

Newsletter



**BUSINESS
ARCHIVES
COUNCIL**

Successful Training Day Run by BAC and ARA's Section for Business Records

Around 30 people were present at The Baring Archive in London on Wednesday 22 January for a training day run by the BAC and the ARA's Section for Business Records.

Students enrolled on archive and records management courses at Aberystwyth, Dundee, and UCL, together with some other interested observers, learned about the various types of business records in general and how they can



Richard Wiltshire, Senior Archivist - Business Archives, London Metropolitan Archives, talking to students

be used. A number of guest speakers were also on hand to address specific issues. Katharine Carter, Company Archivist at Marks and Spencer, described the impressive education and outreach work being done by M & S Heritage. The challenges of digital preservation were considered by Adrian Brown from the Parliamentary Archives. Issues of access and research in business archives were discussed by Justin Cavernelis-Frost and Natalie Broad in relation to the Rothschild Archive.

There were also a couple of breakout sessions which gave those in the audience a chance to debate some points raised by the speakers. One of these involved groups making presentations to a Board of Directors (in reality some of the students) on the future options for a business archive which had been taken over by a rival company. These sessions along with the presentations gave those attending an insight into some of the challenges, peculiarities, and opportunities of being in business archives.

The day was rounded off by 'A day in the life of a business archivist'. Richard Wiltshire (London Metropolitan Archives), David Hay (BT Archives), and Lorna Williams (Bank of England Archive) spoke with great enthusiasm about what a typical day might be like. Tea was obviously an important factor, but what came across was the sheer variety of work undertaken by those working with business records.

BAC Conference

We are pleased to announce that the 2014 BAC Conference will be held on Thursday 13th November 2014 at the Royal Albert Hall. This year is the 80th anniversary of the BAC and we are planning a day that will reflect our past, present and future work, the tremendous

progress that has been made over the past 80 years and the significant challenges that lie ahead for business archives.

More details to follow shortly.

The Business Archive Council Unveils Two Cataloguing Grants for 2014

The BAC is delighted to announce that it is once again offering a £2000 cataloguing grant for business collections.

Additionally, in an effort to support an under-represented area of business archives, and to compliment wider initiatives for archiving

the arts by The National Archives (TNA) and the Campaign for Voluntary Sector Archives, the BAC will be offering once again a £2000 cataloguing grant specifically for cataloguing business archives related to the arts.

The aims of both grants, in funding the

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cataloguing of business collections in either the private or public sector, are to:

- provide financial support for institutions/businesses that manage business archives;
- reach collections that have not yet been prioritised but have potential academic or socio-historical value;
- create opportunities for archivists or para-professionals/volunteers to gain experience in listing business collections;
- increase accessibility to business archives.

We envisage that each grant will be used over the equivalent of a four-week period to fund an archive intern or temporary staff member (under professional supervision) to catalogue a discrete collection of business records. This work should produce either a detailed catalogue of a small collection or a top-level catalogue of a more substantial collection. Grant recipients should provide the BAC with an article for

its newsletter, and the catalogue should be made available to the National Register of Archives (published by TNA).

The Cataloguing Grant for Business Archives (2014) opens on 1st April 2014 and the deadline for applications is 27th June 2014.

The Cataloguing Grant for Business Archives related to the Arts (2014) opens on 1st May 2014 and the deadline for applications is 31st July 2014.

For more information – criteria and application forms – see the BAC’s website at www.businessarchivescouncil.org.uk.

Any questions about the grants should be addressed to Ben White, Administrator, BAC Cataloguing Grant, 2014.

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An American Lock-Picker’s Legacy: Archives of Hobbs Hart & Company Ltd, Lock and Safe Makers

Richard Wiltshire, Senior Archivist - Business Archives, London Metropolitan Archives.

History

Hobbs Hart was founded by Alfred Charles Hobbs, an American lock dealer who had famously picked the famous, and previously regarded as impregnable, rival Bramah and Chubb locks at the 1851 Great Exhibition. He established the firm in 1852 as Hobbs and Company to manufacture locks based on his patents. By 1855 there was a factory at 33 Lawrence Lane, City of London with showrooms at 97 Cheapside. In 1860, following Hobbs’ death, John Matthias Hart took over management of the firm and began manufacturing safes and strong room doors. The company held a Royal Warrant from 1861 and supplied safes to the Bank of England. The firm was incorporated in 1887 as Hobbs Hart and Company Limited, the year Hart died. The registered address was 76-77 Cheapside, City of London, with manufacturing of safe and strong-room doors at Wharncliffe Works, Arlington Street, Islington. Operations moved to works and offices built in Staffa Road, Leyton in 1936. The range of products was increased and supplied to major banks, the royal household, government, hospitals and railways, and overseas exports developed.

The company was acquired by Hobbs Hart’s main rival firm Chubb and Son Lock and Safe Company Limited in 1956. The Hobbs Hart departments later moved to 231-237 Cambridge Heath Road and operations continued until 1983 as one of the two safe manufacturing centres of Chubb Group. The records were in the custody of the Chubb Archive until 1999 when they were transferred and gifted to the City of London via the Business Archives Council. They remain part of the wider archive of Chubb and Son, and of its subsidiaries and acquired firms.

Highlights

The collection consists mainly of minutes, annual reports, correspondence, and records of finance, production, premises and staff. Most records date after the registration as a limited company in 1887. The earliest item is a manuscript copy agreement, Alfred Charles Hobbs versus W Garbutt, for picking one of “Newell and Day’s Patent Parantopic Locks” (1851) (CLC/B/002/HH01/01/03/001). The only other material concerning Alfred C Hobbs relates to a claim brought in 1898 by Jane Mason, an inmate of St George’s Hanover Square Union Workhouse, who claimed to be his sister. Correspondence includes a signed memorandum by Alfred J Hobbs, The Union Metallic Cartridge Company, Bridgeport, Connecticut, United States of America, on the family of John J and Elizabeth Hobbs including dates and places of birth and death (CLC/B/002/HH03/02/01/004).

Other highlights include John Matthias Hart’s correspondence documenting his request in 1885 for a knighthood (CLC/B/002/HH03/01/002). Letters include his dismay and the action taken when a knighthood was conferred on his rival George Hayter Chubb of Chubb and Son’s Lock and Safe Company Limited. Included are letters from Sir John Clayton Cowell, Master of the Queen’s Household, Windsor Castle, Berkshire and Osborne House, Isle of Wight, and a memorandum by Hart’s cousin William Albert Hart on the history of the firm’s works including Windsor Castle.

Further correspondence and reports kept by the Company Secretary, General Manager and Directors include subject files on the Bank of Spain, Madrid, 1901 (CLC/B/002/HH03/02/01/007) and the safe makers strike containing petitions for a reduction in hours from the Society of Iron

Safe Engineers in 1897 (CLC/B/002/HH03/02/05/001). There are comprehensive series of staff records (1871-1970) covering office and manufacturing employees (CLC/B/002/HH08) including archives of the pension and life assurance scheme (CLC/B/002/HH08/08). These records are subject to access restrictions under Data Protection legislation.

The manufacturing records include factory safe order books from 1880 to 1959 (CLC/B/002/HH05/01/01). This series gives the serial numbers of safe and door products, order numbers and customer names (often abbreviated), descriptions of jobs with measurements and some sketches, the engineer's names and details of delivery and date. This series is complemented by customer safe order books (1894-1959) (CLC/B/002/HH05/01/02) and other series including cost price and sales ledgers. For lock products there is only one main customer order series (1944-1959) (CLC/B/002/HH05/01/03).

The archive includes extensive product catalogues and photographs (CLC/B/002/HH07). An unusual example is the supply of Crumpet Making Machines from John

Pelkman Engineering Company Limited during 1950s, documented in a cost book (CLC/B/002/HH05/08/03/002), Director's contract file (CLC/B/002/HH03/03/005) and photographs (CLC/B/002/HH07/06/06/005).

Access

The full catalogue can be found on the online catalogue (search.Lma.gov.uk/OPAC_LMA) at reference CLC/B/002/HH01 through to CLC/B/002/HH10. Please note that the collection is mainly stored off-site and available for consultation with 48 hours' notice. Photographs are stored onsite and available without prior notice to researchers with a valid History Card.

Further information on the firm's history can be found in printed booklets and unpublished articles (CLC/B/002/HH09). Related items including further sales catalogues can be found in the Chubb Collectanea Scrapbooks series (CLC/B/002/10/01). See also 'A Lock Collectors Guide to A. C. Hobbs A Man of Genius' by Mike Fincher 2008 (LMA Library reference: Store 35.133/HOB).

Windows on the World: A successful City Partnership Standard Chartered Bank Archives and History Project



David Luck, Archivist at LMA, surveying the bank records

Standard Chartered bank project team.

In January 2014 London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) completed the cataloguing of the extensive archives deposited by the City of London-based global financial concern, Standard Chartered Bank. Over the past three years, this major project has been managed through a successful partnership with Standard Chartered Bank, funded by the business. The archives provide a fascinating record of the evolution and worldwide impact of the bank's predecessors from its earliest foundations in the mid-19th century to the 1970s. The project has also facilitated the writing of a definitive history of the bank which will be published in due course. Richard Wiltshire tells more.

One of the world's leading commercial banks, Standard Chartered Bank was formed in 1969 through the merger of two City of London-based overseas banks, the Chartered Bank (formerly the Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China) founded in 1853, and the Standard Bank Limited (formerly the Standard Bank of South Africa Limited) founded in 1862. The Chartered Bank was a major presence across most of Asia and the Middle East, while the Standard Bank operated in South, Central and Eastern Africa.

The Standard Bank of South Africa was the first bank on the gold fields of the Transvaal, and its operations predate the formation of the Republic of South Africa. The Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China took advantage of the demise of the East India Company's rule, and had been operating in the Far East for ten years when the Suez Canal opened making it well-placed to enjoy the commercial boom that followed. The Bank's archives are not only key to documenting this history, but also that of the people and countries that worked for and banked with it.

In 2010, Standard Chartered Bank and LMA formed a major partnership, 'Windows on the world – here for good', to catalogue the Bank's extensive archives in order to support the writing of a new definitive company history. Standard Chartered Bank provided funding for a team of three archivists to work on the project. The team was based at LMA and catalogued archives already deposited there as well as records held at the bank itself. In total, five archivists were employed on the project gaining valuable experience of large-scale cataloguing work and financial records, liaising with related archives including archivists at HSBC, and Standard Bank Heritage Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa.

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Building on earlier work by the former Guildhall Library Manuscripts Section, the project has opened up access to over 330 linear metres of previously uncatalogued records. Most of these records belong to the two largest predecessor banks - the Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China, and the Standard Bank of South Africa, but also relate to the British Bank of West Africa, P & O Banking Corporation, E D Sassoon, and Wallace Brothers. Before this project, the contents of the uncharted sections of the archive had been largely unknown and virtually impossible to make available for use by researchers or the bank.

Scope and Some Highlights

The collection consists of head office foundation papers, literally thousands of internal letter and subject files, financial accounts, staff registers and staff club records, head office, branch and agency returns, photographs and premises plans, original banknotes and cheques.

The records reflect both the geographical range and the breadth of interests held by the predecessor banks which exploited opportunities brought about through the 19th century expansion of overseas trade and the mineral revolution in South Africa. Documents cover the establishment and management of branch networks which were established in both Africa and the east, as far afield as Japan, China, the Philippines, Mauritius, the Seychelles, Sierra Leone and Cameroon. The bank played an important role in financing the conveyance of goods around and between continents. Documents describe commodities traded including consumables such as rice, tea and coffee; raw materials including tin, rubber and hemp; and luxury goods such as ostrich feathers and tobacco.

Highlights include 125 Chartered Bank research files and photographs (series CLC/B/207/CH03/01/14-17) for "Realms of Silver – One Hundred Years of Banking in the East" which was published in 1954 as the official history of the Chartered Bank. Extensive staff records recording names of European and local staff per branch are held under section CLC/B/207/CH08, together with a register of staff 1874-1920 (CLC/B/207/CH08/01/001) which provide valuable information for family historians, the latter including details of previous employment, results of examinations, salary, departmental experience and additional notes on reasons for leaving including losses during the First World War where employees were killed in action.

In addition, important records concern the Chartered Bank operations during the Second World War including

a register of staff interned (CLC/B/207/CH08/01/004) and Secretary's files of letters from internees in prisoner of war camps in 1942 (CLC/B/207/CH03/01/09/003-004). These provide a vivid picture of the conditions and issues faced by staff operating under Japanese occupation and the solutions they came up with to circumnavigate barriers in communications with head office.

The Standard Bank of South Africa records include over 1000 letter books from the 1860s to 1970s; and First World War German claim case files held by the Agency and Inspection Departments which concerned the bank's exiled Hamburg Agency (under CLC/B/207/ST03). There are over 3,500 photographs - evocative images of staff posed outside the branches in which they worked, customers, bank buildings and local life. These images provide a fascinating glimpse into what life may have been like for Bank staff abroad over 100 years ago.

A further notable highlight are the records of Wallace Brothers and Company (Holdings) Limited, East India merchants, and E D Sassoon Banking Company Limited. The records of Wallace Brothers, founded 1862, trace its activities as agents, developing markets in the United Kingdom and Europe, and organising finance for importing cargoes from the Far East around the world. Wallace Brothers controlled the operations of subsidiary companies such as the Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation Limited.

Access

Descriptions of all the records are now available on LMA's under reference code CLC/B/207. 48 hour notice is required before records can be produced. There is a 45 year closure in place on all records of Standard Chartered Bank, although access to records containing details on individual bank staff and customers are restricted further under Data Protection. Bank notes and cheques are accessible only by special advance notice and the agreement of LMA. Photographs are available at LMA without prior notice to researchers registered with a valid History Card.

The collection is owned by the Bank, with the exception of the records of Wallace Brothers, E D Sassoon and related companies which have been donated to the City of London.

LMA would like to thank Standard Chartered Bank for funding this important cataloguing project and working closely with LMA to reach a successful outcome. For further information about the Bank's archives, please visit LMA's online catalogue or email ask.lma@cityoflondon.gov.uk. For further information about Standard Chartered Bank please visit www.sc.com/en/about-us/our-history.html

The editor of this newsletter is Alan Gall. The next issue will appear in Summer 2014. Prospective copy should be sent to Alan Gall, Tel: 0161 745 7029 (daytime) 01706 344429 (evening) Fax: 0161 745 9649 email: alangall@hotmail.com Post: c/o SDA Electronics Ltd, Unit 30, Willan Industrial Estate, Eccles New Road, Salford M50 2GR.

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