



Dear BAC Members, there is much to report so Newsletter Winter 2006 is a six page offering featuring articles on the 2005 Conference, the Wadsworth prize, business archive MLA designation successes, an update on the Cable & Wireless Archive and more.

2005 Annual Conference

The Conference took place at Peter Jones department store, Sloane Square, London on 8 November 2005. The theme of the day was 'From Family to FTSE'. The Council thanks the speakers and Judy Faraday, Archivist, John Lewis Partnership, for organising such a successful day.

The Council is grateful to Sarah Jane (Archivist, Cataloguing & Acquisitions, Joint Archive Service of the Corporation of London: London Metropolitan Archive), and Ellen Parton (Assistant Archivist, BT Group plc) recipients of the BAC sponsored conference places for the following write-ups of the day:

The Morning Session

This year's theme was 'From Family to FTSE', with speakers examining various aspects of the role of families in business history.

The first presentation of the day was given by keynote speaker Michael Moss from the University of Glasgow on 'The Business of Archives and the Archives of Business'. Moss set the day in context by discussing the international debate on the purpose of business archive services in the current 'culture of coercive accountability'. Concerns were voiced that when using business archives for promotional purposes, the evidential value of records can be neglected. Using examples such as the Hutton Enquiry and Railtrack scandal, Moss illustrated that despite Freedom of Information legislation being limited to public sector organisations, issues of accountability are just as relevant to private sector organisations.

Jim Bolton from Queen Mary College continued with an introduction to the Borromei Bank Research Project. This innovative work used the two surviving ledgers of the fifteenth century Borromei Italian banking family to produce a unique software package. The programme facilitates data entry for double entry book keeping records and allows the in-depth examination of exchange rates and borrowing/lending patterns. It is hoped that if funding is secured for further development for this software, it will soon be available for commercial distribution.

Lucy Newton from the University of Reading then presented a summary of her research on the continuity of family personnel in banking through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Newton gave a brief history of

banking mergers highlighting the progression from private country banks to Joint Stock Banks and on to the dominance of the 'Big Five'. She then outlined the evidence she has uncovered for the prominence of multiple generations of families amongst the staff and shareholders of these organisations. Sources used for this research were largely bank share registers, although Newton discussed the limitations of this material and the need to corroborate findings from other sources.

Edwin Green, Archivist at HSBC Holdings plc, completed the morning's presentations. He discussed the sources available in business archive holdings for the increasingly popular family history research. At HSBC these materials include staff registers, records of appointments and salaries and staff photograph albums. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these records largely concern male employees, although, the archive also holds a considerable amount of material on women's employment during the first and second world wars. Green also outlined an interesting oral history project recently undertaken to explore the experience of the wives and families of expatriate bank personnel. While the role of overseas managers is well documented in the bank's archive, the wives' unofficial role in entertaining clients and providing social networks was previously unrecorded.

Sarah Jane

The Afternoon Session

Andrew Alexander from the University of Surrey opened the afternoon's proceedings with a talk on the changing market place in 1930s Britain, exploring the relationship between big business retailers and the 'small man'. Introducing the assembled to a database he has developed on the subject, *The Retail Trades Database*, he spoke about the dramatic rise in competition, and the rapid growth of both multiple and co-operative stores in Britain, in the 1930s. Focussing on the grocery and provisions trade and the menswear clothing trade, he demonstrated how the database

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2005 Annual Conference continued

could be used to track the changing fortunes, of specific outlets and trades, during this period of great change.

Dr. Alexander paid tribute to the many archives and archivists that had assisted him, whilst researching the project, including the retail business archives of Montague Burton, Marks and Spencer and Sainsbury's.

He explained that extent and impact of retail change varied geographically, and the motivation behind such rapid change was clear; 'The whole of Britain is practically like one city today. What sells in Penzance will also sell in Putney and Pontypridd. The changes date from the Great War, when the miner, brick layer and bank clerk were all thrown into the melting pot' (Burton Archives, Box 114). The debate over multiple versus independent stores was played out in many forms, resulting in the ultimate decline of the latter, on the British high street.

Judy Faraday, Archivist for the John Lewis Partnership, continued the retail theme, in the second presentation of the afternoon, entitled *Just One Big Happy Family*. Her talk focussed on exploring ways in which archival records held by the partnership could be used to study social development within a corporate culture. Retailing has always been a very social trade and, using records and images from the John Lewis archive, Judy demonstrated the value of these records to the social historian.

Larger retailers have always been interested in portraying themselves as one big happy family, and John Lewis is no exception. Records generated by its many staff associations, welfare and benefit societies, and *The Gazette* (John Lewis' in-house magazine from 1918), document ways in which staff care has developed in the company, and reflect national economic and social trends. John Lewis continues to collect records from staff societies and events held across the company, today.

Richard Wilson from the University of East Anglia, concluded the afternoon's talks with *The Family Rules Supreme: Brewers in Business 1830-1960*. Despite finding that "the mention of the history of beer always brings a laugh", Richard explained that brewing continues to be a fascinating research subject.

Crediting the many surviving records as a rich resource (and including three excellent journals- dating from the 1890s, Government statistics, Barnard's list of notable breweries, local press and oral history interviews), he explained how brewing has always been about family enterprise.

In 1830, there were more than 2000 brewers in business in the UK, the vast majority of which were family businesses. Unfortunately, mainly due to increased competition, by the 1960s this number was in rapid decline. However, their records remain an important and rich resource, revealing much about British traditions, agriculture, and social and business networks.

Ellen Parton

Congratulations to Unilever and Royal Mail on Designation Successes

'Designated' status is awarded by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), the national agency responsible to the government for the strategic guidance of the museums, libraries and archives sector in England. Designation is reserved by MLA for collections they recognise to be of outstanding national and international importance. Designation has been available for collections in museums for some years but in 2005 library and archive collections became eligible for the first time. In October 2005 MLA announced that 38 collections had been designated nationally in 28 institutions, including two major business archives. Congratulations to Unilever Archives & Records Management and The Royal Mail Archive on their successful applications. Below archivists Jeannette Strickland and Vicky Parkinson briefly describe their respective organisations' designated collections and the benefits they believe designation will bring. Jeanette and Vicky plan to write a more detailed article on designation for a future edition of *Business Archives. Principles and Practice*.

Designated Collection – The United Africa Company Archive

Unilever Archives & Records Management is responsible for the archives of Unilever's corporate centre and its operating companies in the UK, past and present, including the United Africa Company (UAC). The UAC archive covers an enormous geographical and

chronological range. The bulk of the material concerns the key West African countries where UAC operated, although there are also papers relating to other parts of the African continent, Europe, the Persian Gulf, Latin America, and the Solomon Islands. The earliest papers date from the late eighteenth century and there is significant material on the mid-nineteenth century, but the bulk of the archive concerns the colonial period of African history and its aftermath. It is not just an archive in the traditional sense, as the collection also comprises antiquarian books, artwork and artefacts, 20,000 photographs, films and oral history reminiscences, thereby presenting a unique picture of life in West Africa and a major trading company.

The UAC archive is of international importance, being of interest primarily to historians working in three broad and overlapping fields - African history, imperial history, and business history - but also to other specialists as well, eg the photographic material provides important ethnographic and historical data, for which there is no obvious parallel. The research potential of the UAC collection is such that part funding to catalogue the collection was secured from The Leverhulme Trust in 2002.

Benefits

Access to this collection has been long awaited. Designation has raised our profile and the standing of the archive and we hope that the attendant publicity will help

to attract a wide range of researchers beyond the academic sector. It will also lead to greater use of other collections whose creators interacted with UAC, such as the Board and Special Committee minutes of Unilever. It has also enhanced our profile within the company, by highlighting that the service we provide has been externally recognised and, hopefully, will help safeguard the collection amid commercial pressures should it ever potentially be at risk as a non-core part of the business now that UAC no longer exists as a company.

Completing the Designation application forced us to take a fresh look at our policies and will act as a spur to periodically reassess and revise our procedures so that we maintain our high standards. The contents of this collection are so varied that Designation will provide a yardstick by which we can measure ourselves against our peers. It will also provide recognition from our peers that we hold both an outstanding collection and provide the necessary infrastructure, i.e. storage, staffing and intellectual control, worthy of it.

Jeannette Strickland, Head of Art, Archives & Records Management, Unilever plc

Designated Collection – The Royal Mail Archive

The Royal Mail Archive applied for designation of its archive in April 2005. Specifically, the records relating to the operation, policy, development and social impact of the British Post Office from 1636 to the present day. Through postal innovation, Britain has become a world leader in the sphere of communications. From 1635 (the material in The Royal Mail Archive dates from 1636) to the present day, Post Office administration has dealt with essential aspects of everyday life, from broadcasting to banking. Prior to the Second World War, the Post Office was the largest employer nationally, and today continues to reach the lives of every member of the population. All aspects of this organisation's unique history, from

employment records to stamp artwork, are held within The Royal Mail Archive. The records are public records, accessible to the public. The archive continues to accrue the records of Royal Mail.

The Royal Mail Archive is a vital resource for education, research and in particular for colleagues within the social history community, and through increased outreach and press and marketing activity it is striving towards increasing access to the collection.

Benefits

We felt that Designation would help us increase access, through recognition of the importance of the records, which we could then use to promote the archive to new audiences, such as further education, while at the same time using it to reassure our key stakeholder, Royal Mail, and we believe that having a Designated collection would give more sway in our negotiations with Royal Mail when it came to their using The Royal Mail Archive as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility programme. This would bring many benefits to the archive, with more promotion, and reaching new audiences that we could not have reached before using the Royal Mail network - both employees, and parts of the community that we have not yet managed to tap into. We believe it will help us show Royal Mail employees the importance of the collection, and encourage them to take our records management and operational selection policies seriously, thus improving archive accrual.

We hope that Designation will give peer recognition and greater credence to the Trust solution that we chose to manage The Royal Mail Archive, and will encourage other archives to look for similarly forward-thinking solutions to problems that face most business and small archives.

Vicky Parkinson, Head of Archives, The British Postal Museum & Archive

Business Archives Council Awards Wadsworth Prize In Business History For 2004

The Council awarded its annual Wadsworth Prize in Business History for 2004 on 8th November 2005. The winner was Professor Robin Pearson of the University of Hull, for his book *Insuring the Industrial Revolution. Fire Insurance in Great Britain, 1700-1850* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

The prize, which is awarded annually for the best book in British business history, was presented to Robin Pearson at Peter Jones, Sloane Square, by Ian Hay Davison, one of the judges. The other judges were Roy Edwards (University of Southampton) and John Orbell. 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.

Enquiries about the Wadsworth Prize should be directed to Peter Scott, p.m.scott@reading.ac.uk.



Left to right: BAC President Sam Twining, one of the Wadsworth Prize judges, Ian Hay Davison, Prize Winner Robin Pearson and, BAC Chairman Terry Gourvish.

BAC Welcomes New Member DeepStore

A Records Management Facility Like Nothing on Earth

The Council welcomes DeepStore as a new member and thanks Katie Moffat for the following:

In a corner of Cheshire hidden from view is a records management company unique in the UK. DeepStore is located 150 meters below the Cheshire countryside. The underground environment is ideal for storing documents and sensitive or fragile materials due to its naturally stable atmospheric conditions: there is no UV light, no risk of flooding or lightning strikes, no moisture and no pests or vermin. The temperature remains at a constant 14°C all year round together with a relative humidity band of 60-70%. This is a natural atmospheric state and cannot be affected by power cuts or air conditioning breakdowns.

DeepStore also has the advantage of being incredibly secure. The nature of its physical location underground means it is not easily identifiable to potential intruders. To enter the facility visitors have to go through two different security checks, one to access the mine and another to enter the DeepStore area. Some clients also have separate secure rooms as a further level of protection.

Steve Holmes is the General Manager of DeepStore and he is very aware of the natural advantage the location affords them, "We all feel privileged to work in such a unique environment and there is no doubt that we have a number of benefits purely by virtue of our location and the atmosphere.

DeepStore works with private businesses and public organisations and offers both long-term and 'active' storage for which they provide a next day retrieval and delivery service across the UK. Clients include The National Archives, the Bodleian Library, police forces, hospitals and many large and small private businesses. Contact: Katie Moffat +44 (0) 161 947 9579



Business Archives in Vogue

In the February 2006 edition of Vogue magazine there is a feature on Christopher Bailey the creative director of fashion house Burberry. In the article Bailey describes how when he first arrived in post as Creative Director he went directly to the Burberry company archive, stating "Without knowing where you've come from, you don't know where you are going to". Burberry dates back to 1856 so celebrates its 150th anniversary this year. The 'archive-inspired' collection is a huge success –'By digging deep into the house's archives, the designer brought the focus back to tailoring and English eveningwear...' (www.burberry.com). The magazine article is illustrated lavishly with inspirational images of designs drawn from across the firm's history and is well worth a read for anyone interested in the contribution archives may be able to make to the current commercial success of a business.

How times have changed...

In response to an article in the recent Business Archives. Principle and Practice, BAC member Sue Garland writes, "I enjoyed reading Valerie Johnson's article about women in BP's history in the November issue of Business Archives. I recall that there is some similar material in the Guinness archives now held by my colleagues at Diageo's Archive in Scotland. I smiled at the sentence "there are now some women taking husbands or partners abroad". I was reading the article on a flight to the USA because Diageo will shortly be seconding me to their North America company for 18 months to help develop their records management programme. Naturally I'm taking my husband!"



An Update on the Cable & Wireless Archive and Historical Collections

Mary Godwin, Cable & Wireless Curator and Director of the PK Trust

Since 1999 the Cable & Wireless archive has been based at Porthcurno, near Land's End in Cornwall. Formerly housed at company headquarters in Theobalds Road, Holborn, the move was inspired by the redevelopment of the Company's historic site at Porthcurno.

In June 1870, the British end of the first undersea telegraph cable to Bombay was landed at Porthcurno. This marked the beginning of the valley's distinguished role in the history of international communications and the birth of a pioneering British Empire telegraph network based in West Cornwall. For 123 years, from 1870 to 1993, Porthcurno remained as a working telegraph station and training centre for engineers. From this tiny Cornish cove, telegraph cables stretched out under the sea, linking Britain with the rest of the world. By the early years of the 20th century the village was home to the world's largest telegraph station.

During the Second World War the telegraph station was moved into an underground building to protect it from enemy bombing. Today these 'tunnels' house Porthcurno Telegraph Museum. The museum houses a unique collection of historic telegraph equipment which was originally collected by a senior member of staff at the Porthcurno Engineering college, David Kendall-Carpenter, OBE (1927-1990). In the 1960s he could see the 'end of an era' for the old telegraph cables and the equipment that worked them. His foresight led to the saving of this internationally important collection of polished brass and mahogany instruments. A private museum was established and maintained on a voluntary basis by staff until the college closure in 1993. The closure created a significant problem as it was the Company's intention to sell off the whole site, with the effect that the museum would have to be found a new home. However, circumstances intervened; the site failed to sell and alternative options were investigated. The happy outcome was a decision to focus on the heritage of the site and develop the museum. To achieve this, a charitable trust, the Cable & Wireless Porthcurno and Collections Trust (PK Trust), was established. All the historic assets at Porthcurno, including buildings, land and the large collection of telegraph apparatus, were transferred to the Trust. A grant of £500,000 was secured from The Heritage Lottery Fund and was matched by Cable & Wireless and other European funds. The museum opened to the public in May 1998.

Since that time the PK Trust has developed its work significantly. The most important development came in 1999 when it was decided to move the Company's historic archive from London to Porthcurno, to be managed by the PK Trust and operated with the museum as a single centre for study and education. A five-year funding agreement was made with Cable & Wireless and this has now been renewed for another 5 years. The agreement funds the staffing and administration of the archive, along with all aspects of its operation and care. Having all the Company's historic collections on one site enables the Trust to take an integrated approach to its work, very much in line with current thinking demonstrated by the

formation of the Museums Libraries and Archives Council (formerly Museum and Galleries Commission) and integrated regional bodies (in our case SWMLAC). We have already applied successfully for a number of grants, which involve both our museum and archive collections.

With regard to access, having the archive fully integrated with the museum enables us to offer wide access to people of all ages. As an educational charity, the PK Trust is committed to making its contribution to enthusing young people about science and now has a lively education programme with a full time education officer. Workshops for visiting groups and for delivery through our outreach programme have been created involving both museum and archive material. These include: 'Electrifying Victorians', 'Tunnels and Telegrams', 'Light Fantastic' and 'Sound Science'. In 2006 the Trust will be participating in the 'Brunel 200' celebrations and has HLF funding to develop activities based on archive material about Brunel's enormous ship, the Great Eastern.

The archive has also given us opportunities to become more closely involved with the local community. The museum's local history unit was established in 2002 with the help of funding from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. Documents and photographs from the local community were collected and conserved and in November 2004 a major book on the history of the Parish of St Levan was published. Volunteers have played a major part in all this work and have been involved with documentation, digitisation, basic conservation and extensive research. We continue to work with the community to gather new archive material and the Trust has recently been awarded a grant of £39,000 by the Heritage Lottery Fund to extend its oral history and image digitisation work and make a film about the telegraph station and parish.

Ours is the second most westerly museum and archive on mainland Britain (nearby Geevor Tin Mine is about a mile further west) but it is well worth the journey. Porthcurno has one of the finest beaches in Cornwall which is just five minutes stroll from the museum and the PK Trust even has its own holiday flats. If you would like to visit, please contact Mary Godwin at mary.godwin@cw.com



Cables. Reproduced with permission of Cable & Wireless Archive and Historical Collections

The British Records Association

Archivist for Hire Scheme

The British Records Association is now making its archivist available for hire. This has proved extremely popular with many jobs coming from across the archive sector. Projects have included the Roundhouse Archives, Gieves and Hawkes, the Eyre Estate, the London Civic Forum, the Royal College of Surgeons and, most recently, Sir Roy Strong.

Two types of service are offered:

- The first service provides a report and action plan for organisations wishing to establish, or re-establish, their own archive. The report contains information for the development and maintenance of an archive.
- The Association also offers its archivist to provide additional professional support to established repositories. This includes sorting, box listing, cataloguing and other archive services.

Further detail and fee information is available from Celia Pilkington at Finsbury Library, 245 St John Street, London EC1V 4NB. Tel. +44 (0) 207 833 0428 or email britrecassoc@hotmail.com.



BAC Responds to Consultation Papers

On behalf of members The Council has responded to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport's 'Inquiry into Protecting, Preserving and Making Accessible our Nation's Heritage' and to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Consultation on its strategic plan 2008-2013. For further information contact Sara Kinsey at sara@kkinsey.fsnet.co.uk.

STOP PRESS

A Business Records Development Officer has been appointed. More details will appear on www.businessarchivescouncil.com and in the Spring edition of the Newsletter.

Who Do You Think You Are?

Thomas Cook archivist and BAC member Paul Smith recently appeared on the BBC's hugely popular series 'Who Do You Think You Are?'. The episode featured the genealogical investigations of actress Sheila Hancock whose grandfather worked for Thomas Cook. Paul spent more than half an hour (though screen time was somewhat briefer) explaining to the actress exactly what her grandfather's role had been and then asked her to wear white cotton gloves to examine the firm's 19th century agreements book. Paul reckons this is the first pair of cotton gloves to appear in the series so far!

Mind The Gap

The Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC) has published "Mind the Gap. Assessing digital preservation needs in the UK." The report is the culmination of almost three years of data gathering and preparation and is available in .pdf format on www.dpconline.org. The report reveals that less than 20% of UK organisations surveyed have a strategy in place to deal with the risk of loss or degradation to their digital resources - despite a very high level of awareness of the risks and potential economic penalties. With the release of the report DPC, aims to help government, public institutions and private companies turn high awareness into concerted action.

The figures revealed by the survey are startling. The loss of digital data is commonplace - with more than 70% of respondents saying data had been lost in their organisation. Despite this awareness of the potential economic and cultural risks is high, with 87% recognising that corporate memory or key cultural material could be lost and some 60% saying that their organisation could lose out financially. Only 18% of organisations surveyed have a digital preservation strategy in place.



The Editor of this Newsletter is Jane Waller. The next issue will appear in Spring 2006. Prospective copy should be sent to Jane Waller at ING Bank NV, 60 London Wall, London EC2M 5TQ; jane.waller@uk.ing.com.

The Hon Secretary is Karen Sampson, Archivist, Lloyds TSB Group Archives, 25 Gresham St, London EC2V 7HN (tel: +44 (0) 207 860 5945);

Karen.Sampson@LloydsTSB.co.uk.

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