



Archives & Records
Association
UK & Ireland

May 2013

No: 285

ISSN: 1745-2120

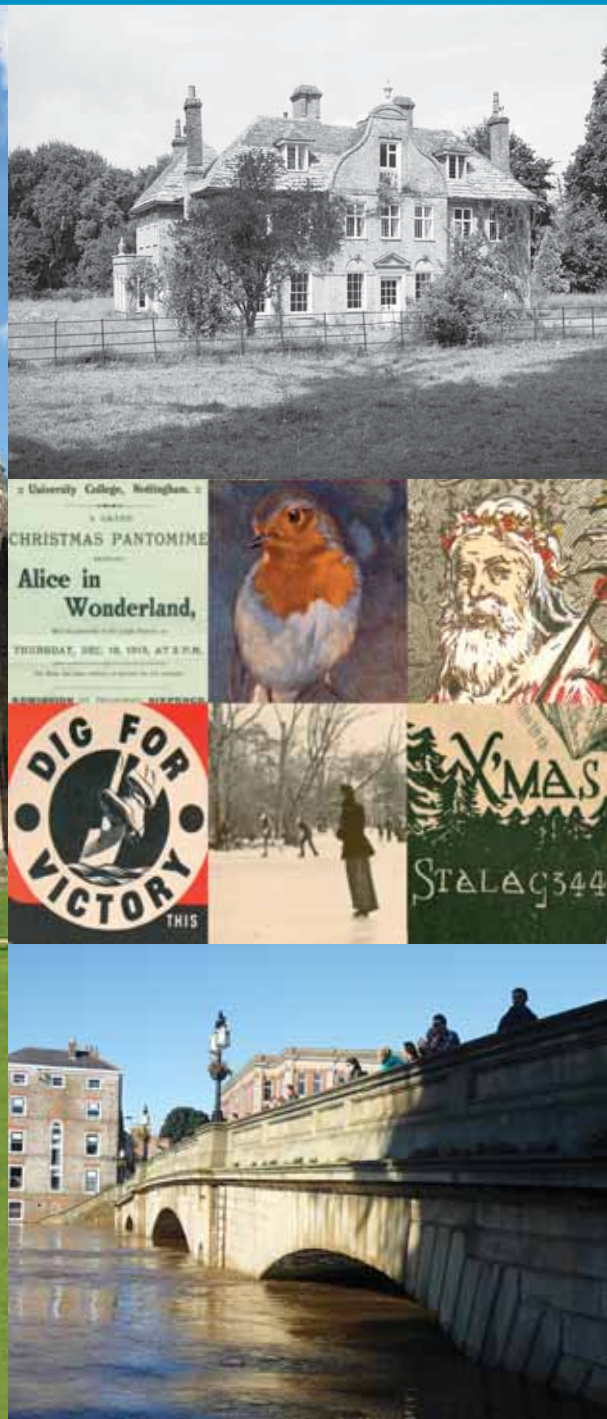
ARcmagazine

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We're working hard to improve the website and make it the one-stop-shop for everything you need to know about your Association and the archive and record-keeping world.

Read the latest news and views. And share some views of your own on the community pages. Forgotten your password? Send an email to membership@archives.org.uk – and you're ready to join in!



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WELCOME **ARC**



EDITORIAL

Welcome to the May edition of *ARC*. This edition is the first to focus on contributions from the Section for New Professionals. The articles offer fabulous insights from a new professional's perspective as well as the perspectives of those who work with new professionals and cover a wide range of topics, from the advent of blogging, the use of new social media techniques and the future of archival education.

The articles give food for thought for all of us especially regarding the embracement of new technology. Archive professionals are often accused of "living in the past", but, as these articles show, as a profession we are actively trying out these new techniques to reach new audiences.

We also have articles looking at new approaches to cataloguing and the direction of volunteers as case studies.

As usual feedback is always welcome!

Happy reading.

**Sarah Norman, Ceri Forster, Rose Roberto,
Ellie Pridgeon and Richard Wragg**

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New Professionals cover images:
Left: Alnwick Castle, by Dalekwidow.
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Some of the digitised images from the blog, used as the University of Nottingham's Christmas card.
High flood levels in York, 27 September 2012: Image courtesy of City of York Council.

ARC Magazine is the monthly publication that is published by the Archives & Records Association (UK and Ireland)

Prioryfield House
20 Canon Street
Taunton
Somerset
TA1 1SW
Tel: 01823 327030

Registered Company No: 2969472

Registered Charity No: 1041063

Registered Charity in Scotland No: SC041674

Advertising enquiries to:

**anu@cabbell.co.uk
or phone Anu Kaplish on
0203 603 7931**

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DISCLAIMER

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Opening Lines

Dr Melinda Haunton is part of the Archive Sector Development team at The National Archives. She is Programme Manager for Archive Service Accreditation and has spent the past year developing the new programme with the sector.



At the time of writing, I am looking at two texts which will be hugely important for the future of archives: the *Framework of Competencies* developed for ARA, and the *Archive Service Accreditation* standard. One standout point strikes me: their parallel structures, balancing organisational/management activity; collections work and user/stakeholder focus. This is no coincidence; the competencies were written with awareness of the proposed accreditation structure, and the fit between the two worked well. That three-sided definition of what we in the archives sector do seems to be key to understanding archives in the future.

Work on collections, whether collecting, description or preservation, remains at the core of our professional

identity. Understanding the unique nature of archives is our USP. But there is, or should be, more to archives work, and we do ourselves a disservice if we downgrade other aspects' importance.

Providing access to collections, whether to a broad range of users or for specialist/internal business use, is something archives have long prioritised. But new opportunities for developing access are growing, with options for digitised, remote and social media engagement. With activities new and old, we also need to be firmly stakeholder focused, making sure what we offer actually meets a need.

It is easy to overlook the importance of management and organisational issues in archives. Aren't we specialist professionals operating within our own expertise? Years of archive inspections have taught me that the single most revealing question about a service's prospects is, "How does this management structure work for you?" We have to work within the organisational structure, but we can still affect the way the archive is viewed by the parent organisation. Raising a service's profile, particularly highlighting good news stories, is always an opportunity. Offering value for money is vital: understanding what service delivery actually costs. How can we cut needless expense, such as preservation of marginal unappraised material? If we are approached for support with a community project, is our support costed and accounted for in grant applications?

The consultation on the *Framework of Competencies* asked whether the framework should be open to volunteers. Responses varied, and there was concern about differentiating roles suitable for volunteers. The PSQG Sub-Committee on Volunteering argues strongly that there is value in supporting volunteering and highlighting opportunities for personal development across the sector.

As with our definition of our professional skills, we have a tendency to identify tasks suitable for volunteers as focused around collections (indexing or repackaging are classic examples). But volunteers can surely add value to the other areas of our work. Supporting access to collections through one-to-one support for new readers is a model that has been tried in a number of services. Building on this, why not see more examples of volunteers developing remote services, building apps, giving talks? When it comes to service management, is there space for volunteers to participate in planning, helping to define organisational priorities and being recognised as a core part of how archive services deliver?

.....
Dr Melinda Haunton

The National Archives
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Collecting Matters

At this year's *UKAD Forum* hosted back in March by The National Archives, delegates from across the archive sector gathered to hear presentations on the theme of networking collections: www.ukad.org/forum2013/

These were individuals at different stages of their professional careers, working in different contexts, facing different challenges.

What brought them all together was an interest in opening up collections: managing and sharing them in such a way as to contribute to a network of archives to support research and reuse of all kinds.

The talks and presentations covered topics as diverse as understanding APIs and Linked Data; indexing and licensing digital records; building digital repositories and contributing to portals.

And nothing proved untouchable: the *ARA Section for Archives and Technology (SAT)* proposed a community approach to revisiting standards and making them fit for purpose in a digital environment. Don't miss your chance to join the debate and be involved: www.archives.org.uk/si-dsg/section-for-data-standards.html

Beyond the poster displays and panel sessions, there were opportunities for networking and making connections, for finding potential project partners or simply asking advice or guidance from colleagues with ideas or experience to share.

But the wider value of the day was its contribution to our continuing professional development, with a flow and exchange of new methodologies, new theories and approaches to take the profession confidently into the future where physical and digital will continue to co-exist in our collections and our collecting practices, at least for a few years yet.

So if we think about ourselves as *new professionals*, we can all help shape a *new profession*.

Cathy Williams, Head of Collections Knowledge

The National Archives

Registration Scheme News

New Enrolments

We welcome the following new candidates to the Registration Scheme and wish them good luck with their progress:

Hannah Jones

Archivist, Oxfordshire History Centre

Clare Walsh

Archivist, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur

Sophie Cawthorne

Museum & Archive Manager,
Wolverhampton Wanderers Football Club

Electronic portfolio submission

All things progress, even for a profession that has long been concerned with looking after paper and parchment. Increasingly, candidates' Learning Outcome Forms are concerned with digital projects - online outreach perhaps, or the implementation of an EDMS. So it is fitting that from April 2014 it will be expected that portfolios are submitted electronically.

The submission of portfolios electronically is quite a departure from the carefully assembled hard-copy versions currently received. With this in mind, we would like to ask your opinion. Are you working towards registration? Is the submission of an electronic portfolio an appealing prospect or will it present you with problems? Have you successfully submitted a portfolio? Would you have welcomed the chance to submit your portfolio electronically or not?

Please let us know if you have any comments or concerns. We welcome your feedback in order to ensure the transition is as smooth as possible.

CONTACTS:

General Registration Scheme Enquiries:

registrar@archives.org.uk

Registration Scheme Events Enquiries:

regschemeevents@archives.org.uk

Registration Scheme Admin and Bursaries:

regschemeadmin@archives.org.uk

Registration Scheme Communications Officer:

regschemecomms@archives.org.uk

Registration Scheme Mentor Queries and Advice:

regscheme Mentors@archives.org.uk

Richard Wragg

Communications Officer, Registration Sub-committee

Forthcoming Events - May 2013

British and Irish Sound Archives 2013 Conference and training event

Friday 17 and Saturday 18 May 2013

Manx Museum, Douglas, Isle of Man

For details please contact BISA secretary,
Jonathan Draper at jonathan.draper@norfolk.gov.uk
or go to www.bisa-web.org

The Archivist as Curator: exhibiting collections, from conception to realization

When: Thursday 23 May 2013, 10.30 - 17.00

Where: White Cube, 144-152 Bermondsey Street,
London, SE1 3TQ

Cost: Waged - £55 / Unwaged - £28

Speakers: Nayia Yiakoumaki, Archive Gallery Curator
Whitechapel Gallery; Fiona Orsini and Catriona
Cornelius, Curators RIBA Archives; Karyn Stuckey,
former George Bernard Shaw Photographic Project
Archivist, London School of Economics; David Lee,
Lecturer on Documentation, University of Leeds; and
Claire Smith, Curator of Posters and Designs, BFI.

This study day explores the practice of displaying
archive material in hard-copy and digital format, from
the conception of an idea/theme through to post
exhibition feedback and analysis. It covers how to
identify the most appropriate platform for display,
who to involve, how to select and prepare material,
promotion and feedback as well as a range of practical
concerns such as conservation, insurance, and
copyright.

For more information contact Adam Waterton at 020
7300 5740 adam.waterton@royalacademy.org.uk
or go to <http://www.arlis.org.uk/events.php>

Welcome to the New Professionals Issue

Welcome to the New Professionals issue of *ARC*. This is our
first issue of *ARC* and 'the gang' are delighted to have been
invited to contribute! We hope that the articles included here
demonstrate the enthusiasm and commitment that we as a section
have for the sector.

As a relatively new section we are still finding our feet, but have so far
succeeded in supporting new professionals in a number of ways. Our
major annual event is our Summer Seminar and we are pleased to
announce that the Section for New Professionals' [SFNP] third Summer
Seminar will be held on Friday 21 June at the New Register House
Dome, ScotlandsPeople Centre, Edinburgh. If you're interested in
attending, please save the date!

In this issue you will find a summary of new professionals' expectations
for the future of the profession, based on conversations preceding the
discussion of this topic at the ARA Conference 2012. Continuing to
look forward, we have a comparison of views on where the education
of new professionals is headed with contributions from a new
professional, lecturer and director. We then take a look at the career
development opportunities provided by volunteer placements for
both volunteers and employees involved in the management of these
placements.

We continue with an innovative project producing a catalogue for
medical case notes using EAD, and a description of the challenges
of setting up a digital repository and establishing an Electronic
Document and Records Management System for Northumberland
Estates. We also take a look at the use of social media in archives with
two pieces describing the use of blogging in archives for engagement,
education and transparency.

Finally we take a look at the use of social media by the archivist, with
an article on social networking and some crowd sourced comments
on the things that drive us to work as information professionals.

Enjoy!

.....
Emily Gresham

SfNP Publicity Officer
.....

The way forward for the sector according to new professionals

This article is a revised version of my opening remarks delivered in my capacity as the Chair of the SfNP during the discussion 'The Way Forward for the Sector' at the ARA Conference in Brighton, 2012. It reflects the views of new professionals canvassed from articles by stimulating authors including Jane Stevenson¹ and Bruce Dearstyne²; online debates including highly popular blog posts last summer³ and the Cardigan Continuum Twitter debate⁴; and a positive face-to-face debate at the SfNP Summer Seminar on 17 August 2012.

Other panellists at the ARA Conference included Oliver Morley, Simon Edwards, Geoff Pick and Piers Cain representing, respectively, The National Archives, CILIP, the ARA Board and the Chartered Management Institute.

Record-keeping professionals are challenged by the speed of advances in technology, the sharpening of public expectations, changes in legislative frameworks governing access to records and serious financial constraints. In response, professionals need to:

- acquire new skillsets and to keep them updated
- respond quicker to our current ever-changing environment
- foster collaboration with peers and related professionals

New skillsets are often associated with the digital environment. It seems that even encoding and web publishing can be handy nowadays. But skills like networking, marketing and communication are just as important to get our message across and to have the backing of people that matter to us.

Dynamism and flexibility are key competencies for our time as well. Nothing around us is static at all. So, the way we deal with challenges and find solutions also has to be dynamic. We know that there is no one solution fits all out there and that no tailored solution is successful indefinitely. Practices, frameworks and ways of living are bound to change and to change quickly, and so must our mindset. As long as we keep the core of our fundamentals, vision and aims, embracing this changeability and adapting is the way forward.

Professionals should also promote cross-sector and peer collaboration. We can also learn from each other's innovative and successful stories [with reference to the LSE Archive work with born-digital material and 'Linking Lives' project by Archives Hub]. But also building partnerships and sustaining strong collaborative partnerships with professionals that can help us to deliver our services successfully.

Having said all that, some of my peers feel unclear about what is expected from the record-keeping professionals of the future. When so many new skills seem to be needed on top of traditional skills, it is difficult to know what we should concentrate on. It sometimes feels as if we are records jugglers. Perhaps specialism in particular areas may be a solution: some professionals will retain traditional skills, i.e. palaeography, and other will be confident with modern skills, such as encoding.

One thing we are aware of is that there is no escape from electronic tools and the digital landscape. What struck me during the discussion at the Summer Seminar is that new professionals believe

that there will be fewer jobs in the future where record keepers can avoid being computer literate. We also feel the need to get relevant skills so that we can perform effectively in such an environment. So, for this new generation of professionals embracing technology at a higher level is a leap that the sector has to take whether we like it, feel comfortable with it, or not.

The drive to get the sector stronger and more skilled should exist not only at top level but also amongst individuals as well. Our sector leader, The National Archives, and professional bodies, including the ARA, are leading the way forward. However, established and new professionals should play their part by getting used to getting out of their comfort zone and see these challenges as opportunities for professional growth and sector drive.

As the way forward the record-keeping community needs to get the right skillsets, share successes already achieved and join forces with professionals that can help us to achieve it. But, most importantly, we need to play a relevant role in developing the appropriate work conditions. As a professional community we need to extend ourselves beyond established practices and to all shape our surroundings and drive our sector forward.

Fabiana Barticioti

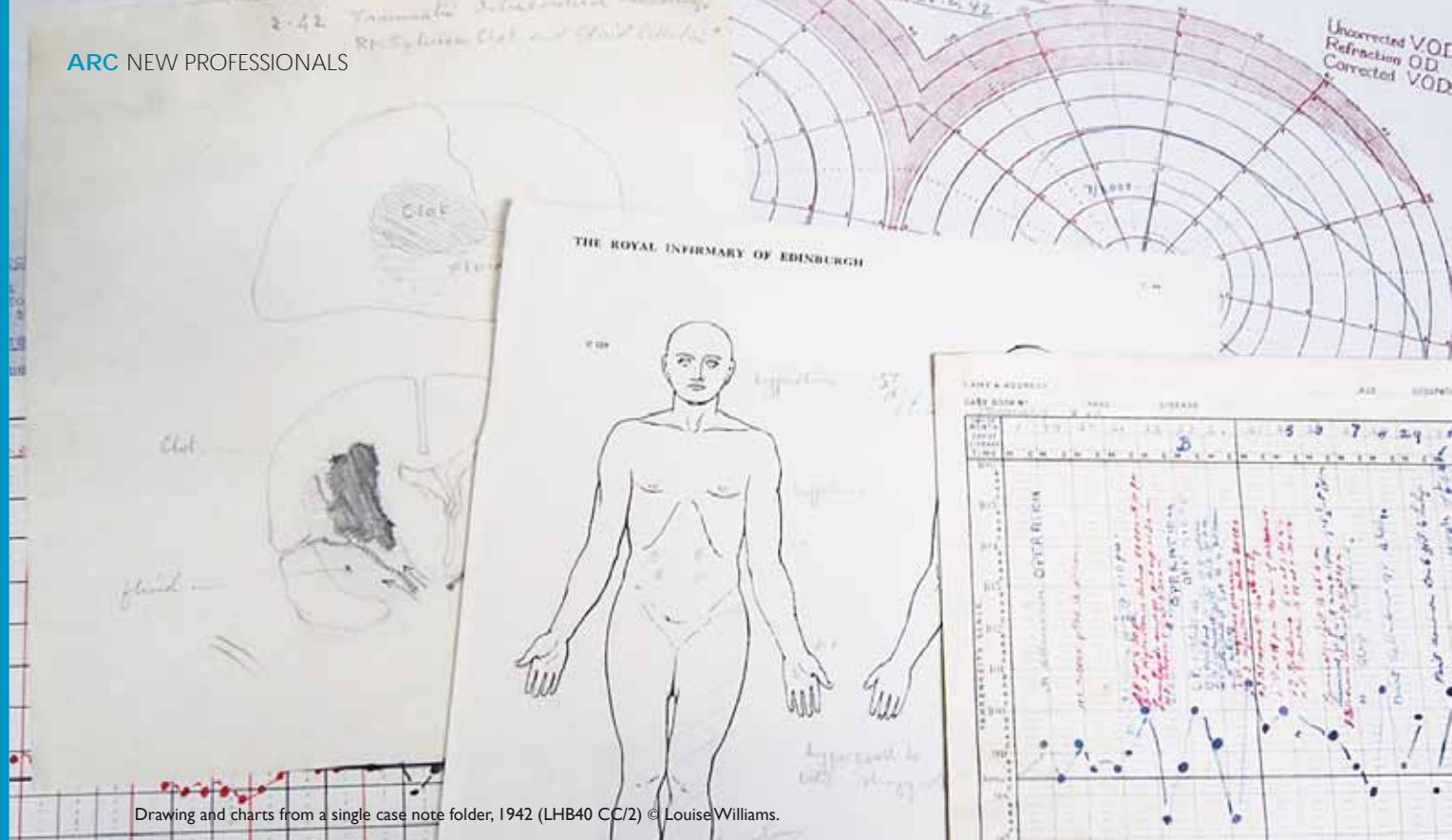
SfNP Chair

¹Jane Stevenson's blog post *The Modern Archivist: Working with people and Technology at Archives Hubs* (<http://archiveshub.ac.uk/blog/>)

²Dearstyne, Bruce W. *Leading Archives and Records Program: Issues and Sources in 'Leading and Managing Archives and Records Programs'*. Facet Publishing, London, 2008.

³Kate Theimer's blog 'Archivenext' *Honest Tips for Wannabe Archivists Out There* (<http://www.archivesnext.com/>) and Lance Stuchell's blog post *My Unsolicited Advice in 'New Archivist'* (<http://newarchivist.com/>).

⁴<http://thecardigancontinuum.wordpress.com/>



Drawing and charts from a single case note folder, 1942 (LHB40 CC/2) © Louise Williams.

New Approaches to Cataloguing Medical Case Note Collections

In September 2012, I began my role as Project Archivist at Lothian Health Services Archive (LHSA), University of Edinburgh. I am leading an innovative medical case note project, *Cataloguing the Neurosurgical Case Notes of Norman Dott (1920-1960)*, which is funded by the Wellcome Trust Research Resources in Medical History scheme. Over 26,000 folders of Dott's case notes will be catalogued to item level using the Encoded Archival Description (EAD) standard inside an XML editor. An online finding aid will be launched in summer 2015, enabling searches by particular categories of information, such as medical condition or age, whilst at the same time protecting patient privacy.

Throughout his career, Norman Dott (1879-1973) fought for neurosurgery to be recognised as a medical specialism in Scotland. He opened Scotland's first neurosurgery department in the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh in 1938 and was instrumental in the development of the Department of Surgical Neurology in Edinburgh's Western General Hospital, which opened with 60 in-patient beds and a full range of diagnostic and therapeutic facilities in 1960. Dott was also a pioneer in surgical practice, particularly in the diagnosis and treatment of intracranial aneurysms ('bulges' in the brain's blood vessels due to weakness that can develop in their walls). He was the first to both treat the condition operatively (1931) and to use x-ray techniques in its diagnosis (1933).

Without known precedent in the UK medical archives sector, the project will provide a gateway to resources that have been significantly under-used in clinical, medical humanities and genealogical research. A lack of item-level cataloguing combined with legislative restrictions on access, specialist medical terminologies and, often, the large number of individual records in case note series can leave researchers without a 'way in' to these historically significant collections. By using EAD to create the catalogue, I am able to tailor descriptions to the specialist characteristics of the case notes (in terms of medical vocabularies and document types, for example) and respond to the needs of different groups of potential users by 'marking up' specific data for online search. Moreover, the methodologies used in this project can be disseminated in future case note cataloguing work both within LHSA and in other archives with medical collections.

Since the majority of the case notes with which I work are closed under the Data Protection Act (1998) and the Scottish Government Records Management: NHS (Scotland) Code of Practice Version 2.1 January 2012, safeguarding the anonymity of individual patients is a primary concern. EAD attributes combined with enhanced security measures will conceal information that identifies patients in the public version of the catalogue, enabling users to access other,



Louise and some attendees at an LHSA seminar at the University of Edinburgh, February 2013. © Louise Williams.

non-confidential aspects of the case notes. The full version of the catalogue will be available to legitimate researchers following successful application to the NHS Lothian Health Records Manager via LHSA.

Some may expect case notes to be dry, formulaic documents, but nothing could be further from the truth. Whilst most folders do contain typed case summaries (a blessing in creating a structure for catalogue entries), they also house a variety of charts, teaching materials, photographs, x-rays, correspondence and surgical sketches. In this project, the case notes not only build a picture of an impressive surgical career, but fill in social contexts behind ground-breaking medical treatments.

This is my third project role since graduating from the University of Glasgow's MSc in Information Management and Preservation (Digital) in 2011. A combination of volunteer placements in medical archives, practical experience with XML encoding acquired during my professional qualification and work on two short-term archive projects has stood me in good stead for my current role, which not only involves cataloguing, but also analysis of complex record types, catalogue design in EAD, consultation with potential researchers and outreach and communication activities. Not only am I acquiring skills in the management

of long-term projects that will be invaluable for the future, but I am also getting to grips with the digital cataloguing environment and the potential that it holds for increased access to archives that have traditionally been difficult to open up to researchers.

Would you like to get involved in the project? Volunteer opportunities are available to those who would like to increase their practical experience of EAD, a valued skill for aspiring archivists in a digital age. For further information on volunteering, please contact Serena Fredrick, Student Support Officer, Centre for Research Collections, on: Serena.Fredrick@ed.ac.uk or 0131 651 1438. For more details on the project itself, please contact Louise Williams: Louise.Williams@ed.ac.uk or 0131 6511720.

Resources

Project webpage: <http://www.lhsa.lib.ed.ac.uk/projects/Cataloguingcasenotes.htm>

LHSA blog: <http://lhsa.blogspot.co.uk/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/lhsa.edinburgh>

Twitter: @lhsaeul

Louise Williams, Project Archivist, LHSA

University of Edinburgh

Why I love what I do...

Recently the New Professionals stumbled across a blog post by one of our own: an archivist who was taking her first steps into the profession after completing the course. The last paragraph of this entry was full of her excitement at each new thing she was asked to do, how she knew it was the profession for her and ended with “being an archivist is awesome!!!”¹ She inspired us too, after all, we were all there once and we all have different reasons for why we love what we’ve chosen to do. It’s all very well us telling you why we love our jobs but with the magic of social media you, our members and followers can give us your opinions, so we asked you to reply via Twitter or facebook with your #wilwid – why I love what I do...

@KatharineES: @newarchivists Student just came into the archive and took a deep breath. “Ah, they should bottle that smell,” she said. #wilwid

@laurajbrown: @newarchivists #wilwid constantly learning & discovering, & getting other people interested in archives

@fionabkearney: @newarchivists #wilwid Realising RM/IM is more interesting and fun than the theory would lead you to believe!

@nicoleschu: @newarchivists I deal with a lot of people, get involved in many projects, keep learning new things and sometimes see...

@nicoleschu: @newarchivists in only 140 characters? I love RM because it is diverse, always different and spans across all organisation

Jane Mycock via fb: I love to practically handle something tangible from history & be that bridge to researchers & help them to build knowledge about the world

Nicolas Moretto via fb: I like the new and old aspects of it, its connection to history, but also the change, with the growing importance of the digital and the breaking down of old borders

David Morris via fb: Put simply, variety! I go to work knowing I can do something different every day. We cover every walk of life and it’s a privilege to work there

Committee tweets

@joNorledge: @newarchivists I love the little discoveries that amuse me, like this one: came across a whole pamphlet on SATAN in the archive.

@emilygresh: @newarchivists #wilwid I work with staff at all levels, solve problems and think creatively about how we can encourage RM buy-in

@polkadotsquare: @newarchivists #wilwid the urge to speak in hushed tones in reverence to the collections around you

@polkadotsquare: @newarchivists #wilwid that feeling of being at home in amongst documents that haven’t been seen by anyone else for decades

@FBarticioti: @newarchivists #wilwid I really enjoy seeing my descriptions online and creating them, of course

@FBarticioti: @newarchivists #wilwid I love working with and promoting papers/ docs/ records/ archives of people/ artists I admire

Jill Veitch

¹Babyarchivist, (2012) Archive Days are Fun Days, available at <http://babyarchivist.wordpress.com/2012/10/01/archive-days-are-fun-days/> (accessed Feb 2013)

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3. Error Checkers

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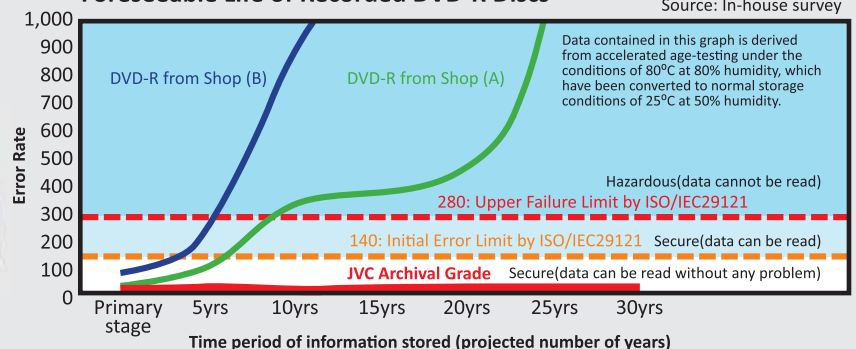
*1 **ISO/IEC10995**: International standard defining the test method to estimate DVD-R longevity

*2 **ISO/IEC29121**: International standard defining the safe level of error rates at the time of writing and during storage



Foreseeable Life of Recorded DVD-R Discs

Source: In-house survey



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The Future of Archival Education:

Part 1 - a New Professional's view

Summer 2012. The Jubilee. The Olympics. I barely noticed them, because, after two years' work experience and nine months' full-time study in Aberystwyth, I had finally qualified as an archivist. I'm now in my second professional post and preparing my MScEcon dissertation at weekends. Like many newly qualified archivists, I'm thrilled at officially 'making it' into the profession.

I'm also worried for the future. I chose full-time study over distance learning, hoping that comparatively faster qualification would lead to more job opportunities. Looking back, receiving a concentrated dose of integrated professional knowledge in the classroom really benefited me. Sadly, postgraduate education is expensive. I survived a postgraduate year by sacrificing my personal life and relying on my long-term savings, family assistance, and a bank loan I'll be paying off until 2016.

The 2013 tuition fees increase is a disaster for aspiring archivists. If I were starting now, I would find full-time study absolutely unaffordable. To be shortlisted for many archival jobs, recognised postgraduate qualifications are essential. The profession, therefore, risks permanently excluding talented individuals from less wealthy backgrounds. This isn't unique to our sector. A recent Sutton Trust report warned that UK professions increasingly require entrants with costly postgraduate qualifications, with a resultant downward social mobility trend as higher-paid jobs become concentrated among richer families (Lindley & Machin, 2013).

For me, creating a new archival qualification outside the common postgraduate system would be folly when the profession still struggles with visibility. Instead, I believe we'll see a cost-driven shift towards flexible distance learning, alongside paid and unpaid work, with subject modules that can also be taken as stand-alone certificates. This would serve qualified archivists' CPD needs, too.



Newly qualified archivist Matt Tantony.

Competent archivists need both practical experience and professional knowledge. Postgraduate education provides the latter. Perhaps archival qualifications should include short, must-pass exams in core fields like UK and EU information law, legal discovery, and information risk. Promoted in this way, employers can clearly see the value a qualified archivist would bring to their organisation's governance, and might be more willing to contribute to tuition fees.

Nevertheless, in today's crowded job market, specialist work experience is crucial. Since qualification, I've only been shortlisted for jobs whose duties and settings quite closely matched my pre-course experience (e.g. appraisal and cataloguing, business archives). At 28, I'm already in a professional niche, albeit a happy one. I wonder how typical my situation is among new archivists.

Matt Tantony, qualified archivist (2012)

Lindley, J. & Machin, S. (2013). The postgraduate premium: Revisiting trends in social mobility and educational inequalities in Britain and America. The Sutton Trust. Available from <http://www.suttontrust.com/research/the-postgraduate-premium/postgraduate-premium-report.pdf>

The Future of Archive Education:

Part 2 - a Lecturer's view

I think the future of archive education will involve greater definition around how we, as a profession, conceive of archive education and our own individual responsibility for it. I have only been teaching on a university based archives and records management programme for 3 years, but I feel that I have been involved in archive education since 1993, when I was fortunate enough to gain a paid trainee position in the Barclays Group Archives. Once qualified, my role in archive education continued, although it obviously changed slightly. In many ways I remained a student/a trainee, learning my craft and taking whatever options I could find or make for my own continuing professional development, but equally I started to support the development of others, talking to and managing potential entrants to the profession as they undertook voluntary work experience and taking seriously the clause in the code of conduct I signed up to as a Society of Archivists' member that;

Members must endeavour to develop their professional understanding and expertise, to contribute to extending the body of professional knowledge and to ensure that those whose training or activities they supervise are equipped to carry out their tasks in a competent manner.

Ultimately my desire to stay true to this principle led me to be a 'proper' student once again as I undertook a PhD in Archival Studies between 2007-2011 and it was this that led me in turn to the role that I currently inhabit, teaching on the programme I had previously undertaken to become qualified as an archivist. I recount this history not because I think it is particularly interesting in itself, but rather as a means to demonstrate that both all those in and all those seeking to enter the archives and records management profession are involved in archive education and have a role to play in shaping its future. Personally, I believe that university



Jenny Bunn is a lecturer at University College London.

“

Personally, I believe that university based programmes such as the one at UCL will continue to have a part in that future, but it will be only a part.

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based programmes such as the one at UCL will continue to have a part in that future, but it will be only a part. Other equally important parts will be supplied by the professional bodies, such as ARA with its work on competencies and CPD, initiatives to build alternative routes into the profession, such as the current Opening Up Archives project, and the efforts of all those individuals who continually seek to develop themselves and others. The future is always uncertain, but I am certain that it will be a lot rosier if all these parts work together with an eye to the bigger picture – the ongoing survival and, more importantly, relevance of the archives and records management profession.

Jenny Bunn, Lecturer

University College London

The Future of Archive Education:

Part 3 – a Director's View

A recent letter to the Museums Journal, printed under the title 'Stop Pretending There Are Jobs When There Aren't', contained a heartfelt plea to the museum profession from a new entrant, unable to secure paid employment in the sector:

"Give the young the chance. Nearly 90% of my class intake [2011-12] are unemployed... we have the relevant qualification and voluntary experience, but no-one will take a chance on us."

It went on:

"The museum sector needs to be more honest with its new recruits and tell us from the onset [sic] that the chance of a paid position in the field is highly unlikely."

It is a very difficult time financially and as someone responsible for both a museum and archive service I know how hard it is for those beginning their careers to obtain and then secure employment. Interviewing a couple of years ago for the intake on the MA/Diploma at UCL, I met a full range of people usually entering the profession with hope and having fought their own battles and overcome their own difficulties to get to this gateway to a professional career. The knowledge and enthusiasm of the candidates put me to shame on more than one occasion. But there is also the indisputable fact that jobs for recently qualified archivists and records managers are hard to find at present, as hard as they have been for a few years now, perhaps a more difficult period than we have seen for many years. And there are more of these newly qualified archivists and records managers completing recognised courses. So how can archive education help these hopefuls, and help employers get the skills they need.

Susan Davies recently wrote on Archives-NRA that 'today's postgrad students have a hard time because there is so much that is unfamiliar to them (and their supervisors!) and so much unmediated information.' What the employer needs is certainly very diverse: we at the British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA) are presently asking our archivists (in addition to their core archival and public service responsibilities) to work as



Adrian Steel is Director of The British Postal Museum & Archive.

building managers, fundraisers, press/PR liaison and spokespeople, contract negotiators, move planners, project managers, digital boffins, and much more.

It helps a great deal that archivists come to BPMA with the professional qualification under their belts. It provides a secure core grounding in key skills and is like a 'licence to drive' in the sector. But it is continuing development of these core skills, the acquisition of new skills, and above all a positive, flexible and engaged mindset – a 'can do' attitude – that makes an archivist employable at the start of their careers, especially at a time like this.

In general, those that have this outlook sell themselves, their core skills, and their way of working best to potential employers. My advice to newly-qualified and qualifying archive and records management professionals is to make sure you work on this mindset just as much as learning what your courses teach to improve your chances of employment. And if the courses can encourage the 'can do' attitude, amid all the professional knowledge and discipline it is essential to instil, so much the better.

Adrian Steel

Director, The British Postal Museum & Archive



The Manor House in Hinton St Mary, Dorset (1951) © Crown Copyright English Heritage

Volunteer Placements and Career Development at the English Heritage Archive

Applying for the post of Careers Officer for the Section for New Professionals at ARA last year led me to reflect on the problems facing those interested in a career in the archives sector. My own career began with a post as a Records Management assistant at the City of London Corporation, and developed through work in the public search rooms at the London Metropolitan Archives, to a position as team leader in the Cataloguing team at the English Heritage Archive. These moves have spanned a period of nearly ten years, and culminated with the recent completion of a postgraduate diploma through distance learning at the University of Dundee. My initial induction into the profession was, however, more a case of being in the right place at the right time, and I developed my interest in archives as a career as a result. In today's climate, however, prospective archivists are finding it more and more challenging to break into the profession.

Volunteering is increasingly being seen as one of the best ways of gaining crucial work experience, which is often a prerequisite of postgraduate courses in archives and records management. Volunteers have

been an integral part of English Heritage for some years, mainly through their invaluable work at our historic sites, and recently the organisation has been looking at ways to develop volunteer opportunities further.

These factors led me to develop a series of six-week work placements in the Cataloguing team at the English Heritage Archive. These placements are designed to give prospective archivists the opportunity to develop their skills in cataloguing, using our bespoke database and GIS mapping systems, and gaining an understanding of the types of work undertaken within an archive.

We have now had two successful volunteer placements working within the Cataloguing team, and our third placement is due to start very soon. The volunteers have worked on cataloguing a collection of glass plate negatives dating from the early to mid 20th century. In addition, they are given conservation handling training, tours of the archive stores, and sessions with staff from different teams such as enquiries and education.



Pamphill Manor House, Pamphill Dorset (1956) © English Heritage.

The placements have also provided an opportunity for internal professional development. Staff with little or no previous line management responsibilities are encouraged to manage a placement in order to develop their own skills in training and people management. They also have the opportunity to interview applicants, which has helped to refine their own interview skills.

The placement scheme has so far proven to be a valuable way of offering work experience to prospective archivists while at the same time providing opportunities for professional development for internal staff. The scheme has also allowed for the cataloguing of a collection that would otherwise not have been possible, and so has had additional benefits for our users.

All placements and volunteer opportunities are advertised on the volunteering pages of the English Heritage website <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/get-involved/volunteering>

Kate Bevan

Cataloguing Team Leader, the English Heritage Archive, and Careers Officer, SfNP

My Placement at the English Heritage Archive

Nichola Luke

I applied for the placement in order to obtain the relevant experience to get on to a MA in Archives and Record Management or a training scheme in an archive. I had already been involved in volunteering at other local record offices, but this placement gave me the chance to gain more experience in cataloguing and handling a range of materials.

The placement involved cataloguing a selection of glass plate negatives taken by the Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England, of buildings throughout Dorset. Through this I had to research where the buildings are using a variety of tools including a GIS mapping system, the inventory notes made by the photographers at the time and the subsequent published volumes. I then added the data to the English Heritage cataloguing database (AMIE) including a caption describing what was in the photograph and information on the format of the photograph, for example whether it was landscape or portrait.

From this placement I learnt the need to be consistent with the language that I use in the captions in order to make them easily searchable for users. Also I can take with me the skills I learnt in handling the glass plate negatives which can be applied to a range of different materials. Moreover it was interesting to compare how the English Heritage Archives is composed compared to other institutions and the similarities and differences in the way they operate.

Having finished this placement I am continuing to apply for archive trainee schemes. I would still like to get into archiving, however competition for the trainee schemes is tough and at the moment I cannot continue to volunteer which is the main way of gaining experience in order to get into this sector.

The Digital Estate

I work for Northumberland Estates which is based in picturesque Alnwick Castle and I'm responsible for two strands of work: digital preservation and records management. The digital preservation aspect involves setting up a digital repository and more generally establishing best practice digital preservation policies. The records management side of my job involves establishing an Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS).

Working for Northumberland Estates as a Digital Curator and Assistant Records Manager leaves me in the auspicious position of seeing how the organisation works as a whole. By taking a step back I can see the many challenges which have to be overcome in order for the successful implementation of an EDRMS and the introduction of best practice digital preservation processes. Taking this two pronged approach Northumberland Estates aims to establish a strategic approach which manages and preserves both current and future digital records. Having been in post for a number of months now, the most exciting part of my job is playing an important part in this holistic approach towards the management of digital content.

Private archive repositories understandably tend to conjure up almost mythical images of lost manuscripts and reams of private papers but what happens to the records which are being created as we speak? As private estates expand into commercial opportunities and diversify their business practices there is a real danger that the fascinating records created by the private families behind these estates could be lost. Like many organisations records are increasingly created in the digital world. The capture of these records is just one of the many challenges which I have encountered in my current role.

On the face of it, the implementation of an EDRMS for a modern day organisation may not sound particularly innovative. Many private estates

“The very nature of the Estates organisation tends to encourage a silo mentality between certain functions of the business.”

simply don't have the necessary resources to carry out such an ambitious project. Consequently the work being undertaken by Northumberland Estates takes on a new slant. Private Estates tend to cover an extremely broad range of business practices which bring their own unique challenges. Even identifying common functions between departments becomes problematic. The very nature of the Estates organisation tends to encourage a silo mentality between certain functions of the business. This only reinforces the need to foster a change of culture throughout the organisation which adequately improves how the Estates operate by ensuring digital records are efficiently dealt with. After conducting a thorough review of our available options we believe that the adoption of an EDRMS will achieve these results.

We are well aware that the implementation of an EDRMS will not deliver a silver bullet to all the challenges faced by the need to establish provisions for digital material. This is why my remit also covers the scoping and establishment of a digital preservation programme which will ensure the stewardship of current digital archival records. When I first started my role the objective was to establish a digital repository which would in essence recreate the traditional paper repository currently held in Alnwick Castle's Record Tower. Open source repository software is widely used to create digital repositories. Systems such as DSpace, Fedora, and EPrints are widely used across Higher Education institutions. Due to the research I undertook it quickly became apparent that the Estates did not have the resources and expertise needed to achieve this aim. Despite the initial



Alnwick Castle, by Dalekwidow <http://www.flickr.com/photos/dalekwidow/5794336394/>

promise of open source software, it is important to remember that there will always be associated costs involved in the installation and maintenance of these specialist systems. There are many factors to consider which informed this decision but it highlights the importance of flexibility. Often the lofty aims of preserving digital content indefinitely must be reined in when you realise the work involved in practical digital curation.

Working as a Digital Curator and Assistant Records Manager for Northumberland Estates has provided me with some of the most challenging work that I have been involved with in my short career. I have immensely enjoyed the role so far and I'm looking forward to implementing the solutions that I have researched and evaluated. It is clear that digital preservation as a practice is currently in a state of flux. In this environment the simplest and often hardest thing to do is to learn by doing. By going

through a process of researching and evaluating the various approaches to digital preservation it is clear that the simplicity of a digital preservation system itself is critical to ensuring the long term access to the material that it holds. There will inevitably be failures along the way but by taking a series of small, simple and affordable steps I plan to ensure the long term survival of vital digital content for Northumberland Estates.

..... **Christopher Fryer**

Digital Curator and Assistant Records Manager for
Northumberland Estates
.....

York: A City Making History

HOME THE PROJECT THE ARCHIVE THE BLOG MPLP



Defining the multiple roles of the project blog

The York: A City Making History Project is the National Cataloguing Grants Scheme funded project to arrange and catalogue the 210m³ York civic archive (1155-1974) in 15 months following a 'More Product, Less Process' (MPLP) approach. It will also create the first digital archive catalogue for City of York Archives. A project blog was planned from the start with three clear objectives: publicity, user education and as a legacy record of process. I hadn't produced a blog before, so it has been a fascinating learning curve with many lessons learnt along the way.

The first objective is the most familiar: as a communications and publicity tool. We needed an attractive way in to a collection that has previously had a specialist-only reputation due to the lack of finding aids and the ostensibly dry nature of council records. The blog is a way of challenging those preconceptions and encouraging users to engage with the material.

The blog focuses solely on this cataloguing project but is tied into the Library and Archives service Facebook page and Twitter feed. Our biggest publicity success so far was a 'Spot the difference' picture of York flooding. During high flood levels last September, I went out and took a new version of a classic historical photo from 1892 and then

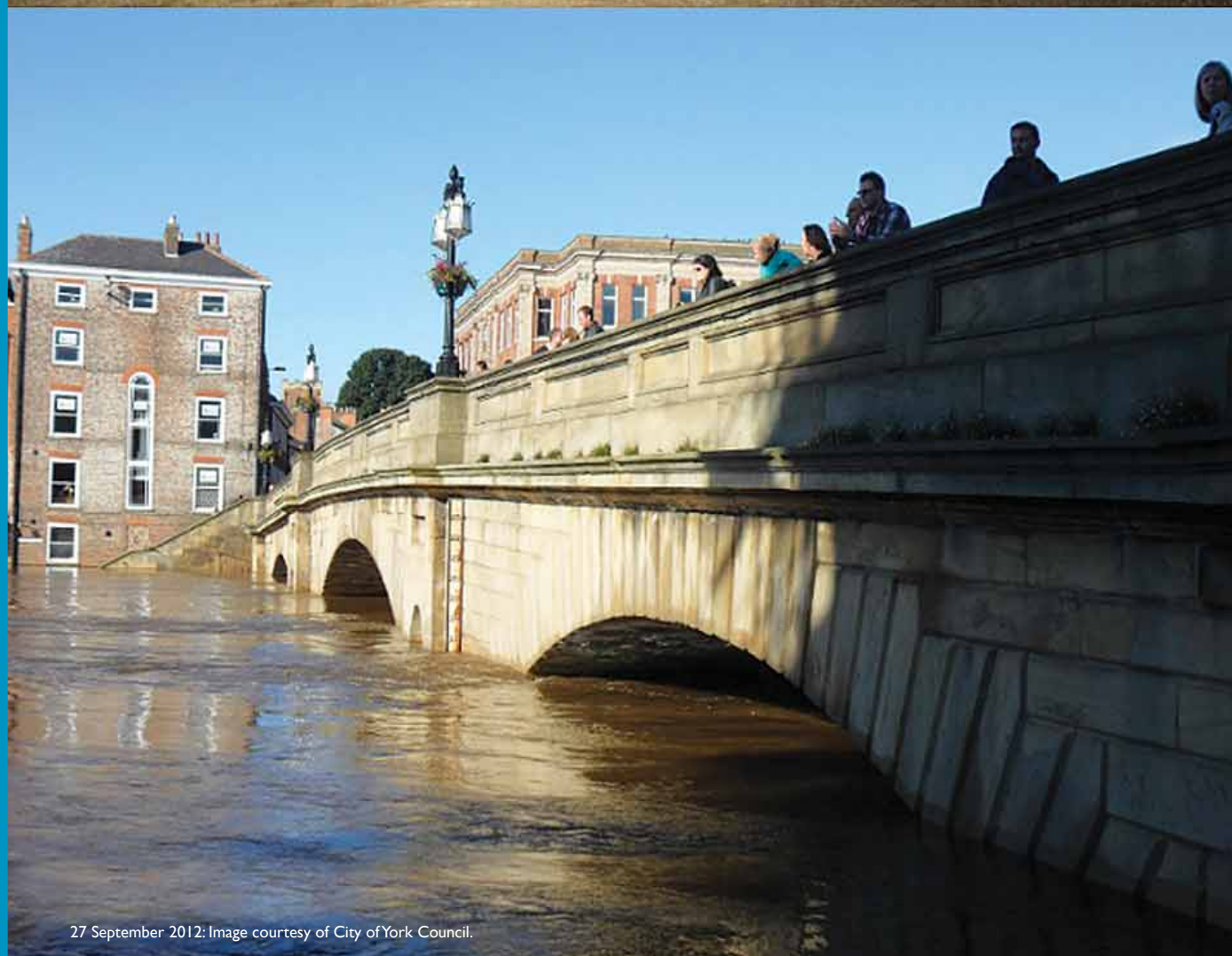
invited users to 'Spot the Difference'. It went viral locally, and received 8000 hits in a couple of days, with 194 comments by people actually 'spotting the difference'. It achieved a very high virality rate of 28% on Facebook, which means that that nearly 1 in 3 people who saw the picture actively shared it with their own networks.

We learnt the value of timeliness from this event: that topical content can drive traffic surges. This was confirmed by our Movember blog post. However, the key to long term growth is building up a resource of good articles that brings in focused search traffic and encourages visitors to click on several pages around the site to learn more.

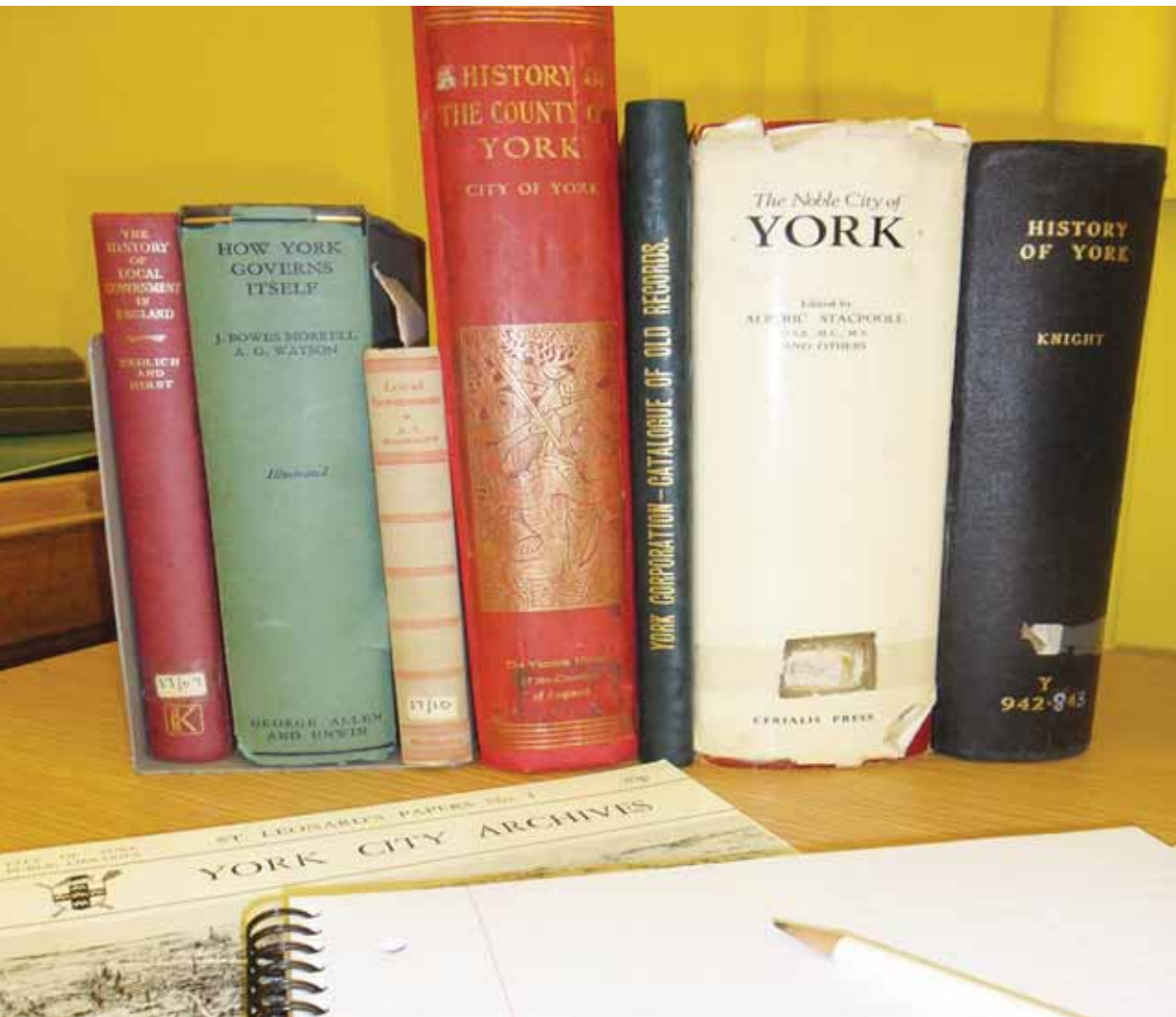
Our second objective for the blog is as a user outreach and education tool. We don't just want to let people know we exist, but teach them about the collection, local history and even archival theory. Instead of carefully selecting documents to highlight, I am running a very popular series of 'Lucky Dips' where I go through the strongroom aisles picking an item at random, and then attempt to show users what gems of information can be found in it. Lucky Dips so far have included cattle market minutes, film censorship minutes, Chamberlain's vouchers and behind the scenes of a local Act of Parliament. Reading through the comments on those pages you



October 1892: Image courtesy of City of York Council.



27 September 2012: Image courtesy of City of York Council.



Research material: Image courtesy of City of York Council.

can see how this approach is successfully spreading the message that all archive material is interesting, if you approach it with an open mind.

I personally feel archivists need to show users not only what we do, but how we think and make decisions, so I openly discuss theories such as MPLP and functional arrangement on the blog. I've received great feedback from users that they appreciate this specialist content, and I encourage other archives to join in this process of breaking down the archival mystique.

The third objective of the project blog is to stand as a record of the cataloguing process. Obviously there are more formal project management milestones too, but we were keen to record the personal journey and decisions taken in a more informal way. This blog is not ephemeral but will accompany the finished catalogued as a legacy outcome. It explains the reasons behind certain decisions, and transparently shows the way the arrangement and description has

been approached and carried out. This also keeps the cataloguing archivist in touch with, motivated by and accountable to the end user via the process of constantly explaining your work.

The project blog deliberately serves these three objectives and so blogging was built into the project archivist job description from the beginning. This ensures that I can spend time on it. More so than Twitter, a single-author blog is a major time commitment, as it can take up to half a day to plan, research, photograph and write a good quality blog post. This is a valuable lesson for other services to bear in mind, and we will do so ourselves if we expand blogging to other members of staff in the future. Having got past the initial nerves of writing about my work, I highly recommend blogging as a rewarding tool for transparency and professional reflection, in addition to publicity.

Justine Winstanley-Brown

York: A City Making History Project Archivist



ARC magazine is a great read - but are you also reading **ARA TODAY?**



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The advent of blogging at The University of Nottingham

Manuscripts and Special Collections at The University of Nottingham has been blogging about its holdings and activities for some time. When I joined the team as archivist on a National Cataloguing Grant Scheme funded project to appraise, arrange and catalogue a large number of accruals of water records, I too became a blogger. It was a great way to keep a diverse range of stakeholders (academics, heritage volunteers, employees of the water sector) informed of the progress of the project. The series of monthly blog

posts, which highlight items of particular interest or appeal, should prove to be a useful resource in the future, whenever staff need quick ideas for presenting or promoting the water collections. Project blogs offer a valuable means of capturing some of the information which does not fit in a catalogue record, and which is in danger of being lost once a short term contract has ended. Blogs are also great for getting archive offices into the habit of documenting their achievements and celebrating successes with a wider audience.

Manuscripts and Special Collections' water project blog <http://blogs.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscripts/category/water-resources/>

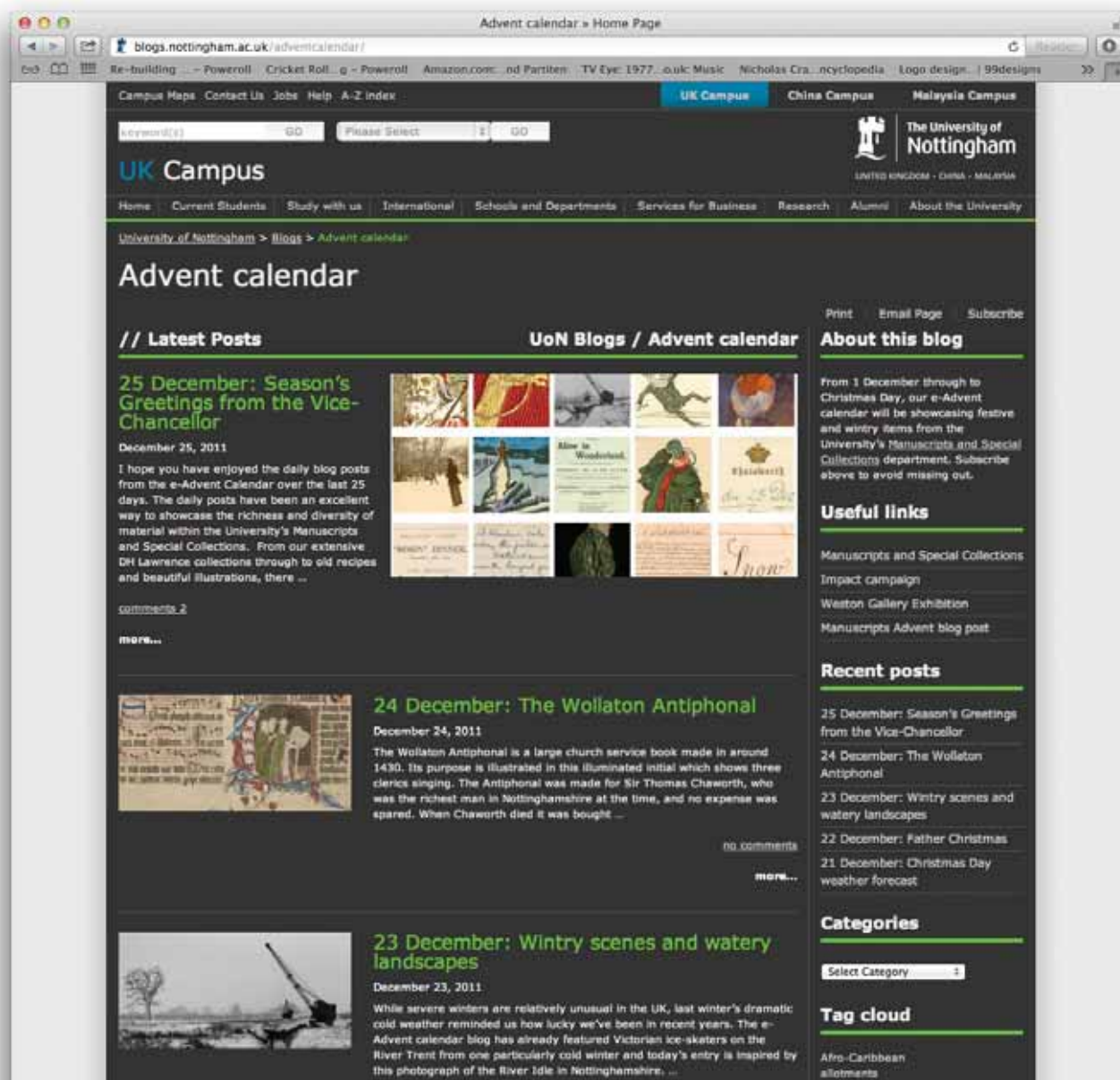
The screenshot displays the University of Nottingham's blog interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links like 'Campus Maps', 'Contact Us', 'Jobs', 'Help', and 'A-Z Index'. Below this is a search bar and a 'UK Campus' section. The main content area is titled 'Manuscripts and Special Collections' and shows a list of blog posts. The first post, 'A year immersed in water records', includes a photo of a person working at a desk. The second post, 'Tin Town: village of the dam builders', features a photo of a dam. The third post, 'Water work: the staff of the River Trent Catchment Board', includes a photo of a group of people. The right sidebar contains a 'Subscribe by email' form, an 'About this blog' section, 'Useful links', 'Recent posts', and 'Categories'.

Whilst working on the project, I volunteered to take a turn as blog editor, so that I could gain more of an insight into the strategic planning behind digital delivery. It proved to be an exciting time for Manuscripts and Special Collections' blog, thanks to a project with the Marketing Department to produce an advent calendar for the University, based on festive items from the collections. It was decided that a blog would be the best way to deliver the content, as it would not require time consuming website design, and would be a great opportunity to publicise the University's new blogging platform. Each day a new post was published, with the digital image of the historic item acting as inspiration for a wide range of digital content (audio, video, and interactive presentations) gathered from academics, students, and external experts. The content was hosted by the

The University of Nottingham's advent calendar blog <http://blogs.nottingham.ac.uk/adventcalendar/>

University's YouTube, iTunes, Flickr and Slideshare platforms, and embedded into the individual blog posts.

A YouTube video of a University academic in conversation with Stephen Moss (BAFTA award winning producer for BBC's 'Springwatch') about the significance of the robin on Christmas cards, was inspired by an illustration from one the ornithological books in Manuscripts and Special Collections' Porter Collection. A programme from a December 1913 production of 'Alice in Wonderland' by University College Nottingham students prompted a photographic recreation of the tea party scene by student members of the University's New Theatre. A medieval deed featuring a reference to a nominal rent of a 'clove of gillyflower' payable on Christmas day, led





Some of the digitised images from the blog, used as the University of Nottingham's Christmas card.

to a video interview with a University academic on the subject of Christmas and consumption. There was even an instructional slideshow featuring a member of Manuscripts and Special Collections baking a plum cake from an 18th century recipe (minus the ambergris/whale vomit!)

It was astounding to see the archive material inspiring the creation of digital content in so many media, and it proved an excellent means of showcasing the multidisciplinary expertise of the University's staff and students. The posts were promoted on a daily basis through Facebook, Twitter and the 'Message of the Day' on every University computer, which had a big impact on raising the visibility of Manuscripts and Special Collections. The blog also featured in local media and the Times Higher Education, and won numerous awards. It was a huge amount of work for

all involved, from selecting, digitising and researching the items, to creating the multi-media content, but it is a great example of how an institution can exploit its historic holdings using the latest digital technologies. I was particularly pleased that my own contribution based on the water records, 'Wintry scenes and watery landscapes', was used on the 23 December (significantly improved, no doubt, by the Marketing Department's inclusion of some BBC video footage of snowy conditions in the 1960s!) The advent calendar blog is still available at: <http://blogs.nottingham.ac.uk/adventcalendar/>

Sarah Colborne

Manuscripts and Special Collections,
The University of Nottingham



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