

# Science and Archives



**13** Registrar for  
80 million  
items

**23** Mapping a remarkable  
collection: laying  
the foundation for  
global access to the  
Sir Charles Lyell  
Collection

**29** Bethlem  
Museum of  
the Mind

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DISCOVERED  
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# Welcome...



## *Welcome to the Science and Archives issue of ARC Magazine*

My first issue as Joint Editor of ARC has been a fascinating one to work on. With the sciences not being my natural habitat, the contributions to this Science and Archives issue have been all the more enjoyable to delve into, as I now feel newly connected to this part of the archives and heritage sector.

Whether being taken inside a fortress-like arctic mountain to explore new technologies in digital preservation, or being given a fresh perspective on the more familiar sight of London's Natural History Museum, this month's contributions are rich in interest. The issue also introduces us to the collections of two prominent scientists, the Naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace and the Geologist Sir Charles Lyell, alongside the more unusual collections of Bethlem Museum of the Mind and the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion.

At a time when we have all been acutely aware of the work of scientists, both in the UK and internationally, and their dedication to developing a COVID-19 vaccine, this month's theme feels especially significant.

Many thanks go to Anne Barrett for her work coordinating this issue, as well as to our authors.

Enjoy!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hannah".

**Hannah Grout**  
*ARC Editor*

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'Trussing in' celebrated when an Apprentice Cooper completed 7 years of training. Image courtesy of the National Brewery Centre.

# Opening lines

**Elena Carter**, Collections Development Archivist at Wellcome Collection, reflects on the ethics and collaborative nature of contemporary collecting in the context of COVID-19.



In the early weeks of March, our offices became our bedrooms and kitchen tables. As we transitioned to home-working, work wasn't at the front of my mind. Like so many others, my thoughts were preoccupied with the uncertainty, fear and anxiety of the pandemic, with worries about friends and family, and the sweeping drastic changes to our lives.

In that early period, my workdays were mostly spent glued to the news, checking in with loved ones, and refreshing supermarket websites to find available food delivery slots. The idea of just continuing with work but doing so from home felt impossible. This wasn't working from home; this was trying to find ways of living and adjusting to a world that had been turned upside down. So, while my computer was switched on, and while I sat through endless online video meetings, my brain was entirely somewhere else. I think it's important to start off by admitting this, because we are human beings who do jobs, we are not our jobs. Our productivity over the past year should not define our worth. This year has shaken the infrastructure of our working environments, and it's also blurred the boundaries between our experiences as individuals, and as professionals trying to maintain services. It has exposed the fragility of our healthcare systems, the inequalities and cracks within our society, and how some lives and communities are disproportionately and unfairly impacted by the pandemic.

Since the pandemic started, I have found myself looking at everyday items in a new way, with every COVID-related flyer that came through the door or photo of an empty supermarket shelf taking on new significance as a potential item for acquisition. We are inundated by a seemingly unending frenzy of content, advice, news and

mis/information – but we also know that this material can be fleeting and ephemeral. With so much stuff out there, it's hard to know how to sift through it and make sense of it. Many of the overriding features of early lockdown that felt so momentous at the time – NHS clapping, loo roll shortages, and sourdough – have already been replaced by other signifiers. It's equally important that we don't allow these broad-brush indicators to take centre stage in our histories and thereby lose the nuance of human experience, and of the more diverse, and lesser-heard experiences of the pandemic. The desire to act out of fear that things will just disappear is strong.

I am lucky in my role as Collections Development Archivist to not be furloughed or face uncertainty about my next pay cheque. I work at Wellcome Collection, and as a large and

“ *Since the pandemic started, I have found myself looking at everyday items in a new way, with every COVID-related flyer that came through the door or photo of an empty supermarket shelf taking on new significance as a potential item for acquisition* ”

“*Our commitment to ethical collecting has led us to work slowly, think carefully, and collaborate lots. We’ve joined up with others from across the heritage sector to form networks for colleagues interested in collecting ethically around COVID-19*”

independent organisation, we are privileged to not be in the position facing many smaller or publicly funded institutions. As an individual, I am lucky to be in good physical health, with no caring responsibilities. I am white, able-bodied, and middle-class, and these characteristics impact how the pandemic has affected me compared to others. I mention all of this because my own experiences of living through this year colour my professional role as a collecting archivist. The power dynamics of recording history has also been thrown into relief by the events of Black Lives Matter, and the subsequent calls for heritage organisations to scrutinise their own histories of exclusionary, racist and colonialist work. With the pandemic disproportionately impacting BAME and disabled communities, how will our histories record these voices and stories?

With all of this in mind, our small collecting team at Wellcome wanted to make sure we were allowing enough time to figure out our core principles and think things through before diving into any collecting activity. We wanted to make sure that our approach to any contemporary collecting around the health emergency was ethical, considered and collaborative. It was important for us to remember that we are just a small part of a much larger community of libraries, archives and museums, and that our collecting should be joined up with broader efforts. We also wanted to make sure our collecting was respectful of lived experience and time sensitive to individuals processing trauma and difficult experiences.

Our commitment to ethical collecting has led us to work slowly, think carefully, and collaborate lots. We’ve joined up with others from across the heritage sector to form networks for colleagues interested in collecting ethically around COVID-19. These online sessions, combined with the use of instant messaging, have allowed us to foster a friendly, informal and encouraging environment to raise difficult questions around contemporary collecting. Importantly, the focus has not been on showing off exciting new acquisitions, but instead being honest about not knowing the answers. If I’ve learnt anything from collecting over the past year, it’s the importance of slowing down.

# Professional development news

**Chris Sheridan**, ARA’s Head of Professional Standards and Development, talks to **Fran Horner** and **Rory Powell**, who are both newly-qualified Foundation Members of the ARA.



Foundation Membership, introduced in 2017, is the first of three levels of professional registration offered by the Archives and Records Association (ARA). It provides an important opportunity for those working or volunteering in the sector to gain ARA recognition for the contribution they make.

We catch up with Fran Horner FMARA, Archive Assistant at the National Theatre Archive and Rory Powell, Customer Service Assistant/Archives Assistant at Sandwell Community History and Archives Service. Both qualified in 2020 as Foundation Members of the ARA.

### **Why did you apply for Foundation Membership?**

“I applied for Foundation Membership because I wanted to develop my knowledge and skills as an archivist through the ARA’s professional development programme,” explained Fran. “During my MA in Art Gallery and Museum Studies, I undertook a work placement at the John Rylands Library in Manchester, working with a literary archive. It was then that I decided to move my career more towards the archive and records management sector. I felt that the reflective learning style and mentor supervision, both

key elements of the ARA's Professional Development Programme (PDP), would suit me and would allow me to build a strong portfolio exploring my experience and achievements."

Rory shares a different pathway. "In a time of sweeping cuts to budgets within local authorities, training has not been made available and indeed there were no funds to support my undertaking of Foundation Membership. My lack of academic qualification made it difficult for me to access industry-recognised training and learning opportunities. As a competency-based evaluation process, the Personal Development Programme suited my needs and enabled me to feel recognised for the work experience I have gained in the sector."

"The support and advice available from the mentoring aspect of the programme was invaluable," added Rory. "It helped me understand my roles and responsibilities in a wider professional context; showing how they relate to important aspects within the archive profession. The clear guidance offered through the resource material, and the support offered by my mentor, put my initial anxieties to rest and helped me remain focussed on developing my application to the required standard."

### **So, how does it feel to have qualified as a Foundation Member?**

"It is great to have qualified as a Foundation Member because I feel like I am a part of the archives and records management community and I am recognised by the ARA as a qualified archive professional," explains Fran. "I feel like it is a big step in my career and it makes me excited about what opportunities may come my way in the future. I have already begun looking at the scheme again and I am planning how I can continue to build on my Foundation competencies to qualify as a Registered Member."

Rory has also benefitted from ARA professional registration. "By completing the Foundation Membership of my own volition, I have shown my

employer that I have a keen interest in progressing my career and in developing my knowledge base further," explained Rory. "As a result of my Foundation Membership, my employer has agreed to fund my master's degree in Archive Administration through long-distance learning at Aberystwyth University."

### **What advice would you offer to those thinking of enrolling onto the Foundation Membership programme?**

"I advise applicants to use the scheme as an opportunity to identify gaps in their experience, skills and knowledge which they can work on to fill," said Fran. "I have identified that I have little experience of cataloguing digital files, so I plan to work with my colleagues to devise a project for me to work on. Applicants must also be ready to reflect on instances where things didn't go well, why things didn't go well, what they learned from this and what they would do differently next time."

Rory agrees, "the ARA's competency framework is wide in its scope, and this enabled me to look at a range of skills and critically analyse them within the context of the archival environment. The process has also taught me the importance of reflection and how it can be used to enforce my work ethic and ensure I am following correct procedures."

2020 has been a difficult year. Many of us have continued our careers during years of austerity and, more recently, the consequences and uncertainties brought about by COVID-19. But we can find positives in all challenging situations, as Fran clearly demonstrates - "I think this unprecedented time is a good time to enrol onto the PDP, as I see it as advocacy for our work and profession."

To learn more about the benefits of ARA professional registration, please visit the ARA website: [www.archives.org.uk/cpd-the-ara-professional-development-programme/qualification-levels-and-benefits.html](http://www.archives.org.uk/cpd-the-ara-professional-development-programme/qualification-levels-and-benefits.html).

# Backchat...



This month, ARC Editor **Hannah Grout** talks to **Elisabeth Thurlow**, Digital Preservation and Access Manager at the University of the Arts London (UAL).

**Hi Elisabeth, could you tell us a bit about yourself and where you work?**

I am a digital preservation practitioner - and qualified archivist and records manager - working as the first digital preservation professional at University of the Arts London (UAL).

UAL's collections, held across the six colleges which make up the University, contain a mixture of formats including paper, objects, textiles and ceramics – as well as increasing amounts of digital materials.

I am normally based in UAL's Archives and Special Collections Centre, home to the archive of filmmaker Stanley Kubrick, but my role involves working across UAL as part of the University's Digital Archives and Collections Project. This IT-led project aims to put in place the architecture to preserve and provide greater access to our growing digital collections. The project team is currently focused on the build of a new digital collections user interface.

**Do you remember how you first became interested in archives?**

My first awareness of the profession came whilst I studied contemporary history at the University of Sussex. Home to the Mass Observation Archive, I was taught by a host of inspiring female lecturers who made use of the collection in their teaching. During my panic about what I might do after graduation, I saw an advert for cataloguing volunteers, as part of the project to prepare for the archive's move to The Keep. This experience led me to apply for a traineeship at Kew Gardens, where I was able to further explore archives as a potential career.

However, my experience as a user of archives goes back further. When Surrey History Centre first opened, I, aged 8 and alongside my mum, researched the history of my childhood home. I can clearly

remember opening the plan chests to view historic maps of the village, Knaphill, and seeing the history of the road I grew up on and the surrounding area laid out before me.

**So you didn't start out in the digital side of things, how did you make the move to your current role?**

My interest in digital archives was nurtured during my time as the trainee archivist at the archives of the Guardian and Observer newspapers. Here, I interacted with their digital repository and was introduced to tools such as DROID. I then went on to complete my postgraduate diploma with an explicit focus on digital archives.

Not only did digital archives look to me like the direction of travel for archive work, but it also appeared to be an enormous opportunity. After working in more traditional archivist posts, I took a digital records specialist role at the Royal College of Nursing, before moving to my current post at UAL in January 2018. Although now working in a purely digital role, I work closely with an amazing group of archivists, special collections librarians and curators, so still feel connected to the more traditional aspects of collections management.

**Is there anything about your work that is still surprising you?**

Working in digital preservation, and working so closely with technology, means much of my time is spent problem solving. My learning continues every day and I am constantly being challenged, either because things are not working, or I maybe need to explain something technical to a non-technical audience.

I think it would surprise those considering a move into digital preservation, or those considering entering the archival profession, how much of my role, which from the outside may look very technical,

Elisabeth in the UAL Archives and Special Collections Centre. Image courtesy of Robin Sampson for the University of the Arts London.



actually involves working with people. Within our project team, we always say that the people are the hard part, not the technology. This is because implementing digital preservation is not only about bringing in technical solutions, but is part of a culture change, and that is often the much harder task.

**You're currently involved in thinking about the environmental impact of digital preservation at UAL, could you tell us about that?**

There is a growing conversation within the digital preservation community around the environmental impact of our activities. The publication of an influential 2019 article by Keith Pendergrass, Walker Sampson, Tim Walsh and Laura Alagna, and a Digital Preservation Coalition webinar earlier this year from the authors, proved to be a catalyst for conversations at UAL.

A number of collections staff have come together in a working group to reflect on our current practices around digital preservation and digitisation. We are already making practical recommendations for future improvements that can be made, to help meet the University's commitment to improving its environmental sustainability. Being able to engage in these discussions also demonstrates how far we have already come on our own digital preservation journey.

**Has the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic affected your working practices?**

As a digital project, our work to build a user interface continues, with our group of developers and solutions architects meeting virtually most days. Previously working across six campuses meant I was well equipped to work from home.

However, with the gradual return to site, in support of the University's blended learning model, this has more recently involved me taking part in on-site duties, to support the face-to-face archive service. Undertaking tasks such as invigilating, which I had not been involved in since 2016, has been a further learning curve.

**Are there any objects or collections from your career, digital or physical, that you feel particularly fond of?**

As a horror fan, working with the collections of Kubrick (and in particular *The Shining* manuscript) is a dream come true, however the more recent born-digital artwork accessions into the University's collections get me more excited these days.

When acquiring a recent virtual reality artwork for the UAL Art Collection, the collection's curator, Lucie, invited me to meet with the graduating artist, Ed Phipps. This was a privilege and an opportunity to learn more about the process of creation directly

from the creator, which will help us to preserve this artwork into the future. As we collect and care for these more complex digital objects, it is increasingly clear that we will need to adopt and combine multiple digital preservation strategies.

**What do you think are the most significant challenges facing the sector right now?**

As a digital preservation practitioner, I would have to include digital preservation. This cannot wait until the 'right time'. Building a business case and advocating for digital preservation in an organisation inevitably takes time, but urgent action is needed, as digital materials will continue to be lost in the meantime.

Until recently at UAL, we were host to a Bridging the Digital Gap trainee. I also sit on the Digital Preservation Coalition's Workforce Development Sub-Committee, but we should be doing more to support people to enter and develop within the information professions, including more on-the-job training opportunities.

In my career I have been lucky to see women in senior positions, which has been inspirational for me and made me even more passionate about the need for us to provide role models for those entering the profession, who might not always see themselves reflected in senior roles.

**Thank you so much for your time! Any final thoughts?**

As well as representation within our workforce, we should also be considering representation within our collections. Within the community of collection managers in which I operate, there is already interesting work taking place around collecting. However, this is not limited to collecting, and collections management practices can also be biased. As part of the build of our new digital collections portal, we need to consider how we forefront certain collections. As well as the impact of digital preservation decisions. Technology, and our application of it, like archives, is not neutral.

# ARA Together: a valuable virtual community for archives and record-keeping professionals

**John Chambers**, Chief Executive of the Archives and Records Association, invites you to join a vibrant online community of professionals.



In spring 2020, when the first COVID-19 lockdown was introduced, the Archives and Records Association (ARA) started to look at ways in which it could support its members while services were closed, some staff were furloughed and others suddenly had no option but to work from home.

We recognised that the COVID-related restrictions would have a huge impact not just on the archives and record-keeping sector as a whole, but also on individuals working in the sector who were under pressure to quickly adapt to new working arrangements and, in some cases, had genuine concerns around job security.

In response, we decided to establish ARA Together, a web-based support hub and online community. The dedicated ARA Together web hub - [www.archives.org.uk/ara-together](http://www.archives.org.uk/ara-together) - brings together a wealth of information in one place, with content ranging from support and practical help from the heritage sector, to the ARA's own

“*ARA Together, a web-based support hub and online community [...] brings together a wealth of information in one place [...] from tips on health and well-being to guidance on staying engaged with your own professional development during the pandemic*”

COVID-19 news and policies, and from tips on health and well-being to guidance on staying engaged with your own professional development during the pandemic.

Our aim was to help members navigate the day-to-day challenges faced during lockdown, but also to share the positive side of the challenges that COVID-19 presented; the many examples of members finding innovative ways to run their services and of teams going above and beyond to stay connected and continue delivering as much of their services as possible despite the restrictions. We also added new content to the support hub when restrictions started to lift in the summer and services were gradually able to reopen, admittedly not permanently in many cases, due to the second lockdown!

One area of the support hub which has proven to be particularly popular is the Stay Engaged – Learning Options page: [www.archives.org.uk/ara-together/stay-engaged-learning-options](http://www.archives.org.uk/ara-together/stay-engaged-learning-options). With face-to-face training and events still restricted due to COVID-19 guidelines, many organisations across the archives and record-keeping sector are doing a fantastic job of switching to hosting their training sessions and webinars virtually. This means that there are a lot of online professional development opportunities available for those who wish to invest the extra time, that they are saving by not commuting, in developing their industry knowledge.

Updated weekly, the web page includes details and links to a whole host of webinars, e-learning opportunities and podcasts, covering topics from accreditation and emergency planning, to archive storage and diversity and inclusion. The ARA Together support hub is updated regularly, so please do return to it from time to time to find the latest news and guidance from the sector.

In parallel with the launch of our ARA Together web hub, we introduced our ARA Together Online Community – a free online platform where members and non-members can chat with each other and share openly via text, voice chat and video. Our aim was to

“*since it was introduced in May 2020 more than 1,000 individuals have joined our ARA Together Online Community, which is testament to the fact that it is clearly a much-valued resource*”

provide a safe, friendly and welcoming platform to allow people to connect with others and learn from one another as a community, sharing experiences, advice and examples of best practice.

Since it was introduced in May 2020, more than 1,000 individuals have joined our ARA Together Online Community, which is testament to the fact that it is clearly a much-valued resource. A series of Online Community calls, which will continue throughout 2021, have provided an opportunity to explore some of the topical issues affecting the sector during the pandemic. So far, we've held 13 calls on topics ranging from contemporary collecting and digital record-keeping in times of crisis, to advocacy in the workplace and tackling race and cultural issues within our collections, services and workforce. Some of the calls have attracted upwards of 100 participants and our highest number of participants on one call was 193!

Hosted in the main by ARA board members, we've also greatly appreciated the support from others in the sector who have taken on the role of co-hosts on the calls. Archivists, conservators, policy advisors, communications professionals and training managers have kindly shared their expertise and advice with our Online Community.

If you're reading this article and haven't yet joined the ARA Today Online Community, then please consider doing so. It's an easy way to engage with others, lean on one another and share your thoughts and ideas openly, as though you were chatting at a conference together. Registration details can be found at [www.discord.com/invite/dvG4xh6](https://www.discord.com/invite/dvG4xh6).

Finally, if you come across any links or guidance you think would be of value to the wider membership, or if you have any feedback and ideas for the ARA Together support hub or for the ARA Together Online Community, please contact us at [membership@archives.org.uk](mailto:membership@archives.org.uk).

# Compiler's note

**Anne Barrett**, College Archivist and Corporate Records Manager at Imperial College London, welcomes you to this issue.

In compiling this issue of Science and Archives, I have incorporated the less usual along with the more anticipated types of archive. All archives are unique though, and I trust that you will enjoy reading the stories these contributions tell. These range from arctic mountains to museums of the mind and of natural history, breweries, crowdfunding of manuscripts, to long term correspondence projects, a science and religion archive, and to genealogical DNA.

I am particularly grateful to all the contributors for their valiant work under the circumstances of this year. Much of their work was achieved under lockdown, and all were keen to share their archival worlds with us. My huge thanks to them.



The tooth of a woolly rhino (*Coelodonta antiquitatis*) collected in September 1668 by John Somner. © Trustees of the Natural History Museum.

## Registrar for 80 million items

**Sarah Long**, Head of Registry at the Natural History Museum, gives us a glimpse behind the scenes into her varied work at one of London's most beloved museums.

The Natural History Museum has a vast collection of over 80 million items. These include meteorites that tell us about the formation of our solar system and planet. Fossils that shed light on how life and our environment have evolved over 4 billion years. There are plants and animals that show the diversity of life around us, and the impact we have had on our planet. As well as books, letters, manuscripts, and artworks that describe how we have learnt about, and view, our world. A tiny proportion of this is on display in our permanent galleries, temporary exhibitions and on the road in our touring shows. The rest is in storage; but it is not dusty, unseen, and unused. Behind the scenes, the Museum is a scientific research organisation where hundreds of scientists care for, study, and publish on a wide range of research topics. The Museum's collection is dynamic, growing by hundreds of thousands of specimens each year; we lend tens of thousands of items to research institutions worldwide, and welcome thousands of scientists to study the collections

and use our laboratories. The collection is at the heart of everything the Museum does. To develop, manage and care for the collection, we need policies, procedures, standards for documentation and ways to manage the risks associated with its movement and display. Defining those policies, procedures, setting standards and managing risk is my role, and the role of my team – the Museum's Registrars.

As Head of Registry, I manage a small team of three Registrars. Between us, we define the Museum's collections policies and procedures, support legal and ethical decision making about the collection, manage the entry

“one of my favourite objects in the Museum is a woolly rhino tooth collected in Chatham in 1668. It has been the subject of research and publication for over 300 years”

“ *sometimes I think the role would be better described as a ‘fixer’, it really exists to keep the collection as secure as possible whilst making it as accessible as possible* ”

and exit of exhibition loans to the Museum’s exhibitions and, working closely with curation, conservation, and security, we manage the risks associated with lending our collection for exhibition. It sounds relatively simple, until you stop to think of the breadth of legislation and regulation that applies to our collection, the different standards, and the sheer size and complexity of the Museum’s collections. Sometimes, I think the role would be better described as a ‘fixer’, it really exists to keep the collection as secure as possible, whilst making it as accessible as possible. It is a job I love.

My pathway to becoming Head of Registry has taken me through several positions at the Museum; Curator, Collections Manager, Head of Collection, but this is by far and away the role I have enjoyed most. No two days are the same. I get to work with, and learn from, people from all over the Museum including curators, librarians, archivists, conservators, researchers, data managers, touring exhibitions, security specialists, information managers and even accountants.

There is no point in being a Registrar if you don’t like people or teamwork! One day, I could be in a meeting about touring Dippy, our huge and much-loved Diplodocus, or discussing the development of a new collections management system. On another I

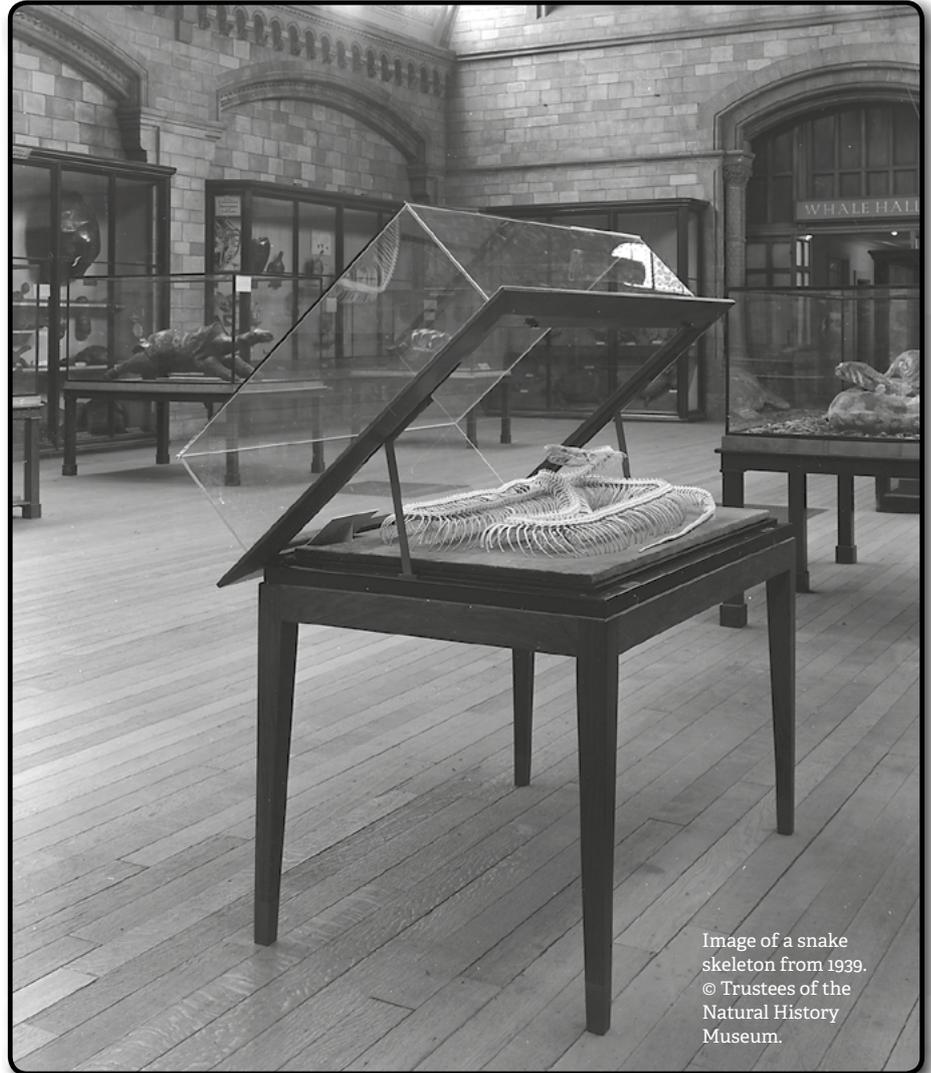


Image of a snake skeleton from 1939.  
© Trustees of the Natural History Museum.

“ *behind the scenes the Museum is a scientific research organisation where hundreds of scientists care for, study, and publish on a wide range of research topics* ”

could be taking a call from one of my team about loans for our new show Fantastic Beasts, or chatting to the heads of Security, Conservation and Touring about how we will handle a remote exhibit of one of our shows, as no one can travel due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and answering an email asking for help about whether we can acquire some specimens or not. It is challenging, and there is never a ‘slow period’, but the feeling of satisfaction when we have solved a problem, or

I see an exhibition my team have helped deliver, is second to none. It is possibly only beaten by the collection itself. One of my favourite objects in the Museum is a woolly rhino tooth collected in Chatham in 1668. It has been the subject of research and publication for over 300 years. All being well, it will still be in the museum and available for study or exhibition for another three centuries and that is the root of why I love and care so much about my job.

# The Alfred Russel Wallace Correspondence Project: preserving a legacy through digitisation

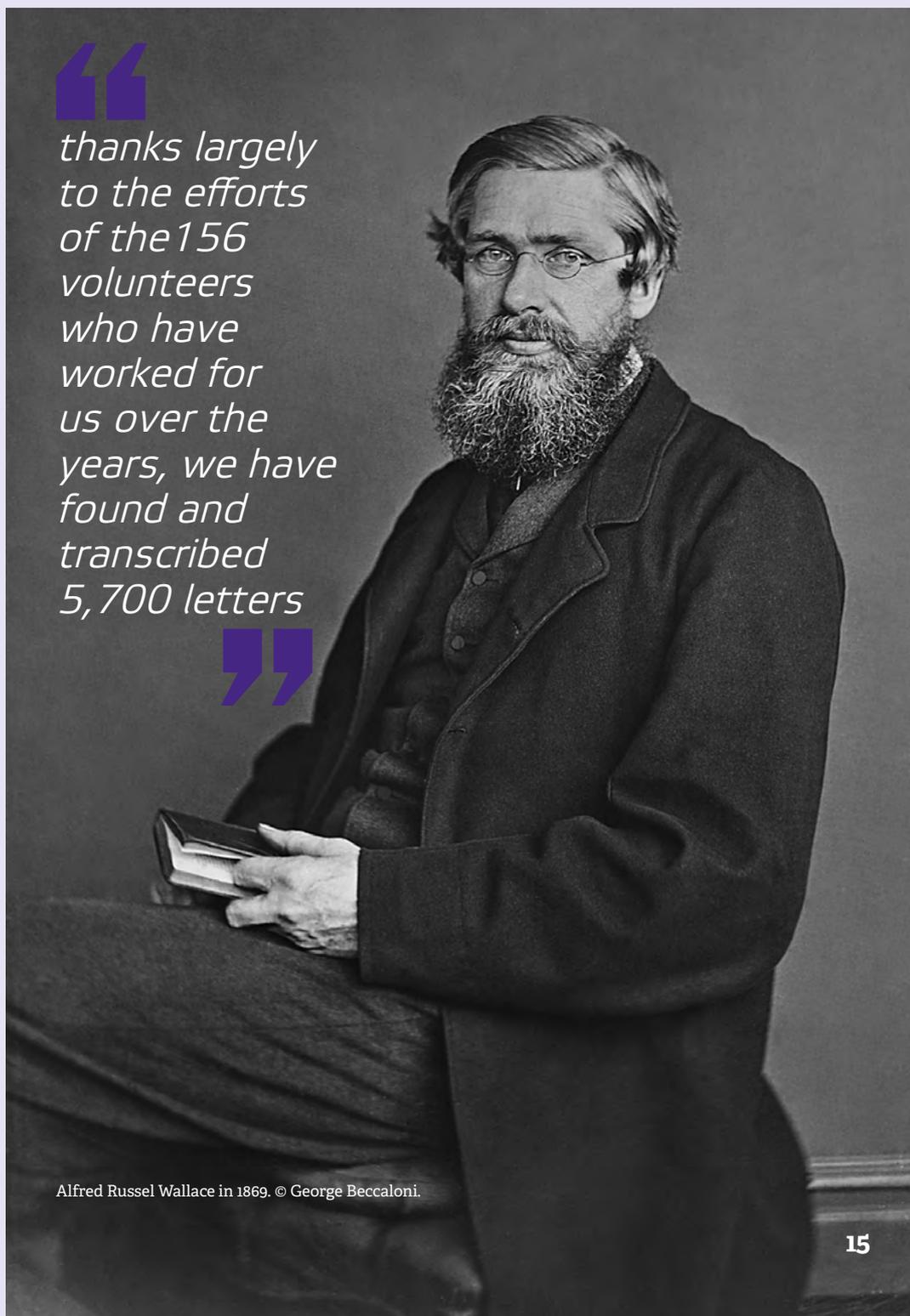
**Danniella Sherwood**, Project Coordinator and Researcher at the Wallace Correspondence Project, and **George W. Beccaloni**, Director and Senior Editor of the Wallace Correspondence Project, share with us their work to preserve and promote the legacy of an oft-overlooked figure in scientific history.

Alfred Russel Wallace (1823–1913) was one of the greatest scientists of the mid-to-late Victorian period. Co-discoverer of the theory of evolution with Charles Darwin, and the founder of evolutionary biogeography, his prolific scholarly work helped to lay the foundations of not only evolutionary biology, but several other fields besides.

When visiting Broadstone, Dorset, in the 1990s, George W. Beccaloni (GWB) found Wallace's grave in a state of disrepair and nearing the end of its lease. GWB committed to reviving Wallace's legacy, and he established the

“  
*thanks largely to the efforts of the 156 volunteers who have worked for us over the years, we have found and transcribed 5,700 letters*

”



Alfred Russel Wallace in 1869. © George Beccaloni.

On the Tendency of Species to form Varieties; and on the Perpetuation of Varieties and Species by Natural Means of Selection. By CHARLES DARWIN, Esq., F.R.S., F.L.S., & F.G.S., and ALFRED WALLACE, Esq. Communicated by Sir CHARLES LYELL, F.R.S., F.L.S., and J. D. HOOKER, Esq., M.D., V.P.R.S., F.L.S., &c.

[Read July 1st, 1858.]

London, June 30th, 1858.

MY DEAR SIR,—The accompanying papers, which we have the honour of communicating to the Linnean Society, and which all relate to the same subject, viz. the Laws which affect the Production of Varieties, Races, and Species, contain the results of the investigations of two indefatigable naturalists, Mr. Charles Darwin and Mr. Alfred Wallace.

These gentlemen having, independently and unknown to one another, conceived the same very ingenious theory to account for the appearance and perpetuation of varieties and of specific forms on our planet, may both fairly claim the merit of being original thinkers in this important line of inquiry; but neither of them

The title of the most important paper in evolutionary biology (Darwin & Wallace, 1858). Courtesy of the Biodiversity Heritage Library.

Wallace Memorial Fund, which raised funds enabling the grave to be restored and the lease extended. Finding that Wallace's grandsons had an incredible archive of their grandfather's correspondence and manuscripts, which they were interested in selling to an institution, GWB arranged for the Natural History Museum, London, to purchase the collection. Subsequently, he conceived a project to digitise the material, and this turned into the Wallace Correspondence Project. The Project's aims are to locate, digitise, catalogue, transcribe, interpret and publish all of Wallace's surviving correspondence and other manuscripts, housed not only in the Natural History Museum, but in repositories worldwide (material has been found in 240 different collections to date).

The Project has now been running for ten years, with an interruption of two and a half years. In that time, thanks largely to the efforts of the 156 volunteers who have worked with us over the years, we have found and transcribed 5,700 letters at a basic level. In addition, about a thousand of these transcriptions have now been carefully edited by specialist researchers, and detailed endnotes added to assist the reader in interpreting the text. Fifteen research staff, including the authors of this article, have worked on the Project part or full-time, and have contributed perspectives from a range of backgrounds and areas of expertise. Such interdisciplinary collaboration, along with engagement with the public, provides a powerful medium for understanding Wallace's legacy.

“ fifteen research staff [...] have contributed perspectives from a range of backgrounds and areas of expertise. Such interdisciplinary collaboration, along with engagement with the public, provides a powerful medium for understanding Wallace's legacy ”



The Wallace Correspondence Project's logo. It is based on Wallace's monogram which was printed on the front cover of several of his books. No copyright.

Ultimately, the Project aims to publish all of Wallace's correspondence in a series of books, but this will require many more years of hard work, and a considerable amount of additional funding. The recent national lockdown has also presented new challenges for us, as the world shifted to remote working. Our usual tasks of visiting libraries and other institutions were stalled. Thankfully, the goodwill and dedication of our colleagues in libraries and universities across the world has enabled us to continue to gather and catalogue new letters and other manuscripts.

Like many similar projects, we are funded by grants and our current award from the John Templeton Foundation ended on the 31st December 2020. We sincerely hope that we will be able to obtain additional funding to continue and complete our work; grants being probably even more difficult to obtain because of the uncertain times we are living in. It would be a sad state of affairs if the life and work of the co-discoverer of natural selection, which has been called "arguably the most momentous idea ever to occur to a human mind" (Dawkins, 2007) remain poorly documented. Especially considering that the life and work of his co-author, Charles Darwin, has been documented and scrutinised by a vast army of scholars and is now known in astonishing 'microscopic' detail. All of Darwin's 15,000 known letters will soon have been published (in 30 thick volumes), a project which will have taken the Darwin Correspondence Project team more than 40 years by the time the project concludes in 2022. We invite anyone interested in reading more about our project to visit our website: [www.wallaceletters.info](http://www.wallaceletters.info).

George W. Beccaloni,  
email: [g.beccaloni@wallaceletters.org](mailto:g.beccaloni@wallaceletters.org)

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*R. Dawkins, "Inferior Design", New York Times (2007), p. 14.*

# The Irish DNA Atlas

**Edmund Gilbert**, Postdoctoral Researcher at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, explores how the Irish DNA Atlas is revealing the genetic landscape of Ireland.

The Irish DNA Atlas is a collaborative research project between the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI), and the Genealogical Society of Ireland (GSI), incorporating genealogical records with genetic data to investigate the impact of history on the genetic landscape of Ireland. This research is possible through the careful use of records by experts at the GSI, so that the cohort and its annotated data can inform and guide genetic research of the genomic profiles of its participants.

Through precise selection and genealogical annotation, individual participants in the Atlas are those whose eight great-grandparents were born within a typical 50km distance. This use of records has allowed the curation of a cohort with detailed information of the regional origin of each participant's recent ancestry. Therefore, studying the genetic variation captured by the cohort, and comparing it to the genealogical profile, such as ancestral birthplace or surname, yields further insights into the genetic patterns detected.

The project began back in 2011, when the GSI invited Prof. Gianpiero Cavalleri, now the project leader, to give a public lecture on genetics and genealogy at one of the society's meetings. Michael Merrigan, a co-founder of the GSI, proposed a collaboration between RCSI and the society with the aim to explore Irish history through DNA. The project was officially launched in 2011, with initial recruitment started then and further expanded in 2015 with dedicated funding from Science Foundation Ireland – one of the primary sources of research funding in Ireland.

With funding, and recruitment, the Irish DNA Atlas has helped reveal the genetic landscape of Ireland through a series of high-impact research publications. The first focussed on the genetic landscape of Ireland, using powerful new genetic analyses to show fine-scale regional genetic differences found across Ireland. This analysis clustered individuals by genetic similarity, and investigated the genetic features of these clusters. The detailed genealogical records associated with each Atlas participant allowed the mapping of individuals assigned to each cluster to a map of Ireland. This data was able

Irish DNA Atlas is revealing the genetic landscape of Ireland.

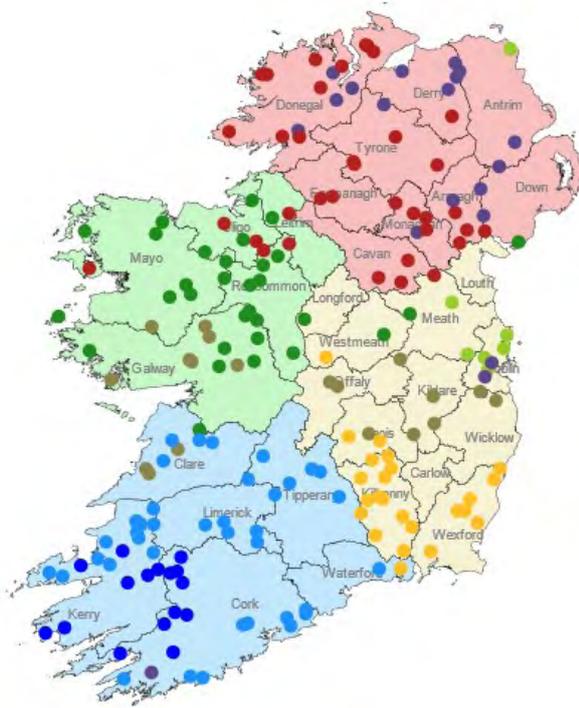


Figure 1. Images have been produced by the Irish DNA Atlas research group, which is the data controller of the data used to produce said images. Irish county boundary data was kindly provided to the Irish DNA Atlas project by Open Street Map Ireland, Copyright OpenStreetMap Contributors. (<https://www.openstreetmap.ie/>)

“use of records has allowed the curation of a cohort with detailed information of the regional origin of each participant’s recent ancestry”

to show the full extent of these clusters, revealing how historical boundaries still impact the genetic landscape of Ireland. See fig. 1, with Irish counties colour coded by historical and administrative Provincial membership. Circles represent an Atlas participant placed at the average geographic location of their great-grandparental birth place and colour coded according to genetic cluster membership. Related clusters are shown in similar colours.

These subtle regional genetic differences are strikingly reminiscent of pre-Anglo-Norman-invasion Irish kingdoms. The correlations are particularly strong for the southern half of Ireland (Thomond, Desmond and Old-Leinster/Dál Cais, Éóganachta, and Laigin population groups respectively). However, the correlations are present throughout northern parts of the island also. Geography influenced early settlement in Ireland and subsequently tended to reinforce historical boundaries and borders also. It appears that geography and regional identities still subtly impact the genetic variation found across Ireland.

Thanks to the collaboration with GSI, the Atlas also records the past three generations of surnames of study participants. Like birthplace information, this data can further elucidate genetic insights. Analysis of individuals with recent genealogical ancestry from, primarily, north-east Ulster (purple coloured circles in fig. 1) shows higher levels of British-like genetic ancestry, though it was unclear if this British-like genetic ancestry was Scottish, English, or Welsh. Analysis of the surnames of these Irish individuals in fact showed there was a significant enrichment of both traditionally Scottish and English surnames, with Scottish surnames more enriched in this group than English surnames. Subsequent co-analysis of the Atlas, with an expanded Scottish genetic sample of different regions of Scotland, confirmed that this British-like genetic ancestry is primarily Scottish-like, from the south-west mainland of Scotland. These results in

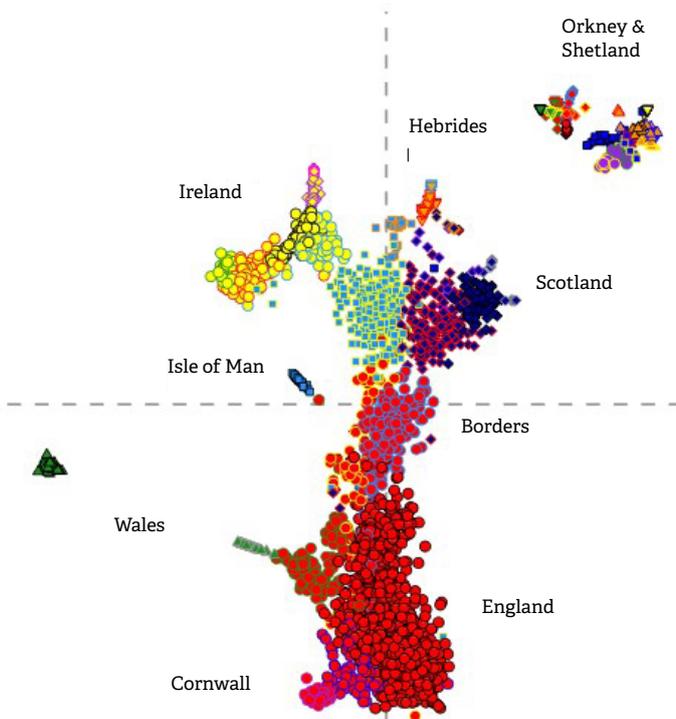


Figure 2. Images have been produced by the Irish DNA Atlas research group, which is the data controller of the data used to produce said images. Irish county boundary data was kindly provided to the Irish DNA Atlas project by Open Street Map Ireland, Copyright OpenStreetMap Contributors. (<https://www.openstreetmap.ie/>)

“*The Irish DNA Atlas has helped reveal the genetic landscape of Ireland and further aided study of the genetic landscape of neighbouring Britain*”

Ulster mirror the plantation history of the north of Ireland since the early seventeenth century. There has been migration back and forth from the north of Ireland to western areas of Scotland since early medieval times, and this history is also evident in the findings of the Irish DNA Atlas project.

The Irish DNA Atlas has helped reveal the genetic landscape of Ireland, and further aided study of the genetic landscape of neighbouring Britain, and how they have been shaped by history. This genetic landscape is exemplified by a figure from the Ireland-Scotland analysis (fig. 2). This shows individuals as separate points, placed at coordinates reflective of their genetic identity relative to others. These ‘genetic coordinates’ bear a striking similarity to the associated geographic positions of each sample.

This work would not have been possible without the intersection of genetic analysis with carefully curated genealogical records and annotation - both informing each other. Future analyses of the cohort are planned as it continues to grow. Future research includes, but is not limited to, questions of Irish demographic history and links with diasporas outside of Ireland.

Individuals interested in participating in the Irish DNA Atlas, and whose records indicate that they fulfil the entry criteria, are invited to visit [www.familyhistory.ie](http://www.familyhistory.ie), or contact Mr Seamus O'Reilly of The Genealogical Society of Ireland: [theirishdnaatlas@gmail.com](mailto:theirishdnaatlas@gmail.com).

For enquiries into the genetic study, please contact Prof. Gianpiero Cavalleri: [gcavalleri@rcsi.ie](mailto:gcavalleri@rcsi.ie).

## Here's to the future: creating an online catalogue for a 41-year history of celebrating brewing

**Vanessa Winstone**, Collections Officer at the National Brewery Centre, toasts the implementation of a new online catalogue for the National Brewery Centre's archives and collections.

The National Brewery Centre has been a museum for 41 years. It has had three name changes and four owners (all breweries), and we are currently run by a fifth – not a brewery!

The site has approximately 100,000 artefacts and objects related to all aspects of the brewing industry. This includes 11 vehicles, a steam pumping engine and two full-size locomotives. Most of the exhibition is housed in a three-storey, Grade-2-listed, 1866 joiners' shop (once part of the Bass Brewery).

The core of the archive is from the Bass Brewery's company records, and spans 750 linear metres of storage. We have one part-time Collections Officer, and 45 volunteers who care for the collections.



'Trussing in' celebrated when an Apprentice Cooper completed 7 years of training. Image courtesy of the National Brewery Centre.



Brewery van and dray horse. Image courtesy of the National Brewery Centre.

Part of the Mansfield Collection. Image courtesy of the National Brewery Centre.

Having an online archive catalogue was one of those projects that had never been a priority, but was always on my wish list. It was only when I attended a West Midlands Museum Development (WMMD) course in Coventry, and met Linda Ellis from a company called Orangeleaf Systems Ltd, that the seed of an idea was sown.

Linda showed us the Black Country History website, and I began to wonder if this was something we could aspire to. Our supporting Trust (The National Brewery Heritage Trust) was looking for projects to give funding to, so I approached the Chair and we talked about what an online catalogue could achieve. Accessibility of our collections is a Trust objective, so we were along the right lines.

The collections management system we had been using was Micromusée. We had been shoehorning museum and archive records into this system for over 20 years, but felt that the fit was not quite right. The decision to change systems was made for us when we realised the cost of updating our current system, which we had to consider as support for our program version was to be discontinued. Time to look at other systems. Most were owned by Axiell, and all had annual fees disproportionate to the use we made of a system. We decided that ICA-AtoM, an open-source Canadian-built software, would work best for us.

Orangeleaf Systems were, and continue to be, enthusiastic and incredibly supportive of the project - I think it has something to do with the beer! We transferred 39,000 records from Micromusée





The National Brewery Heritage Trust. Image courtesy of the National Brewery Centre.

“ *the site has approximately 100,000 artefacts and objects related to all aspects of the brewing industry* ”

to ICA-AtoM, and then selected record information to go to a public interface. Updates could be inputted by volunteers off site if necessary, and browsers to the site can add comments and stories of their own to increase and refresh our metadata.

The process took 2 years, and seems to have worked! On 27 July 2020, we launched our site: [www.nbcarchives.co.uk](http://www.nbcarchives.co.uk). Response has been steady, and we are checking Google Analytics regularly for any trends, with one eye on commercial potential.

Of course, there has been a lot of data cleansing, for example typos and standardisation of terms, as over the past 25 years, and with over 30 system recorders, mistakes are inevitable. The system was not originally developed to be for public access, but purely as a collections management system for staff. Needless to say, we are now compiling a standard for inputting, which will be archive compliant. My next wish is archive accreditation!

See our website for more information:  
[www.nationalbrewerycentre.co.uk](http://www.nationalbrewerycentre.co.uk).

# The Arctic World Archive: a global preservation initiative

**Patricia Alfheim**, Communication Manager at the Arctic World Archive, invites you inside an arctic mountain on the island of Svalbard to explore the future of digital preservation technology.

**S**afely tucked away inside an arctic mountain, surrounded by dry, sub-zero temperatures, is a growing digital repository of world memories.

The Arctic World Archive (AWA), set 300 metres inside a decommissioned coal mine on the remote and demilitarised Norwegian island of Svalbard, holds digital treasures from around the world.

Launched in 2017, institutions such as The National Museum of Norway, the Vatican Library, the National Archives of Mexico and Brazil, the European Space Agency, UNICEF,

Arctic World Archive mountain. Images courtesy of Piql AS.





Rune Bjerkestrand, Managing Director at Piql AS. Images courtesy of Piql AS.

GitHub and many others from around the world have chosen to store valuable data in AWA.

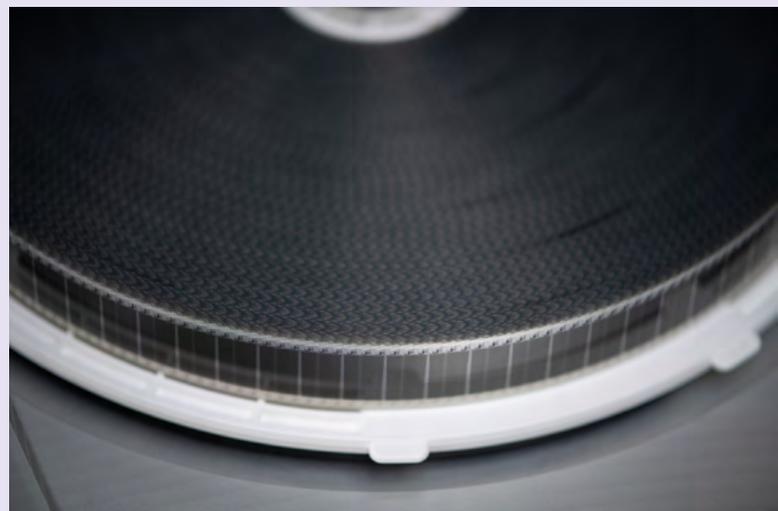
AWA's ambition is to ensure that valuable information and cultural heritage are never lost, but are kept forever, without risk of data corruption, loss or technological obsolescence. Data here is offline and secure, stored on resilient, purpose-built technology designed to last for centuries with guaranteed future access.

This technology is as important as the archive itself, developed by Norwegian innovators and creators of the archive Piql AS.

Most digital storage mediums have a limited lifetime, as hardware, software, and file formats become obsolete as technology evolves.

Through years of research and innovation, Piql transformed photosensitive 35mm film to be a digital data carrier. As an offline medium, piqlFilm is safe from cyber risk, highly resilient against natural disasters, and can be read many times without degradation.

Built as an open-source technology, piqlFilm is designed to be compliant with Open Source Archival System (OAIS) standards. All data is prepared,



Top: piqlFilm. Images courtesy of Piql AS.

Bottom: piqlReader. Images courtesy of Piql AS.



“*data here is offline and secure, stored on resilient, purpose-built technology designed to last for centuries with guaranteed future access*”

validated and converted to preservation file formats and stored with relevant metadata, contextual information, file format specifications and source code.

The data is stored as 8.8-million data points per frame, and can be quickly read back with a piqlReader within minutes (via a high-speed fibre-optic connection from AWA). Importantly, the technology was designed to ensure access to the data in the distant future, enabling manual extraction using only a camera, light and a computer. All instructions to recover the data are stored in both machine-readable and human-readable text alongside the data.

In addition to long-term storage in the Arctic World Archive, Piql also delivers a suite of digital preservation services powered by the open-source preservation platform Archivematica. This includes large-scale preservation projects across Europe, including a world-first health data preservation project for the Norwegian National Health Archive. They are also part of a consortium designing a preservation solution for the European research community in the EU Archiver Project.

AWA welcomes deposits from cultural and heritage institutions, as well as private companies, with depositing ceremonies held twice a year (private ceremonies can also be arranged). The next depositing ceremony will be held in February 2021. Email [info@arcticworldarchive.org](mailto:info@arcticworldarchive.org) to book your deposit or see [www.arcticworldarchive.org](http://www.arcticworldarchive.org) for more information.



Elise Ramsay, Project Archivist, works in the stores to capture key information from the collection  
© The University of Edinburgh

## Mapping a remarkable collection: laying the foundation for global access to the Sir Charles Lyell Collection

**Elise Ramsay**, Project Archivist for the Sir Charles Lyell Collection at the University of Edinburgh’s Centre for Research Collections, considers her role in preserving and promoting the legacy of a great Victorian geologist.

In 2019, after a fundraising campaign led by David McClay (Philanthropy Manager in the Library and University Collections) reached 1,100 funders worldwide and raised nearly £1,000,000, the University of Edinburgh purchased, at a Private Treaty Sale, a collection of 294 scientific notebooks kept by one of the founders of modern geology, Sir Charles Lyell.

Lyell (1797-1875) was a Victorian geologist, and a central figure in the advancement of the science. He found natural explanations for all geologic activity and introduced methods based on observational evidence. These notebooks were kept by Lyell over his eminent 40-year scientific career, and offer unrivalled insights into his reading, field observations, thoughts and relationships. This acquisition adds to an existing geological collection of Lyell papers and specimens, and was joined soon after by a third tranche of Lyell family correspondence and annotated manuscripts, through the Acceptance in Lieu Scheme, making it an astoundingly complete corpus of material.

This collection is predominantly a science archive, as Lyell’s accounts of geographical oddities provide data on the geological and climatological



1188

Weymouth  
Sept 28 1862

Dear Sir Charles

I have much pleasure in sending you a rough sketch of another Drift Supplement which I found last week, and which I believe will lead to the discovery of a fresh locality in England where these implements occur. I found it on a heap of stones near King's Langley and was at first inclined to refer it to our

Letter from  
John Evans to  
Charles Lyell,  
26 September  
1862 (Coll-  
203/1/2) © The  
University of  
Edinburgh

“ *these notebooks were kept by Lyell over his eminent 40-year scientific career, and offer unrivalled insights into his reading, field observations, thoughts and relationships* ”

state of regions 200 years ago and form the basis of climate change research. However, this collection not only gives valuable context to a revered geologist, but interweaves the great debates about slavery in America, human evolution, the participation of women in scientific endeavours, and much more. Lyell interacted with the great scientists, polymaths, artists, and writers of his day, such as William Buckland, Sir Roderick Impey Murchison and Charles Darwin, but also lay-scientists and local guides. As we plumb the depths of this collection, we aim to focus not only on the great geologist at the centre, but all those he interacted with.

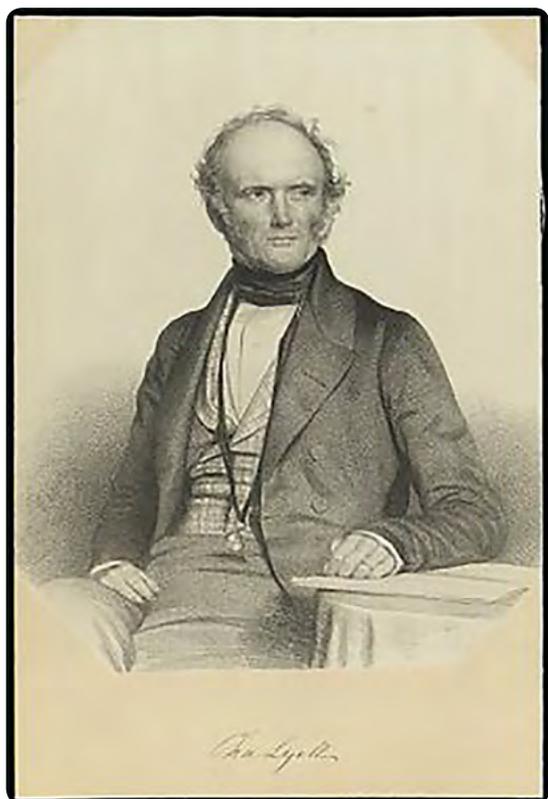
Given the global interest in this collection, my mission as Project Archivist is to create foundational methods and systems for cataloguing. With exposition and description about Charles Lyell, we aim to encourage public engagement and institutional collaboration. To this aim, my priorities are threefold:

1. To find ways to maintain the accuracy of Lyell's own words in descriptions, while including tags for modern usages of his scientific terminology, which has changed considerably.
2. To establish a duty of care, using equitable language in finding aids and catalogue entries that does not elevate the position of privileged groups and speaks plainly about the experience of minority and underprivileged groups, even when this is omitted.
3. To assess and scope the collection, and draw out key narratives through exposition pieces.

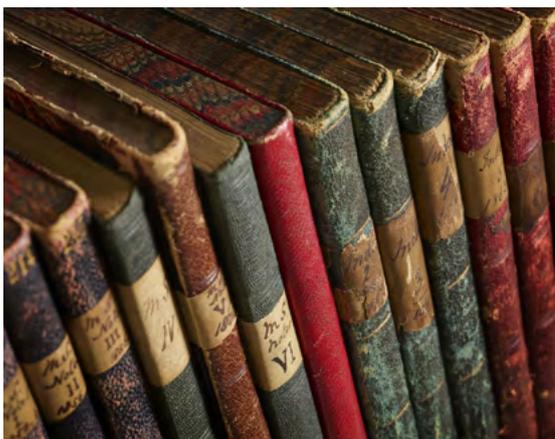
So far, we have been able to test these methods and richly catalogue a pilot set of four notebooks that were digitised before the national lockdown. Now that access to the stores is possible, we are undertaking an initial foray into transcribing Lyell's indexes which he carefully inscribed in the back of each notebook. All of these steps will build the foundation for large-scale projects to make the collection available through conservation, online resource creation and digitisation, ultimately liberating this rich data to be accessed outside of the physical stores and reading rooms.

None of this would be possible without a major grant from the National Heritage Memorial Fund, and outstanding support from the John R. Murray Charitable Trust. Special thanks to Jim Secord, Emeritus Professor of History and Philosophy of Science at the University of Cambridge, and Dr Gillian McCay, Assistant Curator of the Cockburn Museum, University of Edinburgh, for their expertise and guidance on the collection. There is never a dull day when working with this stellar collection.

You can watch our progress on our blog series: [libraryblogs.is.ed.ac.uk/lyell](http://libraryblogs.is.ed.ac.uk/lyell), or visit our webpages: [www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/library-museum-gallery/crc/the-sir-charles-lyell-collection](http://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/library-museum-gallery/crc/the-sir-charles-lyell-collection).



Engraving of Charles Lyell, 1849, J.H. Maguire. (Coll-1518/1/2/1-6)  
© The University of Edinburgh



Bindings of Charles Lyell Notebooks (Coll-203/A1)  
© The University of Edinburgh



Box of gastropods collected by Charles Darwin at St. Helena and sent to Charles Lyell © The University of Edinburgh



The  
**Faraday  
Institute**  
for Science and Religion



Logo and name on building entrance. Image courtesy of the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion.

# In the beginning... the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion

**Mandy Marvin**, Archivist and Librarian at the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion, introduces a new archive with big ambitions, and shares the learning process she is going through during its development.

It's a pleasure to be able to introduce the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion - a new kid on the block since the last 'Science and Archives' edition of ARC was published.

Named for Michael Faraday, the renowned chemist, natural philosopher and man of deep religious faith, the Institute was founded in 2006 within St Edmund's College, Cambridge, by molecular biologist Dr Denis Alexander and geologist Prof Robert White, FRS. In 2018, it became an independent charitable organisation and

an Associate Member of the Cambridge Theological Federation.

An interdisciplinary research institute aimed at improving public understanding of science and religion, the Institute seeks to shed new light on life's big questions through academically rigorous research in the field of science and religion; to provide resources for those with interests in science and faith through research dissemination, education and training; and to catalyse a change in attitude towards science and faith through



ArchI've found a nest of hard drives. Image courtesy of the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion.

“*as I write this one of my philosopher colleagues is on the phone discussing work on the metaphysics of resurrection*”

outreach to schools, colleges, the scientific community, religious institutions and the general public.

All kinds of topics meet and mix at the Institute. As I write this, one of my philosopher colleagues is on the phone discussing work on the metaphysics of resurrection. Others are preparing the technology for tomorrow's lunchtime seminar on Evolution and the Social Brain, and over in the Youth and Schools office, dinosaurs are being herded into a book.

My own role is also multidisciplinary. I was hired in December 2019 as the Institute's first archivist and librarian, with a roomful of books to catalogue and no perceptible archive.

Several reasons have made it necessary thus far to concentrate almost entirely on the library work, but I've been gradually gleaning a sense of the Institute's background, how it operates, and finding out what records there are, might be or should be.

Since it is a part-time post, I'd only had a month's worth of working days before the building we are in was closed due to the first national lockdown. However,



Archives-in-waiting. Image courtesy of the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion.

with the building open again, I've started winking out prospective archival material from nooks and crannies. I've come across a cluster of hard drives, seen 'records-managementy-looking' boxes appear from rearranged offices, and have quizzed the ranks of DVDs perched above shelves of tea and coffee pots in the editing room - 'are you really masters?'

The main series of records I expect to be part of the archive are the usual array of administrative records, including grant-funded project files and records of our Trustees and the International Advisory Board; materials produced by the Institute, chiefly the audio-visual recordings from our conferences, study days, summer schools, courses, seminars, special lectures, etc. (currently 800-plus), as well as Faraday Papers, books and articles, web-based resources; and private papers of individuals prominent in the science and faith arena.

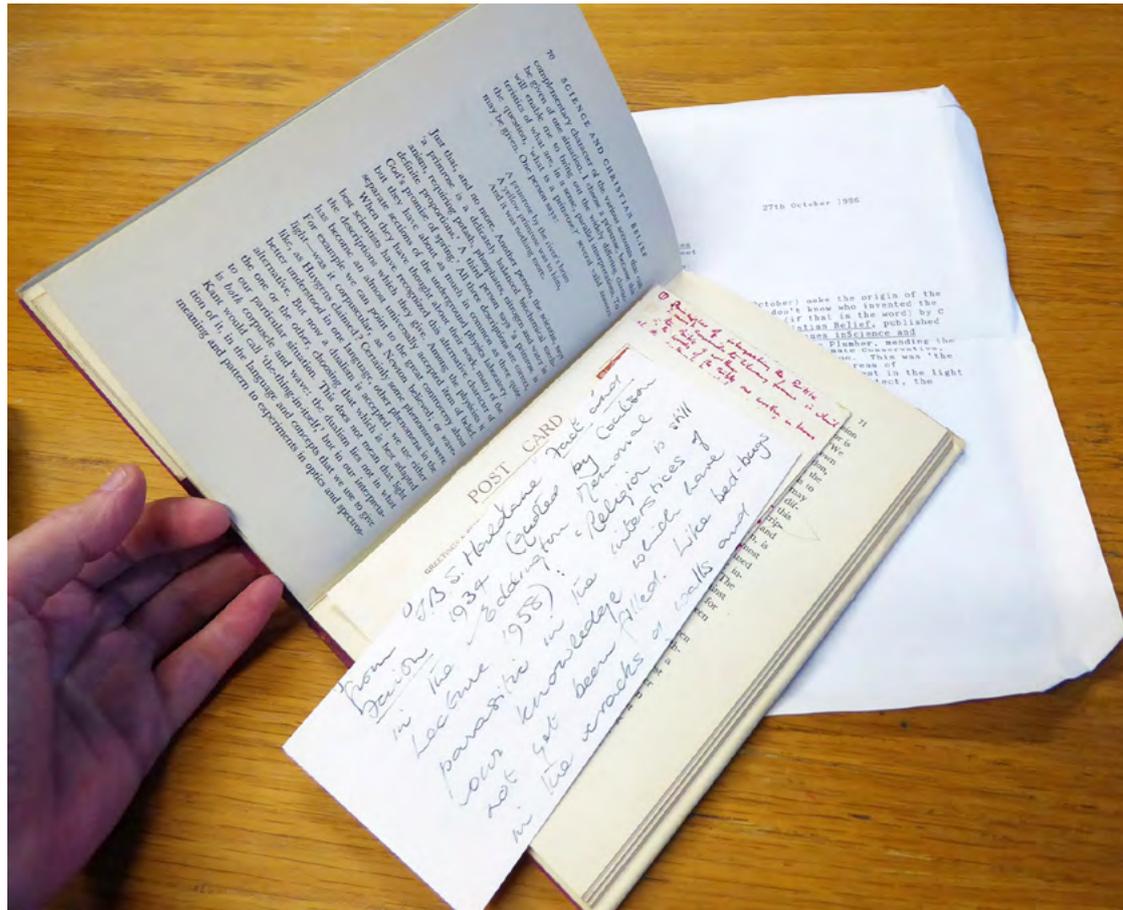
At present, the Faraday has been offered material from two scientists, the first one being an impetus to their seeking an archivist, and more are anticipated. Add to this a small quantity of 'stealth archives'. These are letters, cuttings and ephemera, perhaps from fieldwork or conferences, found interleaved in books in our library that were given to us from individuals' working libraries.

“*with the building open again I've started winking out prospective archival material from nooks and crannies*”

“

*there are the scary-seeming 'big things' to learn, like getting to grips with digital preservation*

”



'Stealth Archives'. Image courtesy of the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion.

There is a lot of nuts-and-bolts archival work that I'm undertaking for the first time, since I've never been a lone archivist, and have certainly never started a service from scratch before!

The to-do list includes policy writing, creating an accession register and forms such as deposit agreements and copyright declarations, figuring out appropriate storage places (at least for now), and establishing processes and workflows.

Then there are the scary-seeming 'big things' to learn, like getting to grips with digital preservation for the operational records and the Institute's born-digital audio-visual and textual output. Cue the timely offering this summer, by the Digital Preservation Coalition and The National Archives, of the 'Novice to Know-How' online course, for which I was very grateful!

One bit of daydreaming beyond the basics is that I'd like to start an oral history collection - another thing I've never done! There's a tranche of people who have been giants in the science-and-faith field, from the late 20th century to the present, who are retiring or already quite elderly, and, as a still-young organisation, we have an assortment of emeritus directors and other early associates who are still happily bouncing around. A set of conversations with all of these would richly complement our historical record. 'Use your specimens while you can', as C.S. Lewis said.

“

*the Institute's thought of hiring an archivist early on in its life deserves a gold star*

”

The Institute's thought of hiring an archivist early on in its life deserves a gold star. That said, what archives are and what archivists actually do is, in fact, a bit of a mystery to most of the team. So, another challenge is learning how to advocate for the archives and the archival process, the hows and the whys, at all levels of the organisation.

It's been funny writing about an archive that isn't yet. But it will be, and this has given me a nice chance to pause and reflect. Perhaps in next year's edition, I can write an update on how it's been developing. In the meantime, there's plenty to feed your curious minds on our website, [www.faraday.cam.ac.uk](http://www.faraday.cam.ac.uk). 'Would you upload your memory?', anyone? If you can find mine, please let me know!



The main exhibition. By permission of Bethlem Museum of the Mind.

# Bethlem Museum of the Mind

**David Luck**, Archivist at Bethlem Museum of the Mind, highlights the collections of the oldest mental health hospital in the world, and reflects on the importance of these collections to a modern user.

Bethlem Museum of the Mind is located in the grounds of Bethlem Royal Hospital in Beckenham, the fourth physical location of the oldest mental health hospital in the world. The Museum has its origins in the 1960s, but the Museum in its current form opened in 2015 in the old administration building on the site in Monks Orchard.

Bethlem can trace its origins to the Priory of St Mary of Bethlehem, established in 1247 in Bishopsgate by

a grant from London Alderman Simon Fitzmary. The Priory quickly became a Hospital, in this case providing 'hospitality' for alms takers for the Church of Bethlehem. At the end of the crusades, ownership of the Hospital reverted to the Crown. The first records of 'lunatics' being treated in the Hospital start in 1400. By the time Henry VIII granted the Hospital to the City of London in 1547, this was starting to become its main function. In 1674, the Hospital moved to a purpose-built building in Moorfields, and was able to look after 200

At a Court held the 27th day of July 1574 these Comyns of the most honorable Comyns

Mr. Gaudin  
 Mr. Colclough  
 Mr. Mable  
 Mr. Kettle  
 Mr. Dysonson

Margaret James brought in ad an idle woman and uncomely  
 Dumblye. Had conversation withe Colles for Dyminge  
 in the street and byinge under stales.

Katherine Danyghard a little woman sente in by Mr. Mable for  
 byinge under the stales. She sayth she was borne in Adross  
 shire. And that one Edmunde Emms & Edmunde  
 howsome taughte her to sayne hit selfe done who  
 dwelt both in longe lane.

Anne Stillitar sente in by Mr. Hill Constable she sayth her  
 Mr. Wolfe howsome had thysse of her bad in dnto hym  
 in his myssed hym. And Mr. Dysonson sayth she ranth  
 where she was & to the

An extract from the Court of Governors Minutes from 1574. By permission of Bethlem Museum of the Mind.



Name of Patient.		Thomas Herbert Stringer		Age.	19	Admitted.	15 Dec 1887.
Previous Place of Abode.		5 Nelson Row Lordskip Lane. Port Dulwich		Occupation.		Apprentice at Printer.	
Married.	Single.	Widower.		Number of Children.		Age of youngest Child	
	Yes						
Whether the first Attack.	Age on first Attack.	Duration of existing Attack.		How many previous Attacks.			
Yes	19	1 week.		None			
Confined in any Lunatic Asylum.	Where.	When.		And how long.			
Yes							
Supposed Cause of Insanity.		Exciting.		Predisposing.			
Not known							
Whether Suicidal.		Whether dangerous to others.					
Yes		Struck his sister.					
Has the Patient been of sober habits.		Degree of Education.					
Yes		5 <sup>th</sup> Standard. Board School.					
State of Bodily Health.		Religious Persuasion.					
		Baptist.					
Relatives similarly afflicted.		And the degrees of Relationship.					
None		Cousin.					

Casebook record of Thomas Stringer and his photograph from 1887. By permission of Bethlem Museum of the Mind.



The Boardroom. By permission of Bethlem Museum of the Mind.

**“we believe we are the only museum of mental health in the UK but we are part of a growing network of museums in Europe exploring and increasing awareness of mental health”**

patients, a number that grew to 250 with the addition of long-stay wings. In 1815, it moved to St George's Fields, now the Imperial War Museum. When that building had become outdated, it developed and moved to Monks Orchard, its current site.

The archive goes back to the 1550s, and includes the records of three Hospitals: Bethlem, The Maudsley, with whom Bethlem formed a partnership to join the NHS in 1948, and Warlingham Park, the former Borough of Croydon Mental Hospital. While the Museum uses the history of the Hospital in its exhibits, this is a jumping-off point for an exploration of the themes around mental health. We are aware that the archive, by definition, often only tells the story of the Hospital. Our collection of more than 1,500 objects and artworks supplements this history, and helps give a voice to the patients, staff, family and visitors affected by mental health issues.

We have three rooms in the Museum. Our permanent display is divided into themes, exploring classification, constraint, treatment, and recovery (with a question mark). Our historic boardroom replicates rooms in St George's Fields and Moorfields sites, and gives an

impression of the history of the Hospital. Our temporary exhibition space features 3-4 different exhibitions a year, usually drawing on themes in our collection of art.

We believe we are the only museum of mental health in the UK, but we are part of a growing network of museums in Europe exploring, and increasing awareness of, mental health. The archive is also unique in the scope and completeness of its records, which include minutes of the Governors from 1574 up to 1948 (with some early gaps), and a complete run of patient casebooks from 1815 (when they began) up to 1948. We used these casebooks recently to run our online research project, 'Change Minds', exploring the lives of patients admitted in 1887.

We are currently back open to the public by guided tour, or to researchers by appointment. Sadly, the Bethlem site is quiet, and we no longer have our regular traffic from Hospital service users and staff, who are always really engaged with our work. We are aware that in a coronavirus (COVID-19) world, mental health is one of the most important topics, and we have a duty to keep our collections and work as open and accessible as possible. You can find more on our website at [www.museumofthemind.org.uk](http://www.museumofthemind.org.uk).

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DISCOVERED  
FOUND  
DETECTED  
CONNECTED  
ENGAGED  
UNEARTHED  
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