



## Business Archives Council Newsletter

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The editor of this newsletter is Lorna Williams. The next issue will appear in Winter 2014. Prospective copy should be sent to Lorna Williams, email:

[lorna.williams@bankofengland.co.uk](mailto:lorna.williams@bankofengland.co.uk)

Post: c/o Bank of England Archive,  
Threadneedle Street, London, EC2R  
8AH.

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## Last paper BAC newsletter – first electronic newsletter: send your email

This is the BAC's first electronic newsletter. A decision was made to move to electronic format to make savings and to meet increasing demand for information to be disseminated in this way.

For those of you receiving this in paper format, please note that this is the last time the BAC newsletter will be sent in this way. If you would like to continue to receive updates of BAC work, please could you send your email address to [bacmembershipUK@gmail.com](mailto:bacmembershipUK@gmail.com)

## **Now we are 80!**

The year 2014 marks the 80th anniversary of the BAC. But how did we start? What have we been doing all these years? And what do we intend to do in the future?

### **How did we start?**

Our beginnings can be traced to the aftermath of the Wall Street Crash in 1929, when a group of business individuals and academics realised that well established companies - many of which could trace their origins to the Industrial Revolution - were disappearing through the unfavourable trading conditions; so too were their important business records.

In 1934, those forward-thinking individuals formed the Council for the Preservation of Business Archives (the precursor to the BAC), with the objectives to promote the preservation of business records of historical importance; supply advice and information on the administration and management of business records; and encourage interest in the history of business in England and Wales.

### **What have we been doing all these years?**

Over the 80 years, much has been achieved. We have lobbied at the highest levels, surveyed and rescued vulnerable corporate records, advised companies on how to keep and maintain their archives, promoted business archives and history far and wide, undertaken training sessions, created forums for discussions, fielded a steady stream of enquiries, and advised researchers on access to material.

Of particular note were the surveys of major national industries, including banking, brewing, shipbuilding, and most recently the architecture, building and construction industry. We recognised a deficit in the business archives of these sectors and actively approached companies to assess their records, highlighting those of historical importance and of course encouraging preservation and access.

The joint development of the National Strategy for Business Archives (England and Wales) in 2009 was another big achievement. In collaboration with a consortium of interested bodies, including government agencies, a formal and national agenda for business archives was created, the first of its kind. The Strategy has led to us being involved in many new initiatives, including the Managing Business Archives website (<http://www.managingbusinessarchives.co.uk/>), the hugely successful annual cataloguing grants (see Ben White's article), and the ever important Crisis Management Team, which continues its good work of monitoring corporate administrations, liquidations and takeovers, and intervening where records are thought to be at risk (the team has taken action on over 50 cases).

And let us not forget our popular annual conference: a great opportunity to learn about current issues and to network with peers. See the notice for this year's conference 'Let the Right One In? – Challenging Perceptions of Access to Business Archives'. There is still time to book.

## **What do we intend to do in the future?**

An organisation with a focus on business archives is still needed. The current financial crisis highlights the risks to business history. As in 1934, when businesses fail their historical records are at greater risk. Additionally many public repositories of business archives are facing cuts in resources.

And so, even after 80 years, our aims remain current. As does our constitution: we remain a charity; we continue to be run by volunteers; and as ever, we rely on the support of our members. But we recognise that we need to move with the times: we need to remain modern and dynamic, we need to adopt new technology, and we need to continue to be able to motivate and inspire. This is our first blog, in our first electronic newsletter. We are now on Twitter (@\_businessarch) and have reached the dizzy heights of 430 followers. In 2012 we tackled digital records at our conference; in 2013, the increasingly necessary topic of securing funding; and this year it will be access to archives, including presentations on the new archive service accreditation, the opportunities and pitfalls of social media, and access to digital records.

## **Thank you**

Happy Birthday BAC and a big thank you to all the volunteers and all our members who have given invaluable support over the 80 years.

*Lorna Williams*

Reprinted by kind permission from The Times of June 21st, 1934.

## HISTORY IN FIRMS' DOCUMENTS

### PRESERVATION OF RECORDS

#### NEW COUNCIL FORMED

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir.—Those who are interested in the history of the economic life of this country cannot fail to have been struck by the scarcity of one most important class of documentary evidence—the records of business men and firms. One of its chief causes, apart from destruction by fire and accident, is the elimination of old documents which is often dictated by shortage of office space. But there is, besides, every reason to believe that great masses of economic records still remain, completely inaccessible, in the possession of firms or of families descended from business men. This inaccessibility is principally due to the lack of any organization for discovering them and for making the student of economic history acquainted with their existence.

A Council for the Preservation of Business Archives has now been formed. The purposes of this enterprise, whose success depends peculiarly on the friendly co-operation of a great number of business firms and private families, are to organize information about such records as exist, and to prevent as far as possible the further destruction of papers which are likely to be of interest to the economic historian. We hope the council will ultimately form a section of the British Records Association, which now co-ordinates all work of this kind.

Our first object is to map out the ground by compiling a register of all business records over 100 years old. The register will have to be made by means of questionnaires, and the council may be able to offer help and advice to such owners of documents as are unwilling to

incur the labour of exploring and classifying their own papers. But the work of discovery will be rendered vastly easier if the owners who are interested in this scheme will spontaneously communicate to the council such information as they are willing to make public. Communications on this head should be sent to the Hon. Secretary, Council for the Preservation of Business Archives, Institute of Historical Research, Malet Street, London, W.C.1.

The council hopes to prevent further destruction of records in cases where the sole motive of such destruction is pressure of space, by arranging for their deposit, in public libraries or institutions, under such reasonable conditions as their owners shall impose. If any firm is in doubt as to which of its records deserve preservation and which may without disadvantage be destroyed, the council will be glad to furnish expert advice.

We hope that business men will conquer any mistrust they may feel of the use which might be made of the information about the records of their ancestors. The council only desire to make it available to serious historians, who, while naturally anxious for the utmost latitude which can conveniently be allowed, will loyally abide by any restrictions which may be laid upon publication.

We are, Sir, yours faithfully,

STANLEY BALDWIN  
W. H. BEVERIDGE  
J. H. CLAPHAM  
G. N. CLARK (Chairman, C.P.B.A.)

DAVIES  
F. C. GOODENOUGH  
HANWORTH, Master of the Rolls (President,  
C.P.B.A.)  
EDWARD H. HOARE (Hon. Treasurer,  
C.P.B.A.)  
H. A. LAWRENCE  
A. F. POLLARD, Hon. Director, Institute  
of Historical Research  
ARTHUR REDFORD  
J. C. STAMP

Council for the Preservation of Business  
Archives, Institute of Historical Research,  
Malet Street, W.C.1.

G.C.P.—E1770

*Letter to the Times on the formation of the BAC,  
1934*

## Backing Archive Cataloguing: a review of the BAC's cataloguing grants

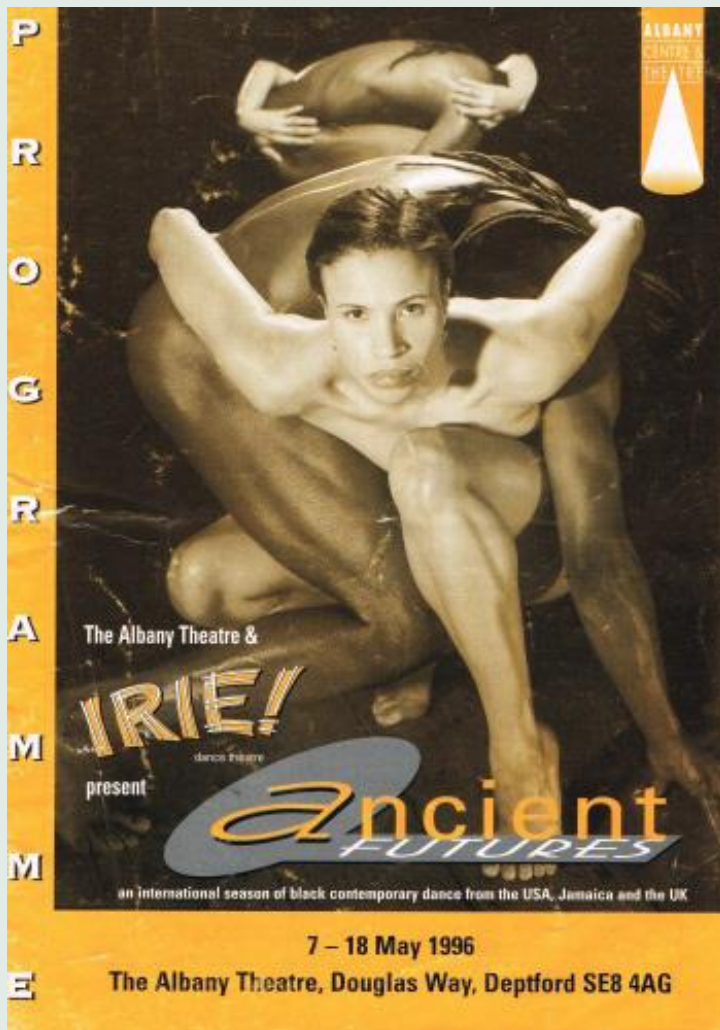
The five-year programme to implement a National Strategy for Business Archives (England and Wales) provided the stimulus for a number of exciting initiatives. One of the most successful has been the Business Archives Council's (BAC) annual cataloguing grants.

In 2009, discussions amongst the BAC executive about use of the Council's charitable funds led Katie Logan to suggest the creation of an annual BAC cataloguing grant for business collections. The proposal was agreed upon and given to Richard Wiltshire who volunteered to develop the application guidelines and judging process. The new grant was launched in April 2010 in direct support of the Strategy. Its main aim: to fund the cataloguing of business archives collections from both private and public sector archives that had potential research interest but had not previously been prioritised by archive managers due, in part, to the fact that they could not attract the funding from existing funding schemes.

Confidence in the success of the grant in that first year was relatively high following the development of a straightforward applications process, supported by good launch-publicity and the

knowledge that there were a lot of valuable, uncatalogued business collections 'out there'. This confidence was not misplaced, with the first year attracting an impressive set of applications that represented a good cross-section of business collections from across the United Kingdom. The subsequent years proved that appetite for this grant was high as 2010's success was repeated again and again.

The businesses types of the past winners have ranged from paddle steamers services to cider making, steel engineering to sugar manufacturing – clearly the grant was reaching across the business archive landscape and the cataloguing grant award was established as a key activity of the BAC. During this time, however, there emerged a distinction between the types of business collections being submitted. Manufacturing dominated, but each year a significant number of applications were submitted for collections of businesses related to the Arts (over a quarter of all applications in 2012); this was noteworthy because business collections related to the Arts were clearly under-represented within the wider business archive community (as of 2012 only six of the 82 business collections listed in The National Archives' ARCHON directory were Arts-related).



*IRIE! programme, 1996.*



Having recognised this lack of representation Lorna Williams drew up a proposal for a new BAC cataloguing grant specifically for business collections related to the Arts. This new grant tied in with a number of other Arts-related archive initiatives and was launched in 2013. The BAC's astute support of this sector of the business archive community was immediately justified with the new grant receiving 20 applications in its first year. And so impressed by the quality and potential benefits described in many of the applications, the judging panel decided to award two £2000 grants, one each to: *IRIE!*, a charitable dance theatre specialising in African peoples' dance, and *Pentabus*, a rural theatre company. Whilst neither company had much in the way of financial resource, or in Pentabus Theatre's case, even an Archivist, what they did possess was a determination to protect and exploit their archive collections, and these grants provided the means.

As the winners' summaries on the BAC website demonstrate there are numerous examples of the excellent uses the grants have been put to. The cataloguing grant gave Durham County Record Office, for example, the opportunity to participate in the 35th anniversary of the closure of the steelworks of Consett Iron Company. The Arts grants allowed Pentabus Theatre to catalogue its collection and deposit it with the Shropshire local record office; this enabled full public access to the collection, raised the Theatre's profile and led to the development of new partnerships with Shropshire Council.

Inevitably, there are regrets with this process: as the administrators concede it would be good to receive more applications directly from private businesses that are aware of the value of the papers they hold but have little resource or knowledge to do anything about them. Additionally, the administrators simply wish they could award more grants! Appealing to collections keepers who have yet to engage with the BAC grants, or increasing the numbers of grants (possibly through partnerships with other grant-funding bodies) may yet happen, but whatever the future developments, they will be built upon the solid foundations of past, successful, grant awards that have leveraged demonstrable benefits for the business community and wider society.

*Ben White*



*Photo from the archives of Cosens of Weymouth, Paddle Steamer Company*

## **Winners of the BAC cataloguing grants 2014**

The Business Archives Council is delighted to announce the winners of the cataloguing grants 2014.

The traditional cataloguing grant for business archives was awarded to Gloucestershire Archives for the cataloguing of the archives of Listers of Dursley, engineers.

The cataloguing grant for business archives related to the arts was awarded to Spike Island Artspace Ltd & The Bristol Record Office for the cataloguing of The Artspace Archive, incorporating Top Floor Studios, Bristol Sculpture Shed and Bristol Printmakers.

Both organisations were awarded £2000 to catalogue their respective collections by April 2015.

For more information about the winners and the grants please see the relevant section of the BAC website at [www.businessarchivescouncil.org.uk/activitiesobjectives/catgrant/](http://www.businessarchivescouncil.org.uk/activitiesobjectives/catgrant/)



*First poster advertising Artspace (photographer Adrian Loveless aka Barbarossa)*

## **BAC annual conference 2014: Let the right one in? Challenging perceptions of access to business archives**

Hosted by the Royal Albert Hall Archive, this year's BAC conference will explore topics including the balance between the commercial needs of a business and facilitating external access, how effectively social media can be used and how access can be made to digital records. The conference will particularly benefit users of privately-held business collections and those managing access to business archives.

Speakers this year include:

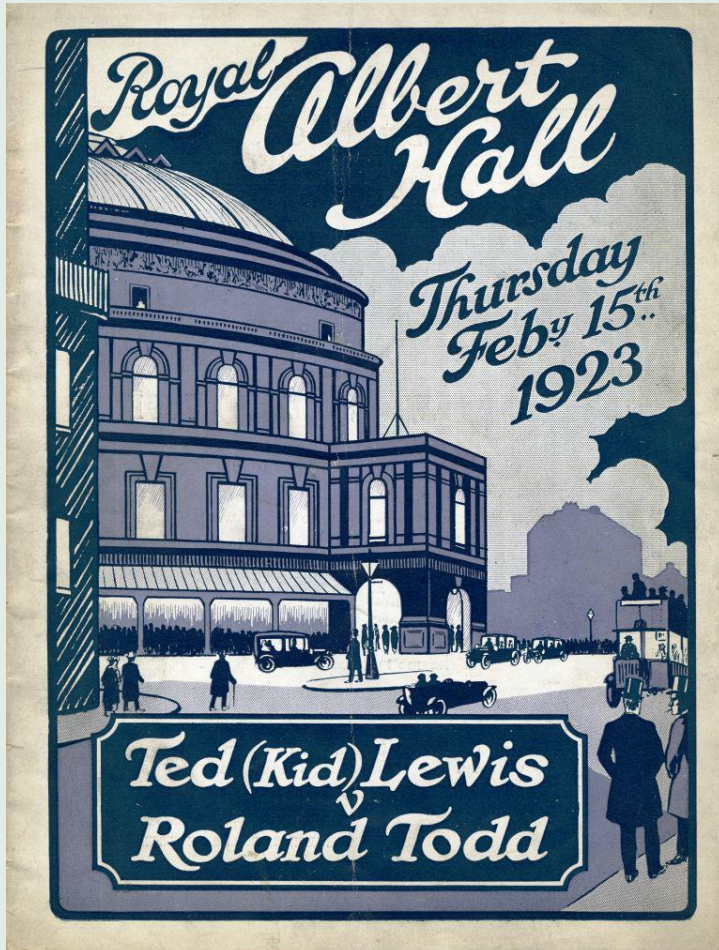
- Maria Sienkiewicz, Barclays Group Archive
- Christopher Hilton, Wellcome Library
- Duncan Campbell-Smith, business historian
- Kiara King, Ballast Trust



- Rachael Griffin, Pentabus Theatre Company

A detailed programme, the booking form, and contact details, are available on the BAC website: <http://www.businessarchivescouncil.org.uk/activities/objectives/conference/>

The conference will be followed by drinks to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the BAC.



*Courtesy of the Royal Albert Hall*

## **Don't risk it! targets business leaders**

As part of the Archive and Records Association's Don't Risk It! Know Your Records campaign, personal letters have been sent to the leaders of more than 1,000 public and private organisations in the UK and Ireland.

The letters urge leaders to understand the risks of not managing their organisation's records and encourage them to reap the rewards of a professional approach to records management.

The letters are one aspect of the ARA's Don't Risk It! Know Your Records campaign. Records managers – and all who have an interest in good records management – are working within their

own organisations to spread the word, both about good records management and about how the skills of records managers can deliver efficiencies and guard against reputational and legal risks.

For more information and the 'Don't Risk It' toolkit please follow this link [www.archives.org.uk/campaigns/knowyourrecords.html](http://www.archives.org.uk/campaigns/knowyourrecords.html) or contact Marie Owens [marie.owens@archives.org.uk](mailto:marie.owens@archives.org.uk) or 01727 838957.



*Don't risk it!*

## **Lord Clark of Windermere leads the celebration for accreditation**

Lord Clark of Windermere, Co-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Archives and History, led the congratulations at a celebration of Archive Service Accreditation at the House of Commons on 15 October. Representatives from the first 14 archive services which have gained Accreditation were praised by Lord Clark for their hard work and their willingness to be pioneers for the wider sector.

The first 14 archive services to be accredited included two business archives (Network Rail Corporate Archive and Unilever Archives and Records Management), local authority archives, film, university and religious archives, as well as the sector's largest archive, The National Archives.

Read more about Archive Service Accreditation at [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/accreditation](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/accreditation)



*Lord Windermere's presentation*

## **The National Archives: introducing the new-look Discovery, a new way to explore archives**

The National Archives has recently launched a new version of Discovery which enables archive users to search, browse and tag 32 million record descriptions for thousands of collections across the UK.

As well as the millions of records held by The National Archives, Discovery searches over 10 million additional records held by more than 2,500 archives and organisations across the UK, including:

- National Register of Archives (NRA)
- Directory of archives (ARCHON)
- Access to Archives (A2A)
- Manorial Documents Register (MDR)

Explore Discovery at <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>

## **Business History Explorer: first issue of News Update**

Business History Explorer (BHE) is the online bibliography of the history of UK businesses and industries. Since its launch 20 months ago significant progress has been made in extending BHE's content by adding newly published material and by filling in gaps. In 2015 it will hold details of some 40,000 publications.

With its emphasis on hard-to-find publications and its business sector and geographical area search capabilities, it is the most comprehensive source for locating publications relating to the history of British business and industry.

The first issue of BHE's News Update is now available to be read at [www.businessarchivescouncil.org.uk/publications/business\\_history\\_explorer/](http://www.businessarchivescouncil.org.uk/publications/business_history_explorer/)

## **British Records Association annual conference 2014: 'Upstairs, downstairs: life in British stately homes and town houses'**

The BRA's annual conference 2014 - arranged this year in conjunction with the Historic Houses Archivists Group - will take place on 2 December. Through the generosity of the Duke of Northumberland, the venue is the magnificent Syon House in Syon Park, west London. The conference will cover a fascinating range of aspects of life in British historic houses, from the family, to the staff, administration, technology, and even taxidermy!

The Bond lecturer this year is Jeremy Musson, the distinguished author, editor and presenter. He will be reflecting on what can be learned from comparing life in Cambridge colleges and British stately homes.

For further information, including details of the speakers and how to book, go to the British Records Association's website at [www.britishrecordsassociation.org.uk/events/upstairs-downstairs-life-in-british-stately-homes-and-town-houses-2/](http://www.britishrecordsassociation.org.uk/events/upstairs-downstairs-life-in-british-stately-homes-and-town-houses-2/)

## **New online catalogue for the Sainsbury Archive**

The Sainsbury Archive at the Museum of London Docklands this month launched its online catalogue at:

<http://catalogue.sainsburyarchive.org.uk/>

The Calmview catalogue comprises more than 19,000 records descriptions and 2000 digital images, related to the history of Sainsbury's from its foundation in Drury Lane in 1869 to the transformation that has occurred in retailing since the mid-19th century. It also includes authority records for the key people and places with links to Sainsbury's, including details of historical store locations.

Feedback on the catalogue, can be sent to [sainsburyarchive@museumoflondon.org.uk](mailto:sainsburyarchive@museumoflondon.org.uk)

MUSEUM OF LONDON THE SAINSBURY ARCHIVE CATALOGUE FAMOUS SAINSBURY BRAND

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**Sainsbury Archive Catalogue**

Welcome to our online catalogue. Here you can access more than 19000 catalogue descriptions, and over 2000 digital images from the Sainsbury Archive.

The Sainsbury Archive is a unique collection of documents, objects (ranging from food preparation and testing equipment, to product packaging and staff uniforms), photographs and audio-visual material charting the development of the well-known supermarket chain from its foundation in 1869 to the present. In 2003 the Sainsbury Archive was created as an independent charitable trust. The archive is on long-term loan to the Museum of London Docklands, where collection highlights are on display and research access is available via the [Sainsbury Study Centre](#).

Please click on "About the Collection" for more information on content, or one of the Search options to enter the catalogue.

**What's New**

**"Little Snow White" promotional booklet for Crelos Margarine, c.1913**

New acquisition: "Little Snow White" promotional booklet for Crelos Margarine, c.1913

[View Record](#)

**Photograph of six female shop assistants promoting Crelos margarine at 9/11 London Road, Croydon store**

Photograph of six early female shop assistants promoting Crelos margarine at 9/11 London Road, Croydon store, c.1914.

[View Record](#)

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Home page of The Sainsbury Archive catalogue

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