

BAC Conference

Organisers Lorna Williams and Judith Wright, right, looking justifiably pleased towards the end of the successful BAC Conference held at Unilever. Lorna and Judith have arranged the last two events: Judith is continuing again next year, while Lorna will be taking over the administration of the BAC Cataloguing Grant Award. Thanks to them both.



Architecture, Building and Construction Records Survey

Alex Ritchie.

Funded to run for one year, the project is a partnership between the Business Archives Council and The National Archives.

The building and construction sector makes a major contribution to the British economy, yet its history and archives are not well known or understood. There is a lack of information in the National Register of Archives (NRA) concerning the records produced by the best-known firms in the sector. The project has been set up to fill this gap in knowledge. The focus will be on companies whose records have neither been surveyed nor deposited, to establish the nature and location of the records they hold. The information gathered will be added to the NRA.

The project will support the aims of the National Strategy for Business Archives

(England and Wales). As well as improving awareness of architecture, building and construction records through the NRA, the project will promote best practice in record keeping to ensure the safety of collections at a time of real threat to all categories of business archives. The survey is now underway, after the project officer started work in September 2011.

While the survey is limited to England and Wales, there is scope for cooperation with Scottish partners to extend the project. If you would like further information please contact Annabel Peacock in Archives Sector Development.

asd@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk;
telephone +44 20 8392 5270.

Alex Ritchie, Business Archives Advice Manager, Archives Sector Development, The National Archives.

JCB Digs Up Its Own History

The letters JCB are a generally accepted term for any kind of digger or excavator. It is shorthand for the company (JC Bamford Excavators Ltd) as well as its products. The success of the company and the brand is now being celebrated in a £5m permanent exhibition – The Story of JCB.

This tells how a small business in Rocester, founded in 1945 by Joseph Cyril Bamford and incorporated as a company in 1956, grew to become a world leader and a household name. The exhibition also looks at the pre-history of the enterprise, which dates back to the 1820s, when the Bamford family were blacksmiths in Uttoxeter.

Read more by following the links:

www.jcb.com/promotions/storyofjcb/storyofjcb.aspx

www.thisisstaffordshire.co.uk/JCB-digs-history-new-pound-5m-exhibition/story-13655800-detail/story.html

Two Delegates Review the 2011 BAC Conference: Business Archives Sans Frontières

Eve Read.

Thursday 10 November proved to be a most interesting and thought-provoking day. Following the AGM the opening talk was presented by Jeannette Strickland and provided an excellent introduction to the Unilever archives operation. Jeanette emphasised that the archives were first and foremost working collections, serving the needs of the company but open to the public by appointment. This was followed by Henning Morgen of the A.P. Moller-Maersk Group who had flown in from Denmark to discuss 'Local records in a corporate retention schedule are they in or out?' Henning provided some fascinating insights into the challenges of operating a company archive, which is also quite legitimately considered to be the family (and therefore largely private) archive by the 98-year-old son of the founder of the company.

After lunch Tina Staples, Head of HSBC Group Archives, put forward a timely and realistic assessment of the skills needed to successfully operate a global archive in today's challenging corporate environment. Tina stressed in particular the vital importance of clearly demonstrating the added value of the archive to key company executives. Richard Wiltshire then supplied a local authority viewpoint with 'Copy to London: exploring international business archives at London Metropolitan Archives', focussing on the 'Windows on the World' partnership with Standard Chartered Bank to catalogue the latter's extensive archive held by London Metropolitan Archives. The final presentation by Professor Michael Rowlinson ('Corporate history: whether to make or buy?') provided a refreshingly quirky researcher's perspective with regard to exploring the creation and perpetuation of 'official' company histories.

From my perspective the outstanding feature of the day was the well-judged balance between the traditional conference lecture format and the opportunity to meet and network with colleagues in the same field. The latter was enhanced by two 'breakout' sessions, where groups of delegates were challenged to match anonymous international documents with an archive represented by the day's speakers. The afternoon 'breakout' also generated some lively debate by confronting attendees with dilemmas such as 'if no one is willing to take responsibility for an archive do you destroy it?'

Eve Read, JWT Project Archivist, The History of Advertising Trust Archive, Raveningham, Norfolk.
www.hatads.org.uk

The JWT Project is funded by the National Cataloguing Grants Programme, administered by the National Archives. The project purpose is to catalogue the extremely rare and significant collection of client account files created by the London Office of the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency between 1920 and the 1970s.

Jenny Rourke.

I was lucky enough to attend the Business Archives Council's annual conference 2011 with the help of a bursary from the BAC for which I am very grateful. This was my first year in attendance and, indeed, is my first as a business archivist. I found the opportunity to meet with other professionals from the field incredibly valuable.

The conference was held at the amazing Unilever building and in the first session it was great to hear Jeannette Strickland talk about the Unilever archive and records management activity; both Jeanette and later Tina Stables of HSBC were inspirational in what they have achieved in their respective companies. I came away from their sessions with a sense of the important role an archive can play within a company on an international scale and the reaffirmed belief that archives are precious resources – a unique way of interpreting and preserving a business's past – that should be treasured.

I also relished the opportunity to talk with other professionals and to share ideas (and the odd grumble). I, and I'm sure many other business archivists are in the same situation, work alone as an archivist in the UK for my company and I really enjoyed 'talking shop' with others and also used the break-out sessions (and coffee breaks) as an opportunity to gather information, hints and tips. A session I would like to see next year is one that focuses on the idea of the business archivist as a lone voice in an organisation; I would have appreciated the chance to discuss ways to 'self-promote' the archive within a business and to discover ways in which a business case for the archive can be made, especially in this time of financial constraint.

Nevertheless, I came away from the whole day feeling rejuvenated and sincerely hope that what I've learnt and heard about will be used in my day-to-day working life. Thank you again to the BAC for granting the bursary and for organising a wonderful event. I shall look forward to next year.

Jenny Rourke, Archivist, Cartier Ltd.



*Delegates (and food) at
the BAC Conference*

Chairman's Statement to the 2011 AGM

Review of Year 2010-11

The Business Archives Council and the Strategy for Business Archives

Your Council continues to play its part in promoting the National Strategy for Business Archives, in association with The National Archives, ARA, and others. One of our principal responsibilities was to establish and manage the strategy website, managing businessarchives.co.uk. New case studies were added, and an updated list of British companies which invest in in-house archives was produced. The Council continues to actively support the work of the 'crisis response team' set up to act more quickly whenever collections are threatened. This has proved to be an effective way of responding to archival problems created by merger or receivership.

One of our innovative contributions to the strategy has been to initiate a cataloguing grant for business collections. The applications were so good that the judges decided to make two awards of £2,000 each: to the Dorset History Centre (Cousens of Weymouth); and to the National Railway Museum (railway engineering and small business collections). Thanks to Mike Anson, Alison Turton and Richard Wiltshire for acting as judges.

We have also supported a new business history online venture called *Business History Explorer: a Bibliography of the History of UK Businesses and Industries*, compiled by John Orbell and Richard Storey, with the assistance of Francis Goodall. This is the result of many years of complex and dedicated work by the authors. Our support has been by means of funding the development of an online application to hold the data, and by agreeing to its publication on the Council's website. A hard copy summary of the bibliography, arranged by business name in alphabetical order, will also be published. The launch will be next spring, and access will be available by subscription, with a 12-month offer of a reduced rate for BAC members.

Another new initiative under the Strategy was to survey archives in something of a problem area for historians – Architecture, Building and Construction. This survey, mounted in collaboration with The National Archives and concerned with archives in England & Wales, is now up and running, and will be fully reported on next year.

Publications

Our regular issues of *Business Archives* were published: Volume 100 (Principles and Practice) and Volume 101 (Sources and History). Our milestone number 100, edited by Mariam Yamin, began with Mike Anson's reflective piece on 'History in firms' documents: 75 years of the Business Archives Council'. The number also included articles by Susan Gentles on 'The Pensions Archive Trust and London Metropolitan Archives'; by Liza Giffen and Kirsty Shields on the 'Going back to our roots: the partnership between the Marks and Spencer Archive and the University of Leeds'; by Katey Logan and Charlotte McCarthy on 'Commercial impact of an archive

exhibition'; and by Alex Ritchie on 'Taking forward the National Strategy for Business Archives'. This journal also included the select bibliography of new publications in 2009, compiled and edited by Emma Stagg, and book reviews, edited by Moira Lovegrove. Number 101, edited by Mike Anson, began with an article by Michele Blagg on 'The Royal Mint Refinery: a business adapting to change, 1852-1968'. This emerged from the first collaborative doctoral award made by the AHRC, and the programme was the subject of two further articles, by Melanie Aspey on 'The collaborative doctoral award and the archivist', and by Michael Kandiah on 'The collaborative doctoral award and CCBH@King's'. There were four further contributions in the number: by Lucy Newton and Francesca Carnevali on 'Researching consumer durables in the nineteenth century: the case of the piano'; by Geoffrey Owen on 'The Courtaulds story: how cellulosic fibres made the company's fortune, then contributed to its demise'; by Kevin Tennent on 'Business archives and changes in popular music distribution and retailing in the United Kingdom, 1950-2000'; and a source note by Claire-Amandine Soulié entitled "'We will become known": James de Rothschild and the founding of De Rothschild Frères: sources in London and France'. This journal also included the 2009 edition of the bibliography in business history, compiled by Richard Hawkins; the list of business records deposited, compiled by Mike Anson; and book reviews edited by Roy Edwards. We are extremely grateful to all the editors and contributors for their work.

Once again, four editions of the Newsletter were produced by Alan Gall. The website was further enhanced thanks to the work of Claire Twinn and the oversight of Moira Lovegrove. My thanks to Moira, Alan and Claire.

AGM and Conference 2010

The AGM and Annual Conference were held on 11 November 2010 at the Freemasons' Hall, London. The theme was 'Business archives: the unexpected!' Here the focus was on unusual collections and their potential. The delegates were welcomed by Susan Snell, from the Library and Museum of Freemasonry. Linda Ellis of Renaissance in the Regions spoke on the contribution of West Midlands' museums to the business archives project entitled 'Documenting the Workshop of the World'. Andrew Newnham, from Nottingham City Museums and Galleries, spoke on the John Player archives, and Kevin Matthias, of Denbighshire Record Office, talked about the papers of the Llangollen International Eisteddfod. Finally, Sarah Chubb, from the Sandwell Community History and Archives Service, gave a paper on the historical potential of the records of the glassmakers Chance Brothers. The conference opened and closed with lively workshop sessions, chaired by Mike Anson. These will continue to be a feature of our conferences. Susan Snell also organised a tour of Freemasons' Hall. Our thanks to Susan, to all the contributors, and to Lorna Williams and Judith Wright, who acted as conference organisers.

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BAC Wadsworth Prize for Business History 2009

The Council's Wadsworth Prize was awarded to Peter M. Jones of Birmingham University for his book *Industrial Enlightenment: Science, Technology and Culture in Birmingham and the West Midlands, 1760-1820* (published by Manchester University Press). The prize was presented by our President, Sir Geoffrey Owen, at a reception held at Freemasons' Hall immediately after the conference. Thanks to our hosts for their generous hospitality, and to our independent judges - Martin Vander Weyer, Professor Michael Moss, and Dr Geoffrey Tweedale - for their hard work.

Bursary 2010

The winner this year was Dr Jonathan Silberstein-Loeb, from the Said Business School of Oxford University, for his research on 'Puff pieces and circulation scams: how British newspapers and advertisers learned to co-operate in the 20th century'. The award was announced at the annual conference of the Association of Business Historians in York University in July 2010.

My thanks to Roy Edwards for organising the Wadsworth Prize and Peter Scott for organising the bursary judging.

Other Activities

Our contribution to training continued in 2010-11. We organised a well-attended session of 'Meet the Archivists' at HSBC in November 2010, hosted by Tina Staples, and ran a business archives training day at The Baring Archive in January 2011, which was attended by over 70 students from University College London, Aberystwyth and Dundee. I should like to thank all concerned for making these events such a success.

On a sad note, I feel I should refer to the fact that we have recently lost two major contributors to our work who both died in September: Professor Leslie Pressnell, who supported our work, in particular, in the field of banking archives; and Sharon Quinn-Robinson, who was our office manager from 1990 to 2003, and maintained our activities at a high level during this period. Fuller appreciations will appear in our forthcoming publications.

Vote of Thanks

Our thanks to Jeannette Strickland and Unilever for generously hosting both the AGM and the Conference, and later on in the day, the BAC Wadsworth Prize reception.

Terry Gourvish, BAC Chairman.

A History of the Royal Mail

Louise Todd.

The British Postal Museum and Archive (BPMA) is pleased to announce the publication of *Masters of the Post: The Authorized History of Royal Mail* by Duncan Campbell-Smith (Allen Lane Hardback, £30.00). It is the first complete history of the Royal Mail up to the present day, based on its comprehensive archives, and includes the first detailed account of the past half-century of Britain's postal history, from the post-war era to the Postal Act of 2011, made possible by privileged access to confidential records.

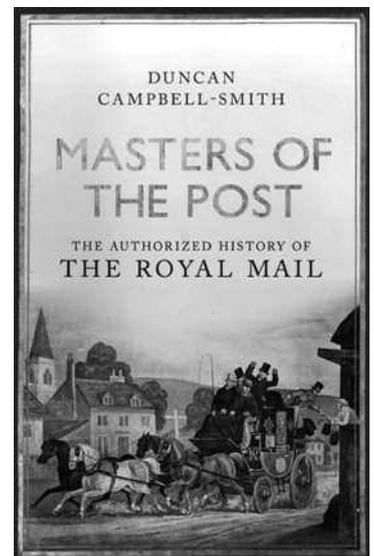
The origins of the Royal Mail go back to the early years of the Tudor monarchy: Brian Tuke, a former King's Bailiff in Sandwich, was acknowledged as the first 'Master of the Posts' by Cardinal Wolsey in 1512, and went on to build up a network of 'postmasters' across England for Henry VIII. Over the following five hundred years the Royal Mail expanded to an unimaginable degree to become the largest employer in the country, and the face of the British state for most people in their everyday lives. But it also faced the demands of an increasingly commercial marketplace. Ever since the election of Margaret Thatcher in 1979, the possibility of privatising the Royal Mail has prompted passionate arguments - and has added immeasurably to the difficulties of running it.

In charting the whole of this extraordinary story, Duncan Campbell-Smith recounts a series of remarkable tales, including how postal engineers built the first programmable computer for the wartime code-breakers of Bletchley Park and how the Royal Mail managed to continue delivering post to the front lines during two world wars, but also how an opportunity to prevent the Great Train Robbery of 1963 was missed. He brings to life

many of the dominant personalities in the Royal Mail's history - from Rowland Hill, who imposed a uniform penny post and set the great Victorian expansion on its way, to Tony Benn who championed the modernisation of the service in the 1960s and Tom Jackson who led the postal workers' biggest union through fifteen frequently stormy years up to 1982. Events since the failed privatisation of 1994 are narrated in colourful detail.

A video clip of the author talking about the book can be found at: www.youtube.com/user/PostalHeritage

Louise Todd, Archivist, The British Postal Museum and Archive.



The project also involves working with academic staff at Swansea University to explore the use of business archives for teaching and research, the results of which will inform web pages on Archifau Cymru Archives Wales. Business archives have been added to sessions in both history and health science modules. In light of the increased focus on student employability at universities, we are running a pilot employability project which uses business collections as its subject material.

There will be a one-day workshop in January, *The Bottom*

Line: The Value of Business Archives for Research. The day will consist of speakers who have experience of using business archives, a panel session and an opportunity to meet archivists from across Wales who will be showcasing their business collections over lunch.

For more information see the project blog at <http://walespoweringtheworld.blogspot.com/> or contact s.capner@swansea.ac.uk

Stacy Capner, Project Archivist 'Profiting from Powering the World', Richard Burton Archives, Swansea University.

Business History Explorer: A Big Step Forward in Finding Historical Information About a Business

BAC is collaborating with John Orbell and Richard Storey in making Business History Explorer (BHE), a new online finding aid, available to users.

BHE is a bibliography of business and industrial history and builds on the work in the mid-1980s of Francis Goodall, published as *Bibliography of British Business Histories*. Francis is an enthusiastic supporter of the new project.

BHE contains all that you would expect in a regular bibliography plus a good deal more. By providing business name, business functions and geographical locations it enables publications relating to a particular business, or area (city/town, local authority and country) or sector to be found. Multiple searches across these fields are possible. To a more limited extent, searching by subject is also possible.

In order to put flesh on these bones, a profile of each business is given. This generally includes such details as dates of formation and closure, names of founders, product development, etc. These profiles are short and to the point but they do give the user a helpful steer in moving forward.

In its first phase the bibliography contains monographs,

theses and unpublished manuscripts. These total around 22,000 items many of which are privately printed or otherwise only locally circulated; many therefore have escaped inclusion in the major online bibliographies or catalogues. All being well, subsequent phases will include periodical articles (on a selected basis), house journals and the trade press.

A hard copy summary will also be published giving broad publication details arranged by name of business/industry.

BAC is an enthusiastic supporter of this project. It is funding development of the online application and is very pleased to make its website available as BHE's platform

Publication is due for the spring. In order to keep administration to a bare minimum, an initial subscription will give access for a three year period. BAC members will benefit from greatly reduced subscription rates if they take out a subscription within twelve months from date of publication.

If you would like to register an interest in receiving further details about BHE nearer the time of its publication, please email john@gongster.plus.com.

International Business Archives Symposium in Tokyo

The Tokyo report that appeared in the Summer 2011 issue of this newsletter should have given full contact details for the author. These are:

Yuko Matsuzaki, PhD
Business Archives Specialist
Resource Center for the History of Entrepreneurship
Shibusawa Ei'ichi Memorial Foundation
2-16-1 Nishigahara
Kita-ku, Tokyo 114-0024
Japan

Email: matsuzaki@shibusawa.or.jp

Web site: <http://www.shibusawa.or.jp/english/index.html>

TEL 81-3-3910-0029

FAX 81-3-3910-0085

Omission

Unfortunately Patrick Russell's email was omitted from his article on industrial and corporate film contained in the November 2011 edition of Business Archives. He can be contacted at Patrick.Russell@bfi.org.uk

The editor of this newsletter is Alan Gall. The next issue will appear in Spring 2012. 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 and Museums, 2nd Floor, 48 Chiswell Street, London EC1Y 4XX. Tel: +44 (0)20 7860 5762 Fax: 020 7522 4337 email: karen.sampson@lloydsbanking.com
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