



Business Archives Council Newsletter

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The editor of this newsletter is Benjamin White. The next issue will appear in Summer 2018. Prospective copy should be sent to Benjamin White, email: Benjamin.White@bankofengland.co.uk

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Chair's blog

Looking back at last year's blogs, I notice that I always seem to start with the weather. Last time it was Storm Eleanor, now it's the icy blast of the 'Beast from the East'. However, this is the Spring blog so it's a good time to look forward.

At the BAC meeting in January we had our annual 'blue skies' strategy discussion. It's always helpful to review what we do against our objectives and decide on priority areas. In 2018, we are going to investigate how we might use outlets such as *YouTube* to demonstrate the benefits of business archives. We also considered the operation of the BAC Cataloguing Grants, and I'm pleased to say we agreed that we will increase the amount available for each of the two grants from £3,000 to £4,000 from this year. This means that they will continue to support a worthwhile amount of cataloguing time while also ensuring, as required by the Charity Commission, that surplus funds are spent rather than accumulated.

Talking of cataloguing grants, I am also delighted to announce that we will be offering an additional one-off grant in 2018. The background to this is that our much-missed friend and supporter John Armstrong left the BAC a sum of money in his will. As many of you know, John's specialist field was transport history and it therefore seems highly appropriate to use this for a grant to catalogue a transport-related business collection. The BAC is going to

contribute some of its own funds so that the grant will total £4,000. I'm also happy to say that Terry Gourvish and Edwin Green have agreed to act as judges for the award: they knew John well, and will make sure that the legacy provides something that proves a fitting tribute to John. Look out for further news about when applications open.

What else have I been up to in the last few months? I attended a very successful training day on business archives for students on the Aberystwyth course. For various reasons this long-standing collaboration between the BAC and the ARA's Section for Business Records didn't take place last year, so it was good to see it reinstated. Feedback from the students was excellent – many had to change their previous perception that business archives are boring! Many thanks to Sara Kinsey and Rachael Muir for organising (I gather that they came away more excited about business archives than ever – if you know Sara and Rachael, that's a lot of enthusiasm!). We are also grateful to the speakers, and to HSBC Archive for kindly hosting.

You may be aware that Caroline Williams has been undertaking some research for the ARA on the impact of volunteering in archives. One of the workshops that Caroline arranged was specifically targeted at business archives. Appropriately, given the success of their volunteer transcription project, this was held at the Rothschild Archive. As well as the beneficial impacts, what struck me were the barriers to the use of volunteers in the context of corporate, and particularly banking and financial archives. Confidentiality issues, IT security and HR policies are just some of the potential pitfalls. I'm not sure how this can be addressed, but it's a shame that a potential source of specialist knowledge and expertise about a business and its records is going untapped.

Finally, away from BAC matters, it was good to see so many friends at the Bank's Archive Accreditation presentation event at the beginning of March. It was great that Jeff James, Chief Executive and Keeper of Public Records at The National Archives, was able to come along to handover the gong. Apparently, we are the sixth business archive to achieve accredited status. Let's see a few more added to that list in 2018!

Mike Anson
BAC Chair

Problems when viewing the newsletter using Outlook email accounts

Those members who have Outlook email accounts might have experienced display issues with the last couple of newsletters. *MailChimp*, the providers of the newsletter template, are aware of issues when viewing newsletters using Outlook, but say that there is no straightforward fix. The only suggestions we can offer are that you either use another email platform, such as Gmail or Yahoo, or view the newsletter on the BAC website where they are posted soon after being issued. The link is:

www.businessarchivescouncil.org.uk/publications/newsletters/

We apologise to those members affected by this problem.

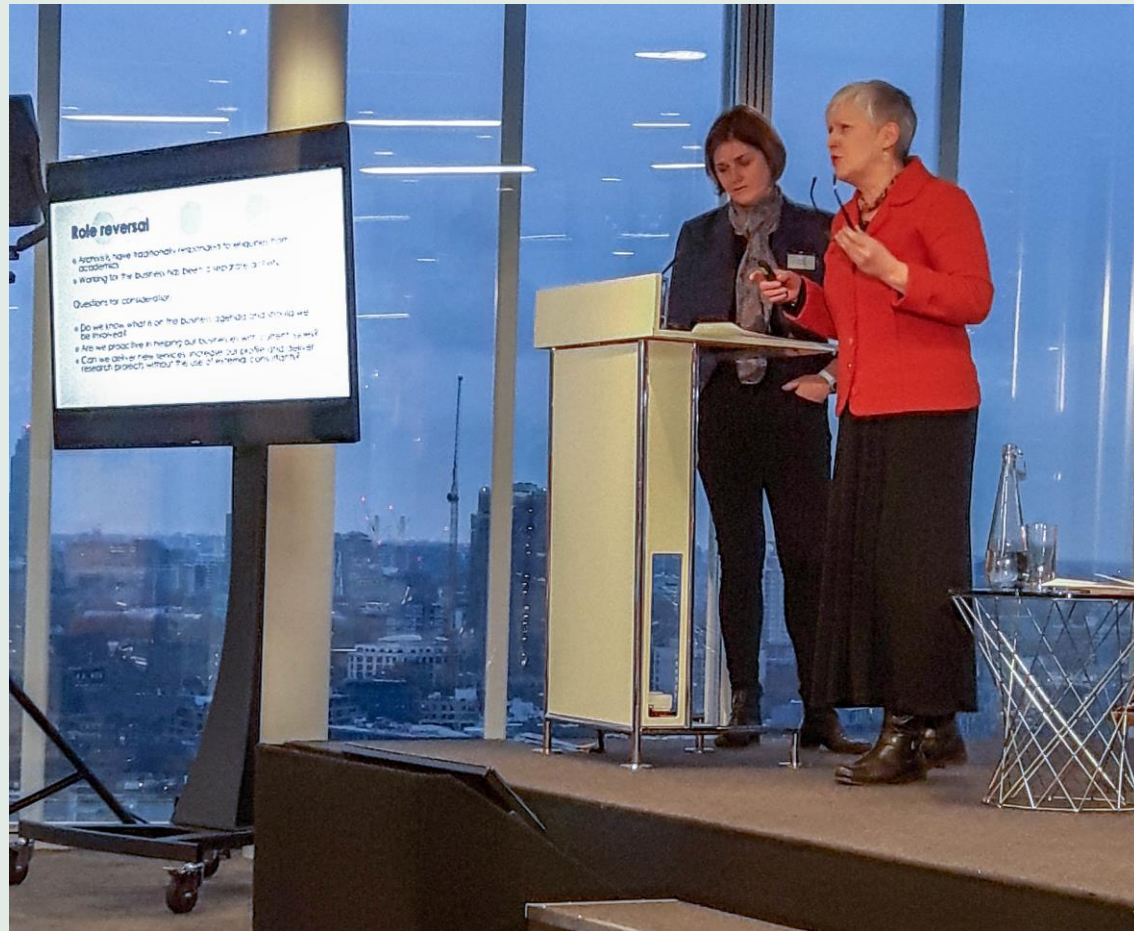
Partnerships with the John Lewis Partnership

As archivists we are very familiar with the academic researcher. Many are very experienced and come to undertake specific and time-limited research but few, in my experience, have been open to negotiating study of the subjects we hold within our collections which we know have potential but have neither the time nor resource to explore ourselves.

Hopefully, however, the tide is turning and we will be able to work with our academics to deliver high quality research which is to the benefit, not only of the academic community, but also the organisations we represent. There has been a move to offer collaborative PhDs within business archives, with the researcher sitting within, or close to, the archive, but our approach takes this idea one step further.

There are few archives which do not have a 'pet' researcher, someone who has developed a relationship with an archive, knows their way around the search room and sometimes even brings cake! This is the case with several of our academic researchers and, over a cup of tea and piece of Madeira, we discovered that there is the potential for a much fuller and more rewarding collaboration.

Those universities with an active research body are constantly requiring their staff to achieve certain goals whether that is for the Research Excellence Framework (REF), the number of journal articles they contribute, or their links with business. Research projects deliver all-of-the above, but interestingly, unless they have been given a specific amount of money for a specific project through a funding bid, our experience has shown that many are happy to explore areas within our collections which are not directly related to their previous work. The degree to which this relaxed attitude extends towards specific subject matter is only to our advantage and archivists should neglect this at their peril. We all have areas of our collections which we would like to see receive more attention. This could either be through straightforward interrogation of the source material, or feedback on the content of unexplored material, to give outcomes we can share with our internal paymasters and stakeholders.



Judy Faraday (John Lewis Partnership) and Alix Green (Essex University) speaking at the 2017 BAC conference about their experiences of working in partnership (Image courtesy Ben White)

In the case of the John Lewis Partnership our discussions focussed around the desire to understand more about the business' approach to pay policy, how this developed over time, and to take away any lessons which could be learned for the business today and in the future. Initially the time taken to identify and extract the material was considerable and limited by the number of visits required to access the archive. However, once the university understood the value of this collaborative approach and the level of interest created within the business, there was an opportunity to apply for internal funding to supplement the academic's time with that of some research assistants. This improved not only our outcomes but also included bringing new researchers into the project to deliver more within a shorter timescale.

Obviously there are restrictions to how this can work. With businesses often requiring very quick turn round on projects there is a tendency for collaboration to require a much longer time-frame and a guaranteed outcome which purely objective academic research may not deliver! However, with careful discussion, realistic expectations on both sides and a degree of flexibility this type of research can provide a cost-effective overview of specific topics which negates the requirement to recruit some consultants – a benefit most business would be delighted to see – and creates a long-term relationship which can move from one area of

research to another, building up a body of knowledge and understanding which cannot be created from a single external interrogation.

To try to pass on our experience we plan to offer a workshop in the autumn to those archives willing to look at this new research strategy. Details will be posted on the list serve and on the BAC website when arrangements have been finalised. We hope to see you there.

Judy Faraday

Manager, Heritage Services John Lewis Partnership

Call for papers: SBR Summer Seminar on technical records in June

On Monday 18 June, the Archive and Records Association's Section for Business Records (SBR) will hold its third summer seminar, on this occasion in partnership with the Ballast Trust. This FREE seminar is kindly being hosted by the National Railway Museum in York in their *Search Engine* space.

The seminar will explore the theme of technical records, focusing on the plans and drawings held in business archive collections. We are delighted to invite submissions for this year's seminar in the form of papers (each lasting 20 to 30 minutes), lightening talks (each running no more than 10 minutes) or practical sessions.

Tell us about your organisation's innovative or traditional approaches in demonstrating the potential of technical records. What successes have you had and what lessons have been learnt in how you manage, preserve and use your technical records? What challenges do your technical records present? Have you connected with different user communities or made use of expert volunteers to unlock collections?

Proposals for papers, lightening talks or practical sessions might include, but are not limited to, the following areas:

- Appraisal and selection
- Arrangement and processing
- Preservation and conservation
- Use and access

Please email your proposals by 30 March to Secretary of the SBR, James Elder (james.elder@bt.com) with the following information:

- Name, job title and organisation of speaker/s
- Type of proposal (presentation OR lightening talk OR practical session)
- Title
- An abstract of no more than 300 words

Details of booking for this seminar will be released with the full programme in April.

Announcing two £4000 BAC cataloguing grants for 2018

The BAC is delighted to announce that for 2018 its general cataloguing grant for business collections and its cataloguing grant specifically for business archives related to the arts have each increased to £4000.



The Lucas Industries Archive held at the British Motor Museum was awarded the 2017 BAC general cataloguing grant (Courtesy of British Motor Industry Heritage Trust)

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.



The 2005 Kneehigh Theatre production of *A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings* at Hayle, Cornwall. Falmouth University, home of the Kneehigh Theatre Archive, was awarded the 2017 BAC Arts cataloguing grant (Image courtesy Steve Tanner/Kneehigh/Wildworks)

We envisage that each £4000 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 will be asked to produce a short report on the project outcomes for the BAC newsletter and website. In addition, the catalogue should be made available on The National Archives' DISCOVERY database.

The Cataloguing Grant for Business Archives (2018) launches on 3 April 2018. The deadline for applications is 25 June 2018.

The Cataloguing Grant for Business Archives related to the Arts (2018) launches on 26 April 2018. The deadline for applications is 26 July 2018.

For more information see the BAC's website at:

www.businessarchivescouncil.org.uk/activitiesobjectives/catgrant/
www.businessarchivescouncil.org.uk/activitiesobjectives/catgrantarts/

Any questions about the Cataloguing Grant for Business Archives should be addressed to Jenny Willis, Administrator, BAC Cataloguing Grant.

Email: Jenny.Willis@postalmuseum.org (tel.) 0300 0300 700 (ext. 953)

Any questions about The Cataloguing Grant for Business Archives related to the Arts should be addressed to Anne Archer, Administrator, BAC Cataloguing Grant.
Email: anne.archer@bt.com (tel.) 07484 539199

The British Records Association's inaugural *Janette Harley* prize is now open for applications

The British Records Association (BRA) is pleased to announce that it is sponsoring a new prize, in memory of archivist Janette Harley (1951 – 2015). Janette was devoted to the BRA, which was a significant help to her during her early career. She remained a member throughout her life. At her death her family fulfilled her wish to bequeath a substantial capital sum to the BRA. This new prize is intended to generate interest in archives, and raise awareness of research and achievements in the world of archives.

An annual prize of £350 will be awarded to individuals or organisations for the best/most original piece of work published in a monograph, journal or magazine, or otherwise made publicly available (such as in a blog), which has promoted 'the preservation, understanding, accessibility or study of archives', the aims of the BRA.

Applications are welcomed from individuals, on their own behalf or on behalf of others, and from representatives of organisations. The prize will be available to anyone, including archivists, local historians, academics, genealogists and conservators.

Applicants must submit for consideration a specific piece of work which has been published or is available in the public domain (such as in a blog), during the past three years (i.e. from 2015 onwards).

The deadline for applications for the inaugural prize is 30 June 2018. The prize will be awarded in October 2018.

Please visit the British Records Association website at the following link for further details on submitting an application: www.britishrecordsassociation.org.uk/the-janette-harley-prize/

Call for papers: LAMAS Local History Conference in November

The London and Middlesex Archaeological Society (LAMAS) is putting out a call for papers for its local history conference: *An emporium for many nations: London shaped by trade*. Papers on any aspects of trade from any period in the history of London and its hinterlands are welcomed. The conference will take place in November at the Museum of London.

Proposals, comprising an abstract of no more than 500 words, should be sent, preferably via e-mail, to John Price (j.price@gold.ac.uk), or via the Department of History, Goldsmiths University of London, New Cross, London, SE14 6NW.

For more information click here: royalhistsoc.org/calendar/emporium-many-nations-london-shaped-trade/

DPC briefing day: shared-service approach to digital preservation, 20 March 2018

The Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC) is holding a Jisc-sponsored briefing day on the topic of *Shared Service and Common Purpose: Digital Preservation as Infrastructure* in London on 20 March 2018.

The briefing day will explore the opportunities that exist for complementary institutions to share investment in digital preservation by sharing infrastructure, resources and effort.

This free-to-attend event is designed to allow attendees to share lessons learned about shared services in the context of research data management, and how these may be applied to groups of complementary organisations of every type, in every sector.

For more information please visit the DPC website ([here](#)).

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