

Newsletter



**BUSINESS
ARCHIVES
COUNCIL**

Major Business Archive Deposit at LMA



*Front cover and first page of the Board of Directors minute book (acc ref: B10/012).
Reproduced with permission of Rio Tinto.*

A very major business collection has been deposited at London Metropolitan Archives; namely the archives of the international mining firm, Rio Tinto, which has for most of its history been based in the heart of the City of London.

Some businesses hold their own archives and for many years Rio Tinto has done just that and provided regular access to academics and other researchers. However, to ensure the long-term preservation of this unique archive, as well as increasing accessibility for researchers, Rio Tinto has been searching for a suitable external repository. Initially these discussions were with Guildhall Library and then more recently with London Metropolitan Archives.



*JFM Moving Services Ltd stacking the records onto shelves at LMA, January 2010.
Reproduced with permission of City of London.*

Richard Wiltshire and Charlie Turpie are very pleased that Rio Tinto deposited its most significant records. These include board minutes, head office files, staff records and some photographs, notably of the copper mines at Rio Tinto near Huelva in southern Spain where the company first began mining operations in 1873. The principal businesses included in the archive are the predecessors of Rio Tinto-Zinc Corporation (known as RTZ): the Rio Tinto Company, established in 1873 in the UK, and the Consolidated Zinc Corporation, founded in 1905 in Australia, with records from the 1930s; and Pyrites Company Ltd whose records survive from circa 1911.

Access

The records very largely predate 1962 (when the Rio Tinto Company and the Consolidated Zinc Corporation merged to form Rio Tinto-Zinc Corporation) and are open to researchers. We have taken in a few records after 1962, where they continue long running series, and permission will be needed from the company to access these. The records have been listed on various internal Rio Tinto databases but will need to be catalogued in a highly structured way to fit in with LMA's other holdings.

We intend to make records available on request by prior appointment during the period between deposit and production of the final catalogue. Anyone who would like to consult these records should email LMA General Enquiries ask.lma@cityoflondon.gov.uk or telephone 020 7332 3820 at least two working days in advance, giving as many details as possible of their enquiry. We look forward to welcoming researchers who have previously used the archive at Rio Tinto, and new researchers too.

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There have been several books written about Rio Tinto including the late David Avery's company history, *Not on Queen Victoria's Birthday* (1974). David Avery was RTZ's historian and also Hon Secretary and Research Adviser of the BAC. Another study of RTZ was a winner of the Wadsworth Prize: Charles Harvey, *The Rio Tinto Company: An Economic History of a Leading International Mining Concern, 1873-1954* (Alison Hodge, 1981).



Primary stockpile of iron ore (hematite) at a mine run by RTZ in Australia, 650 miles NNE of Perth. When discovered, it was one of the world's largest deposits of high grade ore. (RTZ News, December 1966)

We are particularly pleased about the Rio Tinto deposit because it represents an aspect of global British business – extracting minerals worldwide – which was a key part of Britain's history and economy from the late Victorian period through the 20th century. We already hold fully catalogued, but underused, records of other mining companies operating abroad. The Ashanti Goldfields Corporation Ltd mined gold in the Gold Coast of Africa, now part of Ghana, with records stretching back to 1895 (Ms 14164-). Camp Bird Ltd was established in 1900 to mine gold in Colorado and moved into Mexico, Nicaragua, South Africa, Australia, Nigeria and Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) over the course of the 20th century (Ms 22429-). Central Provinces Manganese Ore Company Ltd started extracting manganese in the Central Provinces of India (now part of the modern Indian states of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra) in 1899 (Ms 15907-). Last, but not least, Chinese Engineering & Mining Company Ltd was established in 1900 to mine coal for steamships in the area around Tientsin, China and by the 1920s it was producing circa 4.5 million tons of coal annually and exporting coal throughout the Far East (Ms 28378-).

Incidentally, within the records of the Diocese in Europe, we hold records of the English Church at the “Minas de Rio Tinto” in Spain. They comprise registers or notes of baptisms 1951-7, marriages undated and 1950 and deaths 1933 (Ms 23639-41), service register 1931-58 (Ms 23640), and offertory account book 1912-28 (Ms 23640). These will complement staff records within the Rio Tinto archive.

Richard Wiltshire, Senior Archivist – Business Archives

Charlie Turpie, Principal Archivist

Collections, LMA

A 'Wealth' of Information

On 14 February, the Sunday Times featured an article on Lewis Carroll, highlighting a new book about the *Alice in Wonderland* author by Jenny Woolf. With a new film version of *Alice* out in cinemas, and Carroll's own capacity for sparking controversy, another book on the man is hardly surprising, but what is different about this book is that Woolf has been able to draw on completely new and previously unseen documentary evidence – Carroll's bank account.

Under his real name, Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, Carroll banked with Parsons, Thomson and Parsons of Oxford. Also known as the Oxford Old Bank, Parsons, Thomson and Parsons became part of Barclays in 1919. In 1991, following the centralisation of the Barclays archives in Manchester, 257 customer ledgers were transferred from the Old Bank to Barclays Group Archives. Running from 1775 to 1901, the leather-bound ledgers vary slightly in size, but are usually about 45cm high and 34 cm wide. Depths can vary from 10cm to 13cm. Each one covers between two and five years and contains the accounts of customers whose surnames begin with one of a range of letters, for example, A to D. Each ledger is indexed at the front, making searching relatively quick, if heavy work, as each one has to be lifted from the shelf.

Amongst the Barclays archives, these ledgers are only surpassed by a series for the London bank, Goslings and Sharpe, which runs from 1717 to 1896. A few other series are known to exist in other bank archives, but, generally, runs of customer ledgers such as this are rare, which makes their contents all the more exciting.

Admittedly, it is difficult to imagine the records of someone's bank account proving exciting, but as Jenny Woolf demonstrates with Lewis Carroll, the account is so much more than just columns of pounds, shillings and pence. Each entry meticulously records exactly where the money was coming from or going to. Payments from his publisher show just how much he made from *Alice*, while payments to numerous charities and members of his family show a generosity not previously known. Running from 1856 to 1900 (two years after his death – the account was finally wound up by his brother and executor, Wilfred), the account paints a remarkably vivid and detailed picture of Carroll's personal life.

Obviously, banks take customer confidentiality very seriously, and it should be stressed that current account ledgers held by Barclays Group Archives are only opened to the public after 100 years. Indeed, very few customer records from the 20th century onwards are retained

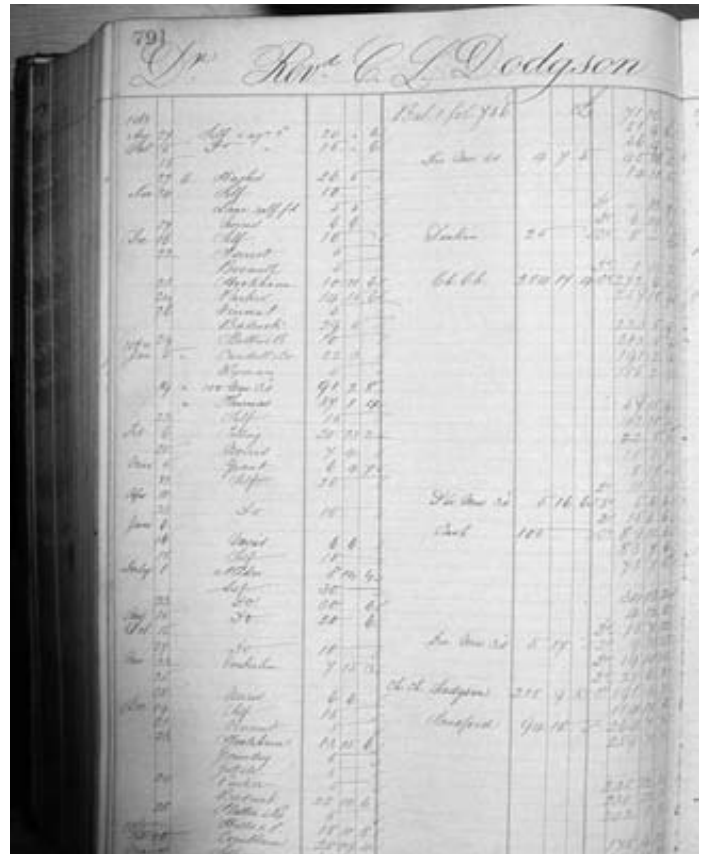
permanently. The point of keeping the two series mentioned here is that they are excellent examples of banking practice and procedure.

As yet, bank accounts remain a largely untapped resource, but there is (quite literally) a wealth of information waiting to be discovered. In the 1990s, the Furniture History Society paid for a researcher to compile a computer index of the Goslings and Sharpe ledgers from 1717 to 1809. Their aim was to track payments from the wealthy to furniture makers such as Chippendale. The end result was an index listing over 10,000 different accounts, which has proved to be of enormous use in answering enquiries quickly and less strenuously. However, it covers less than half of the Goslings and Sharpe ledgers (business increased enormously during the 19th century), and no similar project has ever been undertaken for the Oxford series – just how many more hidden treasures may yet be awaiting discovery?

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The Mystery of Lewis Carroll by Jenny Woolf (2010) is published by Haus Publishing



*Some of the Reverend Dodgson's bank transactions.
Courtesy of Barclays Group Archives.*

BAC Conference 2009: Delivering Results - Collaboration and the Exploitation of Business Archives

Lara Webb (Bank of England) reports.

Last November delegates made their way to the National Archives at Kew for the BAC AGM and Conference. Tea and biscuits on arrival ensured that the AGM passed without dissent. The Conference proper was opened by Natalie Ceeney, who reiterated TNA's commitment to the National Strategy for Business Archives, recently launched in collaboration with the BAC and others. Alex Ritchie, the new Business Archives Advice Manager at TNA, went on to discuss his part in turning that Strategy into a reality. Rene Kinzett of the National Council on Archives closed the first session by stressing the importance of advocacy in developing awareness of business collections.

Once teacups had been refilled, delegates were offered a series of case studies demonstrating the role of partnerships in unlocking the value of business collections. Sarah Mahurter and her colleagues from the University of the Arts, London demystified the term 'knowledge transfer project' and gave an account of the successful exploitation of the Stanley Kubrick Archive by way of inspiration. Stefan Schwarzkopf from Queen Mary, University of London then outlined the research project he undertook (aided by the BAC bursary) at the History of Advertising Trust, Norfolk, emphasising the potential role of users in developing collections.

After a plentiful lunch, Vicky Parkinson gave an honest account of the experiences had by the British Postal Museum and Archive (particularly the pitfalls of generating income from product development). Alan Booth described a collaborative project at the Porthcurno Telegraph Museum, involving the University of Exeter in a drive to understand and publicise Cornwall's telecommunications heritage (although he also drew attention to the seemingly inveterate issue of under-funding). Lastly, Liza Giffin (University of Leeds) and Kirsty Shields (Marks and Spencer plc) reported not only on Twiggy's visit to the M&S anniversary exhibition, but also on the complex relocation project that will see the M&S archive installed on the Leeds university campus by 2011.

It was then time for the delegates to make a contribution. Small groups were encouraged to discuss issues crucial to the implementation of the National Strategy for Business Archives: communications, custodianship, regional outreach and cross-domain working. Feedback from these sessions was duly noted and (I am told) will be used by the BAC executive to ensure that ideas and suggestions from the wider BAC membership are incorporated into their strategy. All in all, it was a challenging, informative and positive day.

Wadsworth Prize in Business History

The BAC awarded the Wadsworth Prize for Business History 2008 at a reception held at the National Archives, Kew, London on Tuesday 24th November 2009. The winners were Jock McCulloch and Geoffrey Tweedale for their book *Defending the Indefensible: The Global Asbestos Industry and its Fight for Survival* (Oxford University Press).

The Wadsworth Prize, which is awarded annually for the best book on British business history from the preceding year, was presented to Dr Tweedale by Sir Geoffrey Owen, President of the BAC. The three judges for this year's prize were John Marshall, Jeanette Strickland and Professor Peter Scott.

In the early twentieth century, asbestos had a reputation as a lifesaver. In 1960, however, it became known that even relatively brief exposure to asbestos can cause mesothelioma, a virulent and lethal cancer. Yet the bulk of the world's asbestos was mined after 1960. Asbestos usage in many countries continued unabated. *Defending the Indefensible* is the first global history of how the asbestos industry and its allies in government, insurance, and medicine defended the product throughout the twentieth century. The book is based on a wealth of documentary

Geoffrey Tweedale, co-recipient of the Wadsworth Prize 2008.



material gained from legal discovery, supplemented by evidence from visits and researches in the US, the UK, Canada, Kazakhstan, Zimbabwe, Australia, Swaziland and South Africa.

New Grant for Business Archives

Katey Logan, BAC Executive.

The BAC is supporting the implementation of the National Strategy for Business Archives (England and Wales) by offering an annual £2000 grant for cataloguing a business archives collection. The grant is available to applicants from both private and public sector archives, and is aimed at collections that have potential research interest but have not previously been prioritised by archive managers. For further information and an application form see the BAC website at www.businessarchivescouncil.org.uk

Latest News

Members will have seen the news that the iconic British firm Cadbury has been acquired by the American Kraft Foods group. Your trustees have taken the initiative in contacting Kraft directly to seek information about the future of Cadbury's British archives. So far the Kraft response has been encouraging and we understand that the Cadbury archive is not in danger. Kraft have a senior manager in place with responsibility for the archives team and they will be actively looking at the archives at Bournville and the other Cadbury sites, with a view to preserving and using them going forward.

BAC Bursary 2010

Applications are invited for the BAC bursary. For further information go to www.businessarchivescouncil.org.uk

Click on 'Activities' at the top then 'BAC Bursary for Business History Research' on the left. The closing date for applications is 15 May 2010.

The editor of this newsletter is Alan Gall. The next issue will appear in Summer 2010. Prospective copy should be sent to Alan Gall, Tel: 0161 745 7029 (daytime) 01706 344429 (evening) Fax: 0161 745 9649 email: alangall@hotmail.com
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