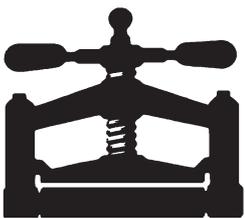


Newsletter



**BUSINESS
ARCHIVES
COUNCIL**

BAC ANNUAL CONFERENCE



Eamon Dyas, Anne Thick (centre) and Melanie Aspey debate a point at the Annual Conference

The Council's Annual General Meeting and Annual Conference were held at the British Bankers' Association's offices in the City of London on the 2nd November; we are enormously grateful to the Association for having allowed us to make use of their superb new premises. This year the Conference focused on 'New Discoveries in Financial Archives'; notwithstanding a seemingly narrower focus than usual, hugely important issues of general importance to business archivists and historians were dealt with. In so many different ways the papers delivered highlighted the huge strides forward made by archivists of financial institutions in the last two decades.

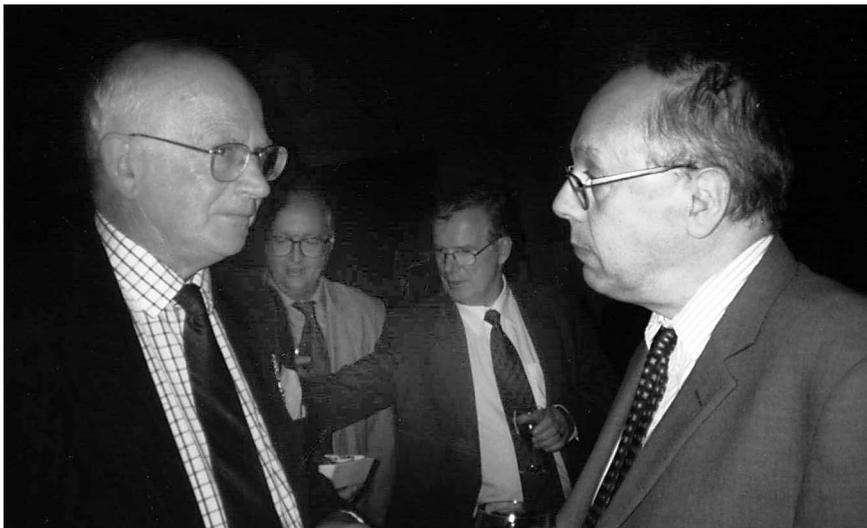
There was much about identification, collection and centralisation of historical archives, features that have characterised the organisational functions and output of bank archivists in recent years. Two historians – Duncan Ross of Glasgow University and Iain Black of King's College London – considered bank archives from the user's perspective and, respectively, dealt with savings banks and the significance of financial archives for historical geography.

Roger Nougaret, the Paris-based Keeper of the Historical Archives of the Credit Lyonnais, and Edwin Green of HSBC considered the informational value of historical archives to the mainstream business of banks. They described how their historical assets combined with their historical perspective and understanding had led them to play key roles in the solution of major business issues. By way of illustration, Roger Nougaret outlined the vital role of French bank archivists in the identification and restitution of the

assets of Jewish customers that had been confiscated during the Second World War. In all cases the complexity and subtleties of the roles they had played had added to their profile, standing and confidence; the message which came through was that banks had in their archive departments assets and skills which would be of increasing relevance to their mainstream business.

To conclude the conference, Melanie Aspey, the Council's Chairman, outlined plans for the future. In the last few years the Council's surveying activities have centred around the records of the pharmaceutical and veterinary medicine sectors – enabled through generous funding by the Wellcome Trust – and both projects are now in different stages of completion. In order to maintain momentum on this front, Melanie referred to plans for a survey of the historical records of the City of London-based financial services sector. Although related to retail banking and insurance, this sector mostly comprises businesses undertaking investment and wholesale banking, broking and asset management. It therefore embraces investment banks, security brokers, investment trusts, unit trust managers, market institutions and wholesale banking entities of the recent past such as secondary and consortium banks. Everything was in a very preliminary stage, Melanie said, and the precise definition of the survey, the nature of the Council's involvement in it and, not least, sources of funding yet had to be determined. But there could be no doubt that the historical records of this sector are in grave danger following the immense structural, ownership and cultural changes of the last 15 years and that, as a result, something had to be done.

LAUNCH OF *BRITISH BANKING, A GUIDE TO HISTORICAL RECORDS*



Dr Peter Mathias (left), Vice President of the Council, talks to Dr Terry Gourvish, Deputy Chairman, at the launch party.

The Council's latest publication, *British Banking, A Guide to Historical Records* compiled by John Orbell and Alison Turton, was launched at a reception at the Bank of England Museum at the beginning of September; we are enormously grateful to the Bank and to the Museum's Curator, John Keyworth, for their generosity in making this possible. Professor Leslie Pressnell, who was largely responsible for the first edition of this book, published in 1985, addressed the gathering of archivists, bankers and historians. Copies of the book are available from the BAC at a cost of £55 plus £3.50 for postage in Europe or £8 for postage elsewhere.

THE FINE ART SOCIETY PLC 125TH ANNIVERSARY

2001 is the 125th anniversary of the formation of the Fine Art Society and the Society, proud of its history, has marked the event in fine fashion. It has published during the year two sale catalogues containing long and informative historical essays about the Society, the first dealing with the early years to 1914 and the second covering the period from then until the present day. Also published is a complete list of exhibitions. The catalogues referred to exhibitions at the Society's gallery of a wide range of items – from paintings and prints to ceramics and furniture – which reflected its specialisation over the years – English figurative art and design of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. There have also been exhibitions of material drawn from the Society's archives.

Dealers in fine art are as much a business as any other and thereby qualify for discussion in our newsletter but the Fine Art Society has a greater claim for inclusion than most. This is because its formation in 1876 was by means of a limited company and was not, as was the norm for the art trade until recent years, by means of a partnership or by individual initiative. It means that the Society is today one of the longest-surviving registered companies and, as such, figured in the Council's 1986 survey of the archives of the earliest limited liability companies [see Lesley Richmond and Bridget Stockford *Company Archives. The Survey of the Records of the First Registered Companies in England and Wales*]. Initially the new firm specialised in print-selling and publishing but from the outset, and this marked it out from the rest, there was a strong emphasis on exhibition at their New Bond Street premises in London's West End.

They are still there today producing splendid and informative exhibitions and can be contacted at 148 New Bond Street, London W1S 2JT [tel 020 7629 5116; faslondon@aol.com]. The catalogues are available at £15 each post-free.

UPDATE ON RESOURCE

Resource – the relatively-newly formed Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries – moves forward in a high profile way and with missionary zeal. 'We will liberate the great [museum] collections held in cities ... or in universities ... from inaccessibility and ignorance', states the second issue of its newsletter *Resource News*, 'We want to place them at the heart of a renaissance as centres of cultural learning and understanding, properly equipped as advanced centres ...'.

It is excellent to see archives given prominence in this publication which devotes a page to 'Archive Action'. It contains news of the progress of the nine English Regional Archives Councils, their appointment of Development Officers, the progress of the Access to Archives [A2A] schemes and, not least, the newly-formulated action plan for archives published as *Developing the 21st Century Archive: An Action Plan for United Kingdom Archives*. One senses – as elsewhere – a real wind of change blowing through the world of UK archives as the availability of resource is examined, the inter-relationship of archives, libraries and museums is reviewed and as new user groups are looked for and actively encouraged to become aware of and involved in their heritage. In all of this business archives and history are vital. Perhaps more than any other category of archives, they explain both the way of life of earlier generations and the achievements of our forefathers in creating knowledge and skills, businesses and industries. They show how wealth and prosperity – but also poverty and deprivation – result.

For copies of *Resource News* and *Action Plan for... Archives* contact Resource on 020 7273 1458 or visit them at www.resource.gov.uk.

25th ANNIVERSARY OF THE HISTORY OF ADVERTISING TRUST ARCHIVE

This Archive, a registered charity, was established in 1976 and this year celebrates its 25th birthday. So very many congratulations HAT. Over the years it has grown steadily, initially in premises in London and now in specially adapted farm buildings in the depths of the Norfolk countryside – a response to the high costs of being London-based. The ‘HAT Archive is about rescuing material, conserving it and making it available to as many people as possible’, writes its Archivist Michael Cudlipp in the latest issue of *Business History News*. The material it collects embraces the UK’s ‘marketing communications heritage – advertising, marketing, media and public relations’.

It all began in two rooms adjacent to the offices of the Advertising Association; the Association’s archives represented its first acquisition and Gordon Phillips – whom many people will remember with great fondness as Archivist of The Times – was its first archivist. From the outset it has been independent and has received no public funds; two thirds of its income is derived from revenue created through selling images, research and other services and publications.

Many of its collections come from advertising agencies and in the very recent past it has received the UK marketing archive of C&A, dating back to 1924, on the closure of that business’s UK operations. Another archive, artificially created by HAT, relates to The Millennium Dome. There are four basic categories of collections – business archives; specialist archives – e.g. covering a particular topic and sometimes artificially built; advertising archives – e.g. collections of artwork, proofs, photographs and the like; and a library of many thousands of volumes of books and journals. Five full time staff and ten part time volunteers administer the collections. The emphasis is very much on ensuring the maximum possible access to the archives and Michael Cudlipp labels it the ‘Peoples Archive’.

So this is no small operation but an important outpost on the business archives and history scene. Visitors are received by appointment and the address is 12 Raveningham Centre, Raveningham, Norwich NR14 6NH [tel: 01508 548623]. Otherwise visit the Trust at www.hatads.org.uk.

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE IN 2000/01

There is so much information packed into the PRO’s latest annual report [to March 2001] it is hard to know where to start. But one should start by saying that the report is as impressive as it is glossy and provides a real marker in measuring how far archives, and not least the PRO, have come in the UK in the last decade.

However even a thorough scanning does not reveal much that is of direct interest to business history and archives. Most notable are passing references to transfers to the PRO of records particularly popular with users. These include, for example, those of the Registrar General of Shipping and Seamen relating to service in the merchant navy in the mid-twentieth century and to others of the British Railways Board and pre-nationalisation railway companies dating from the 1840s.

However there is much about archive and record management processes that is of the real interest to archivists. The great achievement in the year was the launch of PROCat, a huge step forward in online access by making catalogue information available to users via the web. There is also news of the progress of the ambitious Access to Archives [A2A] project. This, through a partnership of the PRO, Historical Manuscripts Commission, British Library and record offices the length and breadth of England, aims to make available via the web a virtual catalogue of 400,000 pages of much used archive catalogues.

On line access to catalogues stimulates online access to the records themselves and here the PRO is breaking new ground. It is digitising the 1901 census results so that in January 2002 these will be available via the web; gone will

be the days – so far as this dataset is concerned – of grappling with microfilm. There are plans to handle similar series of popular records such as military service records and probate materials.

The report also refers to the effects on the PRO of new information policy legislation; its work with professional bodies to prepare a much needed code of practice for record managers and archivists relating to data protection; the continuing transfer of government electronic datasets to the National Digital Archive of Datasets [NDAD]; e-learning products; and a range of other initiatives.

There are statistics in abundance although they are well spread through the report. Operating costs were £31.5 million and revenue generated totalled £2.9 million. £750,000 was produced by PRO Enterprises, which publishes licences and retails. Readers at Kew totalled 101,000 and they consulted more than half a million documents. Web site impressions well exceeded 30 million. Digital scanning now accounts for 22 per cent of all non-film-copying orders completed by the PRO.

Cutting through gloss, it is still clear that the PRO’s annual report lists a range of immensely relevant and impressive achievements; in the last decade or so it has come an awfully long way. But forgive a tiny whinge. The PRO has valuable, if well dispersed, riches for business history and a decently-long publication which draws all of these together would surely not go amiss.

Visit the PRO at www.pro.gov.uk

THE ROTHSCHILD ARCHIVE

One of the most interesting developments on the UK business archive scene in the last few years has been the creation of The Rothschild Archive Trust. This is a charitable trust established to hold the historical archives of, inter alia, the merchant bank of NM Rothschild & Sons Ltd and of individual members of the Rothschild family. It is overseen by trustees and administered by its Director, Vic Gray, and its Archivist, Melanie Aspey.

The recent publication of its second annual review, covering the 12 months ended March 2001, sheds light on its activities – the presentation of a business archives through such a public format makes for a slightly unreal experience! Vic Gray provides a review of the year covering cataloguing and acquisitions, research and publications and members of the archives team write on groups of papers or special subjects. Niall Ferguson's lecture, sponsored by the Trust and delivered earlier this year under the title *'The Cash Nexus: Banking and Politics in History'*, is reproduced in full.

There is much to fascinate and ponder and many ideas to follow up in this beautifully designed and illustrated document. There is, of course, no reason why such reviews for public consumption should be the sole property of an archive trust and one is left wondering about the scope for other business archives to present their work and their assets to a wider constituency in such a way. Budget is one reason but surely not an insuperable one.

Copies of the review are available from The Rothschild Archive, New Court, St Swithin's Lane, London EC4P 4DU [info@rothschildarchive.org]. Visit the Archive at www.rothschildarchive.org.

CONFERENCES, COURSES & TRAINING

FAMILY HISTORY FAIR. The 10th *Society of Genealogists* Family History Fair is to be held over the weekend of the 4th and 5th May 2002 at the Royal Horticultural Society, New Hall and Conference Centre, Greycoat Street, Westminster, London SW1. Its aim is to expand the appeal of family history to a wider audience. The Society is currently advertising space for exhibitors and applications will be handled on a first come first served basis. So set out your stall by applying to the Society of Genealogists, 9 Dallington Street, London EC1V 0BQ.

ARCHIVE-SKILLS CONSORTIUM. This consultancy runs fortnightly courses on different aspects of archive and record management and details can be obtained from Margaret Crockett at margaret@archive-skills.com or visit them at www.archive-skills.com.

The European Business History Association holds its **ANNUAL CONFERENCE** in Helsinki from 23rd to 25th August 2002. It is held under the banner of 'Companies, Owners, Employees' and considers the institutional separation of ownership, management and effort – 'one of the most fundamental changes in the history of capitalism'. Further details are available from the organising committee at either riitta.hjerppe@helsinki.fi or susanna.fellman@helsinki.fi.

Closer to home, the UK's own *Association of Business Historians* is holding its **ANNUAL CONFERENCE** from 28th to 29th June at the University of Reading. Its banner is 'Image Innovation and Consumption' and deals with issues of brands, image, fashion, advertising and marketing. Further details from a.c.godley@reading.ac.uk.

'ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORY' is a joint symposium of the *Royal Historical Society* and the *Society of Architectural Historians in Great Britain*, which is to be held at Sheffield University from 5th to 7th April 2002. Two interrelated perspectives are to be explored – the role of architecture as evidence for other types of history and the ways in which historical evidence contributes to the understanding of architecture. Details from Department of History, University of Sheffield, Sheffield.

PUBLICATIONS & EXHIBITIONS

MANCHESTER ARCHIVES, part of Manchester Archives and Local Studies at Manchester Central Library, has just published on the web a guide to its business collections. Although most collections relate to Manchester several have wider significance, most notably those of the Calico Printers' Association and Renold Chains Plc. There are also the archives of Quarry Bank Mill at Styal, the well-known National Trust property. Read the guide at www.manchester.gov.uk/libraries/arls/busarc/index.htm. Further details are available from Richard Bond at Manchester Central Library.

The latest issue of **FRIENDS OF PK NEWSLETTER** – the newsletter of The Cable & Wireless Porthcurno and Collections Trust – has just been published and is full of news about this enterprising and lively group of archivists and curators at work in the depths of Cornwall. They look after immensely important archives relating to, inter alia, the beginnings of international telegraphy in the middle of the nineteenth century. Visit their web site at www.porthcurno.org.uk.

THE MUSEUM OF LONDON opens its new World City Gallery on the 7th December. It traces changes that took place in London's life between 1789 and 1914 and deals, inter alia, with the creation of infrastructure such as water supply and drainage and underground and overground railways and also with the generation of the capital's vast wealth not least through international trade and finance. Visit the museum at www.museumoflondon.org.uk.

BUSINESS HISTORY NEWS, the Association of Business Historians Newsletter, No 22, Oct 2001, contains an interesting account of The BP Archive written by Michael Gasson, BP Group Archivist.

Pierre de Longueur, Director of the Association pour l'Histoire de Paribas, writes about his bank's oral history programme in the latest issue of **FINANCIAL HISTORY REVIEW**, Vol. 8, April 2001, under the title 'Incorporating oral history sources within an archives department. The Paribas experience'.

The English Galleries at the **VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM** reopened in November after a long period of closure for reconstruction. They are magnificent and provide a superb historical setting for understanding the development of such household products as furniture, ceramics and glass made in workshops and factories across the land.

ON A POINT OF CLARIFICATION Jeanette Strickland, Unilevers' Archivist, asks me to point out that the sale of the contents of the late Lord Leverhulme's house at Thornton Manor, Merseyside, contained no archives. All archival material relating to Unilever and its predecessor companies rests with Unilever Archives whilst the Lever family have retained personal and family papers

The Business Archive Council's Newsletter is published quarterly by the Business Archives Council, 101 Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7RE (Tel: 020 7247 0024). Registered Charity No.31336.

The opinions in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Council. The Editor is John Orbell and he can be contacted at john.orbell@ing-barings.com

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