



Business Archives Council Newsletter

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Chair's blog

Editor Ben is pressing me for my Blog and it feels like I have only just finished the summer one. Anyway, welcome to the Autumn Blog! Not being written on a train, in case you were wondering...

In that Summer Blog (hmmm, I've just checked and in fact it was written in early June!) I ended by mentioning that this year's BAC Conference will be held on Wednesday 20 November 2019 at the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). At that stage we were still working on the programme, but I can now say preparations for *No Archive is an Island. Connection and collaboration in business archives* are nearly complete. We'll be looking at ways of working with internal colleagues and external institutions, with speakers sharing their experiences of participatory approaches to archival practice. All of the speakers are confirmed and as I write, we're just waiting for a couple of titles for presentations. Booking should now be open, with the 'early bird' option available: www.businessarchivescouncil.org.uk/activitiesobjectives/conference/

As usual, the Conference will be followed by the reception for the award of the BAC Wadsworth Prize for Business History. This year the event will be held at the National Theatre Studio, Lambeth. I look forward to meeting many of you at the Conference, the Wadsworth, or both!

Talking of conferences, some of you will know that I am also the Chair of the Archives & Records Association (ARA) Conference Committee. This year we were in Leeds which proved to be very convenient because the winners of the 2019 BAC Cataloguing Grant were Northern Ballet, based very close to the conference venue, The Queens Hotel. Bethany and Hari from Northern Ballet were able to pop over so that I could present them with the cheque for £4,000. The company is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, and they've never employed an archivist before. A definite 'good news' story. In addition, I would like to congratulate Falkirk Community Trust as the inaugural winners of the BAC's new *Grant for Business Archives related to Sport* which was launched this year. Falkirk Community Trust has been awarded £4,000 for the cataloguing of the archive collection of Falkirk Football Club. The cheque will be presented soon, and more details will follow in next quarter's newsletter.

As is the lot of the conference organiser, I didn't actually get to hear many of the papers, but you'll be unsurprised to know that I did put time aside to attend the session featuring three business archives. We heard about working across international boundaries in a global organisation (HSBC), and the imaginative ways in which retail business archive collections can be used (Sainsbury's and Marks & Spencer). You will no doubt have seen the adverts and social media activity celebrating Sainsbury's 150th anniversary, and Allison Foster, Sainsbury Archivist, has written an interesting article for this issue which talks about various celebrations. These included a 'pop-up' heritage shop in Covent Garden, and whilst that's not a new idea, I don't think anyone else has had theirs opened by the Queen! And of course Leeds is the birthplace of M&S and home to the M&S Archive. We had to arrange a tour which was (unsurprisingly) fully-booked.

One of the issues that was discussed during the conference was diversity, or rather the lack of it, in the recordkeeping sector. Not just in terms of those working in archives, but also in terms of what is in the records. It's something that we need to look at, and it's likely to be the theme at the BAC Conference in 2020. We need to get through the 2019 Conference first – see you there!

Mike Anson
BAC Chair

Stop press: The Thomas Cook archive

Just as the autumn issue of the newsletter was due for publication, the travel agent, Thomas Cook UK Plc and associated UK entities, entered Compulsory Liquidation; they are now under the control of the Official Receiver. As some of you will be aware, Thomas Cook built up an important company archive, and its rescue is now an objective of the BAC's Crisis Management Team (CMT). The CMT will make contact with the Official Receiver on the week beginning Monday 30 September, and it has already spoken to academics with a specific knowledge of, and interest in the collection, and a number of archive repositories who have expressed an interest in taking the collection. Updates on the progress of the CMT's attempts to save this archive will be posted on the BAC's website, as well as in the next issue of the BAC newsletter.

Welcome to new members

Zurich Corporate Archives
Warner Textile Archive

Quality Perfect, Prices Lower: Sainsbury's 150th Birthday

2019 is Sainsbury's 150th birthday and during this year the Archive team and members of Sainsbury's staff have been involved in a number of celebratory activities designed to commemorate the company's long history. Sainsbury's was founded in 1869 by John James and Mary Ann Sainsbury when they opened their first shop at 173 Drury Lane, in the heart of the West End of London.

As a little bit of background the Sainsbury Archive was formed as a company limited by guarantee on 8 November 2002 and was registered with the Charity Commission on 11 March 2003 as a separate body to the retail business. Originally based in a Sainsbury's warehouse, the archive moved to the Museum of London Docklands in 2005, where the material is stored appropriately and access is given to members of the public. The core of the archive was formed at the time of the company's centenary in 1969 and has steadily grown to more than 700 linear metres of shelving, including documents, objects (ranging from food preparation and testing equipment, to product packaging and staff uniforms), photographs and audio-visual material. The collection includes a large number of photographs and artefacts, and is particularly strong in the areas of product packaging, advertising and retail stores.



*The Chelmsford Branch of Sainsbury's, 1931 (reference: SA/BRA/7/C/13/1/1)
(Courtesy The Sainsbury Archive, Museum of London Docklands)*

Both the company and Archive Trust saw the 150th anniversary as an opportunity to celebrate the heritage of the business, and for the Archive the activity with the largest impact to our work was the re-design and publication of a brand new website that brought several outdated online sites together. Originally the Archive had four separate websites which all contained different information and content – an online catalogue (Calm View), a website which held digitised copies of the in-house staff magazine *The Journal*, a website hosted by the Museum of London which had contextual and educational material, and a section on the company's corporate website. Amalgamating these old websites and relaunching with a new design and content has made it easier for both current staff based in a different location to the archive and members of the public to engage with the archival material. In addition to this it was decided that the Archive would embark on a large-scale digitisation project of its paper-based material as well as significant portion of the audio visual collection for preservation purposes. 90,000 items are being published on the website over the course of 2019 – 2020. The packaging, advertising and marketing material were chosen as ideal digitisation candidates along with our most requested items – roughly 40,000 historical images of Sainsbury's branches. Between January and March of this year there were over 37,000 unique visitors to the website and nearly 242,000 page views, bolstered by social media promotions by the company and a link on their homepage.

Material from the Archive was featured in a display of *Own Label* packaging from the in-house design studio from the 60s and 70s at the Design Museum in Kensington, London, over the summer and this coincided with the re-release of a book about the same subject by Jonny Trunk.



*Product packaging from the Sainsbury Archive on display at the Design Museum, London, in 2019
(Courtesy The Sainsbury Archive, Museum of London Docklands)*

The Archive has also supported the company in a number of activities that were carried out as part of the 150th birthday celebrations. The most widely known was *Since 1869: The Sainsbury's 150 Experience* which was a pop-up immersive experience close to the original Drury Lane shop in Covent Garden, and open during the birthday week in May. The highlight of this was a recreation of a Victorian street at the end of which sat a counter service branch of Sainsbury's complete with actors who guided you through the development of Sainsbury's history – informing visitors of changes to staffing, product range and supermarket developments. There was also a display of original archive material, a timeline of the company's history, and a space to highlight more recent developments with the business. On Wednesday 22 May, Her Majesty The Queen visited the experience, and received a demonstration of a self-service checkout machine.

On 25 May, Sainsbury's customers were given a surprise free packet of tea and biscuits whose packaging had been inspired by the *Own Label* designs. Colleagues were given these packets too as part of a gift from the company, which also consisted of a specially designed tote bag made out of recycled bottles, and a 150th pin badge.

In addition, material from the archive was used in the 150th TV advert, social media campaigns and in-store point-of-sale material, which all featured an animated model of the founders John James and Mary Ann Sainsbury. There were also archive-related articles in the *Sainsbury's Magazine* and staff magazine.

It's been a busy but incredibly rewarding year so far, and it's been a real honour to be a part of the celebrations. The website can be found at www.sainsburyarchive.org.uk

Allison Foster

Archivist (Sainsbury Archive)

The John Armstrong Award for Transport Archives: final report

Glamorgan Archives, the winners of *The John Armstrong Award for Transport Archives*, have now completed their cataloguing of *The Motorway Archive Trust* papers. Full details of the project, including the project report, can be viewed [here](#).

Museums Association Conference & Exhibition 2019, 3 – 5 October

The Museums Association Conference & Exhibition 2019, the largest event of its kind in Europe for museums and heritage professionals, will take place this October in Brighton.

The theme of Brighton 2019 is: *Sustainable and Ethical Museums in a Globalised World*. The conference looks at how the sector can help to create a more sustainable world, how it can communicate challenges such as poverty and climate change to audiences, and how museums can support campaigns that are working for a fairer and more sustainable society.

Sessions throughout the conference cover topics such as decolonisation, repatriation, sponsorship, curation, health and wellbeing, biodiversity, leadership, gender, workforce and diversity. There are also a host of seminars and training - all developed to facilitate fresh thinking.

For more information and to book your place go to www.museumsassociation.org/conference

New case study published on the value of business archives

The University of Essex has published a new case study: *How John Lewis helped us prove the business value of archives*.

The case study shows how researchers and archivists can co-design projects that benefit both the academic researcher and the business. It focuses on the collaboration between Dr Alix Green (University of Essex), archivists of the John Lewis Partnership, and other organisations, and sets a blueprint for others to follow.

Read all about it [here](#)

Sporting Heritage Summit 2019, 23 – 24 October

This year's Sporting Heritage Summit is being held at the CC4 Museum of Welsh Cricket, Cardiff. You will be bowled over by this year's amazing two-day programme, which can be viewed [here](#).

The conference draws together individuals from across the sporting sector including: sports clubs, governing bodies, museums, archives, schools, universities, and community groups.

Places are strictly limited, so to find out more, and to book your place at the sporting heritage event of the year, please click [here](#)!

The National Brewery Trust: winners of TWA's digitisation grant for 2019

TownsWeb Archiving is pleased to announce that the winner of their UK heritage digitisation grant scheme for 2019 is the National Brewery Heritage Trust (NBHT). The NBHT will use the £6,000 grant to digitise around 500,000 industry-related archives and artefacts, spanning over 250 years, as part of their project to create an online digital catalogue. For more information, click [here](#).

The Northern Ballet Archive: winners of the BAC Cataloguing Grant for Business Archives 2019

The judging panel for this year's Cataloguing Grant for Business Archives was impressed with the variety of records of firms represented from across the UK. After individual scoring and joint deliberation, they decided to present the award to Northern Ballet Limited. The Northern Ballet Archive is a rare example with a wide range of record types. The organisation's growth and development over 50 years is documented, from inception as a regional company to becoming an arts business of national significance. The records provide a valuable insight into social, cultural and economic shifts affecting the business itself and the wider arts sector outside London (where ballet companies have been traditionally concentrated).

Northern Ballet began life as Northern Dance Theatre when it was set up in 1969 by dramatic dancer Laverne Meyer. The Company launched with 11 dancers and a budget of £10,500. It strived to develop new audiences and quickly achieved a loyal following in the North of England.



*Bethany McNaboe and Hari Jonkers of Northern Ballet being presented with their BAC cataloguing grant winner's cheque by BAC Chair Mike Anson
(Courtesy Mike Anson)*

In 1976 the Company renamed itself Northern Ballet Theatre (NBT), with the focus being as much on the 'theatre' as on the 'ballet.' In a relatively small UK theatre circuit, which included a number of classical ballet companies, NBT held a unique role, and the Company's theatrical and dramatic narratives attracted more new audiences to dance. In the 1980s and 1990s, full-length productions such as *A Christmas Carol*, *The Brontës*, *Romeo & Juliet* and *Dracula* won awards and were huge box office hits, making NBT one of the UK's most successful touring companies.

The archive comprises institutional records and personal collections of Northern Ballet. The collections tell the story of the Company from foundation to the present, covering a period of five Artistic Directors, four locations in Manchester, Halifax and Leeds and three Company names. The records relate to all aspects of the Company's activities, from its 200+ production repertoire to its dance training Academy and Education work. There is a wealth of visual sources in photographs, posters, programmes, costume/set designs and audio-visual material.

The grant will enable Northern Ballet to catalogue its highest-level governance records in detail, including board papers and minutes dating back to the very first Board meeting in 1969, and production files detailing some of the company's most successful productions from the past 50 years. It will also help to make Northern Ballet's archive more visible and accessible, for people both inside and outside of the organisation, creating a wider picture of the history of dance, ballet and the arts in West Yorkshire and throughout the UK.

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