



A date for your diary - the BAC Conference 2009

Judy Faraday.

This year's BAC conference will be held at The National Archives on Tuesday 24 November 2009. The conference will be an opportunity for those interested in business archives to discuss, develop and contribute to the National Business Archives Strategy following its launch at the House of Lords in July. The conference will be in a new format featuring more opportunity to participate in

the implementation of this major piece of work. There will be case examples of best practice, contributions from those outside the sector and an investigation of some of the key implementation points highlighted in the strategy document.

Further details will follow in the next BAC newsletter.

Kodak Archives

Michael Pritchard, PhD student at De Montfort University.

In a generous move Kodak has donated its UK company archives to the British Library and its research department's library to De Montfort University in Leicester. The donations safeguard the material in perpetuity as the company continues its worldwide reorganisation. The material comes from the company's British corporate headquarters and the company's European Research Centre which was established at Harrow in 1928 and recently moved to Cambridge.

At a formal ceremony on 2 March 2009 at the British Library, Kodak's Jan Wildman and the British Library's Ronald Milne, Director, Scholarship & Collections, signed the formal agreement to donate. The company archive, which dates from the company's arrival in the United Kingdom in 1885, includes business documents, contracts, production records and marketing material and will complement the British Library's expanding photographic collections which have recently been joined by the William Henry Fox Talbot and Fay Godwin collections. The British Library will be holding a major exhibition of its photographic collections, including some of the Kodak material, from October 2009.



Photograph: British Library, Kodak Archive

This is not the first time that Kodak Ltd has made a major donation. In 1985 it closed the Kodak Museum at Harrow, which had opened in 1927, and donated the entire collection to the Science Museum. It now forms a key part of the National Media Museum in Bradford.

Kodak's British research department was formally established in 1928 and the library includes runs of nineteenth century journals and books which were used by company staff until the 1980s. These will go to De Montfort University in Leicester which has established itself as the leading UK centre for photographic history and research. The university has produced a number of groundbreaking online historical databases and an MA course in 'Photographic History and its Practice' starts in October 2009. It also has several PhD students researching photographic history. The library donation is a major resource and will be housed in a secure special collections area of the university library. A small part of the library has been retained by the British Library to fill gaps in its collection of photographic journals.



Photograph: Michael Pritchard.

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Kodak first arrived in Britain in 1885 when founder George Eastman opened an office in London's Soho Square to sell his and other American manufacturer's products. The London office was a base for Eastman's expansion into Europe and in 1888 it moved to Oxford Street with formal retail premises. The first British company, the Eastman Photographic Materials Company, was formed in 1889 to handle all Eastman's business outside of North America and in 1890 Eastman bought the Harrow site where the first Kodak factory outside of Rochester, NY, was established. The site remains in operation producing photographic papers. Kodak Limited was incorporated in 1898 and the company established a network of shops throughout the UK and added photo finishing to its operations. Camera making commenced in Britain in mid-1927. Kodak Ltd dominated the British photographic manufacturing and retail scene for the next fifty years.

In the early 1980s recession forced the Eastman Kodak Company, the American parent company, to review worldwide operations and the company underwent a period of contraction which accelerated from the early 2000s as digital photography began to impact on the company's traditional areas of film and paper production. In Britain a number of sites were closed. The headquarters, which had moved from London to Hemel Hempstead in 1971, were relocated again and the Harrow factory downsized. The research department is due to close shortly. Restructuring had started to show financial benefits by late 2008 when the worldwide credit crunch hit the company but Kodak remains poised to ensure its future survival by focusing on materials and cameras for digital photography.

Kodak's Jan Wildman and the British Library's Ronald Milne, Director, Scholarship & Collections, hold the signed agreement donating the Kodak corporate archive to the British Library. Photograph: Michael Pritchard.

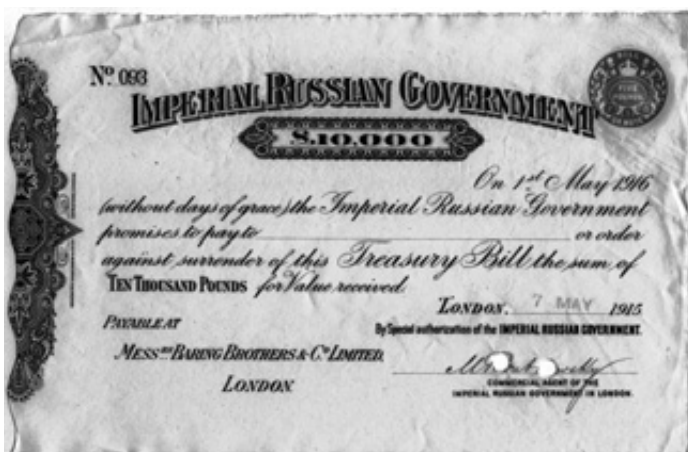


The donation process has taken several years to complete and a number of the key players involved in securing the collections were present at the formal signing ceremony including Kodak's Dr Sam Weller, former head of research, Chris Roberts, Kodak Archive Curator, Derek Birch formerly of Kodak Research Laboratories; the British Library's John Falconer head of photographic collections, and Professor Roger Taylor. Representatives from De Montfort University included Dr Kelley Wilder, head of the new MA course, Professor Stephen Brown and Dr Gerard Moran, Dean of Art and Design.

Launch of The Baring Archive Website

Moira Lovegrove, The Baring Archive.

The Baring Archive, which documents the history of Barings Bank, has recently launched a website at www.baringarchive.org.uk. The site includes the Guide to the Archive, a genealogy, a timeline, a selection from the art collection and an online exhibition about the financing of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803-4. Over the coming months we will also be publishing sections of the catalogue for potential researchers to browse.



*Russian Government Bond 1915.
Photograph: The Baring Archive.*

The website is one of the first projects of The Baring Archive Limited (TBAL), a charitable company established by ING to manage The Baring Archive and the associated historical portraits and to develop their use as an educational resource.

TBAL was established because the archivists had become increasingly aware of the potential vulnerability of the collection since ING, which acquired Barings in 1995, no longer uses the Baring brand. The archivists worked with ING's legal department to investigate options for the future and it was agreed that ING would establish a charitable company to which the Archive would be loaned in perpetuity.

In addition to launching a website, TBAL is undertaking a variety of other projects, including working in partnership with National Life Stories at the British Library's National Sound Archive to undertake an oral history of Barings, and 'Re:searching', a project in which participants from Wimbledon School of Art will produce artwork in response to items in the Archive. Each of these projects will introduce the Archive to new audiences.

House Historian

Melanie Backe-Hansen gives an overview of her work as historian for Chesterton Humberts and the importance of archives in her research.

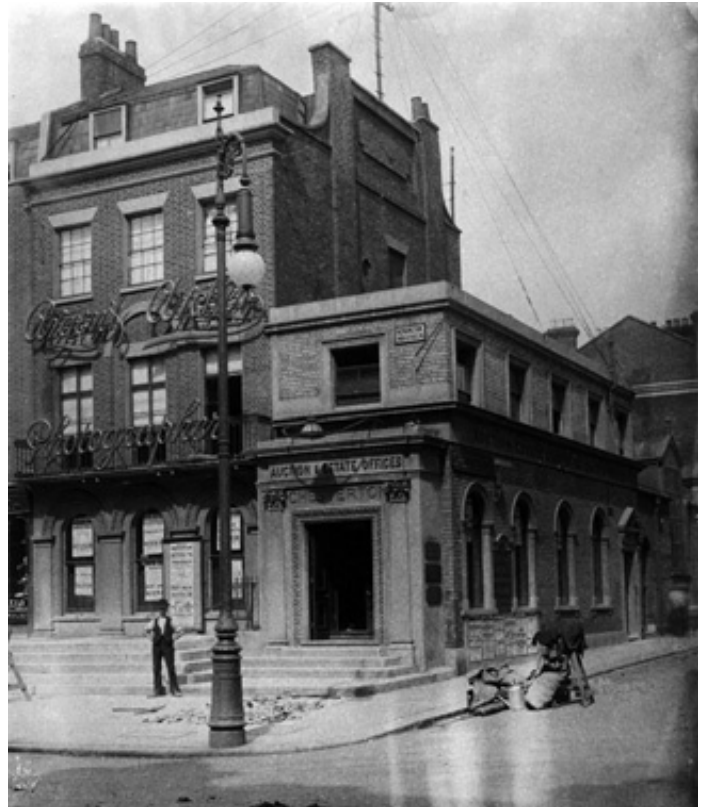
Chesterton Humberts is one of the oldest estate agencies in the UK and we recognise that whether it's the houses we sell or the importance of a long established and well respected company, heritage can have a huge impact on the success of a business. Chesterton Humberts knows the value of heritage and to emphasise this approach employs an in-house historian - the only UK estate agent to employ a full-time historian to research the history of houses and local areas.

I have now been working as a house historian for Chesterton Humberts, formerly Chesterton, for over three years and it just keeps getting better and better. With the rise in interest in genealogy through TV programmes like BBC's 'Who Do You Think You Are' and the increasing availability of resources online, personal research has seen huge growth in recent years. Researching the history of houses is an extension of this pursuit of personal history and this combined with our love of houses is something that continues to interest many. Whether you just want to know when your house was built or whether you're intrigued by the residents who've also lived in your house, a house history can give a great insight into one of our most treasured possessions – our home.

My role encompasses many areas but primarily I research the history of individual homes to help generate additional publicity, along with historical overviews of streets and areas across the country. However, I do also look at the history of the company, especially when the two firms - Chesterton and Humberts – merged earlier this year.



Melanie Backe-Hansen.



The old Chesterton office on High Street, Kensington c1904.

Chesterton Humberts was formed by uniting two historic property firms; Chesterton, established in Kensington in 1805 and Humberts, established in Watford in 1842. As the in-house historian I have been able to spend some time researching elements of the company history, but sadly very few original documents have survived into the 21st century.

When researching the history of houses I visit archives and local studies libraries across the country, as the majority of records are held in the Borough or County Record office. However, I do often visit the National Archives, the London Metropolitan Archives and other independent sources. I search through maps, census records, parish rate books, trade directories and a great number of documents, all with a view of putting the pieces of a puzzle together.

Recently, my research has taken me to Nottinghamshire where I was researching a farmhouse and a Georgian town house. The research of any house is always unique, depending on so many factors, such as location, age and simply the luck of finding existing documents – or not. Fortunately, I found a great collection of documents that gave me a good picture of both houses – including finding some notable famous visitors. In fact, the Georgian town house was closely linked to Lord Byron, who lived in the village in the early 19th century!

Houses can tell us so much about the people who have gone before us, as well as the heritage of a local area. Whether it is a grand stately home or a Victorian terrace, every home has a story to tell. I am a big supporter of valuing heritage and making sure it isn't lost to us, as well as the generations to come. That can apply to a cupboard full of documents, an historic building or personal stories of those who experienced history.

New website for RBS

Alison Turton, Head of Group Archives, The Royal Bank of Scotland.

The Royal Bank of Scotland Group has just launched a brand new website – RBS Heritage Online at heritagearchives.rbs.com – incorporating a guide to our archives and information on how the public can contact us to make enquiries or to arrange a visit. The site is Wiki-hosted, although it is not being used as a conventional publicly-editable Wiki.

The archive guide includes short histories of most of our constituent banks and businesses and a summary of the records we hold for each. We have also indicated where we

know additional related records to be held by other archive offices.

Please do guide your researchers towards the site where it might be helpful. We would also very much welcome your comments on RBS Heritage Online so that we can improve and develop the service. Information about any related archive collections which are not listed, and of which we are therefore unaware, would also be much appreciated.

You can contact me at alison.turton@rbs.co.uk

Summer strategy news

Sara Kinsey

Summer 2009 sees the publication of The National Strategy for Business Archives in England and Wales. The strategy will be available on the BAC and TNA websites in July and a launch event will take place at the House of Commons on 9 July. This launch event is aimed at the business community and aims to raise their awareness of the potential of a well-managed archive to add value to a business. The publication of the strategy is the culmination of sustained work over a number of years and the BAC would like to thank all its members who have been involved in this work, and who have contributed to the shaping of the strategy.

The publication of the strategy is, of course, a beginning not an end, and over the summer all the participating bodies are drawing up plans in order to implement its recommendations. Further events are planned later in the summer and into the autumn to publicise the strategy within the archives sector, and to clarify the implementation plans. One of the strategic recommendations will come into effect in the very near future – the new website, Best Practice Online for managing business archives, should be going live in July. You can keep up to date with the latest details on the BAC website or contact Sara Kinsey at sarakinsey@hsbc.com

Clogs to clogs

The phrase ‘clogs to clogs in three generations’ is said to be of Dutch origin and an expression of the observation that only a small proportion of family businesses survive beyond the third generation. As some have put it, the first generation founds the firm, the second builds it up, and the third makes off with the booty.

Space permitting, I would like to briefly feature some of the longer-lasting enterprises in future newsletters. If any readers would like to propose suitable candidates, please let me know. The criteria will not be as exacting as those for membership of the Tercentenarians’ Club, which only accepts businesses with 300 years of trading and a genealogical link between the current owners and the founder. Firms that started over 150 years ago, and are still in the hands of family members, will do nicely.

Editor.

*One of the select few.
The brewers Shepherd Neame Ltd are
members of the Tercentenarians’ Club.*



The editor of this newsletter is Alan Gall. The next issue will appear in Autumn 2009. 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.

The Hon Secretary of the BAC is Karen Sampson, Head of Archives (London), Lloyds Banking Group Archives, 5th Floor, Princess House, 1 Suffolk Lane, London EC4R 0AX (Tel: +44 (0) 207 489 3945); Karen.Sampson@LloydsTSB.co.uk.

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