



BAC 2006 Conference Report

Managing Business Archives: A Global Perspective

In a break with tradition, the 2006 BAC conference was held in Edinburgh, and jointly organised with the BAC Scotland, the Business Records Group of the Society of Archivists, and the Section on Business and Labour Archives of the International Council on Archives. With its theme 'Managing Business Archives: A Global Perspective', it brought together an impressive array of archivists and records managers from 8 countries and 3 continents to discuss issues of common concern, with nearly 90 delegates attending.

The conference kicked off with a session on managing archives and heritage overseas. The speakers were, from Hong Kong, **Helen Swinnerton** who manages HSBC's Asia Pacific Archives; from France **Didier Bondue**, Director of St Gobain Archives; from the USA **Becky Haglund Tousey**, Archives Manager at Kraft Foods; and from Scotland, **Jennifer Birnie** archivist at Diageo. It was interesting to learn about the different challenges faced by this diverse collection of organisations, but what emerged from each of the talks, and the subsequent discussion, was the importance of business archives to the parent organisation, and the need to reinforce the enduring business value of the archive to the company, not just its historical value.

The next two talks focussed on a universal issue: the preservation of digital records. **Peter Emmerson**, of Emmerson Consulting, opened his paper with some stunning statistics. A survey carried out in 2004 revealed that 47% of the businesses surveyed did not include electronic records in their retention schedules, 59% had no email retention policy and a massive 70% had no migration policy. He went on to argue that the problem was organisational inertia - that the problem was so big that no one felt they could do anything about it. In future he felt record survival would be skewed towards those sectors that were currently tackling digital preservation, such as the oil and pharmaceutical industries. **Seamus Ross**, of Glasgow University followed with a talk on various Europe-wide initiatives set up to look at the issue of digital preservation, with particular emphasis on Digital Preservation Europe (www.epranet.org), which helped to reassure delegates that information and tool kits were available to help them formulate a strategy for dealing with digital records. The discussion following the session found both speakers agreeing that accidental survivals of archives would be less likely in a digital world.



Royal Bank of Scotland, Gogarburn.

The afternoon began with a look at the different national approaches to the preservation of business records. Both **Christian Jansen** of the Danish National Archive and **Matti Lakio** from the Central Archives of Finnish Business described a centralised and strategic approach to the process of collecting business records in their countries. The Danish National Business Archive is part of the State Archives of Denmark, has 22 staff and welcomed 6000 visitors in 2005. As part of its work, it initiates programmes of archive collection for particular sectors of industry - for instance, in 2004/5 it undertook an acquisition programme for the tourist industry. The Central Archives for Finnish Business Records was founded in the 1980s by a partnership of academic and business organisations including the confederation of Finnish Industries and receives approximately 1000 metres of new records each year. **Karl-Peter Ellerbrook** of the Westphalian Business Archive outlined the system of regional business archives in Germany. The first such repository was established in Cologne in 1906 and there is now a network of 6 such archives with the newest founded in 1993. These regional repositories often feature an enviable alliance of archives and businesses: the locals chambers of commerce are usually involved in their foundation and ongoing operations. **Robert Brown**, the Business Records Development Officer at The National Archives in Kew, described the UK structures for collecting and keeping business archives as more hybrid and pragmatic, but with strengths that can be built on especially within the work of the business archive strategy.

The afternoon finished with three very impressive presentations on new projects to get archives out of the mobile racking and

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onto the desks and computer screens of new users. **Clare Wood** from The Sainsbury Archive explained how the company archive had found a new home and new audiences in a fruitful partnership with The Museum of London; **David Carter** from Prudential plc described how the archives team had created and promoted their virtual archive, and **Sian Wynn-Jones** from BT outlined how rethinking the stewardship of BT's heritage had enabled the archives to widen access to telecommunications history

whilst ensuring that their initiatives fitted perfectly within the corporate social responsibility programme of their parent company.

The conference was held at the conference centre of the impressive new business campus of The Royal Bank of Scotland just outside Edinburgh at Gogarburn. Our thanks must go to all the organisers, to the Royal Bank of Scotland and to **Alison Turton** in particular, for putting together such an entertaining, lively and informative programme.

Wadsworth Prize

The Council awarded its Wadsworth Prize for Business History 2005 at Barclays plc in Canary Wharf on 7 December 2006. The winner of the prize, which is given annually to the best book in British business history, was *Renewing Unilever: Transformation and Tradition*, published by Oxford University Press. The successful author was Geoffrey Jones, Joseph C. Wilson Professor of Business Administration, Harvard Business School.

The panel of judges consisted of Howard Davies, Director of the LSE, Roy Edwards of Southampton University, and John Orbell, former archivist of ING. Dr Orbell presented the prize, which was accepted on Professor Jones's behalf by Dr Peter Miskell, of Reading University, one of the research assistants for the winning book. In his address Dr Orbell noted that once again the competition for the prize had been vigorous, reflecting the current strengths of the business history discipline in the UK.



(l-r) Dr Peter Miskell, of Reading University, accepting the Wadsworth Prize on behalf of Geoffrey Jones, Joseph C. Wilson Professor of Business Administration, Harvard Business School; Dr Terry Gourvish, Chair of the BAC; Dr John Orbell, a Wadsworth Prize judge.

Happy Birthday lady clerks

In January 1907 history was made in Midland Bank headquarters- the first female member of staff reported for duty. This pioneer of women in banking was Miss Anne Tulloch and her duties involved translating French and German newspapers for senior managers. In 1914 the bank began recruiting lady clerks to work behind the counters to replace men who had joined the armed forces. *The Bankers Magazine* of the time warned against this practice:

It is probably impossible to employ them on heavy tills or in offices subject to periodic rushes, where the physical and nerve strain would be beyond the endurance of a normal woman.

Many women since have proved that their nerves are up to the task and progress towards equality has been slow but steady. Major milestones were reached in the 1970s with the arrival of equal pay and the first female Midland Bank branch manager.

The archive unit of the HSBC Group (which holds the archives of Midland Bank) decided that centenary celebrations were in order and set about

planning a campaign to engage and inform. For the internal audiences the archive unit made their first foray into television production with a partnership with HSBC Live, the bank's TV station that broadcasts twice-weekly to all staff. The archivists tracked down the bank's first female branch manager (Deal branch in 1973) and she very kindly agreed to be filmed in discussion with a present female branch manager about the changing position of women in the financial world. This was followed up by an interview with a present female business head at HSBC and the two interviews were woven together with clips from old recruitment films and stills of images and documents from the archives. The result was beamed to every HSBC branch, and available to all other members of staff through the intranet. The programme was supported by the



Miss Anne Tulloch joined Midland Bank on 21 January 1907 – the bank's first female employee. Her duties were the translation of French and German newspapers for the bank's senior managers.

release of a story about the centenary on the bank's intranet – and the release was timed to coincide with International Woman's Day which made it the lead story for the day. The pensioners were not forgotten with an article in their magazine about the anniversary and an appeal to write in with their memories and reminiscences. The wider world too was included in the centenary celebrations with a selection of relevant

images on the bank's internet site which were cross-promoted through many areas of the site.

The centenary has been an excellent opportunity for the archives to develop and promote their resources and form fruitful new partnerships. Now we are looking ahead to who, or what, has the next birthday we can celebrate.

Sara Kinsey, HSBC Holdings plc.

Website launched for national bicentenary commemoration events

The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), Awards for All and 24 Hour Museum have joined in partnership to announce their support of the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade with the launch of the website www.abolition200.org.uk. MLA say that the site will act as the cultural sector's premier website for news of national bicentenary events and activities.

Live from 19 March, and managed via the 24 Hour Museum database, the MLA-commissioned site allows you to find out about abolition-related events taking place in local areas. It offers a searchable database of events, news stories and has a special area for teachers and schools. It also highlights funding opportunities for groups that wish to apply for National Lottery money to help fund their commemorative events and activities.

Carpeting the World

Glasgow University, the Glasgow School of Art and Glasgow Museums are working together in a bid to ensure the archive of Stoddard International plc, now in liquidation, is preserved and made accessible to the public, writes Clare Liston of Glasgow University Archive Services.

The Stoddard archive is an important record of carpet design and manufacture in Scotland from the mid 19th century. Whilst the company itself was formed as Stoddard Carpets Ltd in 1983, it has a long and distinguished history through its predecessors James Templeton & Co, A F Stoddard and Henry Widnell & Stewart. The archive, which contains a wealth of visual materials including design sketches, fabric samples, carpets and rugs, reflects changing fashions and the development of design and manufacturing techniques. It is also a fitting record of the impressive achievements of Glasgow and the west of Scotland in the carpet industry.

Glasgow University Archive Services, which is leading the consortium, is working closely with the liquidators whilst sources for funding of the *Carpeting the World* project are identified. Thanks to an HLF project planning grant, a bid for HLF funding is being developed and will be submitted in late Spring.

Carpeting the World looks to realise the full potential of the Stoddard archive. With success in achieving our funding targets, the consortium will not only be able to acquire and preserve the collection but also produce a wide range of interpretive and educational resources to promote the widest possible access.

For more information email Clare at c.liston@archives.gla.ac.uk.



*Images show Templeton's factory at Sanquhar 1950s - 60s.
Copyright The University of Glasgow.*

Equitable Life – an Archive Rescued

On 3 April Dr Terry Gourvish will represent the Council at a reception to celebrate the purchase of the Equitable Life Archive by the Actuarial Profession. Richard Macve, Honorary Fellow and Professor of Accounting at the London School of Economics will unveil a plaque bearing the names of donors to the successful appeal for funding to secure the future of the archive.

The Institute of Actuaries received an overwhelming response from companies, actuarial associations and individuals in the UK and around the world to its appeal for funding to purchase and save the archives of Equitable Life Assurance Society. When the appeal closed on 31 March 2006 it was oversubscribed by around £27,000. Part of the surplus will be used to conserve and promote the archive and create a related website on the history of actuarial science. The archive was transferred to its new homes at Staple Inn and the Guildhall Library on 17 November 2006.

Important Questionnaire from Business Records Development Officer

As part of the National Strategy for Business Archives Project, Business Records Development Officer Robert Brown has prepared a short questionnaire to gather data about the size and shape of the corporate Archive sector. Many of you will have already received the questionnaire as it has been sent out to corporate archive units listed on the business index of the National Register of Archives. However, Robert is aware that many more firms make provision for their historical records than are listed by the NRA, and he is keen that as many of these as possible take part in this important survey. If you look after business archives, are willing to participate but have not received a questionnaire, please contact Robert Brown, email: robert.brown@nationalarchives.gov.uk.

Tel: 020 8392 5330.

Oil Lives Oral History Completed

The Lives in the Oil Industry project was completed in December 2006. The project, initiated by The British Library National Life Story Collection and the University of Aberdeen preserves the personally experienced culture and history of the UK's involvement in arguably the twentieth century's most important industry. The project comes in a line of oral histories covering the fields of industry, society and the arts recorded by The British Library since the start of the National Life Story Collection 30 years ago.

It was realised that, although there was a great deal of information about the oil and gas industry in printed and visual form, there was an alarming lack of first hand information - primary evidence - from the people who had been the industry, had made it happen, and from people whose lives had been materially affected by the industry.

Aberdeen was the logical base for the project. This historic regional capital of North East Scotland, for centuries a centre of maritime trade, fishing, agriculture, granite

quarrying and manufacturing industry, was chosen by the oil industry to be its main centre for the development and operation of the North Sea oil and gas fields.

The project to collect first-hand accounts began in the summer of 2000. It now comprises over 700 hours of archival recordings. Interviewees include men and women representing all sectors of the industry, including finance, management, offshore workers, technical professionals and specialists, personnel from government and regulatory bodies. They include Fred Hamilton whose US company brought the first oil onshore in June 1975, Alexa Reid, who helped keep the platforms clean and provide food for the tens of thousands of offshore workers, and the late Bob Ballantyne, a survivor of the 1988 Piper Alpha disaster.

The project personnel included a panel of experts in the fields of oral history and labour history drawn from the University of Aberdeen and The British Library under the direction of Terry Brotherstone.

For more information see www.abdn.ac.uk/oillives.

STOP PRESS

The next edition of this Newsletter (Summer 2007) will include the first in a series of regular updates, about developments in the National Strategy for Business Archives Project and other matters of interest to members, by Business Records Development Officer Robert Brown.

The editor of this newsletter is Jane Waller. The next issue will appear in Summer 2007. Prospective copy should be sent to Jane Waller at ING Bank NV, 60 London Wall, London EC2M 5TQ; jane.waller@uk.ing.com.

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