into a new era through the development of a united digital library of information about African plants. This idea found support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and has, over the past three years, grown into an initiative of global importance to the botanical community – the African Plants Initiative (API).

Since the outset, the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew has played a role as one of the lead partners in the API. The African Plants Initiative is a collaboration of partners working together to create and provide the digital information about African plants that will be made accessible through the online library. The partnership has expanded throughout the past three year period and currently consists of 45 partner herbaria from Africa, Europe and the United States.

The African Plants Initiative (API) in fact addresses just one strand of the multi-disciplinary online resource known as Aluka. The Aluka initiative, also adopted in 2003, began with the aim of producing an online digital library of scholarly resources from and about the developing world. Aluka is one of several international digitisation initiatives (e.g. Jstor, ArtStor) incubated within the not-for-profit consortium known as Ithaka.

For the past three years Aluka has been focused on the region of Africa, gathering digitised material within three distinct subject areas. The three areas are Struggles for Freedom, covering information about the social history of southern Africa, Cultural Heritage Sites, including, for example, interactive maps and 3D models, and, of course, African Plants. More information about Aluka can be gained from a visit to the Aluka webpages at www.aluka.org. The

digital library is not yet available but is due for an initial launch in Spring 2007. In order to support the goal for a sustainable resource, it is expected that the Aluka online libraries will be made available on a subscription basis, with fees fed directly back in to the maintenance and development of the site.

Digitisation work for the African Plants Initiative in the Kew Herbarium began in earnest in Spring 2004. Since that time we have imaged and data-based almost 70,000 African plant specimen records. The focus to date of specimen digitisation work has

been on specimens known as 'types'. Types are reference specimens directly linked to the original descriptions of named groups of plants such as species and subspecies. These type specimens are fundamental to the taxonomic practice of classifying and naming living organisms. They act to fix a newly published name to a set of characters which are displayed in the reference specimen cited by the publishing author as typical of the named group.

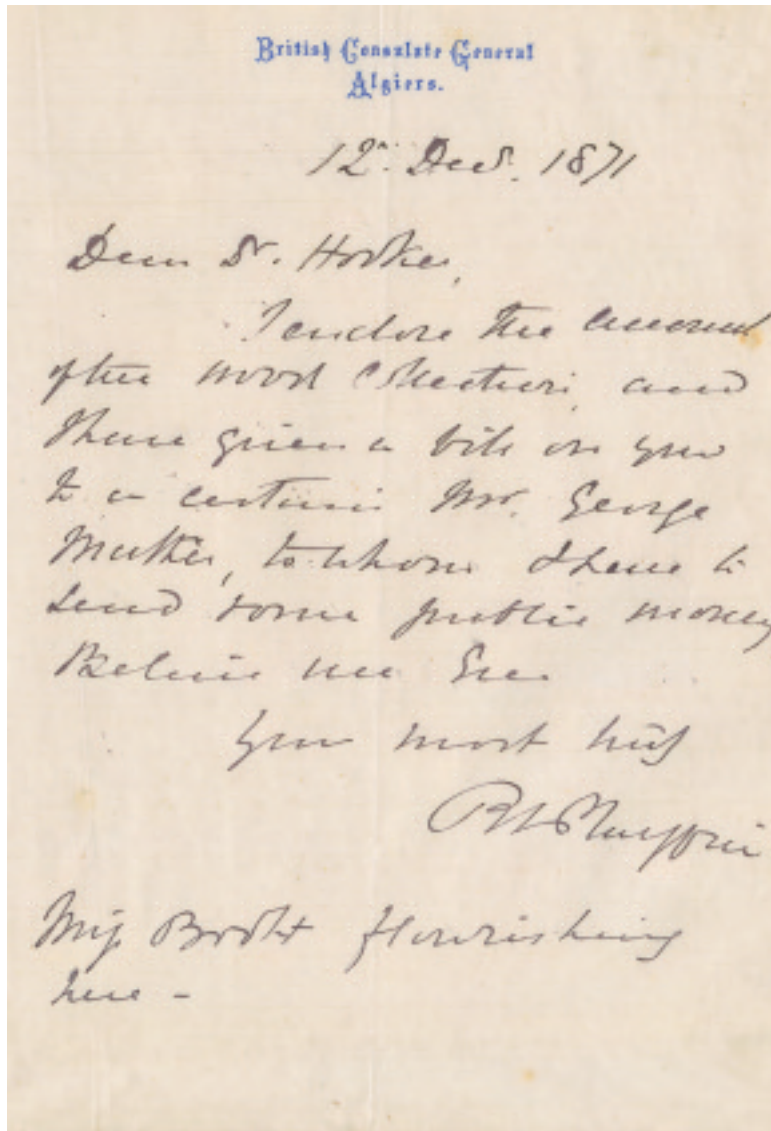
As regards the herbarium specimens, the digitisation process first involves locating the African type material within the collections. The step is made easier through the practice of storing type specimens in paper sleeves with red edges, meaning that they stand out against the many other specimens stored in simple manila-coloured paper sleeves. The Herbarium at Kew is also managed in a way that takes into consideration both the taxonomy of the plant and the geographical location from which it was collected. Again this aids the process of selecting the material for digitisation.

Once the plant material has been selected, each sheet and each independent specimen is marked with a unique barcode. Data about the specimen, including naming and collection information, is then entered manually into Kew's centralised Herbarium Catalogue (HerbCat). Each sheet is then imaged in colour at high resolution (600ppi) before it is returned to the herbarium cupboards. The imaging is carried out using the HerbScan set-up designed by a member of Kew staff. The HerbScan is a simple metal frame which holds a graphics quality flat-bed scanner in an inverted position. The specimen is placed on a foam bed which can be raised with a single turn of a lever, to bring the specimen up to the scanning surface. The HerbScan thereby

1
Map of Lake Nyassa drawn by Sir John Kirk during the Zambesi Expedition, 1860. [From the Zambesi Expedition Archives digitisation project]



2
Letter from Sir Robert Lambert Playfair to Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker, from Algiers, 12 December 1871. [From the current Directors' Correspondence digitisation project]



Kew have made all of our digitised herbarium material, from Africa and beyond, available through our online Herbarium Catalogue (www.kew.org/herbcat). When available Aluka will bring the added value of a search capability that transcends the physical location of the collections and the also the resource type.

This brings us on to the non-specimen material which is being included in the African Plants Initiative. In addition to the digitisation of herbarium specimens, the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew has also contributed digital copies of illustrations, including original illustrations commissioned for publication in *Curtis' Botanical Magazine*, and collections of individual artists and plant collectors, such as Olive Palgrave and Francis Masson. In addition several of the staff botanists at Kew have kindly agreed to allow the digital reproduction of their personal collections of transparencies.

Crucial to the goal of improving access to information about African plants has been the provision of descriptions of African plant species through the electronic capture of relevant Kew publications. For example *Flora Zambesiaca* (Pope, G. (Ed.), 1960-onwards) provides descriptions of species of plants from the Zambezi River basin area. Meanwhile the *Useful Plants of West Tropical Africa* (Burkill, H.M.,

allows specimens to be scanned at a very high quality without inverting the specimen and risking damage to the plant material.

Each partner within the African Plants Initiative retains full rights to the images and data that they create. The Royal Botanic Gardens,

Zambesi Expedition (1859-1883)

From March to August 2005, archive material relating to the Zambesi Expedition (1859-1883) was digitised and catalogued. This was a pilot scheme before appointing a team of dedicated digitisers/cataloguers, who would scan and catalogue letters from the Directors' Correspondence, relating to Africa. The Expedition was headed by Sir David Livingstone with Sir John Kirk (1832-1922) as the Naturalist and Thomas Baines (1820-1875) as Store Keeper and Artist. The documents

comprised of correspondence, notes, press cuttings and plant lists relating to the expedition. The main purpose of this expedition was to extend the knowledge gained on previous expeditions into mineral and agricultural resources of Eastern and Central Africa, as well as improve knowledge on the local inhabitants and establishing trade links with the same inhabitants, as per instructed by the British Government. The botanical collections gathered during the expedition being Government property were sent to the Royal Botanic Gardens at

Kew and the British Museum and were collected and described by John Kirk. The expedition concentrated on the Zambesi itself as well as its mouths and tributaries. John Kirk's letters give a fascinating insight into the geography, geology and botany of the expedition; furthermore, there are many observations of the native people they encountered as well as comments on their contact with Portuguese Slavers. Also included are letters from Dr Livingstone regarding the preparation for the expedition and some of Thomas Baines.

1985) provides information on the uses and common names of economically important plant species grown that area. *The Flora of West Tropical Africa* (1927-1936, revised 1954-1972) has also been

supplied to Aluka. The digitisation of text-based material is ongoing, with the planned provision of the *Flora of Tropical East Africa* (1952-onwards), the *Flora of Tropical Africa* (1868-onwards) and *Flora*

Capensis (1859-1933). Together these last three floras will add descriptions of approximately 30,000 species to the Aluka online library.

Directors' Correspondence Digitisation Project

The Directors' correspondence is one of the largest collections in the Archives, comprising of 218 volumes of letters addressed to the Directors at Kew and Senior staff, all bound to the same format. For the project, the volumes relating to Africa only were selected.

The process of digitising letters sent to Kew from Africa (dating from the 1860s to the early 20th century) begins with a volume of folios being disbound into folders within boxes. A digitiser takes a box and indexes each folder and its contents, entering key information into an Access database. The database is essential in helping us manage the digitisation process and ensures that the letters, once finished with, will be stored in the correct order. We record the letter's place within the box, its folio number and key words that appear on the page. Each letter is given an identifying number that will later form the basis of an image filename.

An indexed box is brought to the scanning room and digital images are generated using Adobe Photoshop at a resolution of 600 dpi. We handle the material as carefully as we can when scanning the letters, at the same time ensuring we capture the best possible image.

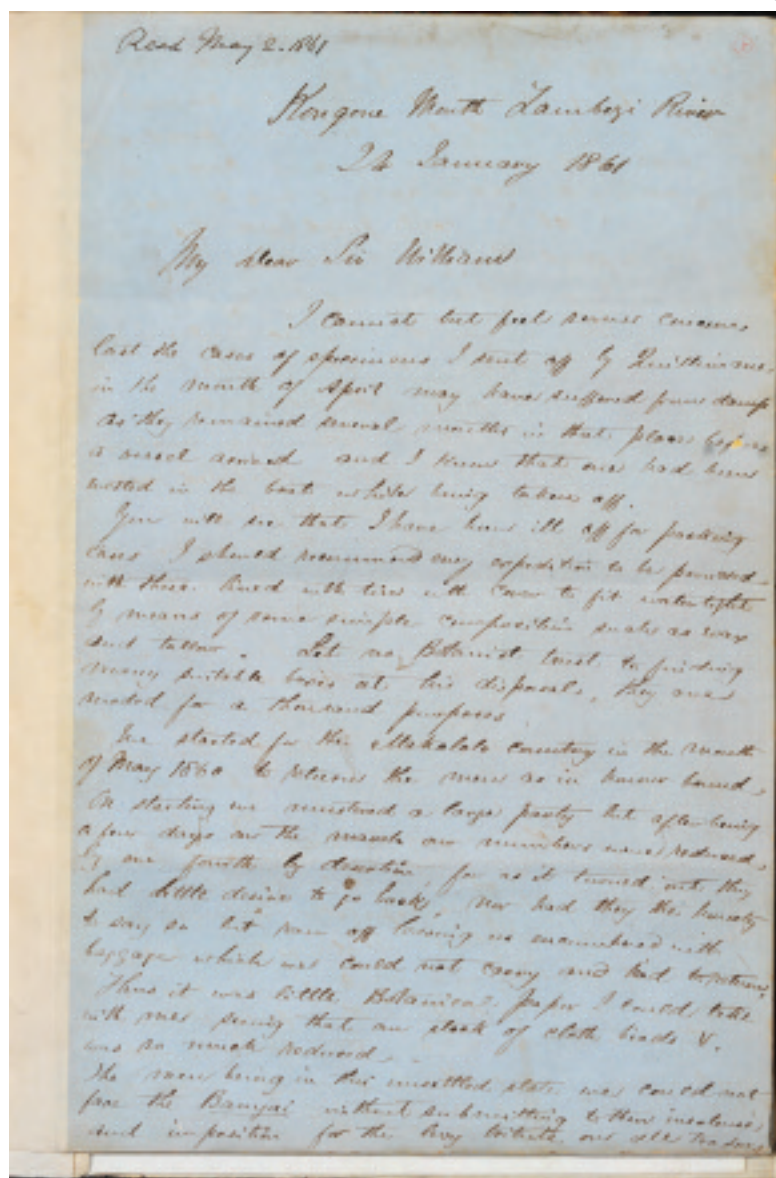
The letters vary in condition and the type of paper used; naturally those written on thin paper and had been folded in the bound volume can be especially fragile. A grey scale and colour patch are placed alongside the letter when scanned, as is a ruler with the Kew logo, which acts as a copyright method. Each scan is given a unique filename and documented on the Access database. The size

and volume of the images means it is necessary to store them on external HDDs (hard disk drives).

Once the scanning is complete, a second digitiser carries out quality control on ten percent of the images. The assessed criteria includes whether the image is free from foreign objects, if the RBC colour mode is even, or if writing

has been mistakenly cropped. If an image fails any of the various requirements, the letter is re-scanned. Our next step is to upload the images onto TOAD, Kew's image database. Due to the large file size of each image, we must first compress copies of the images (with a zipping programme) before uploading them. The images are then registered on the database

3
Letter from
Sir John Kirk to
Sir William
Hooker from the
Zambesi River,
24 January 1861
[From the
Zambesi
Expedition
Archives
digitisation
project]



3

and appear as thumbnails when searched for within TOAD.

The most time consuming part of the process is creating the metadata records for each letter to accompany the corresponding images on TOAD. The 'description' field requires us to read the entirety of the letter and write a concise summary, paying particular reference to people, places and plant names. The length of a letter and, more importantly, the legibility of a correspondent's handwriting can greatly differ. Correspondents are diplomats, botanists, missionaries, explorers, civil servants amongst others people from many walks of life. The historical context of the times and the exotic locations these people were writing from means the details of their lives can make for fascinating reading.

Ten percent of the metadata is also subject to quality control. The record is checked for typing errors, spelling and grammar, as well as the accuracy of dates, names, and reference numbers. The final part of the process is to fill an external HDD with original images and metadata extracted from TOAD. This is exported to Aluka in New Jersey. Unsurprisingly, with a project reliant on IT and digital equipment problems of a technical nature do arise. For example, the possibility of corrupt images or broken HDDs are two factors which can affect the progress of the project and detract from time spent digitising. This is perhaps an inevitable part of all digitisation projects and but can be beneficial in terms of developing greater expertise amongst digitisers.

4
Three specimens of *Convolvulus capensis* var. *capensis*, collected in South Africa. At least one of these specimens on this second sheet was once part of William Hooker's private herbarium purchased by the state for the Kew collection after his death in 1865.

A type specimen of *Welwitschia mirabilis* collected by Welwitsch himself.



Authors:

Anna Saltmarsh, Digital Collections Manager of the Herbarium,
Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
Michele Losse, Archivist, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
Laura Briggs, Archives Digitiser, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Opening the Electronic Gateway to Lambeth Palace Library

Lambeth Palace Library, the historic library of the Archbishops of Canterbury and the principal library and record office for the history of the Church of England will shortly be completing the first phase of an ambitious project to put all of its archival catalogues online.

5a and 5b
Glass Lantern
slides of National
Society schools
c1900

The Library was founded in 1610, when Archbishop Bancroft bequeathed his collection of printed books and manuscripts to his successors, and has been a public library ever since then.

The collections, dating from the 9th century, document not only the Church but also almost every area of life, including art and architecture, politics, society, colonial and Commonwealth history, local history and genealogy. Millions of handwritten documents

and pages preserve unique and precious records of our past. The importance of the library was underlined in late 2005 when the Museums Libraries and Archives council designated the entire library collection as of National and International importance.

The Library launched its appeal to convert its catalogues in 2005 and the imminent completion of phase one will see the launch of the archival catalogue on the library's website. Since the project started,



5a

the catalogue has been merged with that of the Church of England Record Centre where work had begun on cataloguing the archives of the central Church institutions. This single, integrated catalogue already contains nearly 100,000 entries.

While cataloguing at the Record Centre is still in its early days, basic records of National Society schools have been created and include those such as Haworth school where the local vicar, Patrick

Project plan

Phase 1, 2005-2006. Archives of the Archbishops of Canterbury, including correspondence and papers from the Middle Ages to the present, reflecting their role in the Church and public life.

Phase 2, 2006-2007. Heritage Collections of the Archbishops; a rich and diverse collection, including family archives from Tudor and Stuart periods, and correspondence and papers of church leaders, statesmen, diplomats, and kings and queens. Material ranges from records of Queen Anne's Commission for Building Fifty New Churches to the medical reports on the madness of George III.

Phase 3, 2008-2010. Archives of Church and people through the centuries. Including the archive of the Court of Arches – the court of appeal for the Province of Canterbury – one of the foremost sources for marriage, divorce and the social history of England and Wales from the 17th century onwards.

Fundraising: The Trustees of the Library, chaired by the Archbishop of Canterbury, launched an appeal to raise these funds and to date, have raised enough to complete phase 1 and begin phase 2. We aim to complete the catalogue by 2010, our 400th anniversary. Contributions are most welcome, payable to Lambeth Palace Library.



5b

Bronte, bid (successfully) for funds in 1843 to expand his local school, arguing in a tactical manner designed to elicit funds-"I do not hesitate to say, that the populace in general, are either ignorant or wicked, and in most cases where they have a little learning, it is either of a schismatical variety, vainly philosophical, or treacherously political [in] nature." Needless to say, his was not the view of the Society. The Revd. Patrick Bronte also crops up in the library's archive with a letter to Charles Longley, the then Bishop of Ripon following the death of his daughter Charlotte in 1855.

The Ecclesiastical Commissioners Surveys of the Ecclesiastical Corporation preferment Estates of England and Wales (including bishopric and cathedral estates), were undertaken on behalf of the Commissioners, roughly during the period from the 1840s to the end of the 19th century, when a great deal of church lands and assets were transferred to them – they are in effect a 'mini-domesday' of church lands. For example, the volume covering the village of Winscombe in Somerset runs to nearly 500 pages and details all of the property; the tenancies; the income; and the 'customs of the manor', concluding with the recommendation that apart from retaining the vicarage and land for a possible future church, the majority should be sold. In the

The Church of England Record Centre

The Record Centre houses the records of the central church organisations from the early 1700s to the present day. As such it is an archive of the organisations that managed and regulated its assets and supported the church's local ministry through financially assisting the poorer clergy. Its records include those of the Queens Anne's Bounty and Ecclesiastical Commissioners – forerunners of today's Church Commissioners.

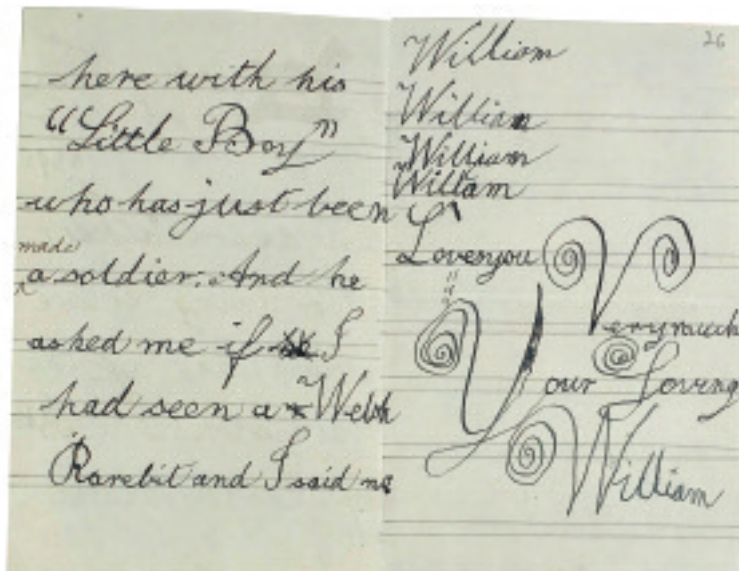
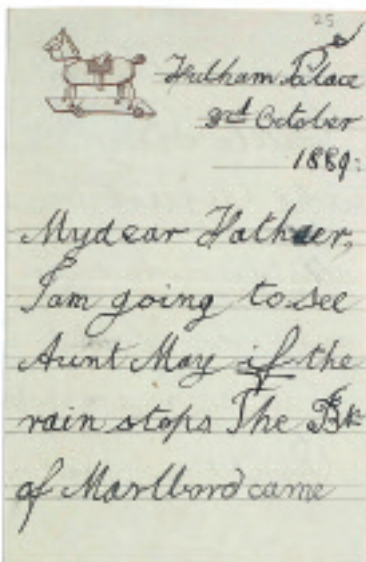
Also present are the records of 'The National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church throughout England and Wales' which was at the forefront in developing education for much of the 19th century and assisted in the foundation of thousands of church schools across the country. The 'National Society' continues to be a pioneering force within the state education sector. Its records include files on most church schools in England and Wales – an archive that touches communities across both countries.

A further holding is the records of the General Synod of the Church of England and its predecessor the Church Assembly, which includes material concerning a wide range of ethical and social issues ranging from race relations to nuclear disarmament that have engaged the Church's attention since the First World War.

6
A Privy Council
letter ordering M
Q Scots execution

A letter from
William to
Frederick Temple

6



Library are records relating to the 19th century rebuilding of the Church including the plans of the church – available online at www.churchplansonline.org

Spreading the word

The Library's websites already receive millions of hits each year,

revealing a huge demand for access to the collections. The catalogue of the library's printed books is already available online, and the Library and Church of England Record Centre together deal with over 8,000 enquiries a year and nearly 2,000 visitors through their reading room at the Library. With the creation of a single online catalogue for the archives of the Library and Record Centre access to this rich heritage will be even easier, enabling the Church to share its heritage with an ever wider audience, continuing the tradition of free access established nearly 400 years ago.

Declan Kelly
Director of Libraries, Archives and Information Services
National Church Institutions of the Church of England



7
Archbishop
Archibald
Campbell Tait –
Archbishop of
Canterbury from
1868-1882

Accessing Lambeth Palace Library and the Church of England Record Centre

Library

Address: Lambeth Palace Library,
London SE1 7JU

Email: lpl.staff@c-of-e.org.uk

Phone: 020 7898 1400

Website:

www.lambethpalacelibrary.org

Librarian and Archivist:

Dr. Richard Palmer BA PhD

Record Centre

Address: 15 Galleywall Road,
South Bermondsey, London
SE16 3PB

Email: archivist@c-of-e.org.uk

Phone: 020 7898 1030

Website:

[www.cofe.anglican.org/about/
librariesandarchives/](http://www.cofe.anglican.org/about/librariesandarchives/)

Documenting the workshop of the world: promoting business records in the Black Country

“The Black Country, black by day and red by night, cannot be matched, for vast and varied production, by any other space of equal radius on the surface of the globe”
– Elihu Burritt, American Consul to Birmingham, describing the Black Country in the 1860s.

One of the strengths of the Black Country archives is their holdings of business collections. Advances in manufacturing technology and transportation during the late 18th and early 19th century allowed the region to exploit its rich mineral base of coal and ironstone. This gave rise to the growth of heavy industry and a proliferation of associated trades.

The collections of business records and photographs housed locally reflect the breadth and diversity of industrial enterprise for which the Black Country is best known and

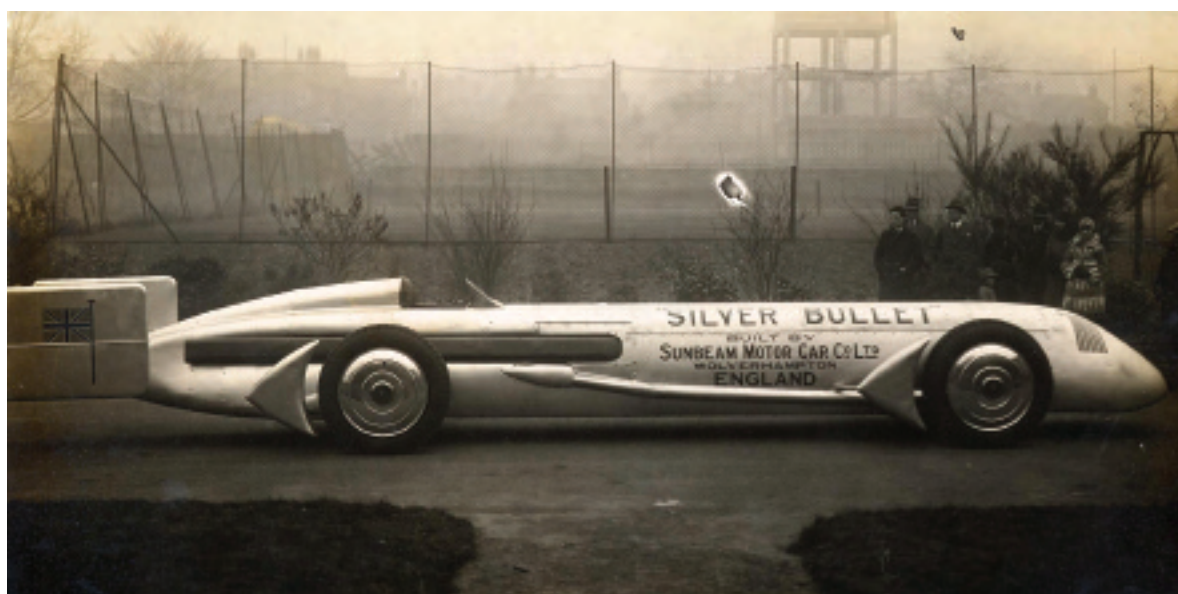
can be seen, more broadly, as a microcosm of Britain’s industrial development during the 19th century.

Business collections in the Black Country form one of the richest, yet least-used sources of primary material held by the region’s local authority archive services. Traditionally, the local record office is seen as the domain of the genealogist and certainly, in terms of visitor statistics, family historians make up the main numbers through the door. What this means is that business records

suffer from low levels of usage given their limited usefulness for family history researchers.

On the other hand, those actively seeking to use business records often find their research hindered by sketchy lists or uncatalogued material inaccessible in strongrooms. A renewed focus has been placed on the preservation and use of business records by the recent appointment of Robert Brown, the new Business Records Development Officer who is based at The National Archives (TNA). Part of his role will be to develop a

8
The ‘Silver Bullet’, built by the Sunbeam Motor Car Co. Ltd, Wolverhampton. The car achieved a land speed of 190 mph in 1930. (Wolverhampton Archives and Local Studies, P/3480)



The smallest tube in the world, made by Accles and Pollock of Oldbury in 1963. (Sandwell Community History and Archives Service, BS-AP)

national policy for business archives which, in turn, will give fresh impetus to the promotion of business records both in specialist repositories and local authority record offices.

This idea is being taken further at a regional level by the Black Country archive services who have collectively embarked on an innovative project to improve access to, and encourage the use of, its archive collections, and in particular its holdings of company records. This article looks briefly at the problems facing local authority-run archives, and explains how the Black Country is overcoming a number of these inherent issues in a bid to 'Document the Workshop of the World'.

Business records and the local authority sector

The single most important problem facing local authority archive services is the cataloguing backlog which renders a substantial and growing proportion of resources inaccessible. Local authority archive offices are traditionally the custodians of local government records but they also accept donations of other material of historical interest relating to the surrounding area including company records. Conflicting demands mean that new accessions and existing deposits often remain unlisted in storage for some time – often years – awaiting professional attention.

In recent years, the archive community has taken stock of its position, and implemented strategies to ensure the continued care of, and access to, British archives. In 2000, the National Council on Archives published the document *British archives: the way forward* which spelt out developmental priorities for UK archives in the new millennium. Four areas were identified: access for all; comprehensive availability; preservation; and conservation and innovation. This framework highlighted the need for resources to be channelled towards safeguarding archives to guarantee their future preservation, and to improving access and raising the profile of archival resources to



ensure their widest possible recognition and utilisation.

The West Midlands Regional Archive Council published its Archives Strategy in 2001 which reiterated these priorities at a regional level. In particular, the document underlined the need for improved physical and intellectual access to archives in the region. In response, the Black Country archive services laid out a number of objectives aimed at improving the quality of archive provision in the region.

The Black Country archive services

The Black Country is the industrial area situated to the west of Birmingham. Its name derives from 19th century descriptions of the industrial landscape which was dominated by smoking chimneys. The boundaries of

the area are not clearly defined, but it is traditionally argued that the Black Country lies across those points where the region's 'thick coal' seam comes to the surface. Today, the area is made up of the metropolitan boroughs of Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall, and the city of Wolverhampton. Each local authority has its own record office which is responsible for acquiring, preserving and making available the historical records of its district. These are Dudley Archives and Local History Service, Sandwell Community History and Archive Service, Walsall Local History Centre and Wolverhampton Archives and Local Studies.

Impetus for collaborative working between the four offices stemmed from the 'Best Value' review of the Black Country archive services in 2001 which highlighted a number of common challenges faced by each service, particularly in the area

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A tyre finisher
pictured at the
Goodyear Tyre &
Rubber Co. Ltd in
Wolverhampton
during the 1930s.
(Wolverhampton
Archives and
Local Studies,
P/3553)



of accommodation. The offices considered a joint approach to service delivery administered from a single repository. An overriding desire to preserve local identities meant this idea attracted little support, but it did open up discussion between the four offices on ways of improving the quality of archive provision in the Black Country.

In light of the problems being faced nationally by public sector archives, reflected to a great extent at the West Midlands regional level, the Black Country identified a number of objectives aimed at improving the quality of service offered by their record offices. Of particular importance were: the need for improvements in information and communications technology (ICT); renewed ways of dealing with uncatalogued collections; continued promotion of access to local services; moves towards more

consistent practices across the region for users of archive services; and improved social inclusion, particularly in areas of urban deprivation and as regards personal disability.

The history of the Black Country is reflected in the rise of its industries from the late 18th century, and the subsequent industrialisation and urbanisation that took place in the 19th century. During this time, British manufactured goods dominated world trade earning Britain the title 'Workshop of the World'. The Black Country was a key player in Britain's industrial development and products manufactured locally were shipped across the empire and round the globe. Local business collections describe how the region developed during the 19th century and outline the role played, more widely, by the Black Country in Britain's industrial transformation.

With this in mind, the Black Country archive services made a commitment to work together to achieve their agreed objectives, and resolved to open up access to their substantial holdings of business records along with their unrivalled photographic collections. Council officials backed the idea of joint working in principle, promising financial support if external funding could be secured. In 2004, a coordinated bid from the four authorities successfully secured a HLF grant of £442,000. The funding was matched by the Black Country Consortium which contributed £75,000 – a substantial financial commitment for the medium-sized services. The outcome was the 'Documenting the Workshop of the World' project, a three-year initiative designed to promote access to business and industrial records through cataloguing, digitisation and outreach.

Documenting the Workshop of the World

The aims of the project can be summarised within the context of the Black Country's wider objectives for archive development and promotion. First and foremost users are benefiting from increased access to material through a programme of cataloguing and digitisation. A range of business records are being catalogued to provide detailed guides to previously unsorted collections. These catalogues have been made available online to allow researchers of all abilities to investigate and understand the region's industrial heritage. The project is also undertaking the digitisation of historical images.

Together, the cataloguing and digitisation forms the basis of a joint Black Country website which brings together the catalogues of the four archive services. This allows users to perform seamless searches across several databases

from one point of entry. To consolidate this work, the project aims to unlock the educational value of the archives through the development of an outreach programme aimed at encouraging local and national participation in the project and more broadly the region's heritage.

Key to improving access to archive collections is the three-year cataloguing programme aimed at reducing the backlogs all four services face. Two Project Archivists have been employed to sort and create detailed catalogues of some of the services' most important business collections. Over 50 collections have been identified for cataloguing, encompassing an array of local industries from iron and steel manufacture to the creation of fine stained glass.

Running alongside the cataloguing work is a programme of digitisation. Two Archive and Local Studies Assistants have been employed to scan and catalogue

10,000 photographs chronicling the Black Country's economic and social development from the mid 19th century to the present day. The digitisation of photographs is being undertaken for a number of reasons. Firstly, the creation of electronic resources will act as a protective measure since the original photographs can be stored away after scanning in a place most suited to their long-term preservation. Secondly, by creating digital copies, the services' photographic collections can be displayed on the Internet to users around the world.

The project builds on the idea of creating a regional electronic infrastructure for archives. In the West Midlands, archive services have made great strides in developing ICT through regional and national partnerships. To build on these developments, and make more information available online, a virtual 'union catalogue' has been developed which allows users to 'cross-search' the catalogues of the

11
A tilt test of a new Sunbeam trolley bus, built in Wolverhampton in 1934. (Wolverhampton Archives and Local Studies, P/3549)



11

four archive services simultaneously. Virtual union catalogues work through a single web interface which gives users access to multiple databases as if they were just one single catalogue. The advantage from the user's point of view is that access to information becomes a seamless process which is not impeded by the existence of numerous information sources. The advantage for each archive service is that they retain control over their own datasets rather than merging them into a large unified catalogue. What

this means for the Black Country archives is the development of a searchable website which brings together the region's four DS Calm databases. The website acts as a single search portal through which users can search and retrieve results from multiple databases at once.

Looking to the future

Documenting the Workshop of the World is a three-year initiative. By the end of the project, a range of unique documentary and photographic material, mapping the Black Country's industrial transformation, will be available online for public consultation. The project will put in place minimum standards for future digitisation and cataloguing which will reinforce the idea of shared practice across the four services.

The four authorities are committed to the continued hosting and development of the joint Black Country website beyond the life of the project. Given that the software is designed to eliminate technological barriers between different systems, the potential exists for adding more databases in the future. The possibilities for collaborative working between archives, museums and libraries are obvious. Other local authorities

across England have successfully collaborated on similar cross-domain projects. Norfolk Online Access to Heritage (NOAH), East of England Sense of Place (EESOP) and West Sussex Past Gateway are all examples of successful collaborative projects which have created information hubs based on the principle of union catalogues. A single gateway for the Black Country heritage sector, encompassing archives, museums and libraries is a realistic possibility. In this way, the Documenting the Workshop of the World project is laying the groundwork for a more collaborative approach to information provision in the future by crossing both local authority boundaries and cultural domains.

Cheryl Bailey
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Wolverhampton Archives and Local Studies
www.blackcountryhistory.org

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 An advertisement for Cannon Gas Cookers, manufactured in Coseley, dating from c.1905. (Dudley Archives and Local History Service, D8)



12

North East Inheritance: creating an online site for Durham wills

Wills and related records have long been popular sources for family, local and academic historians alike. Like many other record offices, the Archives and Special Collections section of Durham University Library has been intermittently working on the conservation and cataloguing of the probate records in its custody for decades. Now, six months (and 24,591 database records) into a three-year project, we can reflect on progress made and lessons already learnt.

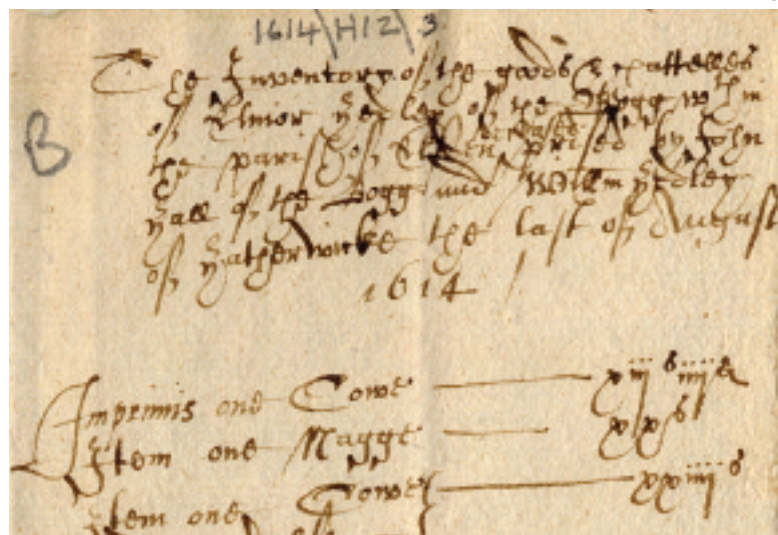
13

From the inventory of the goods of Eleanor Hedley of Bogg, Ridsdale, Elsdon, Northumberland, dated 31 August 1614. Eleanor is spelt variously Elioner, Ellinore and Elinor on the documents, and even miswritten as Eliza[beth] on the back of the will: proof that you cannot always trust endorsements when cataloguing archives. (ref DPRI/1/1614/H12)

The project is called 'North East Inheritance', and will create an online catalogue of the Durham probate records. The catalogue will be searchable by name, place, occupation or date, and will be linked to a comprehensive set of digital images on the Genealogical Society of Utah's website. The two full-time cataloguing staff on the project are joined by weekly groups of volunteers, who are working on specific classes of records. The project also funds the conservation of the most fragile of the archives. Access to both the catalogue and the digital images will be free and available worldwide, once the project work is completed in spring 2009.

The documents

The heart of this project is, of course, the documents themselves: we estimate over 150,000 of them. As well as wills, the collection includes inventories of goods, bonds, accounts of executors and a



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variety of associated documents, many relating to court processes (think Dickens' Bleak House!). We estimate that wills, bonds or associated records survive for some 100,000 people. Although dating from the 16th century, the majority of the items date from

the 18th and 19th centuries (up to the beginning of 1858). Probate material is valuable for many different regional, social, genealogical and economic studies. The documents show the material circumstances of those who made them, including their life styles and

often their family problems. Wills put flesh on the bones of our ancestors and reveal not just names but family relationships. The wills and inventories of traders, merchants, workers or other members of the community are a rich source of economic and cultural information.

"In order to promote the interests of science, I direct that as soon after my death as conveniently may be, my body be delivered to Mr Clifton or Mr William Green for the purpose of being dissected."

The opening sentences of wills are frequently analysed for their religious language, but this is from the start of the will of Peter Bowlby of Old Elvet, Durham, dated 7 July 1825. (ref DPRI/1/1825/B19)

The cataloguing

The value of probate records is obvious from their existing usage and the wide range of studies that they can support. Less obvious is the scope of any cataloguing or indexing project. We already have a series of indexes to names of the deceased, ranging from contemporary 'alphabet books' drawn up by the probate clerks, to 1980s card indexes and pilot Access databases. For any probate cataloguing project, there will always be pressure to index every name within the wills, or the subjects of inventories: how extensively should you be indexing? How much explanation should you include for complex court documents? I recommend setting a clear scope and purpose for the cataloguing work from the outset: this makes subsequent queries far easier to resolve. For North East Inheritance we are:

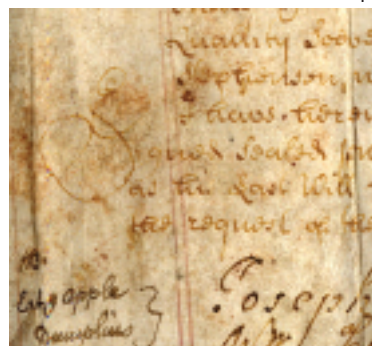
- cataloguing every document in all the major series of Durham Probate Records (wills and inventories, registered copies of wills, two separate series of bonds, etc)
- collecting data that is represented fairly evenly across the whole collection
- collecting data to support

complex and diverse searches, but not to pre-empt possible research use

- mounting the catalogue alongside full digital images
- committed to completing the work within three years.

That means that we are collecting information only on the deceased person, not on other people mentioned in some of the documents. We are however recording, for instance, penal sums from bonds and total amounts from inventories – which can be used to indicate the overall size of a deceased person's estate.

Another query relates to variant spellings of names, places and occupations. We have resolved the issue of place names by recording abodes in two separate forms: once exactly as given in the document (including any specific farm or street names, and preserving original spellings), and again in a structured form (using authority lists of counties, parishes, chapelries and boroughs, and omitting detail below parish or chapelry level). We are also recording surnames exactly as spelt within the documents (together with variant spellings): part way through the project, we will be reviewing these names and deciding which should be regarded as 'standard' versions for searching and indexing purposes. In each case, recording the original spellings when first cataloguing ensures that we can review decisions in these areas and achieve consistency, without needing to re-examine any of the original documents.



Any cataloguing project of this scale should ensure that its resulting data can be maintained and will survive changes in both staffing and hardware/software. For this reason, we are doing all our cataloguing using the Encoded Archival Description (EAD) XML

application, creating a series of 'component' EAD records that can be assembled into a full EAD document before being served on the web. This enables us (or our successors) to easily transform the data or share it with others, without being tied to a proprietary data standard or particular piece of software. In order to input the EAD (without teaching our volunteers the gory details of the EAD tag library or any XML technicalities), we have designed simple templates to use within the ModesXML database software: ModesXML allows editing of XML data in a database 'environment', with consequent control over input, data validation, and ability to check 'index terms' for consistency. One of our full-time cataloguers uses voice-recognition software to input the data. Please contact us if you do want gory details on our EAD data or software setup.

"Make sure that you get your project timings correct, or you'll be coming in every weekend to catch up when the work gets behind."

(Advice from a former librarian, given from her own bitter experience!)

The digital images

Full digital images from all the series of probate records have already been made by the Genealogical Society of Utah (GSU), and will be available for users to view alongside the catalogue entries. This will open up the collection in a way that mere catalogues, however detailed, cannot: we will be hiding nothing from the end users. It also challenges us to get our cataloguing correct: any mistakes will be apparent to anyone using the website, and could prove embarrassing!

The images themselves are not held by Durham University Library, but by the GSU (though we have reserved the right to a single free copy of all the data in the format 'of the day' at any stage). Both we and the GSU have agreed to provide the data free of charge to end-users. Both these decisions may be controversial, but enable us to offload the huge costs and

Wills often tell a good story. This is a codicil to the will of Marmaduke Ward of Hurworth, County Durham, gentleman. He records that his nephew "hath most unnaturally broken my house and chest, and stolne my writings." As the codicil is dated 31 January 1670/1 and is not altered before the will is proved in 1681, Marmaduke seems to have kept his threat to "utterly abdicate and for ever disowne him." (ref DPRI/1/1681/W3)

technical infrastructure required to maintain an enormous digital repository of images. We also hope that, by effectively spreading the data across two sites (and two continents), the university's servers and bandwidth will cope with the traffic of enquiries when the data first goes live during 2009.

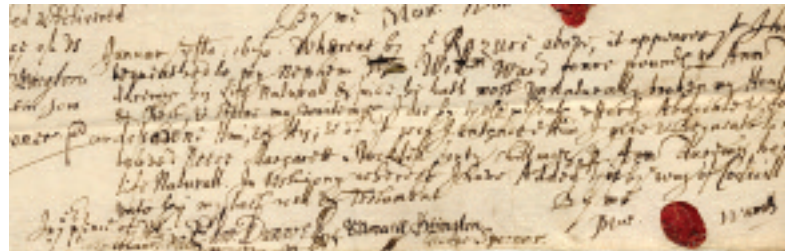
The volunteers

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) was keen that a project of this kind involve the community from the very start of the work. We have taken advantage of this requirement by using volunteers to catalogue some of the most routine of the records, specifically 19th century bonds and registered copies of wills. We decided before the work started that volunteers would be encouraged to work in a single group (shortly to be two groups, thanks to demand), and this has certainly paid off:

- easier to supervise and train
- volunteers can benefit from each other's enthusiasm and special interests/insights

Experience of the volunteers with the probate bonds has quickly taught us:

1. do not assume that a series of probate bonds (even on printed forms) is totally straightforward to catalogue: closer analysis has revealed plenty of complications and anomalies that the volunteers have had to grapple with.
2. Allow extra time in your project timings for volunteers to get 'up to speed' with their cataloguing. They are coming in only weekly (at most), and learning a range of new skills (understanding the documents and the probate



processes that created them, learning how you want them to be catalogued/indexed, and getting to grips with the particular computer system that you are using).

Ensure that you give something back to the volunteers who work for you: not only are they giving up their time, but volunteer days are included as part of your 'match funding' contribution for a project. Allow sufficient time for sharing of stories, private work using the archives, and training and development sessions outwith the narrow requirements of the volunteer cataloguing work (if they want them).

Be clear about the reasons for using volunteers alongside paid staff (not just to save money from the staff wages bill!), and the different contributions that both groups can make to the project. The use of professionally qualified archivists to interpret the documents and understand (and explain) the background to the probate processes behind them, is integral to the cataloguing work. Volunteers will often provide interesting local insights into the material from their extensive local history knowledge, as well as giving us a channel to publicise the documents and the project to their communities.

They also prove a lively addition to our staff room at break times.

Conservation and preservation

One of the aims of North East Inheritance is to substitute the resulting website and its digital images for the heavy use which probate records are currently put to in our searchroom (and in photocopying requests). No three-year project could hope to carry out all the conservation work needed on such a large collection, but a full-time conservator has been funded by the project. She will be able to complete the conservation work on all those documents which have previously been identified as too fragile to produce, as well as many of the less damaged items. The project also funds limited repackaging of the material, so that it is at least stored suitably and safely, within acid-free (and lignin-free) boxes and, where necessary, separate acid-free folders. Some of this repackaging is well suited to work by volunteers – or it can be used to break up the potential tedium of day-long cataloguing of 'routine' wills by full-time staff.

Some parts of the collection of Durham probate records are still stored loose in unsuitable boxes. The NEI project gives us an opportunity to repackage and rebox all the substandard parts of a very large collection.

Andrew Gray
Project Manager for North East Inheritance
Durham University Library

Summary and contacts

Project timespan: three years, from March 2006

Funding: £274,500 grant from Heritage Lottery Fund (66% of overall project cost); (remainder from Durham University Library and a small grant from English Record Collections)

Website: <http://familyrecords.dur.ac.uk/nei>

Email: family.records@durham.ac.uk

Contact: Andrew Gray, 0191 3341216

Managing the Global Archive: Foreign and Commonwealth Office Records – past, present and future

Jane Darby has recently been appointed the Head of Information Management Group within the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). In this article, Jane briefly describes the long history of record keeping at the FCO, outlines current developments and considers the challenges now faced by the FCO in an era of global communication and rapid technological advance.

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Records staff at
Hanslope Park

Past

The United Kingdom has a long tradition of international diplomacy with records going back to the 13th century. The responsibility for safekeeping these records, which contained treaties and agreements, was given to the King's Principal Secretary. In 1578 the State Paper Office was established as a repository for the records of the principal Secretaries of State. The creation of the Foreign Office in 1782 resulted in more diplomacy and yet more paperwork and was followed, less than 20 years later, by the appointment of the first librarian and Keeper of the Papers, Richard Ancell, after whom the FCO library was recently renamed.

The Foreign Office library quickly filled up and by 1840 had 5,000 volumes of original correspondence housed on shelves and in musty cellars. The library's holdings were used extensively by the office but not always in the way intended. During the Chartist riots of 1848, the reference room windows were



blocked with books and staff issued with Brown Bess muskets brought from the Tower of London and imitation cutlasses purloined from a local theatrical establishment. It was not until the completion of the new Foreign Office building in 1868 that the volumes could be housed in purpose built accommodation. The creation of the new building meant that all correspondence could be combined on a single site. Following the Public Record Office Act of 1838,

the Foreign Office began transferring its records, the first transfer consisting of 953 volumes of correspondence. Over the next century regular transfers brought the total number of Foreign Office documents in the Public Record Office to 8 million in 1949. If census returns are excluded, the records produced by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and its predecessors currently account for 13% of all record requests at The National Archives.

The 20th century witnessed a series of organisational changes. Probably the most significant occurred in 1968 with the merger of the Foreign Office and Commonwealth Office. The combination of these two Departments of State required the amalgamation of two separate filing systems and led to the creation of the Library and Records Department. This new name reflected a growing realisation that records management was an essential aspect of FCO's work with the head of the department being designated the Departmental Record Officer for the whole of the FCO. The volume of records continued to grow and in 1990 the archive was relocated to a purpose-built facility at Hanslope Park, near Milton Keynes. This was the same site which during the Second World War was used as a top-secret communications facility. One of the occupants was Alan Turing who built one of the world's first electronic speech scrambling devices which he named Delilah.

In 2004, following an efficiency review, the Information Management Group (IMG) was formed. Working within the Directorate of Strategy and

Information, IMG leads on Freedom of Information and Data Protection implementation within the FCO and handles requests from the public. We also develop FCO policy and best practice on records management, monitor compliance with Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation and Public Records Acts, and disseminate records management best practice. In addition, IMG provides historical advice to senior officials and Ministers, and is responsible for publishing the official record of post-war British foreign policy in the series *Documents on British Policy Overseas*.

Present

Records constitute the collective memory of the department or overseas post and ultimately of the FCO. They provide the audit trail for the development of a particular foreign policy, or the background to a decision. They are needed to answer Parliamentary Questions, or to respond to Official Enquiries such as the Hutton Inquiry. With the introduction of the Freedom of Information Act, people now have the right to see a wide range of FCO documentation. More than

ever, we need to have complete and accurate records in order to comply with the new access regimes. As well as risking legal action, failure to do so would harm the FCO's reputation for transparency and efficiency.

The documents created today, either electronically or on paper, are the public records of 30 years hence. The FCO's archive at Hanslope Park currently stores 23 km of records created by home departments and overseas posts. These files are transferred to the archive in their fourth year after creation and are held until they are 29 years old when they undergo selection and sensitivity review. During this time they are still available to FCO staff through our retrieval section. Our retrievals staff answer enquires from FCO departments and posts, other government departments and members of the public for information from files held in the archive. They also deal with the identification of information relevant to requests submitted under Freedom of Information legislation. Those records selected for permanent preservation are eventually transferred to The National Archives, normally 30 years after creation.

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Foreign and
Commonwealth
Office archive at
Hanslope Park

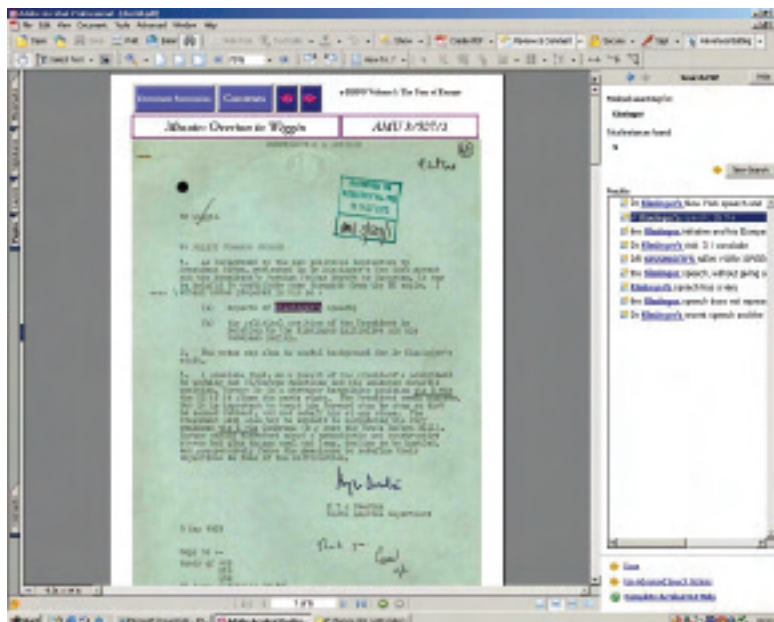


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Screen view of
Historians'
latest volume
on CD ROM

In recent years there has been a huge increase in electronic information produced by the FCO. Our first electronic system, ARAMIS (Automated Registry and Multi-user Information Software), was introduced in 1992. The system (which didn't even have Windows!) is no longer in use. But we have transferred the documents to an electronic library system called MINERVA (Multiple Information Evaluation and Retrieval) that allows us to search for and retrieve the documents when they are required. There are currently some 4 million documents stored on the system. It also holds an electronic reference of the associated paper documents. And paper files that are loaned out to other departments can be tracked and audited with automated reminders. Thus the FCO is able to manage its records efficiently and comply with the Government's records management obligations.

Like other government departments, the FCO has received a large number of requests under the Freedom of Information Act. Early requests were dominated by current topics such as Iraq. But over time there has been more call for older material, especially from the late 1970s and 1980s. Surprisingly, perhaps, these requests sometimes involve us in more difficult considerations about the balance of public interest than do contemporary requests. For example, our diplomatic representatives in some parts of the world have made it clear that their host governments would react very unfavourably to the disclosure of any information about them before the usual 30-year decision point. Even so, a great deal of information has been disclosed and the FCO now has its own Freedom of Information website that can be accessed through the FCO's main website (www.fco.gov.uk) under Access to Information. Here readers will find scanned copies of a number of original documents that the FCO has released in response to FOI requests.

An organisation such as the FCO relies heavily on precedent and previous history, for example of negotiations, territorial disputes, and relations with other states. New policies have foundations in



old ones, and it is important to understand their historical context. The FCO is one of the few Whitehall departments to be lucky enough to have in-house historians. Members of the FCO Historians team are highly qualified and well established in the academic community. Headed by Professor Patrick Salmon, our historians have two main roles: to publish the official record of post-war British foreign policy in the series *Documents on British Policy Overseas* (DBPO), and to provide briefing and historical analysis on current policy issues for Ministers, senior officials and posts. They also provide vital support in answering Freedom of Information requests.

FCO Historians have just published the latest two volumes of DBPO, *The Southern Flank in Crisis 1973-76* and *The Year of Europe: America, Europe and the Energy Crisis 1972-74*. These volumes cover the revolutionary events in Portugal, the death of Franco and the transition to democracy in Spain, the Cyprus emergency of 1974, transatlantic relations and the fourth Arab-Israeli war.

Excitingly, *The Year of Europe* is the first volume to be published in digital format. It reproduces in colour some 568 scanned and fully searchable documents drawn from the records of the FCO, the Cabinet Office and other Whitehall Departments, over 50 of which are otherwise unavailable to

researchers. Ranging from official correspondence, ministerial briefing notes, Cabinet papers to Joint Intelligence Committee reports, the documents cast new light on transatlantic differences over policy towards the Middle East, the Arab/Israeli struggle and future oil supplies. FCO Historians are currently exploring the possibilities of publishing DBPO online in order to reach far more readers than the standard print volumes.

Future

Since its creation in 1782, the Foreign Office has kept the majority of its records on paper. This will soon change. In the last two years alone, there has been a 590% increase in the volume of data transferred across the FCO's current electronic system, Firecrest. The anticipated curve for future use is exponential. In short, a new and improved system is required. In order to become a global online organisation well placed to meet the challenges of the 21st century, the FCO must join together the various information services and communications sources that currently exist. This is not to say that the original Firecrest system did not serve us well. In its day it was probably the premier infrastructure for a diplomatic service anywhere in the world. However, in a world of global communications managing our information assets is more essential than ever. Security is also

a major issue. We need to ensure that information is transferred quickly and securely.

To achieve these aims, the FCO is introducing the next generation of Firecrest (F3G) which will enable us to manage our documents and records effectively within a secure environment. The system also needs to be capable of addressing the biometrics revolution that is about to hit us. In the next decade, passport and visa applications will require us to ferry pictures of people and their fingerprints around the system in very large numbers, possibly millions per year. The FCO needs to have a system that that can handle these requirements. We also need a registry management system that allows us to capture and archive our information assets. And we need to think how future generations are going to appraise and review electronic records before they pass into the historic record. In terms of our reputation as an organisation, acquiring a system that delivers is critical. The future may well be uncertain but, to paraphrase Neville Chamberlain, we must ensure that the past does not become a far away country of which we know very little.

Jane Darby
Head of Information
Management Group
Foreign and Commonwealth
Office

Virtual case files

The Dorset County Council (DCC) approach to managing case files in an EDRM system

With functional file plan design still in its infancy, one of the biggest challenges for records managers is how to deal with case management within an EDRM system. Case files not only refer to client based files (both customers and staff) but other activities such as projects (for example, building maintenance or highway construction style projects), litigation files, claims (such as insurance claims handling) and procurement contracts.

In each edition we hope to bring you a case study highlighting the expertise in and experience of records management in local government. In this edition we showcase Dorset County Council's experience of designing and implementing an EDRM solution to take account of the need to manage case files within the electronic environment.

This article questions the emerging approach of trying to recreate a traditional paper file within an electronic file plan structure and explores the DCC model which seeks to identify and file information by key case file activities and uses the unique case ID metadata to construct a virtual case file if needed.

Approaches: The Paper File Method

As a concept, the reconstruction of a traditional paper file within an EDRM system seems the easiest to accomplish. One of the most important advocates of this approach is the Local Government Classification Scheme (LGCS) which is being adopted, by many authorities. The most recent version of the LGCS (October 2005) states that one of the major failings of functional classification schemes is the difficulty they have in incorporating case files.

The issue is discussed in The National Archive (TNA) article *Business Classification Scheme Design* (Oct 2003 pp 29-31) and is available on the TNA's website. It

recognises the possibility that the traditional paper case file approach could be made redundant within an EDRM environment.

"The ultimate logical conclusion of this in the electronic environment is that the records in such a scenario belong in disparate locations (according to a strict interpretation of the activity and transaction type than was feasible in the paper environment), joined – as they can now be – by an alternative case 'view' comprising a common metadata link between individual items" (pp. 29-30)

The main drawback, it is argued, is that some users will have difficulty understanding this concept and approach. The LGCS suggests that this is a major stumbling block and recommends that a traditional paper case file within the electronic system is the most pragmatic approach since it is the way in which local authorities work and presumably easier to deal with any culture change issues. The LGCS scheme therefore makes the

second level a unique case identifier, moving the activities to the level below, though it concedes that a more theoretical approach would be to reverse these levels as suggested in the TNA article.

1 The LGCS file plan example for an adult service client would be:

Level one: Adult Care Services
Level two: Adult files [Name and ID]
Level three: Document folders such as Assessment, Care plans, carer details etc

2 An example for Procurement contract files

Level one: Procurement
Level two: Contract file (name and ID)
Level three: various folders including contract awards, evaluation. Specification development etc

3 An example of corporate property files

Level one: Council property
Level two: property name and ID
Level three: various folders such as acquisitions, deeds, maps and directions and valuations etc

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The Social Care and Health Case Management part of the Corporate File Plan

This approach has been adopted by a number of authorities as best practice. However there are a number of problems with this approach that must be considered.

1 One of the key questions is how to maintain the functional file plan once corporate roll out is completed? Information management best practice would be for records management to maintain control over the maintenance and development of the file plan. For this role to be practical the maintenance should not be time-consuming. However with the traditional paper file approach a new level 2 folder needs to be created, with associated levels below, whenever there is a new case/project file. Thousands would need to be created within an authority each year. This would be impracticable for a centrally controlled unit to carry out this activity, unless heavily resourced.

The only way to manage this approach is to devolve the building and control of the file plan to a number of local information managers across the authority who will need records management experience or training. Staff turnover may well be an issue with this method. In Dorset 60 local information managers (TIMS) were created (the role added to existing jobs) to manage Freedom of Information enquiries within their business areas, with a central FOI officer overseeing the process; a



similar approach that some authorities have taken (or planning to take) with the management of the EDRM file plan? Within a year 25% of TIMS had left the authority with many not replaced. If this same model is adopted for file plan management then frequent auditing by the records management unit would need to take place as there is a real danger that this approach could compromise the corporate functional file plan and lead to a loss of information management integrity with the system. The experience of bad practice within current electronic shared drives should alone cause information managers to steer clear of this approach.

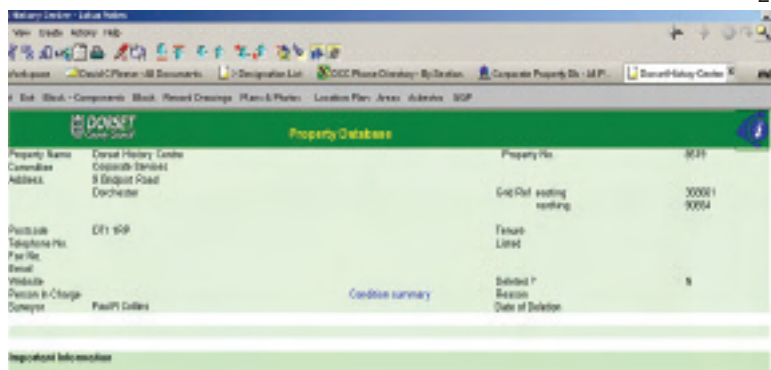
2 Documents that serve different business purposes will be filed in

the case file. However, they may have different retention periods. So, for FOI and DPA purposes, they would need to be disposed of at different times once the case file is closed. On a practical level this will be difficult to achieve since you could not assign different retention periods to a folder. The only way this could work is to carry out a detailed examination of file content (not practical) or to place retention at the document level (again very time consuming and not practical).

3 Another potential problem is the size of the file plan. When opening up the file plan view in these areas it would be very large and cumbersome with hundreds of individual case/project files being created as folders in a very short time. This will make it difficult for anyone trying to manage the system as a whole. With the file plan rapidly expanding horizontally there may also be performance issues that would need to be tested.

4 If the traditional case file approach is integrated with an existing back office system (as is the case with a the Social Care Case management and Corporate Property Database case files discussed in this article) then another major piece of work will need to be undertaken every time a new case is built in the file plan. Each time a new case file is created the file plan path will need to be mapped to the relevant integration path within the back office system and will need IT developer support.

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DCC
Corporate Property Database:
Dorset History Centre details



With the potential of a large number of new cases each year, if they need integration between the EDRMS and existing back office systems then this may well be a time consuming and costly process.

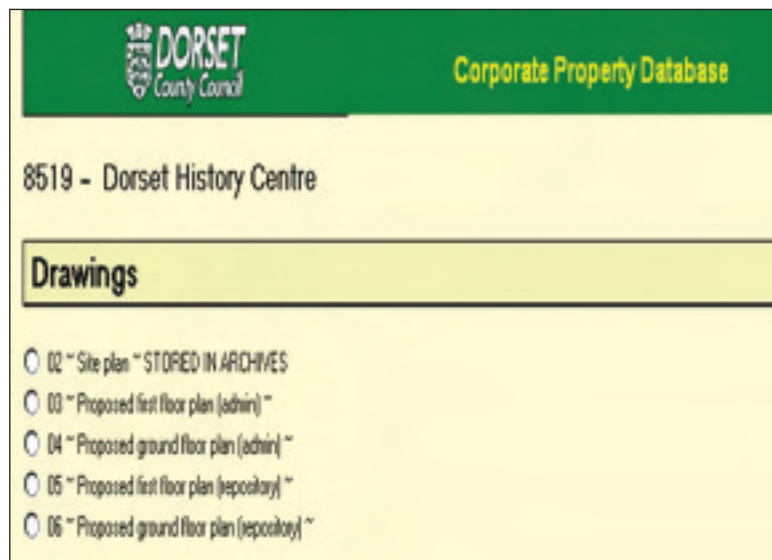
Approaches: The Virtual Case File Method

At Dorset County Council the alternative virtual case file approach is being developed to try and prevent the problems outlined above. Instead of individual case files being created, activities or specialisms are identified at level 3 and at level 4 folders are used as 'bins' to store all the 'like' case activities together, ie in adult services all the Learning Disabilities case files will be placed in the Learning Disabilities active folder as below.

DCC file Plan

- Level one: Social Care and Health
- Level two: Case Management
- Level three: Learning Disabilities
- Level four: Active folder (where all case information is held relating to this activity)
- Level four: Archive folder (where all closed case files related to individuals are held with a disposal schedule set based on the agreed retention schedule)

Each service user will have a unique case identifier entered onto the metadata index card. Users will access cases through either the EDRM software (the 'Smart Office' suite in the case of the DCC product) or existing databases (if



integrated with the EDRM system), using the unique identifiers. In this way the individual 'virtual cases' are 'created' through the search engine metadata and not through individual 'paper-based' case files. In the Social Care case given above, the file plan activities are integrated with the business unit's own database (called Claris) so that searches are made in the existing system. If a social worker wishes to see all the records of an individual, all they do is press the integration icon within their own database which presents them with a list of documents held in the EDRM (a virtual case file) which can be viewed if selected.

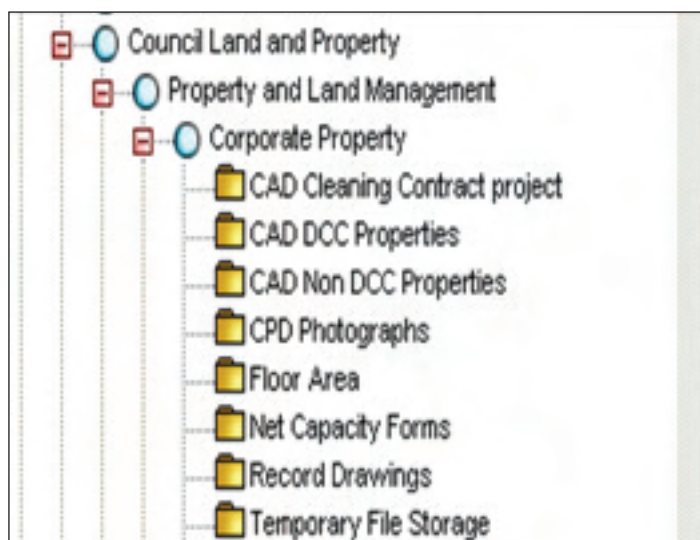
When a service user case is closed in Claris all the case file entries automatically move from the active to the archive folder which

has the disposal schedule set up to follow the agreed retention schedule.

This virtual case file model has been adapted to deal with non-client case management such as the management of the council's 6000 property plans. The plans are scanned and indexed into the EDRM system. The metadata index card includes the property's unique ID number and all the plans are stored in the relevant document folders in the file plan. A single property may have plans in a number of the 'bins' organised by the document/ map type. The searcher views the plans through the existing corporate property database. A property is selected and an integration button presents all the relevant plans from the file plan. Any of these plans can then be viewed on screen.

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Plans available for the Dorset History Centre

22
The Corporate File Plan area holding images from the Corporate Property Database



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The virtual case file model has a number of advantages over the traditional paper file approach:

- 1 This approach is very low in maintenance; once the activities are identified and built into the file plan then it will not need to be amended unlike the paper file where a new piece of file plan will need to be built whenever a new service user or case is initiated.
- 2 The corporate file plan will not become excessively long when opening up the different levels.
- 3 The retention disposal schedule is based on activities and not the

individual case file. If a service user has a number of different contacts within the authority each of these activities are likely to have different retention requirements. Instead of waiting until the service user completes all contact with the authority, the different activities can be closed separately and documents disposed of following retention guidelines.

For example, a service user may be dealing with a social worker from the Older Persons Team at the same time as applying for a disabled car parking badge. If that service user decided to stop driving then the disabled car parking badges case records would be closed and destroyed three years later. In the meantime the service user may still be being dealt with by the Older Persons Team. This case file will still be held until the activity is closed and the relevant retention begins. The records being dealt with by the different activities will be destroyed at the appropriate times (thus complying with the retention schedule and the Data Protection Act) and not kept until they finally finish their dealings with DCC.

Conclusion

The virtual case file approach has been developed and gone live in four business areas at DCC (a pilot Adult Services Local Office dealing with service users; the FOI team; the Data Protection Officer's case files and the Corporate Property Database Team) for 18 months. The virtual case file model has been seen as a highly successful solution by the teams using the system. There has not been a culture

change issue for the teams moving from a paper-based service user file or project file to the virtual case file approach. Both the Electronic Social Care Records (Adults) Project and the Integrated Children's Service Project will be using the system to deliver the ESCR agenda with the virtual case file approach underpinning the corporate file plan. Indeed as the system is being corporately deployed, the virtual case file approach will be used for other case management areas such as Human Resources and insurance claims handling.

Another key advantage of this approach is that once the corporate functional file plan has been deployed across the authority it can be managed centrally with a minimal amount of maintenance. The successful practical deployment of the virtual case file approach at DCC, with the advantages over the traditional paper file approach, does at the very least offer an alternative workable approach.

Dr David Reeve
Records Manager (Operations),
Dorset County Council

Dr Reeve is the operational records manager for Dorset County Council and is responsible for the day to day management of the Dorset Records Management Unit. This includes managing the records management element of the EDM Project (called the ShARE Project) which is deploying a corporate file plan across the whole authority.

Standards and guidance

Why every business needs best practice

'Best practice' is a phrase that stimulates a range of responses. Some are convinced of its value, while others hear only another piece of jargon. Even those who see value in it, disagree about what it means. I would like to argue for a meaning that has value.

The commonest interpretation of 'best practice' is one that I would like to dispel, namely that it consists of doing bits of what other organisations do. Similarly records management – in undifferentiated entirety – is held by some to be an example of best practice. In this light, the many organisations which provide little focus and minimal resource to their record keeping, are guilty of poor practice. If so, why are they still in business? Equally, there are organisations that devote considerable resource to records management, with no evidence of reward for doing so, but are they to be congratulated on good practice?

Copying others

What is good for one, is not good for all. The first rule of any comparison is to compare like with like: similar measures for similar challenges. In identifying best practice and in bench-marking organisations this is a challenge. Overly simple categorisations, like 'central government' or 'utilities', hide salient differences. Size of

business, level of regulation and enforcement, position within the business lifecycle are just some of the factors that are more relevant than 'sector'. Repeating the practices of competitors or peers may even be damaging rather than beneficial.

Records management is always a balance between a worst-case analysis of what might be the records requirement and what can be resourced. The scope of the compromise that emerges is characterised by the extent or thoroughness of records capture and the complexity of the process that is then applied. Best practice in electronic records management – if we knew what it was – would provide answers to questions like:

- How large, deep or subtle should a file plan be?
- How should current, operational information fit into a records file plan, or vice versa?
- How many different disposal schedules are really needed?
- How should access control groups be set up to allow records

management of information that is still highly sensitive?

- What is the best guidance to staff on records identification?
- What sort of cross-referencing should be allowed between records?
- What is the best way to preserve electronic items for the long term?

Some answers might form the basis of bench-marking between organisations:

- What resource is allocated to records review?
- What is the best proportion of records to other documents?
- What is the best proportion of records management specialists to other staff, or to the volume of records or other documents?

In order to judge which answers to these questions are the best, we have a number of options. The first is simple: to follow generic advice promulgated by others, preferably those with some authority. This is, however, generic and for electronic

records management largely unproven, which leads on to the second option: logic, or rhetoric. A closely reasoned argument can be made for specific answers dependent on the circumstances of an individual organisation. Even, however, when the argument is based on comparable, proven practice in paper records management, it is not as good as evidence that a particular practice has been beneficial, which is the third of our options.

'Evidence-based management' means making decisions on the basis of the evidence, rather than tradition or another, less rational, basis. The problem here is that evidence for the effectiveness and efficiency of electronic records management regimes is thin, and what there is may not be relevant for a specific organisation. There is still ample room for logic, and rhetoric.

Evidence for poor practice may be less difficult to find, e.g. the costs of failing to secure electronic information so that it can be used as record or of failing to ensure that inappropriate material is not retained. These lessons, though, are of a generic nature and can be applied to any organisation with litigious competitors, staff or customers. They do not answer the questions above.

Copying closer to home

Within any large organisation there are a number of ways of doing the same things. Policy may dictate the objectives, and guidance offer ways to achieve them, but unless management is oppressively heavy-handed, individuals will find ways to do things that are more congenial

to them. Some of these practices are inevitably better than others.

In a paper-based records keeping environment it can be difficult to see which of these is more efficient and which produces better discovery of records when needed. Yet, once an electronic repository is used for electronic information, all sorts of measures become possible, which can answer some of the questions above:

- The parts of the file plan that are not used or heavily or, perhaps, over used
- Which types of operational information are not being captured as records
- The disposal schedules not used or repeatedly re-started
- Which access control groups no longer have members
- Where highly sensitive information is stored
- Which units have staff that declare a higher or lower proportion of their information as records

Analysis of the statistics from an EDRM system should identify which units are doing better than others – according to the lights of their organisation – and their practices may qualify as 'best'. I say 'should' because there is little actual evidence for the hypothesis: it is only a logical conclusion. Nevertheless, a similar approach is common place in web and intranet site management: web managers live by their 'usage statistics'. Something similar may soon be true of records managers.

Best practice as process

Identifying best practice is one step in the process of the continuous

improvement: looking to see what works best, whether within the organisation or outside. Whilst external practices are useful, especially to a dysfunctional organisation, they only take the business to the same level as any other. Finding, reproducing and maximising the best internal practices enables the business to differentiate itself from others and to do better than them.

The value to the business of this process is in making it more competitive, by finding efficiencies or improving the speed and quality of delivery. The process also enables the business to demonstrate good corporate governance, in its application of policy and use of resources, but perhaps the most uplifting aspect is that the pursuit of best practice provides support to innovators in a world where consistency often counts for more than excellence.

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Bramble.cc is a product-independent consultancy and solution provider, operating in the UK, specialising in business and IT services for EDRM, ECM and related services, and is accredited as a Catalyst 'EDRM Specialist Solutions' prime contractor by OGCbuying.solutions
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Recently released useful publications

Publications from The National Archives

Complying with the Records Management Code: evaluation workbook and methodology Cydydffurfio â'r Cod Rheoli Cofnodion: Llyfr Gwaith Gwerthuso a Methodoleg

The National Archives has developed an evaluation workbook to assist public authorities in assessing conformance of their record management systems to the Records Management Code. The workbook is now available in Welsh.

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/electronicrecords/assessing.htm

Implementation guides

The National Archives is developing a series of practical and easy to use toolkits to help staff in public authorities who are charged with records management, and in particular with compliance with the Records Management Code. There are now two new guides covering the following topics:

- Human Resources in Records Management
- Active Records Management: Record Keeping and Record Maintenance

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/code/implementation.htm

Operation selection policies

Operational selection policies (OSPs) apply the criteria set out in the acquisition policy to the records of individual departments and agencies or to records relating to a cross-departmental theme. OSP recently published:

- OSP35: Board and committee records
- OSP36: Publications / Grey literature
- OSP37: Freedom of Information Act records
- OSP38: Records of internal administration
- OSP39: Inspection records
- OSP40: Records relating to indictable criminal proceedings 1972-1992
- OSP40: Records relation to indictable criminal proceedings 1972-1992.

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/selection/ospintro.htm

2002 rationale for functional requirements

The National Archives' 2002 functional requirements for electronic records management systems (ERMS) specify mandatory, highly desirable and desirable levels of functionality. The November update of the rationale documentation provides fundamental reasoning and principles behind every requirement in the core functional requirements. Future updates will include rationales for optional module requirements.

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/electronicrecords/rat2002/default.htm

Publications from other organisations

Colleges/Universities running Records, Information/Knowledge Management and/or Archiving courses in the UK

The Records Management Society has reviewed the course lists of universities and colleges in the UK and found those below as appearing to fulfil some criteria

towards a record/information/knowledge/archive management function.
www.rms-gb.org.uk/resources/

Data Protection Act - Draft Code of Practice

Code of Practice for Archivists and Records Managers under Section 51 (4) of the Data Protection Act 1998.

www.rms-gb.org.uk/resources/

Government response to 'Freedom of information – one year on' report

www.foi.gov.uk/reference/constitutionalAffairsCommittee.htm

Strong and Prosperous Communities, the Local Government White Paper

Communities Secretary Ruth Kelly published Strong and Prosperous Communities, the Local Government White Paper. The paper outlines new proposals significantly strengthening leadership and devolving power to local government as well as providing a major expansion of opportunities for local people to influence local decision-making and improve their lives.

www.communities.gov.uk/

Contacts

Contacts and staff news

Staff changes

National Advisory Services:

Amy Warner has been promoted to Senior Information Resources Officer (Systems). **James Travers** and **Melinda Haunton** have been promoted to Senior Archives Advisers (Casework).

Records Management and Cataloguing Department:

Jenny Bunn has become Senior Archivist. **Saira Tariq** and **Catherine Hodgkinson** have become Freedom of Information (FOI) Assessors.

We wish them well in their new jobs.

Contacts

Tel: 020 8876 3444
Fax: 020 8392 5286

All staff email addresses are of the format **firstname.lastname@nationalarchives.gov.uk**

National Advisory Services

General enquiries to nas@nationalarchives.gov.uk

Advice on places of deposit and public records

Including disposal, legislation, standards for storage and access:
Andrew Rowley, Head of Archive Inspection Services x 5318

Advice on non-public records

Including standards for storage of and access to private archives, advice to grant awarding bodies, sales monitoring and liaison with regional archive councils and regional agencies:
Norman James, Principal, Archives Advisory Services x 2615

Regional archival liaison

| | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| Scotland | – | Alex Ritchie |
| Wales | – | Michelle Kingston |
| Eastern Region | – | Anthony Smith |
| South East Region | – | Melinda Haunton |
| Yorkshire and the Humber Region | – | Andrew Rowley |
| North West and Northern Ireland | – | Catherine Guggiari/Kevin Mulley |
| East Midlands and West Midlands | – | Liz Hart |
| North East Region | – | Catherine Guggiari/Kevin Mulley |
| South West Region | – | James Travers |
| London | – | Norman James |

Robert Brown, Business Records Development Officer x 2616

Electronic Records Management

General enquiries to e-records@nationalarchives.gov.uk

Ian Macfarlane, Head of Electronic Records Management Development Unit x 5366

Records Management outside central government

Enquiries to rmadvisory@nationalarchives.gov.uk

Advice on developing effective information and records management systems for paper and electronic records:
Richard Blake, Head of Records Management Advisory Service x 5208

Records Management and Cataloguing Department

Enquiries to records.management@nationalarchives.gov.uk

Meg Sweet, Head of Records Management and Cataloguing Department x 5315

Kelvin Smith, Head of Accessions Management Unit x 2303

Howard Davies, Head of Inspection and Client Management Unit x 5340

Rose Ashley, S46 Programme Manager x 2254

Stuart Abraham, Access Manager x 5346

Louise Craven, Head of Catalogue Unit x 5232

Teresa Bastow, Head of Freedom of Information Unit x 2407

Key contacts in other National Archives departments

Information legislation

- Advice on Freedom of Information and its impact on records management and archives
 - Information on proposed records and archives legislation
 - Guidance on data protection and its impact on records management and archives
- Susan Healy, Head of Information Policy and Legislation x 2305

Digital Preservation issues

Enquiries to digital-archive@nationalarchives.gov.uk

Adrian Brown, Head of Digital Preservation x 5257

Conservation and preservation of traditional materials

Enquiries to collectioncare@nationalarchives.gov.uk

Mario Aleppo, Head of Collection Care x 5283

Copyright and intellectual property issues

Tim Padfield, Copyright & Policy Manager x 5381

Advisory Council on national records and archives

Tim Padfield, Secretary x 5381

Archives awareness initiatives

Ruth Savage, Policy Development Officer x 5376

Education, learning and access, schools and universities

Tom O'Leary, Head of Online Services and Education x 5298

Academic publications and development of material for the higher education and lifelong learning sectors

Vanessa Carr, Head of Research, Knowledge & Academic Services x 5224

£2.00

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www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/services/recordkeeping.htm


the national archives