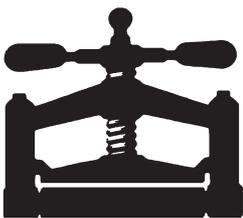


Newsletter



**BUSINESS
ARCHIVES
COUNCIL**

THE BUSINESS ARCHIVES COUNCIL BURSARY FOR BUSINESS HISTORY RESEARCH 2005

Details of the Council's Bursary for Business History Research 2005 have been announced. As a result of the generosity of Sir Peter Thompson, Chairman of the National Freight Corporation, and the Wellcome Foundation, the BAC instituted a trust fund, the income from which is used to offer annually a bursary to help an individual to further his/her research into business history through the study of specific business archives. The value of the award in 2005 will be £1000.

Details about eligibility and applications – which should be received by 31st March 2005 – appear on the flier included in this posting and on www.businessarchivescouncil.com. The successful applicant will be informed by the end of April 2005. The prize will be awarded at the Annual Meeting of the Association of Business Historians to be held at the University of Glasgow on 27-28 May 2005.

In 2004 the Bursary was awarded to Mr Stephen Swarczkopf, of Birkbeck College, London.

Conference 2004 Report – Business Archives: Fit for the Future?

The Council's Annual Conference, hosted by Lloyds TSB Plc, took place on 30th November 2004. The programme was changing up to what seemed like the last minute but gaps in the running order caused by the sad death of Michael Cudlipp of the History of Advertising Trust and the late withdrawal of keynote speaker Dave Snowden of IBM Global Services, were imaginatively filled after much hard work on the part of conference organisers Fiona Maccoll and Karen Sampson. Delegates enjoyed an opportunity to catch up with colleagues and the hospitality of Lloyds TSB. We are very grateful to Karen and Fiona for their efforts.

Recipients of the MLA sponsored conference places, Martin Devereux of the Guildhall Library and Mariam Yamin of The Royal Bank of Scotland Group Archives, have kindly written up their experiences at the conference:

The morning session

Nicholas Kingsley gave a warm welcome as Chairman, commenting that he was intrigued by the challenges faced by archives, and particularly business archives. He recognised that business archives are vulnerable to changes in their parent organisations. Nick also commented on emotive subjects, such as the tensions between private rights and public interests. He said that business archivists needed to confront these issues and understand the complex interrelationships that exist between business, their archives and the public world.

On arrival in the reception of Lloyds TSB's offices in the City of London delegates encountered some splendid story boards charting the history of the bank. The boards, created by Group Archivist Karen Sampson and her team, are an example of the stylish impact archives and history can have in a very modern business environment.



Piet Clement, Head of Library, Archives and Research Support at the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) in Basel, Switzerland gave the first address of the day, entitled *Dealing with today's technology – a practitioner's experience*. Piet's presentation was a lively and fast paced overview of the implementation of an Electronic Document Management System (EMS) at BIS. Piet said that the programme was successful in creating an organisational focus on information sharing and records retention. It introduced a common platform for record storage and created a fluid, shared information environment.

Piet, however, did recognise the programme's weaknesses. The organisation's

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culture (from senior management through to all employees) was under pressure to accept or deny that records management was needed. Working habits and perceptions of the records management process were difficult to change. Also, the idea that the programme would save money or be cost neutral was a fallacy - the project meant increased investment and costs. The setbacks and difficulties faced during the programme's development led to a saturation of time, resources and staff patience. Piet recommended a faster move to implementation accounting for changes in the brief along the way. He also stressed that the support and authority of senior management is crucial in getting departments to accept the need for records management.

Piet rounded off his presentation with a run down of the main considerations when undertaking large projects like introducing EDMS. He said that clear objectives and requirements need to be set, using comprehensible terminology. It should also be clear to an organisation that records management is not a resource saving exercise. Piet also stressed that though management support was essential it was hard to maintain.

Andy Pals, from Pals Consulting Ltd, gave the second presentation of the morning, entitled *Implementing Technology*. Andy had been drafted into the Conference programme at very short notice. From the outset, Andy acknowledged that he had very little knowledge of the archive domain and stated that his objective was to provide an insight into the directions that IT is currently proceeding.

Andy argued that problems implementing technology were caused in the communication between IT providers and their clients. He argued that the current marketing and IT strategies (i.e. the waterfall process of analysis, establishing requirements, designing the product, implementing the product, testing and integration, operation and maintenance) were wrong. Andy advocated the development of a vocabulary that enables the language of business to meet the language of IT. He said that pre-planning without this common vocabulary is nonsense. Andy argued that the opening of any negotiation between provider and client should always begin with a fuzzy, malleable idea of what is required which, over time, crystallises to become a firm realisation of customer needs and technical possibilities. The notion of a rigorous plan, fixed in time by prior analysis is flawed simply because objectives, management and desired outcomes are always in motion.

Andy proposed a different approach, suggesting that the IT product should be delivered quickly so that clients could see the possibilities and then demand the changes and functionality they require. This involves input from real users and enables clients and suppliers to communicate and improve the process of shaping and delivering a product that works. Andy also argued that customers should be consulted on the design of the testing procedures for IT products, and that manufacturing processes, such as automated regression tests, could be employed to make the process of delivering IT solutions more effectively. Andy is an advocate of the *Agile Movement* (<http://www.agilemovement.org/>) which "*is the*

ability to both create and respond to change in order to profit in a turbulent business environment".

In the final stage of Andy's presentation he focused on the sophisticated techniques that modern software uses to make searches simple and intuitive. Andy used Google as an example where the interface is very simple, masking complex search tools that adapt to the different ways in which people carry out searches.

Martin Devereux, Archives Assistant at the Guildhall Library.



(l-r) The afternoon's panel Lucy Jones, BT Archive, - names to be added

The afternoon session

The afternoon began with a panel session concerning strategies for **Funding Business Archives**. Firstly **Lucy Jones** spoke about the work done at BT with the *Connected Earth Project*, which has provided online and physical access to BT's museum collections. The integration of this project with the Group's archive has raised the profile and increased funding for the department as a whole. In addition, the high profile of the project has raised awareness of the part heritage can play in the corporate social responsibility policy of the Company, which has recently written a heritage policy document outlining its commitment to its heritage. Lucy stressed however that *Connected Earth* while leading to an increase in funding was also extremely time-consuming and had had to become a priority for staff in the department sometimes at the expense of other functions, for example cataloguing.

Rachel Hosker, Glasgow University, Scottish Business Archive, described the work carried out by her institution in providing services to businesses whose archives are deposited at the University, and **Lisa Giffen of the Business Archives Council Scotland** gave an overview of the work done by BACS in rescuing the records of failing companies. This was followed by short talks from **Judy Aitken** from the **Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)**, and **Tania Noble, of Arts and Business**. Judy talked about the work of HLF, and explained that businesses could be eligible for funding if it could be demonstrated that a project was for public rather than commercial benefit. Tania explained that Arts and Business was a charity which secured sponsorship from businesses for various arts institutions, including archives.

The panel session was followed by a presentation by **Martin Rush, of the Royal Mail Group**, concerning the

pros and cons of establishing an independent charitable trust. The Royal Mail Archive took this route because it was concerned that there was a risk that in the future the budget of the archive would be severely cut due to financial constraints of the parent business. This was coupled with the fact that even as a successful business archive, there was a general under-funding for staff and resources, and only limited outreach work was encouraged. Although there are a number of perceived benefits associated with the establishment of a trust, such as access to external funding and tax incentives, it was stressed that it would not necessarily be the best route for all business archives. Establishing a trust is a complex legal and financial process, and overall it is unlikely that there will be any financial gains – for the Royal Mail the exercise ended up being cost neutral. There are also a number of problems which need to be considered, such as loss of influence over the parent company, over-emphasis on public benefit at the expense of corporate need, and loss of control of the transfer of records from the business to the archive. However, the Royal Mail Archive has overcome the majority of these problems by establishing three separate entities within the Trust which deal with different aspects of the service. These consist of a holding company which holds the archives but has no financial involvement; an operating charity with a Board of Trustees which deals with exclusively charitable work; and a trading company which provides services to the Royal Mail. At present the Trust is considered a success and the profile of the service has been raised both externally and within the Royal Mail Group.

Adam Green and Gary Collins, of the Access to Mineral Heritage Project, presented the third session of the afternoon. This cross domain project takes the form of a website sponsored by the Coal Authority, which acts as a gateway to archives, libraries and museums which hold information relating to the history of minerals in the UK. The site is in its early stages but it is hoped that it will be popular with both serious researchers and those with a casual interest, as well as being a useful tool for children studying various aspects of mineral history. It was suggested that the project could be a model for businesses in other industries to join together to provide public access to their catalogues, whilst also being a useful tool to raise the profile of businesses.

The final talk of the day was by Justin Cavernelis-Frost of MLA. Justin outlined the findings of the Archives Task Force, and the challenges and opportunities facing the profession today. He also showed a video produced by the taskforce advertising the creation of an *Archives Gateway* to provide one point of access to all the archives in the UK, including business, community and private archives.

To a certain extent the conference lacked a focussed theme, probably due to the fact that several of the speakers had to step in at the last moment. However, overall the day provided a valuable insight into a wide range of current initiatives, and was a great opportunity to meet colleagues and discuss issues affecting the business archives community.

Mariam Yamin, Archivist, The Royal Bank of Scotland Group Archives.

BUSINESS ARCHIVES COUNCIL AWARDS WADSWORTH PRIZE IN BUSINESS HISTORY FOR 2003

In November last year the BAC awarded its annual Wadsworth Prize in Business History for 2003. The winner was Professor J. Forbes Munro, emeritus professor of international history in the University of Glasgow, for his book *Maritime Enterprise and Empire: Sir William Mackinnon and his Business Network, 1823-1893* (The Boydell Press, 2003).

The prize, which is awarded annually for the best book in British business history, was presented to Professor Munro at the Bank of England by Ian Hay Davison, one of the judges. The other judges were: Professor Martin Fransman (University of Edinburgh) and Professor John Wilson (University of Central Lancashire). A strong short-list of entries for this year's prize reflects the growing influence and vitality of business history within the managerial science and historical studies disciplines.

Invisible on Everest, by Dr Mary Rose and Mike Parsons was declared runner-up in this year's competition.



(l-r) Terry Gourvish, BAC Chairman, Professor J. Forbes Munro, winner of the Wadsworth Prize, Ian Hay Davison, a judge of the Wadsworth Prize.

The Designation Scheme

“Collections form the bedrock of all museum, library and archive activities. The Designation Scheme ensures the identification of England's most important assets and supports their care and preservation for the benefit of future generations.” Dr Maurina Crozier, Chair, Designation Review Steering Group, MLA Board Member.

MLA's Designation Scheme, established in 1997, seeks to identify our most significant cultural assets in order to guard against neglect or disposal of national treasures and to promote the importance, richness and variety of the collections held in museums, libraries and archives.

The Scheme was extended to cover library and archive collections in December 2004. The first round of the

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expanded scheme is open to applications from libraries and archives throughout England, and to joint applications from existing formal partnerships of organisations with complimentary collections.

Business archives can apply. The Editor of this Newsletter spoke to MLA's Designation Adviser, Yvette Burrows, who confirmed that business archives can apply provided they can meet the criteria. Yvette stressed that any archive applying must be able to demonstrate that their collection is of outstanding quality and significance, and that they meet the criteria in relation to collection management and service to the public – in particular she mentioned access and learning opportunities related to the collection.

Full guidance notes and an application form are available from the Designation team at MLA or can be downloaded from the MLA website at

www.mla.gov.uk/action/designation/00desig.asp.

Applications should be submitted to MLA by 11 April 2005. Awards will be announced by 30th September 2005.

MLA did ask potential applicants to register their interest by 14th January 2005 so that they could get an idea of the

nature of the collections planning to apply in order to properly manage the assessment process. However failure to register is not a problem provided archives fill in the form which accompanies the application documents and return it to MLA as soon as possible.

For further information on Designation, please contact: Yvette Burrows, Designation Adviser, yvette.burrows@mla.gov.uk

Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, 16 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AA. Tel: 020 7273 1444, Fax: 020 7273 1404. Email: info@mla.gov.uk.



Voices of the Wine Trade

The *Oral History of the Wine Trade* is a collaborative initiative between the National Life Story Collection, The Worshipful Company of Vintners and the Institute of Masters of Wine. From cellar man to CEO experiences of members in the trade are recorded in 252 hours of life stories which form part of the extensive Food: From Source to Salepoint. The recordings cover the period between 1930 and 2004 and are a vivid testimony to the key changes and events in the UK wine trade. Gems include this from John Clevely who became Mr Veuve Cliquot in the UK 'Why wine, my life? Pure chance!...End of the war came....I didn't want to go to university...you were so disorientated. I met somebody...and suddenly I found myself working for a wine merchant. I was lucky. Then I got the Government Scholarship to come to London by chance. And then I got the Vintner's Scholarship that set me on my way. That was it. I suddenly realised life was not too bad.' (Recording: C1088/14).

The *Oral History* includes recollections of entry into the trade, networks, family connections, apprenticeship schemes, the decline of independent wine merchants, the rise of the supermarkets in the wine trade, trade bodies, educational organisations and life histories of some of the biggest names associated with the trade such as Hugh Johnson.

In Vino Veritas, a double CD of sound bites from the collection will be released in March and will be on sale at the British Library Bookshop and Vintners' Hall.

The National Life Story Collection was established in 1987 to "record first-hand experiences of as wide a cross-section of present-day society as possible". As an independent charitable trust within the Oral History Section of the British Library Sound Archive, NLSC's key focus and expertise has been oral history fieldwork. Over the past decade it has initiated a series of innovative interviewing programmes funded entirely from sponsorship, charitable and individual donations and voluntary effort

IN BRIEF

- The Centre for the History of Retailing and Distribution (CHORD) invites proposals for papers and sessions exploring all aspects of the history of retailing and distribution for its 2005 Conference. Papers from all disciplinary perspectives, historical periods and geographical areas are welcome. The deadline for proposals is 18 March 2005. Proposals should be sent (preferably electronically) to: Dr Laura Ugolini, HAGRI/HLSS, MC233, MC Building, University of Wolverhampton, WV1 1SB. Email: Lugolini@wlv.ac.uk.
- The 'Eighth Wonder of the World', Hogarth's letters and 68,000 Egyptian artefacts are amongst the extraordinary places and objects recently supported by ALM London, the strategic development agency for London's archives, libraries and museums, which is celebrated its inauguration on 18 January 2005 at an event hosted by the Corporation of London at London Guildhall. Graham Fisher, Chief Executive, hailed ALM London's successes so far and outlined plans for the future. In attendance were the Lord Mayor of London, Michael Savory, The Rt. Hon. Lord Macintosh of Haringey, Minister for Media and Heritage, and Mark Wood, Chair of Museums Libraries and Archives Council. www.almlondon.org.uk.



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The Editor of this Newsletter is Jane Waller. The next issue will appear in Winter 2005. Prospective copy should be sent to Jane Waller at ING Bank NV, 60 London Wall, London EC2M 5TQ; jane.waller@uk.ing.com.

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