



Business Archives Council Newsletter

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Contents

- [CHAIRMAN'S BLOG](#)
- [WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS](#)
- [BAC CATALOGUING GRANTS 2015](#)
- [FUTURE OF THE JOURNAL](#)
- [BARCLAYS' HISTORY GOES ONLINE](#)
- [BUSINESS ARCHIVES TAKE STEPS TO SAFEGUARD DIGITAL CORPORATE MEMORY](#)
- [THE RECORDS OF J. J. AND S. W. CHALK](#)
- [ROLLER FLOUR MILLING: AN IMPORTANT INDUSTRY WHICH IS LITTLE KNOWN](#)

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CHAIRMAN'S BLOG

As I am writing this latest Newsletter Blog, it seems that spring has definitely arrived. With all those green shoots emerging we are beginning to plan for two of our important activities, the Annual Conference and the BAC Wadsworth Prize. I'm delighted to say that we already have venues for both of these, and we also have two new organisers. There will be further details announced over the coming months, but I'm happy to say now that both events will take place in London on 12 November 2015, albeit at different locations.



Mike Anson, BAC Chair, on one of his regular catch ups with Marie Owens, Head of Public Affairs, ARA (photograph courtesy of ARA)

While on the subject of core activities, the application process for the 2015 BAC Cataloguing Grant for Business Archives has just opened, which will be closely followed by the Cataloguing Grant for Business Archives related to the Arts on 30 April (see advert in this Newsletter). The closing dates are 26 June and 30 July respectively, so there is still plenty of time. And don't forget that the available money has been increased to £3,000 for each grant. As previous winners have demonstrated, these small awards really can make a difference.

On a less happy note, elsewhere in the Newsletter you will find an announcement about the future of our Journal. Obviously this was a very tough decision for us to take but I am confident that it is the right one. Since my last Blog I've been busy representing the BAC at various events and meetings. Perhaps most importantly I have seen Jeff James, the new Chief Executive at The National Archives. We had a very productive chat and agreed that we will continue to meet on a regular basis.

At the end of March I took part in a workshop at Aston Business School about the role of organisational archives. This was the first in a series of six ESRC-funded events run by Stephanie Decker, Michael Rowlinson and John Hassard which seek to explore the interlinked themes of archives, organisations and history. For further details about this

initiative see: www.aston.ac.uk/aston-business-school/research/groups/esg/esrc-seminar-series-organizational-history/

Back in February I was at the ARA's 'Don't Risk it! Know your Records' event at KPMG, Canary Wharf. The aim was to demonstrate to organisations the benefits that can be experienced by properly managing information and the risks of reputational and financial damage if this is not done. The speakers put the case across very effectively. I left thinking what a critical impact records management in a business can have on the archives of a business.

While on the subject of the ARA, I have been having regular catch-ups with John Chambers and Marie Owens. As many of you will know Marie is stepping-down as Head of Public Affairs down in May. She has been a great supporter of the BAC in recent years and I am sure that you will join me in wishing Marie all the best in the future.

Mike Anson
BAC Chair

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

The BAC is pleased to welcome the following new members:

David Cross
Fiona Bourne, the Royal College of Nursing
Mardi Jacobs, Betty's & Taylor's Group



Nurses from Glasgow in 1909
(photograph courtesy of Royal College of Nursing Archive)

BAC CATALOGUING GRANTS 2015

They're BACK and they're BIGGER than ever!

The Business Archives Council (BAC) is delighted to announce that for 2015 its **general cataloguing grant for business collections** and its **cataloguing grant specifically for business archives related to the arts** are each increasing to £3000!

The aims of both grants, in funding the 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 £3000 grant will be used over the equivalent of a SIX-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 Archives' DISCOVERY database.

The Cataloguing Grant for Business Archives (2015) launches on 1 April 2015. The deadline for applications is 26 June 2015.

The Cataloguing Grant for Business Archives related to the Arts (2015) launches on 30 April 2015. The deadline for applications is 30 July 2015.

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

Any questions about the **Cataloguing Grant for Business Archives (2015)** should be addressed to Adam Hillhouse, Administrator, BAC Cataloguing Grant. Email: adam.hillhouse@postalheritage.org.uk. Tel: 020 7239 2566

Any questions about the **Cataloguing Grant for Business Archives related to the Arts (2015)** should be addressed to Ben White, Administrator, BAC Cataloguing Grant. Email: benjamin.white@bankofengland.co.uk. Tel: 020 7601 4810

FUTURE OF THE JOURNAL

Over the last few years it has become increasingly difficult to produce our journal *Business Archives*, both in terms of generating sufficient articles and finding editors. This is particularly the case on the history side where academics are now less willing to submit material to a journal that is not refereed. In addition, the shift towards PowerPoint

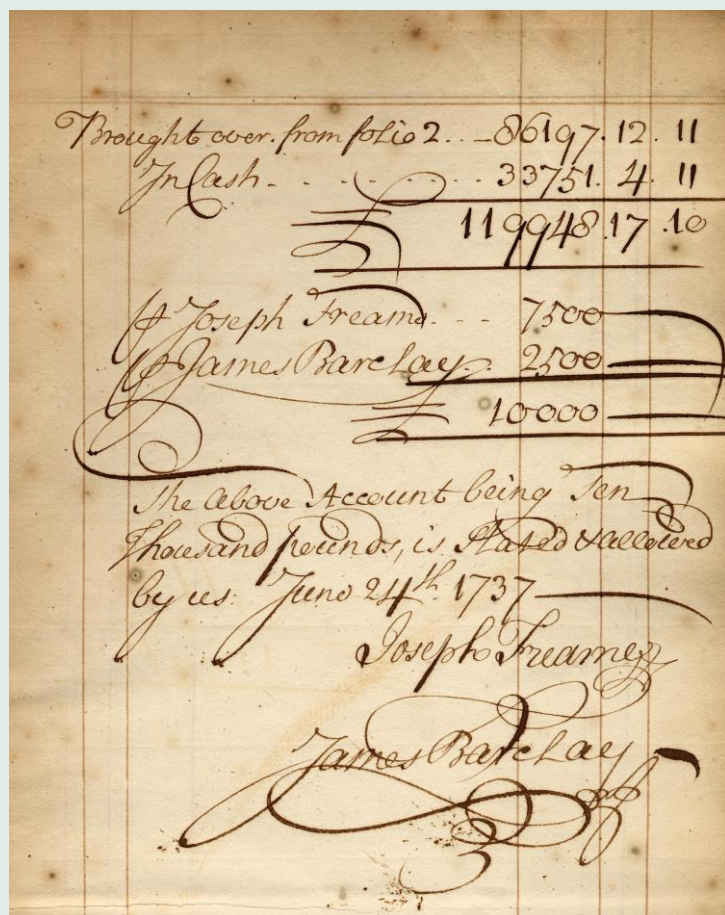
presentations at conferences means that potential contributors no longer have written papers ready. Finally, the printing and posting of the hard copy journal is a growing expense.

This issue has been discussed on a number of occasions by the BAC Executive, but at our February meeting the decision was taken that reluctantly we will discontinue the journal. Obviously this was an extremely difficult decision but the Trustees felt that on balance it was the right one given their duty to ensure the most effective use of the BAC's resources in pursuing our objectives.

We will now be considering the best ways in which elements of the journal might continue in other forms, for example, through use of our website, newsletter and other social media, or by working in partnership with other organisations to ensure that there remains an outlet for the publication of articles about business archives and their use.

BAC Chair Mike Anson says 'I appreciate that this news will disappoint some members, but we have to be realistic about what is achievable. Throughout its history the BAC has proved itself capable of making tough choices and adapting to new situations. I am confident that we will do the same again and continue to promote the preservation and use of business archives in new and exciting ways'.

BARCLAYS' HISTORY GOES ONLINE



James Barclay's signature, 1737
(photograph courtesy of The Barclays Group)

Barclays Group Archives are proud to announce the launch of a new online resource that makes thousands of items from the archives freely available online

Featuring branch photographs, advertising material, annual reports and a selection of other weird and wonderful items amassed by the Archives over the years, the website also includes a wealth of information on Barclays' history around the world, and should prove of interest to serious scholars, casual browsers and Barclays staff.

Based in Manchester, the Barclays archive has been accessible to visitors by appointment only for the last 25 years. This initiative brings this significant collection to a worldwide audience for the first time, opening up a treasure trove of history.

The Barclays Group Archive website can be seen at www.barclays.com/archives

BUSINESS ARCHIVES TAKE STEPS TO SAFEGUARD DIGITAL CORPORATE MEMORY

Last month The Bank of England became the latest in a line of business archives, including HSBC, Lloyds Banking Group and the Royal Institute for British Architects (RIBA), to join the Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC); recognising a need to address the growing concern of continuous access to digital content.



The DPC celebrates its bi-ennial Digital Preservation Awards (photograph courtesy of DPC)

Digital preservation has been in the news again recently following comments by Vint Cerf, Vice President and Chief Internet Evangelist for Google, on the risks of obsolescence and the need for joint action to tackle those risks. This is not news to members of the DPC which was set up in 2002 to encourage collaboration between agencies with significant digital collections. Enabling members to deliver resilient long-term access to digital content and services, the DPC helps to derive enduring value from digital collections and raises awareness of the attendant strategic, cultural and technological challenges they face.

‘In practice the DPC does four things for our members: advocacy, staff development, capacity-building and partnership,’ Executive Director of the DPC, William Kilbride explains. ‘All of which are tailored to support our members particular needs in digital preservation.’

In a corporate environment, and in an age where data is expected to be always at our fingertips, there is a risk that we think of digital preservation as a technological challenge. In reality it’s a socio-technical puzzle that technology alone can’t solve it: policy, organisational structure, staffing and leadership all have to be in place too.

Helen Redmond-Cooper of Lloyds Banking Group acknowledges this by saying, ‘We are keen to use our membership of the DPC to optimise our digital preservation programme by learning about best practice from other coalition members, and we particularly look forward to sharing our own interests and perspectives relating to the undertaking of digital curation activities in a corporate environment.’

The DPC facilitates conversations about how and why citizens, agencies and governments should work together to ensure a dependable digital legacy and the benefits that accrue, and these benefits can be stated more clearly than in previous years. Data and systems form a distinctive element of corporate and personal identity.

‘Joining the Digital Preservation Coalition provides us with access to specialist resources, a unique network of peer advisors, and collaborative opportunities,’ adds Dylan Evans, RIBA’s Head of Systems & Services, ‘essential for the RIBA Library’s promotion, preservation and developments of its important architecture and design collections.’

A determined effort to identify, document and retain data of enduring value means that the right data is available to the right people at the right time in the right format: it brings efficiencies of scale and scope to corporations, agencies and individuals. It enables planned disposal and deletion. Digital preservation enables the consolidation of legacy systems: without it, agencies are forced to maintain and repair a profusion of redundant systems which add cost and reduce effectiveness. Digital preservation is not simply an investment in data: it is an investment in distinctiveness, competence and competitiveness.

The DPC is a cross-sector, inter-disciplinary body which is open to all who need to ensure continuing access to digital collections, irrespective of purpose. Its independence is guaranteed by a broadly based membership, transparent management and vendor neutrality; providing a safe haven for members to talk freely and at times confidentially.

For more information about the Digital Preservation Coalition and how to join, visit:

www.dpconline.org

Sarah Middleton

Head of Communications and Advocacy
Digital Preservation Coalition

THE RECORDS OF J. J. AND S. W. CHALK

Timber merchants and importers, Limehouse and Whitechapel, 1819-1988

Natasha Luck,
Heritage Officer (Archives),
Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives



Chalk business premises, Riga Yard, Commercial Road, Whitechapel, c1900 (photograph courtesy of Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives, reference B/CHA/1/8/1)

In July 1997 the business records of timber merchants J. J. and S. W. Chalk were about to be disposed of when Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives (THLHLA) was alerted to their existence and imminent fate by local campaigner and historian, Tom Ridge, and the Ragged School Museum. Thanks to their efforts the records were saved and transferred to THLHLA for safekeeping. The records relate to the firm J. J. and S. W. Chalk and the family members involved with running the business. Based in Limehouse and Whitechapel, in London's East End, the firm was active for much of the 19th and 20th centuries.

I took up the post of Heritage Officer (Archives) at THLHLA in August 2011. The focus of my role is to support the Borough Archivist with the management of the archive collections. However, the role also involves public service related tasks (e.g. reading room duty; answering enquiries; processing image orders and publication sales) and assisting with communication work to promote the collections and outreach activity to reach new audiences. It was when I was undertaking a programme of business archives collections development work (i.e. attempting to make links with, and encourage deposits from, long standing local businesses) that the J. J. and S. W. Chalk records first came to my attention. I was drawn to the shelves housing this intriguing collection: boxes; ledgers; files; volumes; objects; photographs and a large locked chest! Realising that these records were uncatalogued made me decide that, in addition to undertaking collections development work with the aim of bringing in new business archives to THLHLA, it was equally important for me to tackle the backlog of business archive accessions already in our care.

As the records had been taken in at short notice there was no time prior to transfer to assess the material in order to identify and select the core records for deposit. Consequently, I began the project by compiling a comprehensive list of the records deposited. This detailed listing of the contents was invaluable for the next stage of the process enabling us to make

informed decisions re retention and disposal and it was also very useful for creating the catalogue entries further down the line. Once we had agreed upon the retention of the core records, the superfluous material was disposed of in an appropriate manner. The structure of the catalogue was then put in place and the remaining records were repackaged and catalogued onto our CALM database.

At times it was a hard slog! Some parts of the archive were complex, the combination of family and business records making it difficult to navigate. The ledgers were extremely large and heavy so it was not easy to lift/handle them. Compiling a fitting administrative history was also a challenge - there was no written history of the business and it was hard to establish a solid timeline for the business and/or to corroborate dates for key events, biographical data of Chalk family members and their relationships to each other and the business. This challenge was overcome and the final section completed with close reference to the Chalk archive, in conjunction with secondary sources from our library collections.

The J. J. and S. W. Chalk archive consists of 17 boxes, 19 large volumes and 2 plans including financial and accounting, administrative, employee, property and premises and personal records, in addition to some awards. The archive is accessible to visitors in THLHLA's reading room, please consult our webpages for further information (www.ideastore.co.uk/local-history).

ROLLER FLOUR MILLING; AN IMPORTANT INDUSTRY WHICH IS LITTLE KNOWN

Rob Shorland-Ball

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If you were visiting York Minster in the 1900s you might have been encouraged to climb to the top of the central tower for a panoramic view of the city. Should you be looking in a South Easterly direction you could not fail to see Leetham's Mill, described by a contemporary trade journal as follows:

. . .the largest [flour] mills in Yorkshire, if not in the United Kingdom, viz., those of Messrs. Henry Leetham and Sons, Hungate . . .This large manufacturing industry was founded, we believe, considerably over a quarter of a century ago, by the late Mr Henry Leetham, but it was not till the introduction of roller milling that the initiation of its great development began to be noticed by the outside milling world. . . The plant throughout this large establishment is of the best description that energy, enterprise, and present-day knowledge can accomplish. *Milling*, Vol XIV (30 June 1900), p.480.



Illustration of Leetham's Mill c1908 from Henry Smith Ltd, 1897-1988 (photograph courtesy of Rob Shorland-Ball)

The Mill Manager, and one of Henry Leetham's sons, was Sydney Leetham who was the 1900 President of the National Association of British & Irish Millers [NABIM], the representative organisation for the UK flour milling industry. Leetham's Mill had water – the River Ouse and the Foss Navigation – rail, and road connections and was producing over 100 sacks of flour per hour in 1900. Each sack weighed 280lbs.

In September 1928, Leetham's Mills in York were sold to Spillers, and their subsidiary companies were taken over by Joseph Rank Ltd. In February 1930 Spillers closed the York Mill and the Yorkshire Gazette reported a loss of 1,000 jobs. The following year all the milling machinery was removed and during this operation a fire occurred which gutted most of the building. The 145ft chimney, which is very apparent in the illustration above, was felled in January 1933 and in 1934 the derelict Mill buildings were sold. Rowntree & Co [York] purchased the Navigation Warehouse (added in 1894) and used it until 1987. Subsequently the building has been internally reconfigured as apartments and flats and today it is the only part of Leetham's extensive Mill which has survived.

My interest in the Mill is as part of my continuing research and recording of: **The Roller Flour Milling Revolution from 1820s to the present**. The mill is an exemplar of the important roller flour milling industry which is little known today. By comparison 'traditional' wind-and water-mills, milling flour using millstones, are studied, photographed, published, and in some cases restored to working order. In 2004 the owner of Calbourne Mill in the Isle of Wight, which contains stone and roller-milling plant, published a *cri-de-couer* on his Website:

Roller mills have been frequently ignored by historians and often shunned by mill societies. Perhaps traditional stone milling and water / windmills blend better with the 'Heritage Landscape' where most mill enthusiasts dwell? It is nevertheless strange that issues which concentrated the minds of so many mill owners have been of so little concern to many of those who record their stories. Past experience suggests the passage of time will eventually bring wider recognition to the technological achievement and enterprise of the Roller Milling Revolution. Sadly, by then, most of the archaeology will have gone.

Some of the roller flour milling archaeology has gone – as Leetham's Mill demonstrates – but what has also disappeared are the archives and business records of many of the large flour milling companies. For instance, Spillers Ltd owned flour milling operations in the

UK and supplied flour to bakeries they owned. In 1979 Spillers was acquired by Dalgety plc and their bakery business was sold to Allied Bakeries. In 1997 Dalgety sold Spillers' flour milling operations to Kerry Group plc. Spillers owned several large roller mills – like Foster Mills adjoining Cambridge Station – but where are their business archives now?

Other names, once well known, have in some case disappeared or been subsumed in mergers:

- Joseph Rank – Hull
- Messrs W Vernon & Sons – Merseyside
- Paul Brothers Ltd. – Birkenhead (originators of the HOMEPRIDE brand)
- McDougall Bros. – Manchester
- S Fitton & Sons – Macclesfield (who originated HOVIS)
- Co-Operative Wholesale Society – who owned a number of large roller flour mills

My research data is being lodged with The Mills Archive, Reading, and I am working with the flour milling industry through advice and help from nabim, from personal memories from retired master millers, from reading, map-work, site visits. But if I GOOGLE Messrs W Vernon & Sons – Merseyside – nothing comes to light. I would be very grateful for any suggestions.

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