

Nicola Marchbank, Newly Qualified Archivist at Barclays Group Archive

Barclays Group Archives (BGA) simultaneously serves the bank during the course of its daily business and preserves the history of a company which is over 300 years old. Therefore, as a newly qualified archivist with Barclays, there is a lot of learning on the job.

Much of my work comprises the core of BGA's duties which focus on serving the current operations of our parent company. Our primary function is to serve the Bank and the information we hold is often retained for essential business, regulatory or legislative reasons so our internal function is vital. Learning this element of the job is the hardest part about being a newly qualified archivist working in Barclays. An efficient response with vital documents to Legal or Corporate Secretariat Departments, effectively managing records you receive in the first place and learning to interact with different parts of the bank who have very different roles are amongst the more important elements of the work. One minute you may be retrieving product terms and conditions for Head Office Customer Relations, the next minute, tracking historic sort-codes from dormant customer accounts often based in branches which have long since closed or a share certificate for Secretariat, all whilst in the midst of researching a piece for the pensioners magazine!

On the other side of our dual face we either research on behalf of members of the public or support academic researchers who visit our office. This can range from researching a constituent bank, the bank accounts famous customers (of whom Lewis Carroll was one), answering genealogical enquiries, searching for information about Directors, departments, branches and branch architecture, or the history of our eagle logo.

The possibilities are endless: the huge variety of research that can be undertaken from what at first glance could be a limited field of study, banking is a lesson the newly qualified archivist must learn when joining an archive like this. The Bank isn't just about global finance and business. It underpins the life and concerns of the whole community. Ultimately it's not just the range of records you work with and the archival skills you develop in your daily work as a newly qualified archivist, or the complexities of working in a large company like Barclays but just how relevant the work you do is, even if it doesn't seem like it at first. And in the end, that's why I like it here.