



Archives & Records
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UK & Ireland

ARCmagazine

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Specialist Repositories Special Issue



"I WISH I COULD SEE MY
LITTLE WILLY"



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the World Register

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WELCOME **ARC**

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the August edition of ARC.

What connects the writer Brian Aldiss with Mimi the mannequin modelling a nun's habit, or little Willy with UNESCO? It may look as if the ARC editors have finally taken the magazine down market to attract a wider audience. But we can assure you that this month's issue with its specialist repositories theme and focus on SIGs (Special Interest Groups) has an educational, religious and charitable flavour, and only a small amount of innuendo and double entendres.

Where else would you learn about the School Archivists' Group, the trials and tribulations of a school archivist getting involved in a television programme, or find out how Canterbury Cathedral Archives got involved in an IT project to use and read documents in different ways? Or read about the John Rylands University Library's digitisation of an annotated copy of the Greek New Testament? Readers will also discover how the Liberal Jewish Synagogue and the Daughters of Wisdom archives helped with centenary celebrations (which is where Mimi makes an appearance), and how the records of St Werburgh's church in Dublin give insights into social and economic activity in that city.

There is news of a Children's Society project to show how it cared for disabled children, and a discussion by the WRVS archivist on whether or not charity archives are a liability or asset (and how UNESCO recognition can save the day). The innuendo comes from an article about the British Cartoon Archive project to digitise Crown Prosecution Service material relating to attempts to stop saucy seaside postcards (including little Willy) being sold.

We would like to thank Susan Scott for her usual fine work in rounding up articles and keeping up the tradition of the involvement of nuns. You can find out more about this in her introduction to the specialist repositories content.

You will see a new name below, as Sarah Norman has replaced Rachel Freeman on the editorial team. We hope you join us in thanking Rachel for her efforts, and welcoming Sarah on board.

Gary Collins, Ceri Forster, Sarah Norman, Rose Roberto and Richard Wragg.

DISCLAIMER

The Archives & Records Association (UK and Ireland) cannot accept responsibility for views expressed by individual contributors to ARC Magazine. It is a medium for informing members of news, information and ideas relevant to the profession, including archive conservation. It is not an official guide to procedures, concepts, materials or products.



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Specialist Repositories Special Issue Cover Images:
Opening of the WRVS Archive & Heritage Collection Volunteer Project, 2008.
'Mimi' the mannequin wearing the habit from 1965
Crown Prosecution Service index card for postcard "I wish I could see my little Willy". Ref. No. CP0438.

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anu@cabbell.co.uk

**or phone Anu Kaplish on
020 8971 8457**

Send articles/comments to:

arceditors@archives.org.uk.

Association News



A word from John Chambers, Chief Executive of the Association

Another year is speeding by and we already have reached my final plug for Conference 2011. You can view the programme and book via www.archives.org.uk. Speaker biographies and extracts are also available.

Voting for the elections to Council is in full swing. If you will not be attending the AGM please use your proxy. Remember to return your form to be received in Taunton by Saturday 27 August 2011 at the latest.

I am now utterly convinced that the way the "Big Society" is being implemented is nothing more than being about the replacement of professionals with volunteers. I think that archivists and conservators are now targets. When the UK government was elected René Kinzett and I read the Big Society document and *Red Tory*, the book from which it all stems, so we could gain an understanding of what it is supposedly about. The most obvious thing that struck us was that Community Archives are Big Society (well they should

be). However there has been no interest in them in any form from the government (we have asked).

The government was originally interested in our Best Practice Guideline, 'Volunteering in Collections Care', until they read it. I think they were hoping it would support their agenda, but it doesn't. We support the use of volunteers to enhance collection care under the direction of professionals. We oppose the use of volunteers to replace professionals. Over the last few weeks I have had conversations with backbench Tory MPs at Westminster and have been alarmed at the indoctrination they exhibit about using volunteers to replace professionals. I think that librarians have lost this argument and that we need to be prepared to defend our professions.

I will be working with the ARA's new Head of Public Affairs Marie Owens to get our arguments together. I kid myself that it should be easier to make our case understood than it was for librarians but the fact is that ears are closed. This is going to be just as hard.

In other news from around the ARA:

The All Party Group on Archives recently agreed to represent history and is now the All Party

Group on Archives and History. I was initially dubious about this but am now sold on it. They recently held two events. One was to honour Eric Hobsbawm and Huw Thomas and the other a lecture by Lord Hennessy. These three historians have high profiles and attracted good audiences, as well as *The Times* and *The Guardian*. All spoke about the value of archives.

We have renewed the accreditation of the courses at the University of Glasgow for five years and extended that of University College London by 18 months whilst they review their courses.

The Code of Conduct is being revised and will be presented to the membership for approval.

The Research Fund has been extended to include advocacy projects as part of the legacy from the National Council on Archives.

Student membership of the Association will be offered to trainees on the Skills for the Future programme.

.....
John Chambers
.....



**Archives & Records
Association**
UK & Ireland



Advocating for Archives and Records: The Impact of the Profession in the 21st Century

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Edinburgh**

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Collecting Matters

What makes specialist repositories 'special'?

Charity archives, business archives, archives in museums and galleries, community archives, subject - or sector-specific archives – there are more and myriad ways of defining collections and who's collecting them.

But they are all part of the same archive landscape and at The National Archives we work to map the changes to that landscape and to encourage 'connected collecting' across the UK and Ireland.

So how does your specialism fit into that bigger picture? Do you know who else is building related or similar collections? Does your collection policy complement those of other institutions? Maybe you want to know who or where those institutions are?

Searchable by topic or repository, the results from our annual Accessions to Repositories survey 2010 have just been added to the National Register of Archives (NRA) and reference a whole range of specialist areas: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/accessions/>

But do people know what's 'special' about your own collection? If not, ask us to include you on the NRA or be more direct and submit an article for our Archive Sector Update:

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/information-management/spring-2011.pdf>

We can help tell your stories and you can help keep collecting connected!

.....
Cathy Williams

Senior Manager: Strategic Collection Development
The National Archives
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www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/policies/collection-strategies.htm

I Wish I Could See My Little Willy

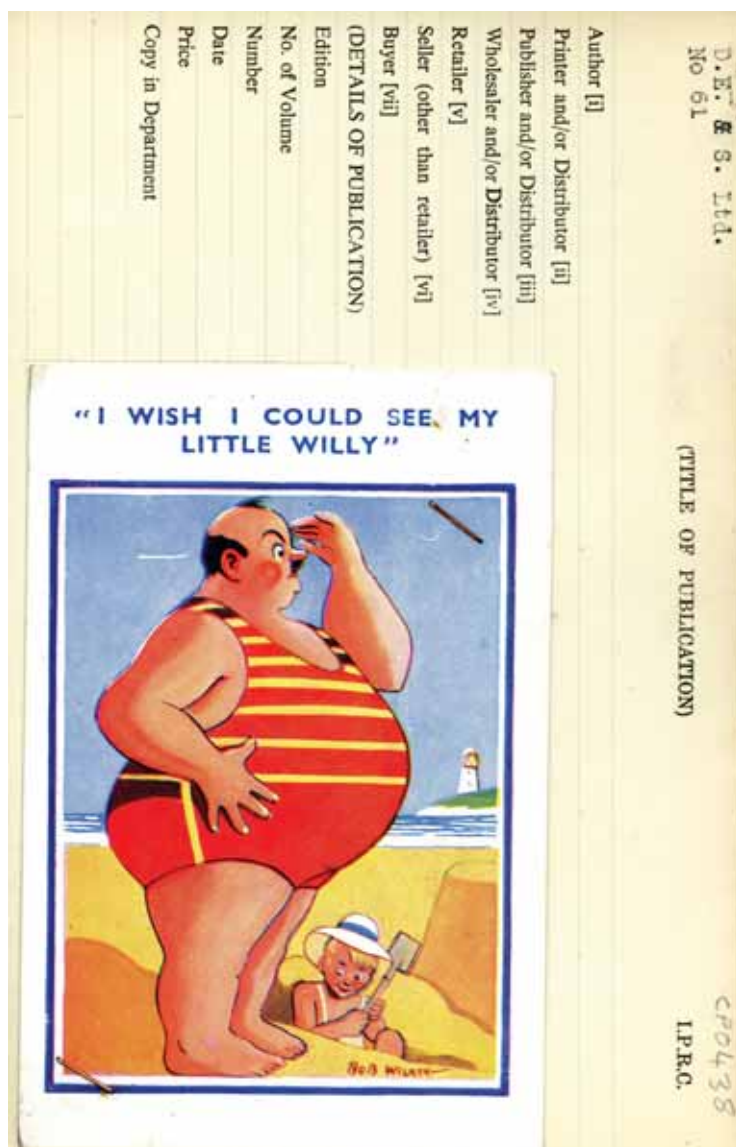
Dr Nick Hiley explains how a British Cartoon Archive digitisation project will be a real eye opener

The British Cartoon Archive (BCA), at the University of Kent, is just completing its latest digitisation project, which will add a further 25,000 images to its collections. The project, called CARD (Cartoon Archive Rapid Digitisation project), was funded by the Higher Education Funding Council.

The Archive was established in 1974 to collect British political cartoons from newspapers and magazines, and began to digitise its holdings 15 years later, eventually building up a freely available online database of more than 140,000 catalogued images. The vast majority of these are of political cartoons, bringing the BCA catalogue right up to 2011. However, the CARD project also takes the BCA into new territory, by including the complete digitisation of the Director of Public Prosecutions' (DPP) central archive of banned seaside postcards of the 1950s. This small collection consists of 1,300 index cards, recording the numerous prosecutions of individual cartoon postcards in an anti-obscenity campaign that lasted from 1951 to 1963. In many cases the index cards also have a copy of the original postcard attached.

The DPP's archive came to the BCA in 1999. In the previous year The National Archives had accepted the DPP's surviving files on the national anti-obscenity campaign, but, rather surprisingly, had decided that it "did not want the postcards" themselves. This strange decision led to the DPP's archive being offered to the BCA, which it accepted as a valuable piece of legal and social history.

The digitisation of the DPP's collection has attracted a vast amount of media interest. On the first morning of the project I did five radio interviews and a television interview, starting with Radio 5 Live at 6.45 am, and ending with a recording for Radio Newcastle's "Drive Time". The BCA responded to this demand by working with the Dreamland Trust to



Crown Prosecution Service index card for postcard "I wish I could see my little Willy".
Ref. No. CP0438.

organise a postcard exhibition in Margate, entitled "I do wish I could see my little Willy." It opened on 22 July 2011 at the Pie Factory gallery, opposite the Margate Magistrates' Court where the postcards were originally condemned.

The anti-obscenity campaign was pursued by Winston Churchill's Conservative government under the Obscene Publications Act of 1857. This allowed police to raid seafront shops and kiosks, seizing stocks of postcards against which there had been a complaint, and applying to Magistrates for a destruction order. The shopkeepers had to appear in court to explain why their stock should not be destroyed, and they offered a range of justifications, from "good honest vulgarity" to blank disbelief that their cards had any double meaning.

However, the issuing of a destruction order had



Crown Prosecution Service index card for postcard "Have you got any thrillers, Miss?"
Ref. No. CP0535.

Crown Prosecution Service index card for postcard "What did you want to look up Sir?"
Ref. No. CP0997.

no impact on other shops in an area, or on shops in other towns. The campaign thus consisted of repeated police raids across the country, co-ordinated by the DPP's office. A central index allowed some popular cards to be pursued for a decade or more, in an attempt to make them too risky to stock. But the whole campaign fizzled out as public opinion began to change, especially after the DPP failed to obtain a conviction against D.H. Lawrence's novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in 1960.

The 1,300 index cards are now freely available online, allowing everyone to marvel at this decade-long official campaign against such innocuous material. It is also fascinating to trace how a card could be condemned as obscene in one seaside resort, but not in another a few miles away. Or how contradictory decisions could be made in a single town. "I do wish I could see my little Willy" was condemned in Margate



Crown Prosecution Service index card for postcard "Attendant: 'Did you titter?' Gent: 'No I never touched her!'" Ref. No. CPI 177.

Magistrates' Court in January 1954, although in October 1953 the same Magistrates had considered and passed an almost identical card, captioned "I do wish I could see my little Willie" (www.cartoons.ac.uk/record/CP0767).

The 1,300 index cards are already available online at www.cartoons.ac.uk. The search facility for the DPP's collection is still being developed, but they can be searched by publisher and artist - such as Donald McGill or "Trow". The whole collection can also be browsed by selecting "Prosecution card" under "Format" in the advanced search screen.

Dr Nicholas Hiley

Head of the British Cartoon Archive, University of Kent



Boys with their matron and teacher in the garden at St. Martin's Home for Boys, Surbiton, Surrey. Ref. TCS/PH/0002201 © The Children's Society.

Including The Excluded

Records of The Children's Society will show how disabled children were cared for

A new project using material from The Children's Society archive to highlight how the Society cared for disabled children has just started. The initiative, called 'Including The Excluded', is being managed by the Society's Records & Archive Centre, and is supported by funding from the National Cataloguing Grants Programme for Archives.

The project will document the relationship between the Society and the Children's Union, an innovative fundraising scheme that ran from 1889 until 1979 and gave children the chance to support individual beds for disabled children in The Children's Society's care homes. The Union's remit gradually extended to contributing toward the funding of specialist disabled children's homes and hospitals nationwide. The archive material includes home records, almost 2,000 children's case files from 1889 through to the Edwardian era, correspondence, publications, files, publicity material, artefacts and photographs. The decision to include relevant case files in this project means that the Children's Union records can be seen in the context of the children



supported. Steps will be taken to ensure that confidential and sensitive information is safeguarded during the process of increasing access to this material. One of the aims is to increase awareness and accessibility of an under-used and under-researched area of The Children's Society archive for a wider audience, including disabled people and individual young people, as well as schools, community and academic researchers. The project work will catalogue collections and make them available to the widest possible audience, using websites such as The Children's Society's Hidden Lives Revealed (www.hiddenlives.org.uk), and appropriate archival gateways such as AIM 25 (www.aim25.ac.uk/index.stm), The Archives Hub (<http://archiveshub.ac.uk>) and A2A (www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a/). Repackaging of material will also be carried out to improve the storage, preservation and accessibility of the collections selected. Volunteers will be supporting the project by working on preparing archive material for repackaging, and assessing preservation and conservation needs of the records. 'Including The Excluded' is also part of longer term plans to enhance Hidden Lives Revealed, to digitise material, and to help with the delivery of social work projects using the archive.

Ian Wakeling, The Children's Society Records, Archive & Data Protection Manager, said: "This project will give a unique insight into the circumstances of disabled children in the Victorian and Edwardian eras, and will show how medical and social care allowed them to lead as normal a life as possible.

The Children's Society's approach to disability was ahead of its time and the records that document this and the innovative fundraising involvement of the Children's Union are a rich resource for the history of disability and childcare."

Janine Stanford

The Children's Society Records & Archive Centre

Boys playing cricket at St Martin's Orthopaedic Hospital and School, Pyrford, Surrey. Ref. TCS/PH/0000851 © The Children's Society.





The Section for New Professionals

Committee members in discussion at a Section meeting, National Railway Museum, York

Most recordkeeping professionals would generally agree that pursuing your vocation as an archivist, records manager or conservator is not, and perhaps has never been, an easy career option. Indeed, archivists and conservators in particular have always faced an uphill battle not only in achieving professional status but also securing long-term employment. In recent years, the effect of the economic recession and public spending cuts in the already under-funded heritage sector has only made this problem worse. This has led to a situation in which an increasing number of newly qualified professionals are now competing for jobs with experienced public sector archivists who have had the misfortune of bearing the brunt of spending cuts.

The decision to form an Archives & Records Association (ARA) Section for New Professionals in December 2010 was undoubtedly influenced by this unprecedented situation but it also reflected a clear need to provide a representative body to act on behalf of individuals in a wide range of positions who are just starting out in their chosen recordkeeping profession. This includes volunteers in an archive repository; archive, records or conservation assistants; students on a recordkeeping course; and those recently qualified within the last five years. Our website (www.archives.org.uk/community/sections/interest-groups/section-for-new-archivists.html) states that our mission is to “represent, inform and promote the interests” of these groups but what

does this actually mean in reality? What can the New Professionals do, and what are we doing, to assist new professionals in these difficult times?

One of our most important initiatives to date has been the design and production of our very own e-magazine featuring articles and opinion pieces on specific issues affecting the new recordkeeping professional. We hope that the e-magazine is mostly written by its core audience, and that it gives aspiring recordkeeping professionals a chance to write about topics that they feel passionately about. The aim is also to encourage them to develop an interest in the wider profession at large.

Another initiative that is currently in the planning stages is the implementation of an e-mentoring scheme. As many seasoned professionals will testify, starting out in a recordkeeping career can be a lonely experience. This sense of isolation is heightened by the relatively small size of the profession and the geographical distance between volunteers and trainees who often have little support and few opportunities to get their questions answered or issues addressed outside of their immediate environment. The mentoring system will help to alleviate these difficulties by providing a newly qualified professional to act as a ‘virtual’ mentor figure to guide the person being mentored through the initial stages of their career. This has obvious benefits for both;

The ARA Section for New Professionals presents:

The New Professionals'

Summer Seminar

2011

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Flyer design by E. McKie

the former will have advice and assistance from a recent graduate who has recently been through the system, and the latter will gain valuable experience to enhance their CV that, in turn, will hopefully improve their chances in the job market.

Much of the work of the Section for New Professionals has also involved building links with other organisations and individuals in an attempt to raise our profile. For example, we have been working closely with Kiri Ross Jones, Archivist at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and her Graduate Training Group. One of our Irish-based committee members has also been tasked with assisting the Irish ARA group as the precarious economic situation there has created an even more difficult environment for job-seeking new professionals. Finally, we have also been developing links with universities offering recordkeeping courses, and both Dundee and University College London (UCL) have shown a particularly strong interest in working with our group and helping us to develop our vision.

We certainly envisage plenty of opportunities for new professionals to have their say in the running of the group and how they would like to see it develop in the future. Our Events and Training Officer visited UCL in February to talk to the archive students and has received very positive feedback, comments, and suggestions on how we can take the group forward. She is now planning similar visits to other universities that will include talks to conservation and records management students. We are also hoping that our summer Annual General Meeting in London will provide practical advice for new professionals and some interesting debates on the bigger issues affecting them.

If anyone is interested in joining the group or has any further questions, please do not hesitate to email us (newprofessionals@archives.org.uk). We are also looking for articles for the next edition of our e-magazine (offtherecord@archives.org.uk).

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Jonathan Bush

Chairman, Section for New Professionals
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New look for the British Postal Museum & Archive website

The British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA) website at www.postalheritage.org.uk has been refreshed (by designers Mind Unit) and now has new content and features.

The BPMA has had a website since 2006, and after five years of continual growth, the structure of the website needed to be overhauled to improve navigation and enhance the visitor experience.

Every user can now access more than 900 pages. New additions to the site include:

- New content, such as new articles in the History section
- Photo galleries and access to bigger images
- Increased focus on social media (it is now easier to share pages and information using Twitter, Facebook and Google Buzz)
- More than 95,000 searchable records in the online catalogue
- The Phillips Collection, comprising of more than 2,200 pages, is now searchable. The Phillips Collection is an unparalleled philatelic collection, chronicling many of the important changes to the postal system in the 19th century
- An online shop.

The BPMA has in the past two years developed an impressive social media presence on Twitter, Facebook, and Flickr. The organisation also has a regularly updated blog, featuring stories on the BPMA collections, events and other interesting postal related stories. Additional new features and information will be added to the website at a later stage, such as a Timeline of Key Dates.

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Jenny Karlsson

The British Postal Museum & Archive
.....



www.archives.org.uk

Emerald Literati Awards 2011 for the *Records Management Journal*

The winners of this year's Emerald Literati Network Awards for Excellence 2011 have been announced. The winners for the *Records Management Journal* are:

Outstanding Paper Award

- Victoria Lemieux: 'The records-risk nexus: exploring the relationship between records and risk' – volume 20 (2), 2010

Highly Commended Papers

- Kate Cumming and Cassandra Findlay: 'Digital recordkeeping: are we at a tipping point?' – volume 20 (3), 2010
- Elizabeth Lomas: 'Information security and access' – volume 20 (2), 2010
- Lawrence Serewicz: 'Do we need bigger buckets or better search engines? The challenge of unlimited storage and semantic web search for records management' – volume 20 (2), 2010.

Outstanding Reviewer

- Katharine Stevenson for her reviews in volume 20 (1) and volume 20 (3), 2010.

Each year Emerald, a leading independent publisher of global research, invites the *Records Management Journal* (RMJ) Editorial Board to nominate what they believe has been its Outstanding Paper and up to three Highly Commended Papers from the previous 12 months. The award winning papers are chosen from the nominations. Victoria Lemieux's article was selected for the Outstanding Paper Award as it explored a topic of "increasing importance for information and records managers and their organisations through an analysis of the literature using an innovative method – visual analysis."

The Highly Commended papers looked at different challenges associated with digital recordkeeping offering different perspectives, insight and valuable advice on how records managers need to consider and ultimately address the challenges. One of Katharine Stevenson's excellent reviews was of Viktor Mayer-Schönberger's book *Delete: The Virtue of Forgetting in the Digital Age* – a book that many records managers might wish they had written.

The winners all contributed to a series of specially designed issues that marked the journal's 20th anniversary in 2010. Reflecting on the anniversary volume, Editor, Professor Julie McLeod, said: "this volume is one the Editorial Board can be particularly proud of, not only because of the milestone it represents but also the high quality variety of its content. So many of the contributions were worthy of nomination for this year's awards that made the final decision more difficult than ever. I am delighted that the winners are from the UK, Canada and Australia and include both well-established and relatively new names. This demonstrates the international appeal of the RMJ as a place to publish views and findings from both research and practice."

“
The award winning papers are chosen
from the nominations.
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Julie was named a Leading Editor in the awards list. She has been Editor since 2005 and was Co-Editor with Catherine Hare from 1996. She is Head of Research, Information & Communication Management in the School of Computing, Engineering and Information Sciences at Northumbria University.

The full list of Literati Award winners is available at: www.emeraldinsight.com/authors/literati/index.htm.

All Outstanding and Highly Commended Papers are freely accessible for a limited period until 1 September 2011 at <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/authors/literati/awards.htm?year=2011&journal=rmj>.

Julie McLeod

Head of Research, Information & Communication Management,
Northumbria University

Our SIgnificant Others

Hello and welcome to what would in previous years have been the SRG issue of *ARC*. This year however we stand before you not as a Group, but as a Section, so have changed our name by deed poll to SSR – the Section for Specialist Repositories.

Our theme this year is our SIGs – the Special Interest Groups who sit under the umbrella of SSR. There are around half-a-dozen of them, and our Chair Adrian Glew will tell you a little more about them in his introduction to our section of *ARC*. One of the most valuable aspects of these SIGs is that their membership comprises not only professionally-qualified archivists, but also non-qualified ones; people who for one reason or another have found themselves taking responsibility for the archives in small organisations, and are keen to learn how best to look after the material in their custody. The SIGs provide mutual support, advice and encouragement, and through SSR a useful line of communication with the Archives & Records Association. The best illustration of the benefit of SIG membership can be found in an article from the youngest of our SIGs, the School Archivists' Group (SAG). It explains why and how SAG formed, what it does, and how it continues to grow.

Other contributors have written on a variety of topics, from their approach to the celebration of anniversaries, to the impressive opportunities they have taken in order to raise their profiles both within and without their parent organisations, with all the attendant benefit this brings. Greater appreciation by the parent organisation, better publicity, raised public awareness, an increase in donation of material – who among us has not wished for one or more of these at some point in our own careers?

And finally, those of you who pay attention to such things will recall that traditionally the SRG issue features a picture of a nun. This year is no exception. While 'Mimi' may not be a nun as such, she certainly dresses like one, but you'll have to read the entertaining article about the Daughters of Wisdom to find out who she is. This piece was also co-authored by one of the Sisters; the first time that a nun has actively contributed to our pages. We hope that you enjoy this and all the articles contributed by SIG members.

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Susan Scott

Section for Specialist Repositories
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Applauding Our Affiliates

This year's SSR edition of *ARC* provides a perfect opportunity to celebrate and highlight the tremendous work achieved by colleagues in our affiliate groups, namely the: Charity Archivists and Records Managers (CHARM); Health Archives and Records Group (HARG); Historic Houses Archivists Group (HHAG); Parliamentary and Political Parties Archive Group (PPAG); Religious Archives Group (RAG) and the Schools Archivists' Group (SAG). Affiliates help the Archives & Records Association (ARA) – through the SSR – to build strong relationships with other groups working in our sector, some of whose members may not have the opportunity to become full members of the Association. As our eagle-eyed editor and committee member Susan Scott notes, this issue illustrates how this part of the sector raises its profile. So, we hope that you will enjoy this issue and gain a greater understanding about the work and projects undertaken by affiliate members.

Affiliates and visiting affiliate members are often in the forefront of our collective minds as following our foray, last year, into Celtic parts we ventured north to Alnwick Castle where our host was Chris Hunwick, who was appropriately at his last meeting as the HHAG representative. The surroundings were magnificent, as was the Manorial Rights Conference Pack that he tabled at the meeting (funded by the ARA through the SSR budget allocated to our affiliates). We were able to advertise this resource to the SSR's 550 plus membership via our e-newsletter, compiled by our excellent Secretary, Daniel Scott-Davies; as well as on the archives-nra listserve - with the result that many more copies were distributed than would have been possible when first mooted.

This and other publications, training days, conferences, and websites organised by affiliate groups and funded by the ARA via the SSR, illustrate how modest funding of such initiatives can have a much wider impact for the whole archive sector. At this juncture, I would like to congratulate another of our affiliates RAG (supported by The National Archives and the ARA) for their survey of religious archives that was officially launched on 25 November 2010. Like the mapping exercise that was undertaken by the then SRG, this sort of initiative can lead to many useful outcomes for the sector in terms of lobbying for funds, increasing awareness, and creating more cohesion.

It was at the meeting in Alnwick that we were also able to announce the welcome news that we had appointed a new Training Officer: Nicola Court, archivist at The Royal Society. Suffice to say that we now have a schedule of speakers for our regular meetings with recent ones about the dreaded subject of moving an archive by Nicola and Joanna Corden in London, and one on archives and their literary uses by Sara Sheridan in Edinburgh attracting significant attendance. Later this year there will be meetings and talks in London, Norfolk and other regions, so we look forward to welcoming you to one of these events. Recently, a training questionnaire has been forwarded to members to find out what needs there may be, with the results to be circulated and acted upon later this year. If you would like to become involved with the committee, become a representative for your region, or help us in other ways, please contact either me or Daniel (Daniel.Scott-Davies@scouts.org.uk). We look forward to meeting members at this year's conference (where we will have a new leaflet), and seeing more new faces at events around the country in the coming year.

.....
Adrian Glew

Chair, SSR

adrian.glew@tate.org.uk



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The School Archivists' Group

The School Archivists' Group (SAG) started from a small ad hoc meeting of independent school archivists at Christ's Hospital School in 1997. Since then the Group has expanded to over 220 representatives, the majority from schools throughout England, Scotland and Wales.

Many of these representatives have other positions and undertake work in the archive as part of their job or as a volunteer. A large proportion get involved through being a former pupil of the school and helping to gather school memorabilia together for reunions. Others, such as Librarians, find they have inherited the school's historic records within their responsibilities. As SAG's profile has risen more of these acting archivists have heard of our organisation, and seek out advice in a forum where ideas can be compared and exchanged.

Each year a conference is organised in a different independent school. The aim is to hold alternate years in the London region as it is central for most members to get to. However by visiting schools in the regions it is possible for people to see round a wide number of different types of schools. A main feature of the day is a guided tour of the school and its archives. The day can be reassuring for those who are struggling to get funding and who may be feeling isolated and inadequate. Sharing problems and discussing possible solutions is a key feature in the programme.

SAG does not limit its membership to preparatory and secondary independent schools and has been keen to encourage state schools to join. Our fame has even reached overseas, as we now have two senior schools in South Africa and one in Bermuda as members.

Recent discussion points have been the setting up of School Museums to display material from the archives, which often have the advantage of acting as a good public relations tool by encouraging old pupils to donate items. Another trend has been the digitisation of the school magazine, both as a preservation tool but also to increase access to information. This also helps the



archivist to respond to enquiries more quickly and, when many only work one day in the archive, this is a very important consideration.

Lack of investment in technology is often a big stumbling block for school archives. Money for projects such as digitisation requires a much larger sum than is allocated in an annual budget (if indeed the archivist gets such a thing). In order to fund such projects an important source is often the Old Pupil Associations who are prepared to support the archive if they consider it worthwhile.

As SAG membership has increased it has become obvious that more schools are recognising the importance of their historic records, but fall short at providing the dedicated space and funding to ensure their proper care. Networking with other school archivists provides a good sounding board and support for the struggling archivist to be able to confidently negotiate with school management to improve their caretaking standards.

In order to help with limited funds, SAG negotiates discounts with archival suppliers so that its members can purchase archival quality storage materials. The same applies to archive software; a special discount is offered for software called Archive Manager and Archive Server, which is a package specifically written for an Australian school and used by many others in Australia. The majority of members cannot afford expensive databases,



Wellington College, site of Annual SAG Conference (2010)

and if they do not have any archive training they often do not understand archival terminology. Their need, therefore, is for something with simplicity of use and a reasonable cost, or preferably free. A limited annual budget may also mean that annual maintenance or upgrades are unaffordable; and a lone worker with only one pair of hands at his or her disposal can struggle to get collections catalogued.

There is currently no charge to join SAG and it is run as a self-help organisation, with a committee who give freely of their time arranging and running courses or giving advice, although any help offered from outside the group is very gratefully received. A website is currently under construction by an external supporter of the group and this is going to greatly improve our ability to advise. Up to now communication has been based purely on e-mail circulation.

The enthusiasm and commitment of this specialist group of archivists is second to none. Many of them have had no archival training but are aware that they need to seek out the proper advice. Some have personally paid to undertake distance archival training to improve their knowledge. They receive little financial recompense for their work and have to manage on a shoestring, undertaking a massive workload in a minimal number of hours. They are the unsung heroes of schools and their heritage, and need all the support and encouragement

“As SAG membership has increased it has become obvious that more schools are recognising the importance of their historic records, but fall short at providing the dedicated space and funding to ensure their proper care.”

they can get. This story is, of course, very familiar to those archivists who have been working on their own for some time.

Could I make a suggestion to those archivists who are struggling to find work and need to keep their skills alive in this dire economic crisis? Would you consider volunteering to help in your old school archive or if it hasn't got an archive why not set one up? If you no longer live near your old school perhaps another school near where you live would be only too happy for your help. Who knows, it may lead to a future job – it will probably never be well paid but it would certainly be rewarding, as many of us working in schools can testify.

Rita Boswell

Co-ordinator: School Archivists' Group
info@schoolarchivesgroup.org



Demonstrating the DocExplore software at Canterbury Cathedral Archives, March 2010

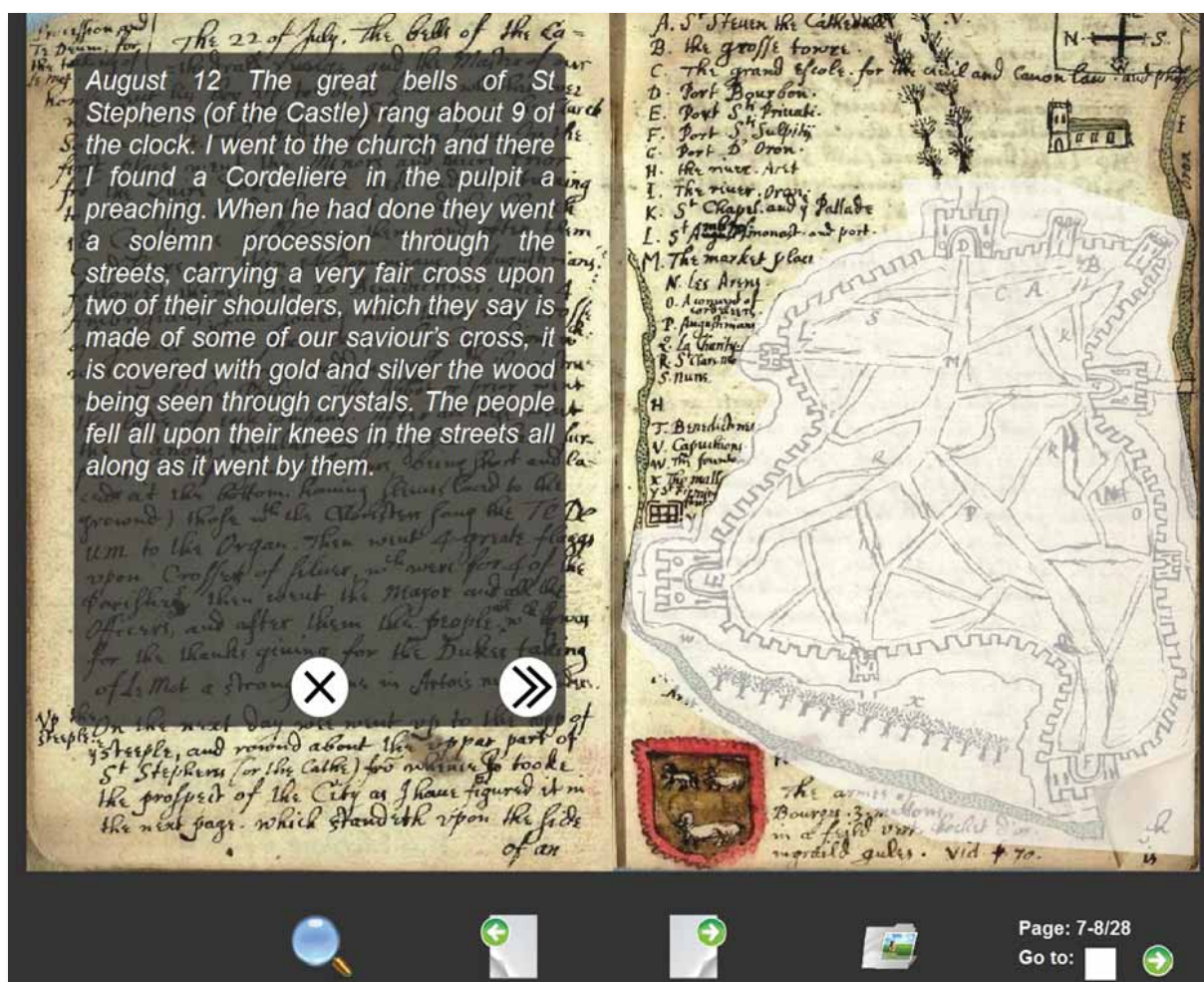
DocExplore: Opening Up The archives

Canterbury Cathedral Archives is a partner in an exciting project to open up archives through the use of IT. Known as 'DocExplore', this EU INTERREG IVA project started in April 2009, with a scoping phase. The second phase of the project has now begun and will run until the end of 2013.

DocExplore (www.docexplore.eu) is a joint project between the School of Engineering and the Digital Arts at the University of Kent, and the Laboratory of Computer Science, Information Processing and Systems (LITIS) based at the University of Rouen. Computer scientists in both institutions have experience of work in the area of the automated analysis of handwritten information. Applications include writer identification, bank cheque reading, automatic signature verification, and the assessment of neurological function through the computer analysis of writing. They are now interested in investigating historic handwriting.

Alongside the Cathedral Archives, the Bibliothèque Municipale de Rouen (BMR) is also working with the project. The BMR collections are extraordinarily rich, particularly in medieval books. Previous collaborative work between the BMR and LITIS has produced some good online resources, including an amusing animated 'ABC' drawing on initial letters and illustrations from medieval manuscripts (see <http://bibliotheque.rouen.fr/creaplus/abcd/index.html>).

DocExplore's aims are stated as 'empowering citizens on both sides of the Channel to engage with, explore and study their cultural heritage, as embodied in written and printed documents, in meaningful, informative, accessible and entertaining ways, through the provision of transparent computer-based interactive tools'. The project will use touchscreen technology to help with the exploration of digital images of manuscripts. The technology will simulate the turning of pages, thus providing a virtual



Screenshot from the 'presentation tool' of the DocExplore software, showing the Bargrave Diary

exhibition of the documents. It will also act as a valuable research tool, enabling the inclusion of transcriptions and commentary. It is hoped that graphical search and handwriting analysis tools will be included. This may make the identification of particular styles of handwriting easier, and also individual hands.

The project workers have discussed the system with staff from the Cathedral Archives and the BMR. The system was also demonstrated to members of the public in Canterbury and in Rouen in Spring 2010. Feedback has helped to inform the development of the system. The project workers have also consulted with historians from the Universities of Kent and Rouen, thus identifying the specific needs of academics working on the manuscripts, and their students.

When choosing manuscripts for use in the project, the Cathedral Archives has endeavoured to select items that relate to the common cultural heritage of the Kent and Normandy regions. For the first phase of the

project, pages from a 17th century diary of a journey through France were chosen. This diary was written and illustrated by John Bargrave, a cathedral canon who travelled extensively on the Continent during the English Civil War. In later stages of the project, records of the Canterbury Huguenot Church, which date from the 16th century onwards, may be used.

As part of the project, a workshop is due to take place next year, which would be open to all interested in this area of work. Details are yet to be finalised. For more information about the project or the workshop, please email archives@canterbury-cathedral.org.

We are delighted to be able to work with a project of this kind, which brings together the interests of IT specialists, of archivists, of the general onsite and online visitor, and of the more specialised academic researcher, from both sides of the Channel.

Cressida Williams

Canterbury Cathedral Archives

Daughters of Wisdom Centenary Celebrations

In 1891 the first Daughters of Wisdom (Filles de la Sagesse) arrived in England from France. The foundations in England continued to be administered by France until 1911, when the Province of England (now Province of Great Britain and Ireland) was set up. 2011 therefore sees the Daughters of Wisdom celebrating 120 years since their first arrival in Romsey and 100 years since the creation of their Province. The year also marks 25 years since Sr Gerard du Calvaire died. This Sister was miraculously cured at Abbey House in Romsey in 1927 from tuberculosis, and this miracle - which was attributed to the Sisters' founder Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort - led to his canonisation in 1947. 2012, also sees two centenary anniversaries: the arrival in Newcastle and the establishment of the first English Novitiate in Liverpool.

When it was realised that these significant anniversaries were imminent, it was evident that they would need to be celebrated. Any celebrations would of course involve the archives. It was decided to have a centenary year with the highlight being a celebration in June in Romsey Abbey. In March 2011 the centenary year was officially launched during a celebratory mass, and we contributed to the small display that was put on. Everyone enjoyed seeing the old photographs, especially of the Sisters in the original habit.

In preparation for the celebration in June, the archives helped produce an advertisement, which was placed in local newspapers, by providing the old school logos. It was hoped that this image would catch the eyes of former pupils, staff and other associates, whom the Sisters wanted to invite. We plan to collect anecdotes from those attending the celebration that can then be added to the archives.



'Mimi' the mannequin wearing the habit from 1965

It was decided that a booklet with an overview of the history of the Province should be produced to mark the centenary year. Using the copious notes made by the first archivist Sr St Mildred, a start was made. Unfortunately her research only went up to the 1980s. To bring the history up-to-date, we sent out a request to the Province asking each Sister to send us a few comments on what they had done in the past 30 years. The responses assisted us in the writing of the history and also added to the archives. This shows the benefit of being able to consult the Sisters to fill any gaps.



The old Filles de la Sagesse logo

Often there is little opportunity to delve into the archives, but writing the history gave us a legitimate excuse to spend time reading the chronicles of the houses, which proved to be a great source of information.

One of the difficulties with the history was deciding on what to include and how to structure it, since there have been many establishments, which each have had their own fascinating stories. Another challenge posed was that often the notes didn't name Sisters, simply stating 'sister', and we wanted to name each one. There was the additional challenge that following the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) some Sisters reverted back to using their baptismal name, which sometimes led to confusion. We also had to make sure not to cause upset by omitting any of the living Sisters. However, we are nearing completion of this work, and it is anticipated that the booklet will be ready for the June celebration.

In addition we prepared posters for an exhibition to be on display in the Abbey. We used lots of images from the archive and kept the accompanying texts short, although summarising the history of the Province was not an easy task. The research for the booklet also helped in the production of the posters.

As well as the posters, the original habit, and the habit that replaced it in 1965 (neither of which are now worn)

“

One of the difficulties with the history was deciding on what to include and how to structure it, since there have been many establishments, which each have had their own fascinating stories.

”

will be displayed. It was difficult to find suitable and affordable mannequins but 'Mimi' eventually arrived. There was much amusement as we made sure that she was presentable for display by covering her make up and removing her false eyelashes. Another challenge was ensuring that she was dressed correctly as it has been a long time since the habits were worn and the memory of how they were put on has faded.

Recently we had a tape recording of Sr Gerard's account of the miracle digitised and are hoping to create a short film using this audio clip with digitised photographs. It is moving to hear her simple way of recounting such an incredible event and it is a treasure to have this record in our archives.

Preparing for the centenary celebration has been very rewarding work and it is great to make others aware of what material we hold. There has been a lot of appreciation of the archives. Now the celebration in June is over we can begin to think of other ways in which to promote the materials in our care.

.....
Rebecca Volk and Sr Agnes Dewhurst

Daughters of Wisdom GBI Provincial Archives
.....

Getting On The Telly

The late Frankie Howerd, who, like many comedians, was a notorious worrier, was once asked if, after a particularly difficult show with a particularly difficult audience, he had ever contemplated suicide.

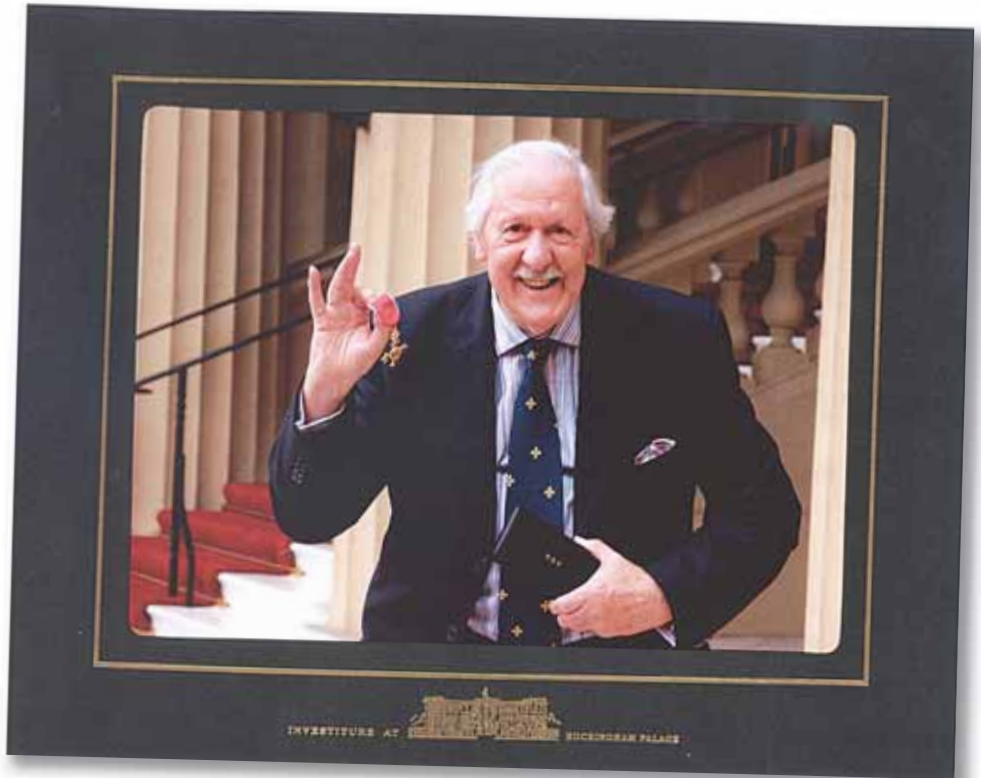
‘No,’ he said at once, and paused. ‘But I have often contemplated murder.’

Which only goes to show that you never know what is going to happen.

I thought, when I took on the task of creating a school archive, that I would be involved with books, bottom drawers, junk, and dust. Well, I was, but it soon became clear that there was a lot more to it than that. Like Topsy, it sort of ‘grewed’.

For example, the Headmaster would say to me, ‘Berwick, I have to make a speech to an Old Boys’ dinner next week. Dig me out something about the early days of rugby in the school, please.’ So I did.

Or the School Press Officer would ask me to provide a little documentary background to something she wanted to do for the local paper. Or a member of staff would request some material on a historical topic for one of his classes.



Brian Aldiss and his OBE, June 2005. Photograph courtesy of West Buckland School Archive.

This set me thinking: if I was going to make the Archive a going concern, I needed to develop what the experts call an ‘image’, or a ‘profile’. I had to make people aware that the Archive was there. And a way to do that was opening up. So I started taking assemblies; I put regular bulletins on the Common Room notice board; I took the initiative in providing more material for the local press – about school celebrities, unusual coincidences, and anniversaries.

Our Press Officer was successful in extending our press coverage, so people started reading more about us. One of those new readers was somebody connected with the television industry. He was involved with a programme

called ‘Collectors’ Lot’. As the title suggests, it was about collections. They could be collections of anything – match-boxes, Dinky cars, teddy bears, ancient foundation garments – I suspect, the more outré the better.

Anyway, this BBC person got the idea that what was in the West Buckland Archive might provide ammunition for another ‘collection’, and he approached the School about a possible programme.

It was just as well that we didn’t get too excited. For a start it wasn’t going to be a whole programme, just part of a programme, and not a very big part at that. And it wasn’t going

“
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”

to be enough for the School
Archivist to take the viewer on a
guided tour of the School's most
attractive memorabilia. We had
to have a celebrity. Did we have a
celebrity on the books?

Yes, we did – Brian Aldiss, the
writer. Good.

The team duly arrived – the
cameraman, the 'other-duties'
boffin, the Familiar Face as the
Presenter, and Brian Aldiss himself
(whom they had persuaded to
come to Devon all the way from
Oxford – for a fee – they didn't
offer one to the School Archivist).
I was asked to lay out a selection
of our collection on a large table in
the School library, with a carefully
angled background of venerable
bookshelves groaning under the
weight of suitably impressive
tomes. While I was doing this,
Brian Aldiss was interviewed about
his time at the School, and he took
the Presenter round the older
buildings that he remembered.

When it came to my turn, I joined
the Presenter and cameraman
before the bookshelves, and was
asked questions about the history
of the School and about the

Archive and its genesis. Then, to
my horror, and with the camera
still running, he said, 'Now talk
about what you have on the table.'

I said, 'What – just like that?'

'Just like that.'

'Suppose I make a mistake.'

He saw the look on my face, and
leaned forward.

'Mr. Coates, when our editors have
finished with what you have said,
believe me, it will be seamless.'

So that's what we did. It is difficult
to estimate or remember how
long I spoke for. When I had
finished, the Presenter got up and
left me to the cameraman, who
needed some close-ups of the
documents and other things I had
referred to in my – what shall we
call it? – my 'address'.

And that was it.

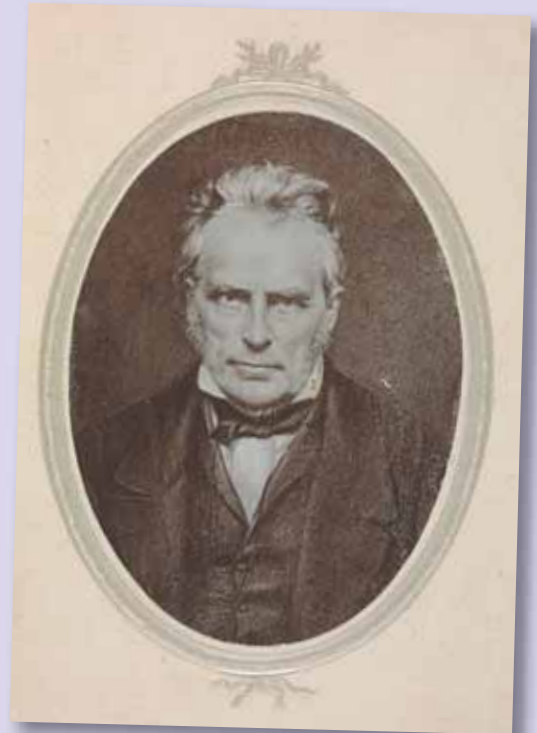
When the programme went out,
it was a third or fourth part of a
half-hour slot – on a weekday
mid-afternoon – so peak viewing.
The Presenter set the scene. Brian
Aldiss got the lion's share, with
his reminiscences. The Archivist
was introduced and given some
cursory questions. Then I did my
piece, such as it was. The rest of
the time was taken up with the
Presenter nodding at carefully
spaced intervals, and with
some splendid close-ups of the
Archivist's index finger.

Fame indeed.

.....
Berwick Coates

.....
West Buckland School, Devon
.....

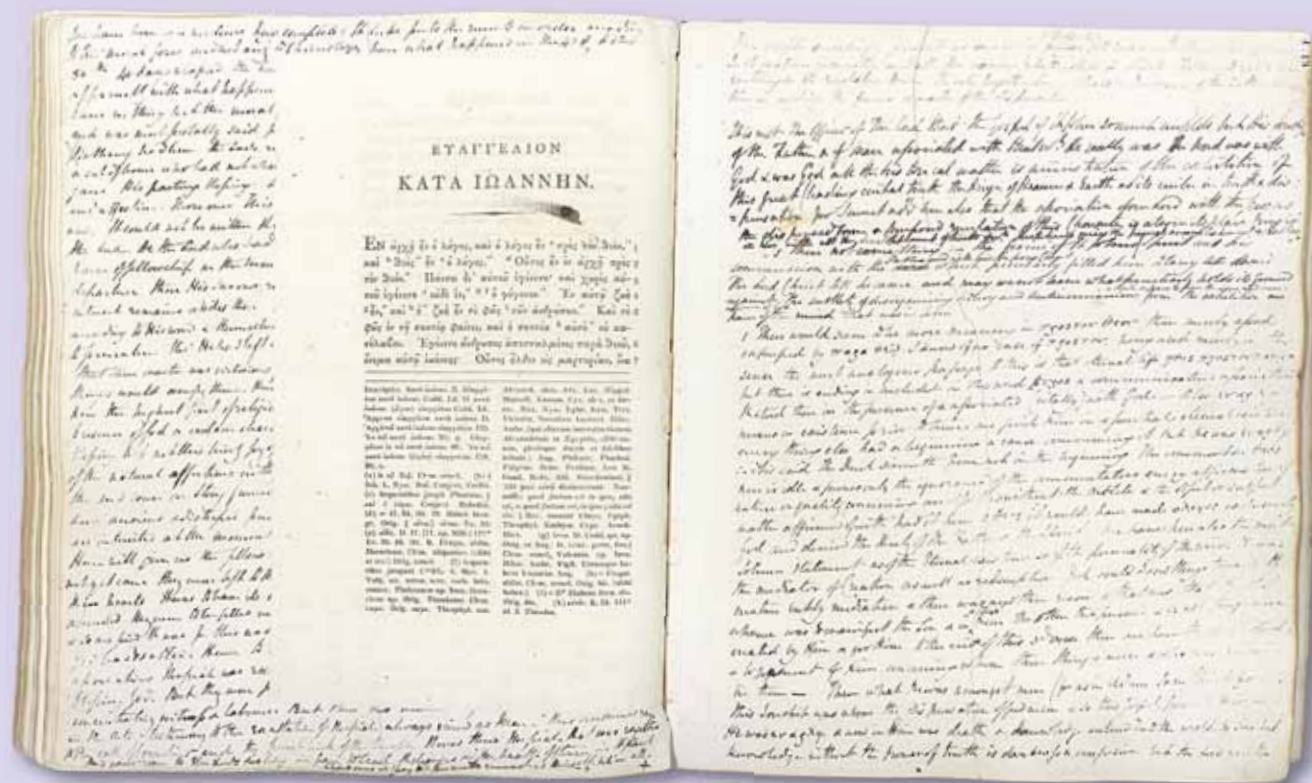
Digitising John Nelson Darby



John Nelson Darby. Reproduced by courtesy of the University Librarian
and Director, The John Rylands Library, The University of Manchester

The John Rylands University Library
in Manchester is particularly rich in
resources relating to the history of Protestant
Nonconformity. An important component of
this is the 'Christian Brethren Archive', which
is probably the world's foremost collection of
material relating to the history and practices of
those better known as the Plymouth Brethren.
The Papers of John Nelson Darby are one of the
highlights of this collection.

The papers of this highly influential thinker
and preacher were acquired by the Library
in 2002. They include a large scrapbook of
personal memorabilia, documents relating to
important events in Darby's life, detailed notes
of lectures and sermons by Darby and others,
and extensive correspondence. It also contains
Darby's personal annotated Bible, but most
importantly it contains his personal copy of the
Greek New Testament published in 1818. Darby



Digitised image from Darby's Greek New Testament. Reproduced by courtesy of the University Librarian and Director, The John Rylands Library, The University of Manchester

had this book rebound into four large volumes interleaved with blank pages, most of which now contain detailed annotations in Darby's hand. As a result of generous donations from Trinity College Dublin (Darby's old college) and the Panacea Society, John Rylands has been able to digitise these detailed notes and make them available online.

Darby, who lived between 1800 and 1882, was a highly regarded Biblical scholar and preacher. After studying law in Dublin and London, he took up a career in the church, becoming ordained in the Church of Ireland in 1825. After a spell of preaching in a small rural parish in County Wicklow he became disillusioned with Anglicanism, and left to become one of the founders of the Plymouth Brethren. Following the breakup of the Brethren in the middle of the 19th century he became the first leader of the 'Exclusive Brethren'. He is best known as the populariser and systematiser of the scheme of Biblical interpretation known today as premillennial dispensationalism.

He developed a distinctive reading of the

Bible, which focused on the 'end times', the 'ruin' of the church, the prophetic importance of Israel, and the 'rapture' of the 'saints' or true believers at the point of Christ's return. This system was incorporated into the much used study and reference Bibles of Cyrus Scofield in the early years of the 20th century, and became a major influence on modern fundamentalist Christianity, especially in the United States. Darby was a prolific writer on Biblical themes and translated the Bible into English, French and German. His writings are still in print, and are surprisingly popular today (try an online search for 'John Nelson Darby' or 'premillennial dispensationalism').

The digitisation was carried out by the Centre for Heritage Imaging and Collection Care (CHICC) at John Rylands, which has been involved in the production of a wide range of high quality digitisations in recent years, including the Library's Middle English Manuscripts, Persian manuscripts and the Genizah papyrus fragments. The images are hosted on the University's LUNA image management system, which means that these high quality images

can be viewed online and magnified to make Darby's notoriously difficult handwriting easier to read.

The project to digitise the New Testament was initiated by Dr Crawford Gribben of Trinity College Dublin, who has recently set up a Centre for Millennial Studies there, hosting among other things, a conference devoted to Darby and his works. The College provided



Darby's New Testament being digitised by CHICC. Reproduced by courtesy of the University Librarian and Director, The John Rylands Library, The University of Manchester



CHICC photographer James Robinson at work digitising the volumes. Reproduced by courtesy of the University Librarian and Director, The John Rylands Library, The University of Manchester

funds for the first two volumes to be digitised. The digitisation of the two remaining volumes was funded by the Panacea Society. This Society is a fascinating body devoted to the memory of Joanna Southcott the millennial prophetess (again, try searching for the Society online, and look up the page on Joanna – you will not be disappointed). The Society is a charity that funds educational projects, and is particularly interested in the publication and distribution of religious works associated with prophecy, which in this instance includes the work of Darby.

Virtually everything Darby ever wrote has been reproduced online by enthusiastic modern followers, but prior to the John Rylands digitisation project, the major absence was his extensive notes on the Greek New Testament. These are now available on the Library's website.

..... **Graham Johnson**

The John Rylands University Library: The University of Manchester
.....

St Werburgh's Church: Faith, Fabric and Future

A recent seminar organised by the Irish Landmark Trust focused on the unique church of St Werburgh and its diverse history and architectural development in inner-city Dublin. The day-long seminar provided an opportunity for the vast array of parish records now available in the Representative Church Body (RCB) Library – the Church of Ireland's record repository – to be introduced, and included a passionate plea by the vicar, Archdeacon David Pierpoint for public commitment to be secured to restore and improve this most unique of buildings and strategically-important place of worship. The safe custody of its records which tell its evolutionary story may help to underpin this aspiration.

Today, St Werburgh's is one of only two of the original medieval parishes in the area clustered around Christ Church cathedral in inner-city Dublin to continue as a place of worship. Whilst the other, St Audeon's, retains many of its medieval features, by contrast St Werburgh's reflects the optimism and stability of the mid-18th century that gave rise to its re-building at that time. As a Georgian gem, it remains a most important part of the city's fabric, and with records spanning from the 13th century to the present, St Werburgh's is one of the best documented of Dublin's city churches.

Most of these records have been extensively catalogued and are available for public consultation in the RCB Library, and the full catalogue list, together with a historical introduction to the parish and a selection of images of the records is available online at www.ireland.anglican.org.

The relevance of these records goes far beyond the Church of Ireland and enables important aspects of Dublin's social history during a long period to be reconstructed. For example, St Werburgh's proximity to Dublin Castle – the centre of British rule and official seat of the royal representative in Ireland, the lord lieutenant – was key to its prominence in the city's historical geography. Its two principal thoroughfares were and are Castle Street (which took its name from the castle)



John Cahill (Senior Conservation Architect at the Office of Public Works), Paul Arnold of Paul Arnold Architects (conservation architects for the current phase of restoration at St Werburgh's), Dr Eddie McParland, (Irish Landmark Trust), Canon David Pierpoint (Archdeacon of Dublin and Vicar of St Werburgh's), Dr Susan Hood (RCB Library), and Eric Parry (Parry Architects London).

and St Werburgh St (which took its name from the church). Both enjoyed the protection of the Castle. The original entry via drawbridge to the castle from Dublin was situated on Castle Street, while at the southern end of adjoining St Werburgh Street was one of the original gates into the medieval city – the “Pole gate”. From at least the 16th century, the Main City Guard was located right beside the church, from where entry into the old city was controlled.

The strategic location of St Werburgh's next to the Castle gave it a special significance in relation to the seat of official government in Ireland, and links between Castle and parish church become a recurrent theme in the minutes of the vestry. In 1733, for example, a resolution is passed to set up a flag on the steeple of the church which was to be ‘displayed everyday that the flag of the Castle of Dublin was displayed’. Contemporary visual images of the Upper Castle Yard show clearly the church's steeple bearing such a flag, while at the turn of the 19th century security concerns for the Castle seem to

have determined the removal of the church's steeple to prevent its use by insurgents. The six-peal of parish bells erected in 1748 were rung for official Castle events, and important anniversaries in the life of the city. A random mid-18th century bill to the vestry for ringing details the following events between October 22nd and 5th Nov. 1754: ‘22nd Oct. King George the second crowned; 23rd Oct. the Irish Rebellion, Novrb the 4th King William 3rd born, 5th Nov Gunpowder plot’. Later, when the sitting viceroy of Ireland, the Earl of Nugent, died in 1788, the bells of St Werburgh's tolled as his body was conveyed out of the Phoenix Park, and along with the bells of St Andrew's Church and Christ Church cathedral, rang the ‘mournful peal’ for 16 consecutive days.

The St Werburgh's seminar included an inspiring presentation by Eric Parry of Parry Architects, London, about the magnificent restoration of St Martin-in-the-Fields church and its social outreach, in central London, which might provide a model for St Werburgh's to follow in Dublin. The day concluded

when Archdeacon Pierpoint presented to the RCB Library further St Werburgh's records which have recently come to light in parish custody. These relate to former parish properties, and will augment the already large quantity of deeds and leases in the collection. The new items include a lease for a property on the south side of St Stephen's Green and another on Blind Quay, as well as various properties once within the parish which have not survived the ravages of time, such as Cuckoo Lane and Hoey's Court. From medieval times, the parish of St Werburgh acquired such properties to provide it with a source of income, but unfortunately these leases and revenues have long since expired.

Representative Church Body Library, Dublin

of Parliament intituled an Act for the
more effectual Enlightening the City of
Dublin and the Liberties thereof) for
one Year commencing the first day of
September 1784.

Calculated at the rate of five pence
by the Pound Ster. of the Valuation for
Watch money paid by the said Par-
ish.

Globes Registered pursuant to the Act

1	Woollen Ware House	Castletown
2	W. Morris	Parliament Street
3	W. Tuite	Do
4	Thos. Todd Faulkner Esq.	Do
5	Silk Ware house	Do
6	W. Walsh	Essex Street
7	M. Hopton Scott.	Grane Lane
8	W. Hackett	Do
9	Messrs. Latouche	Castletown
10	W. Arthur Johnson	Doyle Court

Charity Archives: Liability or Asset? WRVS and the UNESCO Memory of the World Register

When is a charity archive a liability and when is it an asset? While historians and archivists will inevitably and enthusiastically defend the notion that they are always an asset, convincing those who are apathetic or who have no interest in history, that they are not a liability, has always been one of our most fundamental challenges. Charities perhaps have a unique balancing act to perform. Can Trustees justify the use of donated money to keep their archive if it means that they will be taking money away from delivering front line services? Archives are in many cases, some may say rightly, at the very bottom of the list of priorities.

We are all advocates for the value of our collections, but even if we have one of the most historically important and fascinating collections in the country, sometimes tipping the balance and convincing people of this importance and value is an uphill struggle. There is now one more tool in our armoury: the UNESCO UK Memory of the World (UKMOTW) Register.

UNESCO's international Memory of the World Programme started in 2004, and its register includes a diverse selection of some of the world's most important documents, for example, the Magna Carta, and the film 'the Wizard of Oz', to name but two. The UK's national register was opened in July 2010, with the aim of raising awareness of some of the UK's exceptional, but lesser-known documentary riches by awarding them with the globally recognised Memory of the World status. The first 10 UK inscriptions included the WRVS/WVS Narrative reports: 450,000 reports covering 50 years and the entire UK, written by ordinary women about their extraordinary work for their communities.

WRVS (formerly the Women's Royal Voluntary Service) first established an archive in 1958, as part of preparations for its 21st Birthday. Its purpose was to provide the Publicity department with information



Opening of the WRVS Archive & Heritage Collection Volunteer Project, 2008

and statistics about the achievements of the organisation, both for the celebration and in more general marketing capacities. However, by the 1990s and with the transformation of WRVS into a charity, the archive seems to have lost all importance to the organisation and in 1997 was placed into warehouse storage with an uncertain fate.

Fast-forward 10 years and the situation had changed. After four moves in seven years, in and out of various self stores, and with a new part time archivist

“After four moves in seven years, in and out of various self stores, and with a new part time archivist appointed, the future looked brighter after a Heritage Lottery Fund supported report found the collection to be of ‘national significance’”

One of the WVS Narrative reports for Bristol Dec - Jan 1940/1941, which hold UK Memory of the World status

OFFICIAL REPORT *W.T. High* HEADQUARTERS. COPY *Report*

WOMEN'S VOLUNTARY SERVICES FOR CIVIL DEFENCE.

MONTHLY NARRATIVE REPORT.

CENTRE *Bristol* COUNTY *Gloucestershire* MONTH *Dec 1940*

This report should contain a statement of the activities of the Centre during the month and include information under any of the following headings which are appropriate:-

- (1) EVACUATION (a) General Position, numbers received and remaining, (b) Residential units, i.e. sick bays, maternity homes, nursery centres, children's homes, hostels, etc., (c) Communal Feeding, (d) Clothing schemes, (e) Leisure time activities - Adults, Children, (f) Any other activities.
- (2) A.R.P. (Including provision of shelter and amenities for the homeless after air raids). (3) TRANSPORT. (4) HOSPITAL SERVICES. (Including Nursing Auxiliaries, First Aid Lectures, Blood Transfusion Service, etc.).
- (5) CANTEENS. (a) Number of canteens (b) Authority under whom each canteen works (c) Number of helpers, paid/voluntary (d) Numbers fed per week (e) Type of food served. (6) HOSPITAL SUPPLY DEPOSITS AND WORK PARTIES. (7) MEETINGS. (8) SALVAGE. (9) OTHER ACTIVITIES.

HEADINGS. EVACUATION. Bristol our evacuees, only, dealt with from the office. 1) Many hundreds have been received & housed by the hands of the WVS. All are either rehoused, being with relatives or being cared for in hostels. The day can be found elsewhere. It is impossible to give the exact figures but the number dealt with runs into thousands. 2) There was a nursery school for children under 5 of distressed people have been opened, dealing with about 200 children at present. 3) Soup kitchens and Rest Centres opened all over the Town by the A.R.P. 4) Public Assistance Authority who have kind of help from WVS. One Mobile Canteen has fed, daily, hundreds of troops, denizens & A.R.P. men and distressed civilians. 5) Depots opened all over the Town by WVS, A.R.P. to distribute clothing & necessities & distressed people and a new office opened by WVS to deal with the increased volume of work. (New Palace, Queen's Square.)

2. A.R.P. Help has been given in every direction to the Shelter Marshall. Most of the clerical work has been done by WVS and Canteen & relief workers for the rest Centres. Also help in assembly of gas masks.

3. TRANSPORT. Many WVS members use their own cars for, in every transport purpose and are called upon frequently to supply cars and drivers for other organizations.

4. HOSPITAL SERVICE. Many WVS, aux. nurses have left the town with the rest of staff of the evacuated hospital in safer places. Most of the clerical work for the Blood Transfusion Service done by WVS. Clerical help supplied to the hospital as requested.

5. CANTEENS a) Canteen has number 12. b) These are run under the contract of Mr. Henry M.O.H. Munkley & others. WVS & are under the Regional Commission. c) No. of helpers (voluntary) 452 (paid) 1000 numbered for day 146. Mobile Canteen fed military & civ. population between 2,000 & 3,000 troops weekly. d) Type of food, varied & unvaried, not chosen at home canteen, other refreshment.

6. HOSP. SUPPLY DEPOSITS A new Hospital Supply depot opened, but the largest and most important one, that entirely in the hands of much valuable material and stores. This service still functioning admirably in spite of this.

7. MEETINGS WVS has co-operated with all other women organizations. Sign. a meeting monthly, at least in discussion. Signed..... (Centre Organizer).

8. SALVAGE Done mostly by Regional Office. TO BE COMPLETED IN TRIPLICATE AT THE END OF EACH MONTH. ONE COPY TO HEADQUARTERS, 41, TOTHILL STREET, LONDON, S.W.1. ONE COPY TO REGIONAL ORGANISER. ONE COPY TO BE RETAINED AT CENTRE.

IF FURTHER SPACE REQUIRED PLEASE USE BACK OF FORM.

9. OTHER ACTIVITIES. These include washing, mending, knitting, ironing, & other indoor activities for the supplying clerical staff & A.R.P. organizations. Civil bodies. Supply of electrical help. Medical workers & nurses needed. Ambulance crew & mending mobile canteens. Collecting for, & camp meals etc. The Ambulance Service covers innumerable activities with the members own initiative.

appointed, the future looked brighter after a Heritage Lottery Fund supported report found the collection to be of ‘national significance’. After a concerted bout of internal advocacy, spurred on both by the favourable report and the renewed attention brought by our 70th anniversary year, the decision was made to invest in a development programme. This included the setting up of a volunteer project, the launch of a special archive fundraising appeal, and finally the relocation of the archive to a single dedicated location. Our objective was to make full use of our archive to help celebrate our 75th anniversary in 2013 and create a resource of ongoing value for everyone for the future.

Despite the fantastic progress, it was clear the task ahead of us was significant. With some 500 linear metres of uncatalogued and unlisted material to sort, further internal support and funding would be vital if we were to achieve the aim of running our collection to professional standards and making it an integral, useful and truly valued part of WRVS. While the 2007 report stated that the collection was of ‘national importance’ a lack of official recognition was proving a significant issue. However, the inscription of the WRVS/WVS Narrative reports on the UKMOTW Register in July 2010 proved a tipping point, delivering official recognition of the importance of the collection and changing the balance of opinion.

It gained WRVS significant regional and national media coverage and showed how the organisation's history is a significant asset not only to the UK, as an historical resource, but also to the organisation itself as a publicity tool.

The spotlight placed on the collection by the UKMOTW inscription significantly altered the organisation's understanding of its value and, most importantly, has given us the confidence to invest in our asset. For the first time we have been able to put in place policy documents for the care of our collection, increase staff hours and make a significant investment in staff training. Further planned investment this year in the creation of our catalogues and their launch online in 2012 will bring the archive back to its original purpose, raising awareness of the organisation as a whole, and helping us to deliver our core mission of helping older people.

You can find out more about the WRVS and its Archive & Heritage Collection by visiting www.wrvs.org.uk/about-us/our-history.

Matthew McMurray

WRVS Archivist



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The Liberal Jewish Synagogue Centenary

Honorary Archivist Bryan Diamond explains how records of The Liberal Jewish Synagogue helped with its centenary celebrations

The Liberal Jewish Synagogue (LJS) in St John's Wood, London (founded in 1911) is the oldest and largest (over 2,000 men, women and children) of more than 30 congregations belonging to Liberal Judaism, and arose out of the Jewish Religious Union (JRU). The synagogue was rebuilt on its 1925 site and reopened in 1991; and I have been the Honorary Archivist since the boxes came out of store in 1992.

The Archive holds records from the inception of the Liberal movement in 1902 and especially from the founding of our congregation in 1910. I wrote a note for the *LJS News* analysing when the Centenary was due: the Minutes show that in 1909 the JRU members felt that an actual congregation was needed; a Constitution was approved in October 1910; premises were found and the first service held in February 1911. The first membership form was signed in January 1912, and the first Annual General Meeting held in 1913. The Centenary Year is being celebrated from February 2011, beginning with a Centenary Service.

The Archive includes: prayer books and other liturgies over

the century; Council Minutes, which are the prime record of the congregation (indexes to these have been transcribed); Annual Reports which give a valuable quick picture of activities each year; the newsletter; papers relating to the cemetery from its first lease in 1914; applications for membership since 1912 (those from this date until the 1950s are now on a database); copies of some marriage records; extensive records of committees, the religion school, adult education, youth groups and the Womens' Society; press cuttings from 1902 and ephemera; and sermons from 1911. There is also a collection of photographs of the congregation and the buildings dating from our first synagogue in Hill Street in 1912 to the present time. More recently there are many digital photos, unprinted.

The Centenary exhibition charts the events leading up to the establishment of the LJS from the years 1898 to 1913.. It provides a rare opportunity to see material drawn mainly from the LJS Archive, and was organised by member Eric Rowan.

Visitors discover who the synagogue's pioneers were, why they felt the synagogue was needed, and what drove them



The 1925 synagogue building frontage



Centenary Service Liturgy cover

to persevere, even in the face of hostility from elements of the wider Anglo-Jewish community.

Highlights include works written by its early leaders, starting with a page of Lily Montagu's 1898 handwritten draft of her influential article about the need for a new form of Judaism. There is a commentary on the Bible written by Claude Montefiore for parents and children, that was a text book used in early Religion Classes. The exhibition concludes with an extract from the inspiring inaugural sermon of its first minister, Israel Mattuck. According to a report in the *Jewish Chronicle*, 10 February 1911, about 250 people attended the first service, of whom 'probably at least 200 were women'. The *Jewish World* described Claude Montefiore's sermon as 'striking'.

Also on display are one of the first prayer books, a copy of the first entry in the synagogue's marriage register and contemporary press coverage of the very first service.

A history of the synagogue by Pam Cox, called 'A Place to Call My Jewish Home: Memories of The Liberal Jewish Synagogue, 1911-2011', is to be published in November. It has been largely based on interviews, transcripts of talks, and other oral history materials that have been gathered over the last two decades. It will recount the history illustrated by people's memories. For this project, the LJS archive has provided memories, anecdotes and historical details taken from letters, memoirs, newsletters, etc. Annual Reports and Council Minutes have been particularly helpful for the checking of facts. Although one of the attractions of oral history materials is that people remember things in different ways, sometimes their memories are not infallible. With the aid of archive material, the author has been able to ensure that the history book contains no major inaccuracies. Photographs and pictures of documents have also been reproduced and will enhance the text.

Other uses of the Archive included drawing on material, especially the photographic collection, for a special issue of *LJS News*. And most notably, the Centenary service liturgy included part of Isaac Mattuck's inaugural sermon from 1911.

.....
Bryan Diamond

The Liberal Jewish Synagogue
.....

A Guide to Archival and Related Standards

Standards applicable to archives; for the digital delivery of repository guides, finding-aids, and images of material from collections.

Title

UNESCO Thesaurus

Name of Standards Developing Organisation

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)

Current version

UNESCO Thesaurus, available as part of UNESBIB Bibliographic Database 2008 on CD-ROM. ISBN 978-92-3-004093-2 or searchable online at <http://databases.unesco.org/thesaurus/>.

Replaces

UNESCO Thesaurus: A Structured List of Descriptors for Indexing and Retrieving Literature in the Fields of Education, Science, Social and Human Science, Culture, Communication and Information (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 1995; ISBN 92-3-003100-3; 2nd edition).

Abstract

The UNESCO Thesaurus is a controlled and structured list of subject terms covering broad areas of knowledge. It enables subjects to be expressed consistently across different datasets and services that use it.

Description

Subject indexing can provide a way to represent the significant subjects associated with collections in a way that helps users to discover them. It enables users to cross-search more effectively by subject. A user can undertake a subject search in order to limit their results to only those collections that are significantly related to the subject. Other possible advantages include the ability to provide links to related subjects through a browse function, and the ability to be more innovative with linking to other kinds of data through subjects.

For archivists, there are a number of options available for selecting subject terms to use. The UNESCO Thesaurus is one, and the other general thesauri are the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) and the UK Archival Thesaurus (UKAT), discussed in the July 2011 edition of *ARC*. There are a number of other thesauri that are more subject specific, such as the Medical Subject Headings (MeSH).

The UNESCO Thesaurus was first published in 1977. The second edition was published in 1995. It is currently published as a CD-ROM and available from UNESCO publishing, but it can also be searched via the UNESCO website: <http://databases.UNESCO.org/thesaurus/>.

The thesaurus is used for the resources available in the UNESCO Documentation Network (UNESDOC), the database of the organisation's documents and publications.

The UNESCO website provides an alphabetical display and a hierarchical display for the thesaurus.

If you enter a search term in the alphabetical search, you can see that the UNESCO Thesaurus links terms together in a number of ways.

Firstly, it provides broader and narrower terms. Thus, you can search for 'musicians' and see this in the context of the broader 'parent' term of 'performers' and the more specific narrower term of 'composers'. A search for a very broad term such as 'biology' provides a long list of narrower terms. This helps you to pinpoint the term that is most appropriate for you to use to index your collection.

Secondly, it provides associative relationships, showing similar or related terms. 'Musicians' is related to 'music', for example, and 'botany' is related to 'zoology'.

Thirdly, it steers you from 'non-preferred terms' that are not part of the thesaurus, to 'preferred terms' that are. A search for 'medicines' refers you to 'drugs' as the preferred term.

Using the hierarchical display provides you with access to the 'microthesauri'. These relate to seven major subject domains. For example, the subject domain of 'Culture' includes religion, history, visual arts and performing arts as microthesauri. The display of these smaller thesauri is identical to the main display, allowing you to browse around the terms provided.

Other features of the thesaurus include:

- Scope notes for some terms, though many do not include this. For example, 'biotechnology' is described as 'Utilization of biological organisms, processes and systems to make or modify products, to improve plants or animals, or to develop microorganisms for specific uses.'
- French, Spanish and Russian equivalents of English terms
- Links to resources catalogued in the UNESDOC database, which may be of help in showing how the subject terms are used to index a range of resources.

The UNESCO Thesaurus provides a number of advantages: it is a large thesaurus, it is continually updated and it reflects European history and culture. It is easy to use – you can just enter search terms and use the navigation through broader and narrower terms to find the appropriate subject.

It may not meet all the needs of archivists in the UK. The thesaurus was not developed with archives in mind, which is why you may find the UKAT thesaurus, specifically developed for the archival community, more appropriate. But it does strike a balance between comprehensiveness and complexity. The Library of Congress Subject Headings enables you to be significantly more specific, but they can be difficult to apply.

Next month

Next month we will look at MARC 21, a standard for the representation and communication of bibliographic information in computer-readable form, and its application to archives.

.....
Jane Stevenson

The Archives Hub, Mimas, University of Manchester
.....

The Archivist's Retracting Universe

Our anonymous correspondent worries about archivists not standing up for themselves

In 1948, when the School of Archives opened at University College London, the prospects for the profession looked rosy. For the next 30 - 40 years this continued to be the case. Yet already some portents could be discerned. The London course was tacked on to librarianship and the later Liverpool University course on to history. No Ecole des Chartes or Marburg for Britain. The profession was ancillary to other, more important, disciplines – historical research, librarianship, museum management, teaching, and, much later, information science.

Yet archive management is a discipline in its own right requiring special skills and experience not casually acquired. Archivists are expert at coping with large masses of data and recognizing their significance and the internal structure relating to origin and purpose. They reveal the inner meaning of data in a critically analytical manner. They are, or should be, natural enemies of mythology and political agendas. Intellectual Freedom Fighters in fact with a meticulous dedication to truth. Archivists understand evidence as doctors understand illness or astronomers the cosmos. Neither discipline is immediately accessible to outsiders and both have to translate for the benefit of the ordinary citizen. British archivists have not been good at that and confuse personal amiability and social inclusion, as exemplified by outreach activities, as the equivalent of engaging seriously with their audience. Where is the Brian Cox of archives?

This is not to say that Verne Harris, Randall Jimerson, Terry Cook and their like have not got important things to say to the profession. They certainly have, but all too often the professional response is to throw up our hands and abdicate responsibility. I recently heard a group of experienced archivists telling me that archives had no chance of standing on their own but had to boot strap

on to more popular activities. I could not believe my ears. The curse of Jenkinson on all such! An earlier piece in this series pointed out that archivists are the most important people in the world. Quite so, but they are incorrigibly reluctant to accept the fact. Nor have the training schools helped by adopting an almost apologetic stance for their temerity in wasting public money on such a useless academic enterprise as creating archivists. Can we imagine the French, the Germans, the Americans taking such a view?

Of late archivists have been assailed by all kinds of inimical pressures and have not been noticeably good at resisting them. Records managers have usurped many of their functions, IT specialists have trumpeted dubious panaceas for ancient documentary retrieval problems, populist agendas have eroded the specialist expertise, and financial constraints have frozen the generous current of many an archivist's soul. In its 60 years existence the Society of Archivists failed to produce a public statement of the objectives, standards, and qualifications of a professional archivist. One only needs to look at the Information & Records Management Society, now elbowing archivists aside; the MLA, whose promotion of M and L at the expense of A became notorious; the Railway Heritage Committee's statutory powers transferred to a museum; the ludicrously misnamed The National Archives resisting every attempt to be so; the Archives & Records Association

dropping the honoured name of archivist and substituting a more comforting generic – why are we not the Association of Archivists and Records Managers? This is like a trade union inviting the employers to take over their organisation.

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