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Royal Armouries
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hard work and
cooperation

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2019



Crowne Plaza, Chester
2nd – 4th September

Conference
2020

We ♥ Records



Welcome...

As mentioned in the October ARA Today, the resignation of Jon Elliott, who was due to edit this Conference edition, has delayed the publication of the November 2019 issue of ARC Magazine. ARA Conference Chair, Mike Anson, has stepped-in to help, but circumstances mean that this is necessarily a rather thin edition, and we also apologise for the lateness in it landing on your virtual doormats.



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Front cover: J. Willgoose, Esq of Public Service Broadcasting giving his Keynote speech at this year's Conference.

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Opening lines



Reflecting on the Conference in the bar on the Friday evening after it had all finished, I was more than satisfied with #ARA2019. Glasgow was always going to be a tough act to follow, but in certain ways Leeds was better. Some of these might not have even been noticed by those attending because they related to the behind the scenes organisation or subtle changes to the programme structure. Other changes were more obvious, for example our pre-conference communications with delegates were much improved. Feedback from those I spoke to at the Conference was encouraging and there was plenty of inspiring and stimulating debate. So I felt that my beer was well-earned!

Then the events on social media on that weekend... I do keep reminding myself that despite the Twitter storm, Leeds was a good conference, but of course we have all been thinking about what we can do to address the serious questions around diversity facing our sector. The ARA Conference Committee is actively exploring ways in which we might attract a greater range of both speakers and delegates to Chester (and beyond). One thing that we will definitely be doing is to appoint someone onto the Conference Committee with specific responsibility for diversity – watch-out for news of this.

What about #ARA2020 in Chester? In what was a first, Karl Magee was able to announce the theme of the following year's conference during the wrap-up in Leeds. The call for papers on the theme 'We Love Records' is now open and you can find further details in this issue. I think that the sub-themes of Diversity, Advocacy and Sustainability really address some keys issues facing our sector, so I would encourage you all to think about making a submission. If you have any ideas, questions or suggestions then please get in touch with me.

Mike Anson

Chair, ARA Conference Committee

Professional development news

Career reflections.

A series of articles where we invite leaders and managers from the record-keeping sector to reflect on their careers so far. In this edition **Chris Sheridan** chats to **Gillian Cooke** RMARA Group Archivist at Cambridge Assessment.



What was your first job in this sector?

Archives Assistant, Humberside County Record Office, 1989 - 1990

At what age did you decide you wanted to work in the archives and record-keeping industry?

When researching my undergraduate History dissertation, aged about 20

Did your career take the path you had envisaged when you first started out in the industry?

Pretty much, yes. I started out in local authority archives services but always wanted to move to the education sector. I worked in two county record offices and one borough local studies library as the lone archivist amongst librarians. The library helped me to understand library philosophy and practice and is where I learnt about good management and mentoring. Moving to an examination board has provided many more opportunities than I envisaged. As Cambridge Assessment has grown, so I have been able to develop a team, with trainee archivists keeping us all in check. The untapped collections have proved unexpectedly diverse and my place on the Senior Management Team of the Research department gives the archives a strong voice.

What has been the highlight of your career?

Probably co-ordinating the publication of a history of the organisation for our 150th anniversary (Examining the World, edited by Sandra Raban, in 2008). I ended up having to write one of the chapters as well as supporting the authors and there was a buzz about the archives for months as documents were uncovered for a new and sustained audience.



How much have the early years in your career influenced how you work today?

I was very aware of a hierarchy of archive work and have tried not to replicate this pattern as my career progressed – why, for example, should one person in a team do all the document production work? So, in a bid for a little more diversity and equality, we all do some document production and reading room duties. It helps avert hubris and keeps the service running when staffing is short!

What is the most important lesson you've learned over your career?

There are many ways to be advocates for the archives and the collections we manage – I have found success in unlikely collaborations, unpromising displays and unorthodox pieces of writing. I've also learnt that sometimes things just don't work well and you have to try a different approach. Trying out new tactics can be scary, but if you are curious and enthusiastic, there are always people who are willing to help.

What is the best piece of career advice you have ever been given?

In recruitment and delegation, don't focus too heavily on skills. If someone is enthusiastic and has the right mindset, they will acquire the necessary skills.

If you could turn back time and give your younger self career guidance, what advice would you give?

Not to take setbacks too seriously – you can only do your best and sometimes external forces seem to win the day - take a longer view!

How important a role has continuing professional development played throughout your career?

For me, it's like a clock ticking in the background, I rarely notice it but sometimes it chimes and I'm aware that I need to take action to embrace something new.

RMARA is a professional qualification that recognises achievement. How important has this been to you in your career?

I have spent most of my professional career working for managers who are not from the sector and this qualification has undoubtedly given me a stronger professional voice.

The Professional Development Programme is the next stage in developing professional standards across the sector. It builds on the success of the Registration Scheme. How important are professional standards to the archives and records management sector? What do you think are the key benefits?

If we are to advocate effectively for archives and archive management then we have to work with, and for, people who have no background in the sector. Our continuing professional development must therefore be easy to relate to and supported by high profile and respected organisations.

Collecting matters

Melinda Haunton Programme Manager at The National Archives (UK) at the ARA Conference 2019.

I came to the ARA Conference 2019 prepared to get out of my comfort zone. At previous conferences, I had a topic closely tied to my day job. But the 2019 call for papers gave me scope to share insights from my RLUK-The National Archives professional fellowship research on what archives can learn from public history.

I wanted to challenge the conference to think of archives' outreach work as part of the public history spectrum, and stimulate us to examine what picture of the past we are presenting. I argued that we should see public history within our professional skillset, particularly as archives promote collections to wider audiences and with varied approaches.

I have had a great response, receiving constructive feedback on the conference presentation and draft principles for public history, which I released for comment after speaking. One original principle said, "In undertaking public history with archives and special collections, practitioners should strive to be self-aware of their own biases and internal assumptions." The conference and feedback encouraged me to be tougher: we must do this. We won't always get it right, but we have to try.

These principles can only work if they both support and challenge archives. I am using the feedback I received to produce a second draft, which may be online by the time this piece appears. I will welcome more comments on the second iteration, and keep working to help archives deliver ethical, effective insights into collections about the past.

ARA Training

Adrian Steel, ARA Board, Training, discusses ARA's wide range of training opportunities, recognising there is a huge variety of training needs across the recordkeeping profession

The majority of our training is provided via Nations, Regions, Groups and Sections, who organise events throughout the year to meet the demand they identify, on their own or in partnership with others. Members of ARA have access to all training provided in this way, whether or not you belong to the organising group itself. Devolving training organisation in this way allows member needs to be identified and met quickly on the ground, supports the provision of training to meet the different specialist needs many of our members have, as well as creating the opportunity for experimentation and innovation in delivery. This training is usually promoted and booked via the ARA website www.archives.org.uk/events/display.html or promoted by email to members or via the Archives-NRA or other mailing lists. Training can be delivered as part of a group business meeting or AGM. Some events book up quickly so it is worth watching your inbox for the latest opportunities.

In recent months events have been organised across the UK and Ireland covering subjects such as:

- Funding 'dos and don'ts'
- Tacketed stationery binding
- Copyright
- Digital Archives
- Volunteer Management
- Diversity and Inclusion
- CPD
- GDPR
- Museums Collections Management
- Social Media

While the majority of ARA training is still delivered in person, organisers are increasingly using online or phone delivery methods to maximise accessibility.

ARA also has a training business plan for 2019-20, which aims to support delivery of some further training organised centrally. These events are usually ones where

Adrian Steel our board member for training.



we are working with a partner (for example, a body who might fund us to organise particular sorts of training), where we are piloting something new in response to member demand, or where we are addressing a centrally-identified need. Key priorities for 2019-20 come from the results of the recent member survey, which asked questions about training requirements. They include: revisiting collections, archive freelancing, leadership, social media and GDPR. We are hoping to try some new things – for example, we'll soon be announcing a pilot of freelancing training, watch this space.

Where there is member interest in a particular topic but we aren't currently in a position to organise training, we can often signpost other resources, including those available online. For example, the recent member survey showed that some Members would like more support on Fundraising. A recent Lottery-funded project delivered in partnership across the UK has left a legacy of valuable resources to support the development of fundraising capacity online here: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/projects-and-programmes/fundraising-for-archives - the content provided here is designed to help at different stages of the fundraising process, and there are even options for online training for all to access. Similarly, the highly-regarded Emotional Support training provided in recent years has left an online legacy here: www.archives.org.uk/what-we-do/emotional-support-guides.html and this is available to those who need it. Some Members have also recently taken an online course on Future Learn, on Understanding Diversity and Inclusion, which has received positive feedback: www.futurelearn.com/courses/diversity-inclusion-awareness. ARA's board will be taking this course together early in 2020.

ARA central training is generally organised on a break-even basis, with a need to cover its costs in order to help keep member subscriptions down. Sometimes external funding or the generosity of volunteer trainers or venues given for free means we can reduce or even eliminate charges, on other occasions we may need to make a charge to attendees or participants to ensure our trainers can be paid for their work, and venues obtained for holding training events.

All ARA Training, whether centrally or locally organised, free of charge or paid-for, relies on the goodwill and time of volunteers to put on. We are extremely grateful to all who take on Training Officer roles across ARA. Our Training Officers Network Group, which exists to share information and offer support to Training Officers, is a great forum to exchange ideas and solve problems relating to training delivery. Next year we are meeting three times at UK/Ireland venues. We also really appreciate the expertise of Lorraine Logan at the ARA office who helps out whenever needed.

Please feel free to contact me with any suggestions or comments about ARA training (adrian.steel@archives.org.uk), or contact the Training Officer for your nation, region, section or group... and if you feel inspired to help provide training to our members, just let us know!

Archives and Records Association UK & Ireland

Annual Conference: 2-4 September 2020, Chester, UK

Call for Papers: We♥Records

The Archives and Records Association UK & Ireland invites proposals for its 2020 Conference to be held in Chester between 2 and 4 September 2020.

Our 2018 #ARAGlasgowManifesto was a rallying cry for change within the sector [conference.archives.org.uk/sites/default/files/Glasgow%20manifesto%20FINAL.pdf](https://www.archives.org.uk/sites/default/files/Glasgow%20manifesto%20FINAL.pdf). While our 2019 #Recordkeeper3.0 conference indicated a real appetite to critically examine our profession and our beliefs. Who are 'we' and why should we 'love records'?

Our 2020 conference will give us the opportunity to explore these questions and look at how recordkeepers and records can make a difference in turbulent times through our key themes of Diversity, Advocacy and Sustainability.

WE LOVE RECORDS

Sessions will encompass the main areas of archives and records, conservation, digital preservation and information governance using our key themes: Diversity, Advocacy and Sustainability. Therefore, we want to see proposals which have a strong focus in these areas which have emerged from Conference feedback and communication with ARA members and stakeholders.

Diversity

Diversity is a big issue and one which many of you feel very strongly about. Rightly, you want to see progress that is fast, real and lasting. In 2019 #Recordkeeper3.0 examined the profession and we want to take the debate forward in Chester by looking at records. How do we increase diversity and representation in the records and what role do recordkeepers play in this process? How can we represent if we are not representative?

Recordkeepers can take steps in the right direction to leading the charge!

Advocacy

We may know the value of records, but how do we go about spreading the message to others? How do we convince depositors and potential depositors that we are trustworthy custodians of community memory and how do we ensure that we are? How do we make the case for the necessary investment in staff, IT and projects? Why are archives critical to society and why is proper records management important to businesses and organisations? Reaching out to those who don't know, don't care or don't want us is our challenge – let's meet it!

The historic walled city of Chester is the setting for the ARA Conference 2020



Sustainability

If we can advocate about our diverse records, then what do we do to sustain them in the future? Whether it's the energy consumption of data centres, the impact of appraisal in deciding what we keep, the need to develop passive archive storage, or the materials used for conservation, environmental impact is increasingly something that recordkeepers should consider.

We are a small sector but, as we know, no one is too small to make a difference!

These questions are only suggestive of potential areas that could be included. Now it's over to you! Why not submit a proposal on something that you would like to have debated at #ARA2020.

PROPOSALS

We aim to accommodate different types of presentation. Some suggested formats are given below, but we are happy to consider alternatives. When you submit your proposal please give details of the format you would prefer or contact us for an informal discussion conference@archives.org.uk

- Individual contributions – presentations of 20 minutes
- Panel sessions – up to three speakers presenting related papers on a specific theme or topic
- '30 minute makeover' – standalone tutorials or smaller workshops
- '60 minute workshops' – more time for practical demonstrations
- Lightning talks – pitch your big idea or burning issue in quick-fire five minute presentations
- Posters – an opportunity to highlight your contribution in our poster session

Please remember:

- We aim to devise a coherent programme, so please connect your proposal to the theme
- We would like proposals that will stimulate debate
- We want diverse panels of speakers. If you have particular requirements (e.g. accessibility, interpretation, etc.) please let us know and we will make every effort to accommodate you.

Anyone who has experience or expertise in working with records can submit a paper. Contributions are welcomed from across the UK and Ireland, and from colleagues in the global recordkeeping community. And of course we welcome submissions from other sectors too.

HOW DO I SUBMIT A PROPOSAL?

Please use this link to make a submission:
app.oxfordabstracts.com/stages/1543/submissions/new

If you require assistance please contact conference@archives.org.uk

KEY DATES

The deadline for submissions is Friday 20 December 2019.

Notification of invitations to speak will be confirmed in the week beginning 10 February 2020.

The programme will be published in the week beginning 17 February 2020 and conference registration will open.

EXPENSES

All speakers will receive free conference registration for the day on which they are presenting. We are unable to pay accommodation costs, but speakers will be reimbursed travel expenses up to a maximum of £100.

OUR CONFERENCE VENUE

Our venue for 2020 will be the Crowne Plaza Hotel, located in the centre of the historic city of Chester and a short walk from the railway station. The hotel was built in 1989 and all of the conference facilities are on a single floor with level access. There is also a health club onsite. As usual colleagues from ARA North West will be welcoming conference visitors and showcasing what the region has to offer from historic sites to eating and drinking.

We look forward to seeing you in Chester!

Conference 2019

The conference opened to the rousing soundtrack of Go!, a track from Public Service Broadcasting's 2015 Race for Space album. It provided a taster of the work of Friday's keynote speaker J Willgoose Esquire, who gave a unique perspective on how archives shape his work as a musician. The conference theme of Recordkeeping 3.0 provided an opportunity to examine in depth the daily themes of our careers, our workplace and our profession. Like Public Service Broadcasting's first album which used material from the British Film Institute and the National Archives to reflect on the Britain of the mid twentieth century we hope the conference carried out its aim to Inform, Educate and Entertain.

Karl Magee

Chair, Archives and Records Association

Conference 2019
opening address
from chair of
association Karl
Magee

Reception at Royal Armouries Museum, Leeds





Insights into the diverse work of fellow conservators

Fiona Johnston bursary winner, reports on the wide range of collections care issues discussed at Conference

This year's conference offered insights into the diverse work of fellow conservators which included presentations about the conservation of entire collections of manuscripts, the study of bound manuscripts, conservation ethics, nanocellulose, digitisation projects and the role of volunteers, to name but a very few! In addition to this, we were able to participate in practical sessions to prepare parchment for repair and make remoistenable tissue for paper repair. Having attended several conferences already, I was anticipating an informative and enjoyable three days, and this year's conference certainly did not disappoint!

Shirley Jones and Zoe Reid both gave presentations discussing their approaches to managing grant-funded projects of large collections of parchment and paper manuscripts. Shirley spoke about the conservation of 60 court rolls, comprising 230 membranes belonging to the Conisborough manorial court rolls. Conservation of this collection involved a very organised approach to the sequential stages of conservation treatment. The parchment manuscripts were treated in groups and collectively underwent the same phase of conservation, starting with the unrolling and detaching the membranes, followed by surface cleaning, humidification, flattening, repair and finally, the membranes were re-attached, re-rolled and housed in archival folders and boxes.

Zoe's presentation also focussed on a large-scale conservation project and reflected on the conservation of paper and parchment documents damaged during a fire in 1922 at the Public Record Office of Ireland. Initially, the strategy was to select the least damaged documents that required relatively straightforward conservation treatment. The second phase involved collaboration with historians to select the most historically important documents that would need more complicated conservation in order to allow public access. With ever-increasing workloads and grant-funded projects becoming more common, I thought both talks were insightful and offered useful advice when planning and carrying out externally funded projects.

On the theme of fundraising, Lien Gyles gave a very interesting talk about crowdfunding for conservation projects. Lien and her team crowdfunded to raise funds for photography and the rehousing of a collection of artefacts belonging to Lady Jane Franklin, wife of artic explorer, Sir John Franklin. As became clear during Lien's

talk, crowdfunding is not a quick fix to raise funds to fill shortfalls in budgets; considerable time is required at the initial planning stage, in addition to on-going project management. As Lien remarked, finding a suitable conservation project that will spark public interest and also prompt people to donate, is one of the most important, and possibly most trickiest decisions to make. Happily, Lien and her team exceeded their target and were able to photograph and rehouse the artefacts and so the hard work paid off!

Victoria Stevens and Mark Allen both gave presentations that were followed with the opportunity to get hands-on with making remoistenable tissue and paring parchment for document repair. We had a 'smashing' time in Victoria's talk and watched alchemy in action as she made iron gall ink. Iron gall ink is in part composed of oak galls, which require crushing before use! During her talk, Victoria remarked that in recent years iron gall ink corrosion and its prevention has been the subject of much debate and research, resulting in the development of an interventive conservation treatment to arrest ink corrosion. Victoria also discussed the alternative approach to preventing ink corrosion which involves long-term storage of iron gall ink manuscripts in moderate but stable humidity. In our practical session, we made remoistenable tissue using RKO tissue and 3% gelatine B adhesive. Remoistenable tissue made using gelatine B adhesive is used specifically for the repair of damage caused by iron gall ink corrosion.

Mark Allen's presentation 'Parchment in the archives workshop' was an opportunity to practice paring parchment in preparation for parchment repair. Mark's talk outlined how some traditional parchment repair techniques had resulted in unsympathetic results. Mark advocated the use of traditional conservation materials for repair but employed with careful and measured application. In keeping with the conservation ethic of repairing 'like with like', we had the opportunity to pare parchment in preparation for infilling loss and we also examined goldbeaters skin and alum-tawed caecum that can be used for tear repair in parchment. Conservation of parchment and manuscripts written using iron gall ink are a significant part of an archive conservator's work and both Victoria and Mark's presentations were very useful summaries of the challenges and options available for the conservation of these materials.

Thank you very much for the ARA bursary to attend this year's conference, I learnt a huge amount from all the speakers. Thank you also to Antony Oliver for organising such an excellent stream of conservation presentations. Heading home after three days of inspiring conservation talks, I left Leeds already looking forward to Chester 2020!

Mark Allen's presentation 'Parchment in the archives workshop' was an opportunity to practice paring parchment in preparation for parchment repair



Alexandra Eveleigh giving her Keynote speech on Wednesday at the Conference



Our keynote speakers 2019

Ros Lynch giving her Keynote speech on Thursday at the Conference





J. Willgoose, Esq of Public Service Broadcasting giving his Keynote speech on Friday at the Conference

Imagination, hard work and cooperation

Vikki Ellis, Island Archives (Guernsey), reflects on her enriching Conference experience in Leeds.

It's amazing what can be achieved with imagination, hard work and cooperation'. That was the message from archivists' go-to musician J. Willgoose, Esq., keynote speaker on the third day of the conference. His inspiring and entertaining talk was one of the highlights, hearing about how his band Public Service Broadcasting repurpose archival footage in their music. He called for imagination in how we promote access and uses of collections, pointing out the benefits to repositories of engaging with people who wish to use archival material in creative and unexpected ways. He also confessed his own archiving was 'terrible'!

Having recently completed the MA in Archives Administration with the University of Aberystwyth, I was keen to attend this year's conference to gain insight into current developments. I was impressed by the breadth and quality of the conference programme; with so much on offer it was difficult to choose which talks to attend. One of the key themes explored throughout was our professional identity and the importance of adapting to meet current and future challenges. Engaging panel discussions were held on the relevance of traditional archival skills, such as palaeography and diplomatics, in the digital age. There seemed to be a consensus that the increasing need for digital skills is not superseding the value of traditional ones, as without them we would not be able to fully understand the records in our care and interpret them for users.



“Inclusivity and diversity were recurring themes throughout the conference, giving me a better understanding of the barriers that might prevent people accessing or working with archives.”



Networking in the Information Marketplace

Several speakers emphasised the need to develop confidence with digital technology and integrate it in everyday practice. We shouldn't avoid digital preservation because it is difficult; even small steps can help. The big question is no longer 'do we need digital skills?' but 'how do we get digital skills?' With increasing connections between our profession and others, especially information technology, there was an emphasis on embracing collaboration and celebrating diversity in our skillsets.

Inclusivity and diversity were recurring themes throughout the conference, giving me a better understanding of the barriers that might prevent people accessing or working with archives. Jasspreet Thethi offered thought provoking and practical suggestions about how to deal with offensive or inappropriate language in catalogue descriptions and improve representation in exhibitions. She encouraged collaboration, for example when working with certain materials it could be helpful to engage with people who may be able better to understand and interpret them.

In the digital stream several speakers shared their experiences of recent projects, giving an insight into how the theory I'd recently learnt on the course is being put into practice. It was exciting to hear about new technology and how it can assist with our work, and to learn from repositories' approaches, successes and failures. I found it

particularly informative to hear how staff at the University of Leeds Archive manage hybrid collections and have used Transkribus software to assist with transcribing series of records. The panel discussion on web archiving was similarly enlightening, increasing my awareness of the importance of preserving our online history.

Another conference highlight was hearing about the Tate Gallery Archive and challenges of working with artists' collections that do not easily fit into established models of acquisition and arrangement. It was refreshing to see such a conceptual and creative approach to cataloguing archive materials.

Working on an island for a small archive service, the conference provided a rare opportunity for me to meet and catch up with colleagues from diverse institutions. It is wonderful to work in a profession in which people are so willing to share experience and support each other in working towards a common goal - and passion - of preserving our documentary heritage and making it publicly accessible.

I thoroughly enjoyed my first conference and am very grateful to the ARA for making my attendance possible through their bursary scheme. I returned home to Guernsey full of inspiration and ideas to discuss with my colleagues at Island Archives.

Archival literacy and traditional skills in a digital age

Michael Wells, NSPCC Archives, reflects on the new and traditional skills for the recordkeeper of the 21st century.

I was awarded one of four diversity bursary places to attend the full three days, kindly sponsored by KevinJBolton Ltd. Kevin is a consultant specialising in archives, libraries and heritage.

Having worked in the library sector before starting in my current post in archives and records management in 2017, I seized this unique opportunity to learn more about wider issues and discussions from the area which has become my professional focus.

The sessions and keynotes I attended were each informative and unique in line with the conference theme. Highlights for me which have a particular bearing on my work include discussions around the value of archival literacy and traditional skills in a digital age; mapping essential skills for the 21st century archivist; bringing an archive service back to life; web archiving and the Glasgow School of Art's efforts in diversifying the archives and collections workforce following the fire in 2014.

On day 3, Jaspreet Thethi's excellent and passionately delivered session 'Empowering collaboration: diversifying archives through co-production', set out the ongoing challenge of making the world of archives more diverse and accessible.

Overall, I found attending these three days a very positive experience. It was good to have had this opportunity to meet and learn from colleagues on the worldwide delegate list and increase my awareness of the sector. My attendance was timely in relation to the impending introduction of a new archive catalogue which will grant - initially, internal - access to the NSPCC Archive for the first time. Knowledge gained from attending has already been of benefit to my current role.

A personal thank you to the ARA for awarding me a bursary place to this engaging conference and to KevinJBolton Ltd for the generosity shown in sponsoring the bursaries, and making my attendance possible.





Andrea Waterhous and Nicky Hilton of the ARA's Pay Review Group presenting 'Working for Fair Pay'

Shadreck Bayane gives a case study on 'Records Management Entrepreneurship in Botswana'



Trending: top tweets #ARA2019



Social media provides a platform to communicate crucial issues arising from Conference beyond the venue – opening up discussions and participation to a wider audience and proving that they are relevant to all in the profession.

This year's theme Recordkeeper 3.0 certainly delivered food for thought across the three days at Leeds addressing current issues related to our professions, our workplace and our careers. Speakers discussed everything from Artificial Intelligence to funding challenges, diversity and inclusion to historical dramas and the tension between digital and traditional skills to name but a few topics.

This year for Leeds we launched our brand-new Instagram account (@araconference) adding yet another channel to our social media presence and opening the debates to brand new audiences. Couple that with our Conference-themed Archive Hour, Q&A interviews with this year's keynote speakers, the

Anne Lister social media competition #icantellmyjournal by West Yorkshire Archive Service and a record-breaking 2036 tweets collected across the three days, by the close of the conference on Friday #ARA2019 had been our most successful social media year yet.



Lucy @lucy_brownson · 28 Aug
 some really valid questions emerging in @melindahauton's afternoon session on the relationship btwn archives & public history. by distancing ourselves from history, are we limiting our profession? #ARA2019 @ARAconf

1 4 13

Barry S @Noirmality · 29 Aug
 Not often you'll get a crowd of archivists stunned into silence but Ros Lynch's fascinating talk on IP and AI just had so many facets to comprehend. Enforcement sounds like mission impossible in this day and age but apparently there's a police unit dedicated to it!. #ARA2019



4 14

Alexandra Eveleigh @ammevel... · 29 Aug
 Can't help myself observing that copyright is perhaps *the* classic example of a framework which maybe restricts innovation in C21st practice. Interesting to contrast Lynch keynote & mine yesterday! #ara2019

8 21

Gary Brannan @gbrannanarchive · 30 Aug
 Message for me here: have the bravery to open up the archive to creative types. Take a chance. See what happens and let the creativity lead. #ara2019

4 13 37

Mike Anson @BAC_Chair · 30 Aug
 Cheers! Now it's all over, I can officially declare that #ARA2019 @ARAconf in Leeds was a success. Thanks to all the speakers and delegates for your contributions and to Kim and @Mills_Media for their fantastic support. See you in Chester! #ARA2020 We ❤️Records



7 8 65

James Baker @j_w_baker · 29 Aug
 #ARA2019 awards are seriously lovely. A bunch of archivists receiving awards by saying ~"it isn't me, it's them". What a charming community.

4 17

Katie McDonald @kmcDonald_1 · 30 Aug
 #ARA2019 Day 3: brilliant final keynote from @JWillgoose_Esq. Key themes: be open to collaboration (even to weird + wonderful ideas) + make it easy for people to use your collections (through good catalogues + fair reproduction fees). You never know what collabs can lead to! 🚀🍷

9 15

Deborah Rohan for
Distinguished Service in
Archive Conservation



Our Award Winners 2019

David Mander for
Distinguished Service in
Archives and Record
Management



Julie Devenney
New Professional
of the Year



Record Keeper of the Year Elaine MacGillivray



Mark Allen for Distinguished Service in Archive Conservation



Carrie Farnell Archive Conservation Training Scheme Award

The boundaries between physical and digital are narrowing and we must accept that

Riza Hussaini, The John Rylands Library, Manchester, reflects on her experience attending Conference for the first time.

I'm not a stranger to Leeds – living in nearby Calderdale and having worked at the Brotherton Library, it was a pleasure to be able to attend not only my first ARA conference there but it felt that my professional pathway as a conservator brought me back to here.

With a programme of interesting talks, figuring out which sessions to attend was quite a task. How was I going to attend them all? Also, with so many experienced conservators attending, I knew that I would be learning a fair bit and picking up useful tips. There were opportunities for networking with hopes of collaborations in the future too.

As a BAME individual working in the sector, I was eager to meet other traditionally marginalised professionals and hear their thoughts.

I was unsurprised to find so few BAME professionals present at the conference however. The lack of attendees from said backgrounds unfortunately mirrors the reality in the sector.

We started each day with a speech from a Keynote speaker. The topics covered were varied and not primarily focussed on records management which was a good thing. I particularly enjoyed the talk by Ros Lynch from the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) on issues within the digital realm. Machine learning and Artificial Intelligence (AI) are prevalent in our day to day lives so it was very reassuring to hear that the IPO are asking questions of entitlement, ownership and liability of AI, algorithm designers and eventually algorithms that become a self-managing entity in their own right.

“*Personally, the highlight of the conference was the studio visit to the Royal Armouries*”

She mentioned that ethics were carefully considered in the IP framework and made me speculate whether the framework would be flexible enough to accommodate new technologies and content produced.

The morning speeches usually set the tone of the day for me and encouraged questions and reflections to where the sector is heading or planning to be in the future. This gave plenty of scope to use as an ice-breaker during the breaks too. Of which there were many. It was only during the second day did I truly appreciate them.

Attending a conference is rather intense. I did manage to go for a brisk walk around the city to clear my head. Would having a quiet space for reflection be considered in future events?

Personally, the highlight of the conference was the studio visit to the Royal Armouries. Visiting other conservation studios is always a treat, especially when the collections differ so greatly from one's own. As we were mostly book and paper conservators on the tour, I think we were all giddy with excitement to look behind the scenes.

Shepherded in small groups to the high security studio, we were treated to a somewhat no-holds-barred tour of the space. I definitely came out rejuvenated but restless and wanted to get to a library immediately to research more about composite materials.

To conclude, it seemed to me there was a common thread for the need to reassess entry into the sector, for experimentation and dedicated time to learn by doing. Conservators are increasingly expected to be both specialists and all-rounders, requiring soft skills and out of the box thinking to be employed rigorously.

The boundaries between physical and digital are narrowing and we must accept that the world is undoubtedly getting smaller. We need to challenge traditional structures and training to adapt.

As said by the first Keynote speaker Dr. Alexandra Eveleigh, the key to pushing innovative ideas could be to actively explore diversity in all its forms and to embrace ideas from outside. I hope that ARA will lead the change to promote inclusion within the sector.

Last but not least, I would like to thank ARA and the generous sponsorship from Kevin Bolton of KevinJBolton Ltd which enabled me to attend the conference.



The Royal Armouries, Leeds



The Royal Armouries, Leeds



The first Keynote speaker Dr. Alexandra Eveleigh



Our Conference 2019









What you told us about #ARA2019 Leeds

Mike Anson, chair of ARA Conference Committee, summarises delegates' impressions of the event.

We're always looking at ways to improve the conference experience and that's why the feedback of delegates is so important to us. We received just under 120 responses to our post-conference survey. That's a healthy number, and so a big thank you to all those who took time to complete the form.

The results run to 57 pages so it's something of a challenge to assimilate, let alone condense into a short article. Nonetheless, here are a few of the headline figures.

57% of respondents were archivists, 9% records managers, 9% both archivist and records manager, 11% conservators, and 13% 'other' of various kinds.

74% of people were funded by their employer and 7% were self-funded. The remainder were speakers or received bursaries.

The vast majority of delegates were satisfied or very satisfied with the registration process and pre-conference information.

44% thought the venue was excellent and 37% thought it good. Perhaps unsurprisingly given the layout and age of the venue, scores were lower on ease of navigation. Feedback on the catering was the usual mixed bag, but top marks all round for the M&S visit, the yoga and Chair's Run! Taking into account some of the comments, we will look at increasing the range of wellbeing options.

On the overall programme, 75% of those responding thought that the content was either excellent or good, plus we have nearly 300 free text comments on what people did or didn't like, and suggestions for improvements.

We added two new questions to this year's survey as a result of what we picked up during the various debates at the conference. One related to events for new delegates (75% were in favour) and some form of mentoring scheme (67% voting for this). However, as on the conference floor there are some very divergent views on the value of these suggestions. The Conference Committee will give more consideration to what might be done in Chester.

The other new question was about how to make the conference greener. There were 75 comments on this, and the environmental impact of the conference is clearly something that you feel strongly about. We'll certainly be addressing this, not least by looking at cutting-out single-use plastic bottles and reducing our carbon footprint in other ways. And of course very appropriately, sustainability will be one of the sub-themes at #ARA2020.

Calling all colleagues!

ARC is always seeking articles reflecting the issues that matter to you most. We would love to publish pieces that reveal the sector's opinion and showcase successful best practice.

If you would like to send something for inclusion in the magazine, please send articles to arceditors@archives.org.uk, or write and let us know what you'd like to read about. Guidelines for articles for ARC can be found on the Association's website: www.archives.org.uk.





Crowne Plaza, Chester
2nd – 4th September

Conference
2020

We ♥ Records

