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Call for Core Training Co-ordinators

The ARA training group is looking for a number of new members to contribute to the Core Training offer for ARA members. We believe that the provision of quality, inexpensive, accessible training is one of the key roles for ARA. As a group we oversee training across the Association, designing and delivering regional and specialist training events. In the last two years we have developed the new Core Training events.

Can you help us to further develop our training provision? Are you looking to spread your wings and broaden your horizons from your current job? Do you have something to offer?

We are particularly looking for people to take on the roles of Core Training Co-ordinators. These are people who look after specific Core Training courses and take responsibility for their structure and administration. This is an excellent opportunity to develop your skills and show a commitment to your continuing professional development.

We are looking for enthusiastic people who can make a minimum two-year commitment to the role. We meet three times a year with discussions in between by teleconference and email. Travelling, telephone and other expenses are met by ARA. For an informal discussion or to express an interest contact the chair of the training group.

Lizzy Baker, ARA Training Group Chair

Email: lizzy.aratraining@outlook.com

The ARA's Core Training programme is supported by Link 51.



**Archives & Records
Association**
UK & Ireland

Welcome to ARC Magazine April 2015

Welcome to the Conservation and Preservation issue of ARC and to my first issue as editor. What struck me when reading these articles was the huge amount of time and effort that goes in to making archive material accessible and the intricate processes that conservators undertake that often take place 'behind the scenes'. I was also pleased to learn about some of the fantastic conservation projects that have taken place and the variety of materials that are being made available as a result.

I hope you enjoy the issue!



Sophie Stewart
Editor

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Front cover shows: Antoinette Curtis
demonstrating tissue coating



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DISCLAIMER

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

opening lines



Marie Owens has been Head of Public Affairs at ARA since July 2011; she will leave the post at the end of May.

For a good while now I've been part of the team scheduling 'Opening Liners' and encouraging contributors to the page to 'tell it as they see it'. Now, as I approach the end of my time as Head of Public Affairs at ARA, I get my own turn to say a bit of what I (really) think!

Actually what I (really) think about this sector has barely changed in four years:

Modesty

When I first joined ARA, I couldn't believe how self-effacing most recordkeeping professionals were. I was used to noisier folk with large egos. And I still ask myself: how can anyone receive a 97% satisfaction rate from their users without at least a massive high five, let alone a large G and T?

I've spent 35 years plus in PR. So of course I'm wired to the glass being more than half full and over-accentuating the positive. Record keepers feel, and I do understand, that it's about the collection, the user, the record. It's not about them or their skills. Modesty is just fine if there are no battles to be won, no support to be garnered, no funding to be secured. But when s/he who makes the most noise might just get some funding or some security, a quieter 'just get on with the job' approach can be dangerous.

Please remember: this sector has some of the best-educated and best-qualified people in the UK and Ireland; the skillset is wide and deep; the innovation strong; the humour wonderful (I shall never forget Explore Your Archive hashtags in 2014!). You have so much to shout about. Do it, at least sometimes.

Small

I recall putting 'small' as both a positive and a negative when, early on, I looked at the sector's strengths and weaknesses.

Now I really think the positives outweigh the negatives. I've just about stopped being amazed at how everyone in this sector knows everyone else (the first two people I ever tried to introduce were married to each other!) This allows a rare level of trust and speed of action. We probably don't exploit that well enough yet.

Pride

Having worked for many years for a nuclear physicist who 'didn't do pink and fluffy', I learned to keep some of my 'touchy feely' instincts in check in the workplace. But when you measure communication, or advocacy, or other sorts of success, it can't all be about clicks and footfall and numbers. Feelings matter. I remember adding 'Did it make you feel proud?' on a questionnaire about the first year of Explore Your Archive. Yes came the reply. People who feel proud do better work; they stand taller; they try again when they get knocked back. When we launched Explore Your Archive at the House of Commons in 2013 Gary Brannan spoke about the pride he had in his work. To say he stole the show from a good number of experienced and quite famous speakers is an understatement.

No one's perfect. We all drop the ball. But no record keeper lost all the UK's money, or ruined lives with intrusive practices, or conned people out of their life savings. Please take pride in a sector that works, and which has considerable integrity. One of my first conversations in this role was with family history magazine editors. 'What's it like working with archivists' I asked. 'Wonderful' was the standard reply. 'When an archivist says you'll have it on Friday, you have it on Friday. And it's perfect'.

I could go on, with headings and thoughts. But that's about it from me. The next time you have an opportunity to tell someone about the extraordinary work you do – ditch the modesty, take a breath and go for it. Be proud.

Registration Scheme **news**

Last month, we announced the names of the final enrolments to the current Registration Scheme. As we move through 2015 and towards the introduction of the ARA's new CPD offer, it's perhaps worth considering what options are available for those of you thinking about, or actively working towards, registered status.

If you are already enrolled on the Scheme you have two options:

1. Complete and submit your portfolio under the current system. As you can see below, that means submitting in the next 30 months, by the 1 October 2017 assessment round at the very latest.
2. Postpone submission of your portfolio until after the new Registration Scheme is introduced. The earliest submission date for those who wait will be 1 April 2018.

If you plan to submit by October 2017, don't forget to maintain communication with your mentor. Together, you might develop a professional development plan to support your CPD. This can be used to identify goals and set targets and deadlines. We continue to run workshops - both the general workshops explaining the Registration Scheme and 'Blitz-It' workshops for those of you nearing submission or in need of a gentle push towards the finish line. You will find an advert for two general workshops on page 6. Not only will these events provide information about completing your portfolio but there will also be an opportunity to learn about the changes to the Registration Scheme.

If you aren't ready to submit your portfolio by October 2017 then don't worry. It is much better to wait and submit a strong portfolio under the new system than rush and have your portfolio fail to meet the required standard.

If you have not yet enrolled on the Scheme you will now have to wait until enrolments open for the new Registration Scheme on 1 January 2016. However, as with those who plan to postpone submission, you can still be thinking about your CPD.

Remember: Whatever you decide, no CPD activities will be wasted if you postpone submission or wait for enrolments to begin in 2016. You should continue to record your CPD activities and gather evidence for them. The way in which you write-up these activities will change, the format of the portfolio will be different, but the underlying need to demonstrate professional development will be the same. The Registration Scheme is changing but it will not end in 2017.

Don't forget: Existing candidates have 30 months to submit their portfolio under the existing Registration Scheme.

Contacts:

General Registration Scheme enquiries:

Email: registrar@archives.org.uk

Registration Scheme events enquiries:

Email: regschemeevents@archives.org.uk

Registration Scheme admin and bursaries:

Email: regschemeadmin@archives.org.uk

Registration Scheme Communications Officer:

Email: regschemecomms@archives.org.uk

Registration Scheme mentor queries and advice:

Email: regscheme Mentors@archives.org.uk

Richard Wragg

Communications Officer, Registration Sub-Committee

Collecting matters

Over the last two years, the *Archiving the Arts* project has reached out to a huge range of arts organisations, from record companies and orchestras to local theatres. Many had not fully recognised the potential value of their archives. So we have worked with them to build knowledge about the importance of these collections and to equip arts professionals with the skills to assess, manage and care for what they have.

Another major part of the project has been gathering and sharing information about arts archive collections across the UK. These are just a few of the many fantastic collections we've found out about:

- The records of Matt's Gallery, 1967-2014, an East London-based contemporary art gallery set up in the late 1970s. The collection includes photographs, exhibition material, artists' files and administrative papers.
- Finance, property, design papers and photographs of Poole Pottery Ltd, a pottery manufacturing company, held at Dorset History Centre (ref: D-PPY).
- The papers of animator Roland Frederick Godfrey (known as Bob Godfrey), held at the University for the Creative Arts (ref: BG). Bob Godfrey is best known for animations such as *Roobarb and Custard* and *Henry's Cat*.

Getting involved:

There are a number of case studies and resources to explore on our webpages: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/archiving-the-arts-resources.htm>

But please get in touch if you'd like to be part of the project and highlight your own collections through a case study.

We're very grateful to all the archives, arts organisations and individuals who have contributed to the project so far. The work of *Archiving the Arts* is continuing so if you know of an arts archive collection that might be at risk please let us know!

Kate Wheeler

Collections Knowledge Manager

Louise Piffero

Collections Knowledge Officer

The National Archives
asd@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

Registration Scheme Workshops in Dublin and Newcastle

Registration Scheme workshops will be held at:

University College Dublin, 6 May 2015
Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle, 15 May 2015

Both workshops will take place from 1pm to 4.30pm.

These FREE half-day workshops are suitable for candidates, referees and mentors.

They will provide the opportunity to:

- Find out about the upcoming changes to the Registration Scheme and what this means for current candidates
- Work through the four development areas: Formal training courses; Private study/professional research; Work achievements; Contributions to the profession
- Work through Learning Outcome Forms: Motivation; Achievement; Evidence
- View successful portfolios
- Ask questions

Programme Structure:

13:00-13:10 - Arrival & registration

13:10-13:50 - Overview of the ARA Registration Scheme; role of the candidate & mentor; Personal Development Planning

13:50-15:15 - Getting to grips with the four areas of development; Learning Outcome Forms

15:15-15:45 - Tea/coffee; view portfolios from some of the successful candidates; individual queries

15:45-16:30 - Support; changes to the scheme; discussion and round-up

Maximum attendance for each workshop: 20. Book early to avoid disappointment (no later than one week prior to the date of the workshop).

To register for either workshop, please contact Kate Jarman, Events Coordinator, Registration Sub-Committee, at regschemeevents@archives.org.uk

ARA Volunteering Award

Where would we be without our volunteers?

I know that in my workplace our volunteers are certainly appreciated and many additional tasks are done that could never even have been contemplated without their valuable contribution and dedication.

What better way to celebrate your volunteers than with the ARA Volunteering Award?

Now in its 6th year the award grew out of recommendations from the 2009 report, *Volunteering in Archives: A Report for the National Council on Archives* which was supported by CyMAL: Museums Archives and Libraries Wales, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, and the Scottish Council on Archives.

The award was designed to encourage national recognition of volunteers' contribution to archives, and to promote good practice in volunteering. Going by the feedback received from past winners it has certainly achieved its objectives and more besides.

Over the past five years the nominations have always been extremely varied, from archives relating to dance companies and rugby clubs to universities, charities and of course local government archives. The projects too are innovative and inspiring. In 2010 The Black Cultural Archives put forward *The Heart of the Race: Oral Histories of the Black Women's Movement*, a project whose aim was to collect testimonies from a range of black women involved in the movement for the rights of black women in the UK, including activism, organising, campaigning and lobbying at a grassroots, national or international level. This year's winner, the University of St Mark and St John Plymouth, had a stand-out piece of work. Their 'Connected Catalogue' provided an opportunity for people with disabilities to engage with archives and heritage activities by a programme of volunteer-led displays and exhibitions based on the archive's collections.

Anecdotally the two biggest impacts of the award are that it is, perhaps unsurprisingly, a way to formally



The Hull volunteers celebrate their award in 2013, standing by a 1935 car owned by one of the volunteers. Above right - Carol Tanner, who led the project for Hull History Centre, holds the 2013 trophy. Photograph by Hannah Rogerson for the ARA



The 2014 winners: University of St Mark and St John Vice Chancellor Professor Cara Aitchison, David Mander OBE, Chair of the Archives and Records and Association who presented the award, former student volunteer (now graduate) Agata Czacza (holding the certificate), David Allen, Archivist Gil Fewings, D Wood (holding the award) and Ron Deakin. The photograph was taken by Mark Bryant, another 'Connected Catalogue' volunteer.

“ It is safe to say that all the volunteers involved are extremely proud of their achievements and their contributions... to the continued success and profile of the archive they represent ”

recognise volunteers' work and is a tool to promote archive services to parent bodies and the broader public.

What are remarkable though, and what continue to inspire, are the pride and joy that volunteers take in contributing to the success of archives and the impact that the award can have on volunteers' self-esteem. It is also reassuring that the award is having an impact on future funding opportunities or promotion of service both internally and externally, through providing official recognition of successful audience development and community involvement.

...it was a very useful advocacy tool within my organisation - the award raised the profile of the service, the role of volunteers and the Chinese Archive. It was also a great reward for the volunteers themselves.

Manchester Archives and Local Studies Winner 2010

I think it helps enormously that Volunteer Managers throughout the Council are using a process and guidance that has been recognised by ARA. The number of volunteers throughout the Council continues to increase and we are confident that there is a consistent approach to managing volunteers, which makes them feel valued and recognises the support

they give. This approach will be used for Hull's City of Culture 2017 volunteers.

Maxine Hunter, Partnership Officer, Hull City Council Winner 2013

Feedback from the volunteers themselves has also been positive. One volunteer from last year's wining project, who did not complete his education in the 1960s, said: 'I've finally got something to be proud of to put on my CV'.

Having attended several of the award celebrations it is safe to say that all the volunteers involved are extremely proud of their achievements and their contributions, however small, to the continued success and profile of the archive they represent.

So don't forget to enter your project for this year's award. The closing date for submissions will be the 8 June 2015.

Further information on the award and former winners can be found on the ARA website:

<http://www.archives.org.uk/ara-in-action/campaigns/volunteering/volunteering-awards.html>

Sally Bevan

London Metropolitan Archives

Legislation and Standards Working Group

The Legislation and Standards Working Group (LSWG) is the section of ARA responsible for responding to formal consultations on local, national and international legislation and standards that impact on our membership and the wider record-keeping professions.

There are presently eight members who meet four times a year to discuss current issues and pending consultations. Three meetings are by teleconference and there is one face-to-face meeting. We monitor impending national and international legislation and standards that are developed by a range of bodies including local and central government, devolved administrations, quangos, the Information Commissioner's Office and the European Union. Our current members are drawn from England, Scotland and Wales and, as a whole, the group represents ARA's membership in the international archives community.

We respond to a wide range of consultations. As well as those which relate to copyright, data protection and freedom of information, we also respond to those which relate to other intellectual properties, particular records sets and other information rights. In the last six months, LSWG has responded to the following consultations on ARA's behalf:

- Protecting Personal Health and Care Data (UK Government)
- Role of the Lord Chancellor (Lords Constitution Committee)
- Inquiry into Manorial Rights (UK Government)
- Devolution, Democracy and Delivery (Welsh Government White Paper)

- Information Tribunal (Senior President of Tribunals)
- Transposing Amendments to the Directive on the Re-use of Public Sector Information (UK Government / The National Archives)
- Directive on Professional Qualifications (European Union).

Over the last year, members of the group also contributed significantly to the work being done on the draft European Data Protection Regulations.

We currently have two vacancies within the group: general member and Consultations & Communications Officer. General members share the responsibility of monitoring for new consultations and reporting on them. Each member drafts responses to one or two consultations per year with input from the other members. The time commitment would be for four or five hours per month. A good working knowledge of relevant current legislation and standards is all that is required although we would welcome applicants with a particular specialism or interest. We would also particularly welcome applications from those working in Ireland as the group does not currently have an Irish representative.

The role of Consultations & Communications Officer is, as the name suggests, two-fold. Firstly, the person will maintain and update a list of current consultations and arrange which group member will lead on the response. Secondly, the person will advocate the group's work to the ARA membership and wider profession. For example, we plan to publish LSWG's consultation responses on the ARA website as well

as canvass members for feedback via the Archives-NRA listserv. One of the key responsibilities will be to develop the section's presence on the ARA website. Please see <http://www.archives.org.uk/community/groups/viewgroup/35-legislation-and-standards-working-group.html> for further details.

For both roles, applicants should be a full ARA UK & Ireland member. Expressions of interest should be sent to Barbara McLean (contact details below).

Legislation, standards, codes of practice. Whether or not they originate in Europe, the UK or in local areas, they all have the power to alter the way in which our professions operate. It is therefore essential that the views of those who work in and run our record-keeping services are heard. Without them, we risk being presented with legislation, standards and codes of practice which are not fit for purpose and which do not accurately reflect the realities of operating archives, records management services and conservation units.

Therefore, if you feel that there is impending legislation or a developing standard which ARA should respond to, please let us know. Similarly, if you would like your own feedback included in a consultation response then please send your comments to legislation@archives.org.uk. The more voices we have, the stronger our responses will be.

Barbara McLean
LSWG Secretary

Barbara.McLean@glasgowlife.org.uk

The BAC Cataloguing Grant for Business Archives is back and has been increased to £3,000!

In support of the National Strategy for Business Archives, the Business Archives Council (BAC) is delighted to announce that it is once again offering a cataloguing grant for business collections. Furthermore, the grant this year has been increased to £3000.

The aims of the grant, in funding the cataloguing of a business collection in either the private or public sector, are to:

- Provide financial support for institutions/businesses that manage business archives
- Reach collections that have not yet been prioritised but have potential academic or socio-historical value
- Create opportunities for archivists or para-professionals/volunteers to gain experience in listing business collections
- Make more business collections accessible

We envisage that the grant of £3000 is used over the equivalent of a six-week period to fund an archive intern or temporary staff member (under professional supervision) to catalogue a discrete collection of business records. This can either be a detailed catalogue of a small collection or a top-level catalogue of a more substantial collection. Grant recipients should provide the BAC with a final report and catalogue, and the catalogue should be made available to The National Archives' DISCOVERY database.

Previous applicants are welcome to re-apply. Please note that the BAC would not normally award a grant to the same institution within three years.

The Cataloguing Grant for Business Archives (2015) opens on 1 April 2015 and the deadline for applications is 26 June 2015. For more information criteria and application form see the BAC's website at <http://www.businessarchivescouncil.org.uk/>.

Any questions about the grant should be addressed to Adam Hillhouse, Administrator, Business Archives Council Cataloguing Grants (2015) at: Email: adam.hillhouse@postalheritage.org.uk
Tel: 020 7239 2566

Adam Hillhouse

A welcome to the Preservation and Conservation special issue from Sarah Volter:

Welcome to this Preservation and Conservation special issue of ARC.

From Fifteenth Century printed books to modern records, this issue includes conservation projects on a wide range of collections with their own unique challenges.

These insights into practical conservation treatments highlight the varied and constantly adapting role of a conservator. One of the issues raised is the sometimes challenging need to balance the most appropriate and sympathetic techniques whilst keeping within timescales negotiated through grant funding. The difficulties faced in ensuring access of exhibition items in a clear and informative way without compromising the preservation and safety of the collections is also explored in this issue. We have a report on a Professional Internships for PhD Students placement and how this supported learning and increased knowledge on the compatibility of adhesives with fragile parchment.

Although there are many changes and challenges facing the sector today, it is the ability to adapt and prioritise that ensures the successful preservation of our archival history.

Sarah Volter

Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre



Thomas Hayton Mawson and the Ahmadiyya Mosque

Peter Eyre talks about the conservation of plans for London's first ever purpose built mosque

Thomas Mawson, 1861-1933, made a significant contribution to the art of garden, park and civic design in the Edwardian Era. Today his work has been somewhat overshadowed by more famous landscape architects such as Gertrude Jekyll, 1843-1932, almost his exact contemporary.

However Thomas Mawson made a significant contribution that deserves to be better known. We are fortunate that an extensive archive has survived and this has been a source of inspiration to historians of the Arts and Crafts era, owners who have sought to restore their gardens and councils who have been able to research his plans of civic parks to restore them. The archive (WDB 86) includes an extensive collection of plans and photographs of his projects and reveals the breadth of his vision including not only beautiful coloured plans of gardens but ambitious civic design schemes, such as the building of the city of Calgary in Canada.

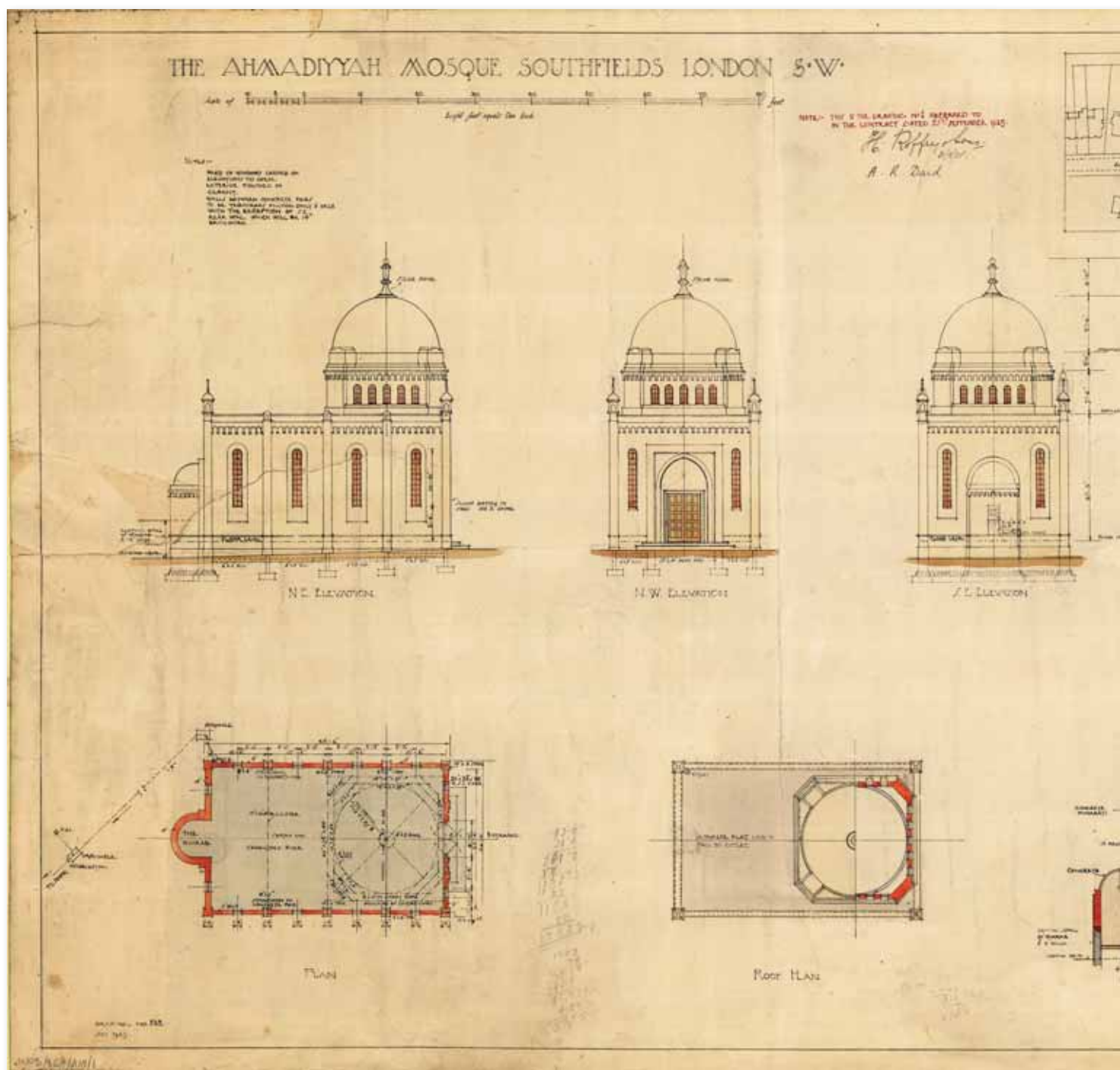
This article is concerned with a project to conserve an extensive collection of plans relating to one of Mawson's later and more unusual projects for London's first ever purpose built mosque. The plans illustrated here show Mawson's plans for the Fazl (Mosque of Grace) Mosque in South London, built for the Ahmadiyya Community. This commission was a late request at a time when Mawson's health was declining.

In 1920 an acre of land in Southfields, South West London, was purchased by the Ahmadiyya Community for the purpose of building a mosque to serve the community. The work, starting in 1925, was completed in July 1926. Mawson was commissioned to design the formal gardens around the mosque.

The Mawson Archive includes an extensive collection relating to the mosque, including 29 plans. For example there is a drawing of the Dome, details of the minaret and plans of the grounds. The plans are in a variety of media including blueprints, brittle tracing paper and wove paper. Many of the tracings had tears of varying severity and, without treatment, it was only a matter of time before the record of this very important late commission would be inaccessible.

In 2012 we were approached by representatives of the Ahmadiyya Community (Ahmadiyya Archive and Research Centre), who commissioned the project to conserve the plans to enable continued access to them.

Following a detailed survey of the 29 plans a treatment plan was drawn up which established the conservation needs of each individual item and set out how the conservation treatment would be carried out. The first stage was to

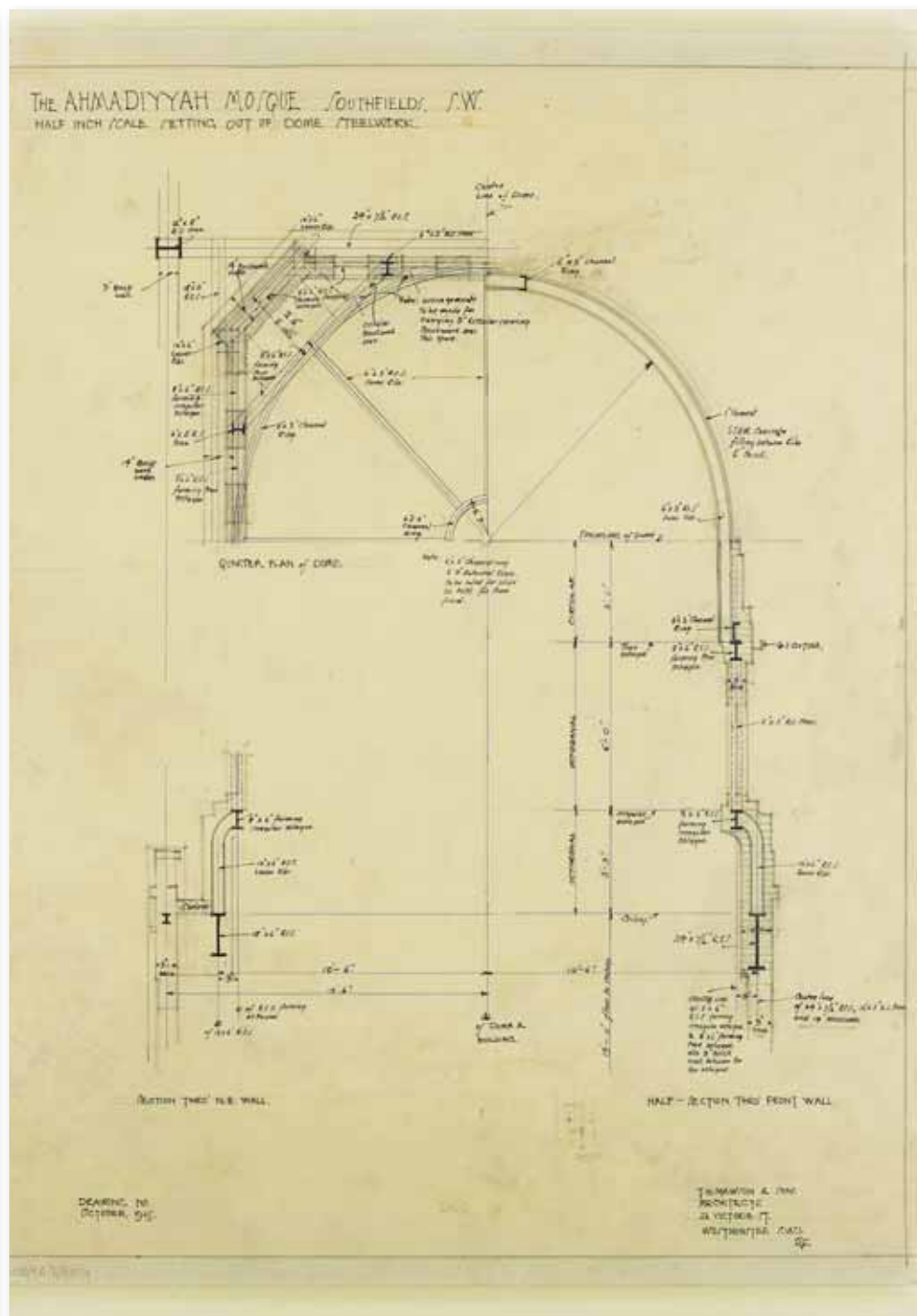
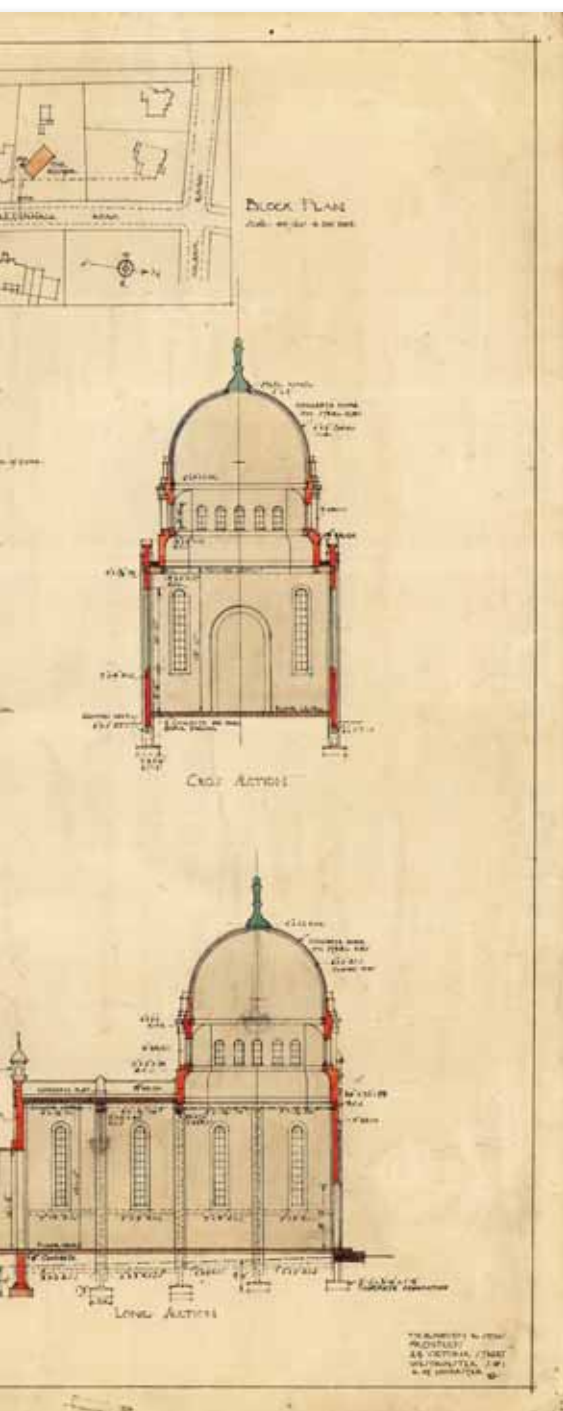


surface clean all the plans to remove dirt particles that had accumulated over the years. Depending on how fragile the plans were this was carried out either by using a soft goat hair brush or a vulcanised rubber sponge that is very effective at removing particulate dirt.

The majority of the plans had been produced on light weight tracing paper, a common medium for architects who valued its translucency, which made easy reproduction possible. Unfortunately the production methods for tracing paper tend to result in very poor longevity due to factors such as the oils used to make the paper transparent quickly degrading, making the paper discoloured, extremely brittle and liable to fracture

into multiple pieces unless handled with extreme care. Luckily none of the tracing plans had degraded to that extent but they had been tightly rolled for a long time, making them prone to springing back when efforts were made to unroll them. The edges had suffered damage and several plans had significant tears and missing areas which needed repair to stop further loss and allow safe handling.

Each plan was placed in a chamber containing high levels of humidity, and, as the paper absorbed moisture from the air, it relaxed and following drying between blotting paper, the formally rolled plans were now flat with no tendency to spring closed. Repairs were carried out using a lightweight tissue



backed onto a heat activated adhesive. Pieces of the tissue were carefully shaped using a needle to produce a feathered edge that helps adhesion and flexibility of the finished repair before being secured in place by a heated spatula. For missing areas of tracing paper a piece of tissue was applied from either side creating a double thickness of tissue over the hole, normally a repair paper would be used to fill the hole but due to the thinness of the tracing 2 thicknesses of tissue was sufficient.

Following repair the plans were repackaged in archival grade materials including custom made boxes and chemically inert polyester sleeves that allow the plans to be viewed without

removal from the protective plastic. Each plan was digitised allowing the option of future access via a high resolution image rather than risking wear and tear by handling the original once again.

The work to conserve the plans was a major undertaking and we are grateful for the support of the Ahmadiyya Community in making it possible to save these plans for future generations.

Peter J Eyre

Assistant County Archivist, Cumbria Archive Service

Tony King

Senior Conservator, Cumbria Archive Service

The Erddig Family Book



Conservation of the Erddig Family Book

Last year Flintshire Record Office was awarded grant funding by the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust and CyMAL (Museums Archives Libraries Wales) for the conservation and digitisation of the Erddig Family Book (Ref: D/E/1542). The grant funded twelve weeks of work by project conservator Maggie Harris, working alongside Flintshire Record Office Conservator Mark Allen, to prepare the volume for digitisation.

A unique and complex volume

The Erddig Family Book is a complex volume from the National Trust-owned Erddig Estate in Wrexham. Philip Yorke II (1849-1922) compiled a scrapbook by gluing or taping over 500 interesting and unusual items selected from the Yorke family archives into an 18th century blank book. The miscellaneous contents, the earliest dating from 1661, comprise mainly letters but also bills, posters, cuttings, drawings, prints, invitations, a passport, playbills, poems and songs, pedigrees and maps. They relate to events in the Yorke family, their servants, house and estate, royalty (including letters from Queen Victoria), political and military matters, society, entertainment and business. In addition, there are

paintings and handwritten inscriptions in fugitive black ink directly on the pages.

The need for conservation

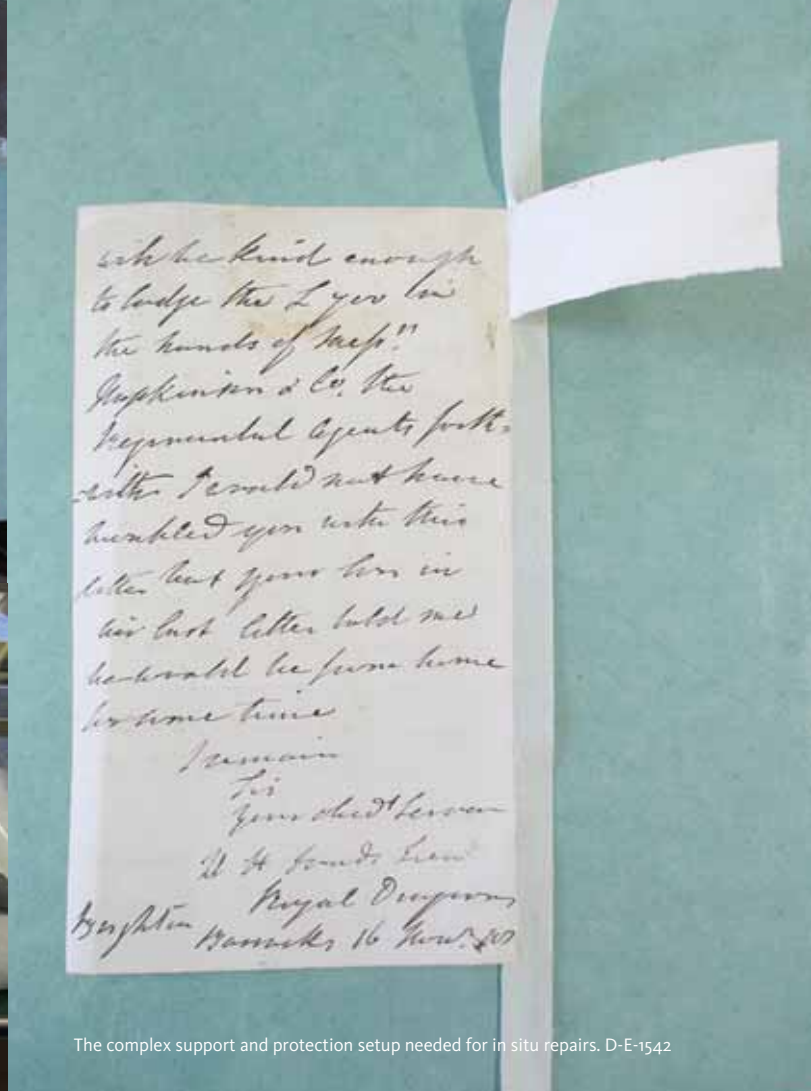
Philip Yorke II's personal arrangement of documents gives the book its unique character. Its fascinating contents, from the popular Erddig Estate Collection, are of considerable appeal and significance. However, its fragile condition meant it was unavailable to researchers. The book had deteriorated due to ageing of the materials and physical handling of the overcrowded, folded, interlayered, poorly-attached contents. The reverse calf, tight-back account book binding, with fore-edge clasps and a central boss, had distorted boards and damaged joints. Some pages were split or detached, with many edge tears. Some older documents had become acidic and weak. Many had become dirty, detached, torn, crumpled or creased. Tape repairs and hinges obscured some text and created further stresses. Animal glue had been applied liberally leaving deposits and stains. Previous conservation treatment in the 1970s or 1980s left some documents detached, unsympathetically repaired (by today's standards) and stored separately.



Unusual arrangement of letters risks physical handling damage. D-E-1542



Previously attached only on the righthand strip, the letter will be reattached with a full length Japanese paper hinge. D-E-1542



The complex support and protection setup needed for in situ repairs. D-E-1542

complex reattachment to be completed at this stage but the separate documents would speed up the digitisation process.

Resulting benefits

Housed in a bespoke, Plastazote-lined, archival box, supplied by Lancashire County Record Office, and wrapped in 100gsm Bondina, the original volume will remain in the strongroom at Flintshire Record Office, while high-quality digital images provided by the National Library of Wales will soon provide researchers with excellent access to this valuable historic resource.

And personally, as a recently-qualified conservator, I thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated the opportunity to gain valuable professional experience working on this demanding and worthwhile project.

Maggie Harris

Flintshire Record Office



Deacidifying a poster from Simon Yorke's wedding in 1846. D-E-1542

Emily in the studio

Policies, Postcards and Prophylactics: a project to catalogue and conserve LHSA's UNESCO-awarded HIV/AIDS collections

Project Conservator Emily Hick discusses a project undertaken by the Lothian Health Services Archive

In January 2014, Lothian Health Services Archive began a 12-month Wellcome Trust-funded project to catalogue and conserve their UNESCO-awarded HIV/AIDS collections. This material documents the social and medical response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Edinburgh and the Lothians from 1983 to 2010. By the mid-1980s, the HIV infection rate in Edinburgh was seven times higher than the national average, which led to the city being dubbed the “AIDS capital of Europe” in the national press. Policies formed at this time, in terms of awareness and prevention campaigns as well as care of patients, went on to inform national policy. As such, this is a unique and comprehensive resource of vital importance to our documentary heritage, hence its inscription in the UNESCO UK Memory of the World Register in 2011. Of the 12 collections, 4 were uncatalogued at the start of the project, and all collections required conservation treatment. The project has ensured physical stability and the long-term availability of the material for research, and will subsequently aid understanding of this unique period in modern history.

The collections are made up of a variety of media, mostly loose paper documents, but also badges, stickers,

photographs, 35mm slides and canvas and plastic bags, as well as rubber and latex items such as condoms and balloons. Although the material was in good condition overall, previous storage led to planar distortion, creasing, tearing and the accumulation of surface dirt on paper documents. Damage to other items was often due to the inherent nature of the object. For example, rubber items such as balloons became brittle due to loss of plasticiser and objects were stuck together due to the migration of additives. There is also a collection of digital media such as 3.5" floppy disks, VHS, audio cassette tapes and film reels which are in danger of becoming obsolete. Much of the material had no secondary protection or had only been provided with basic housing on accession. Due to this, conservation treatment mainly involved surface cleaning, tear repair, flattening and rehousing, with some focused digitisation work.

New organisation and storage systems were created to meet the particular needs of the collections. For example, a large number of metal fasteners were removed from paper sheets during this project which meant that the original grouping of these papers were lost. To maintain the grouping, a paper strip was folded over the documents with one side



Boxes on shelves after treatment



Boxes on shelves before treatment



Boxes on shelves after treatment

longer at the edge. These were graduated down the side of the document to create a tab system, aiding in quick access to the required item. These were then placed in acid-free triptych folders at a maximum depth of 2cm, and stored in an acid-free box.

Many items in these collections were degrading in strange and surprising ways, and challenges in the project occurred due to the modern nature of the materials. This led to the design of some innovative storage solutions for problematic items. One such item is a long line of plastic bunting with a repeated “Take Care” logo on. It has a strong ‘plastic’ smell, suggesting it is deteriorating rapidly and likely to become brittle as it ages. To avoid excessive handling of this object, a ‘concertina’ folder was created which could display three flags only and leave the rest untouched. This storage method enables the general design of the bunting to be viewed and the condition of the item to be monitored without touching it at all.

Some plastic objects in the collection are at high risk of deterioration and need to be monitored regularly, for example, several vulnerable plastic watches which were previously stored in tissue paper. This made the items difficult to assess and hard to wrap up neatly once the package had been opened. To aid monitoring of these items, a box was made using mountboard with a clear polyester window on top, so that they can be viewed easily without excessive handling. Ventilation holes were left at the edges of the box to allow acidic vapours released from the plastics to escape the package.

Since the conservation of modern materials is a relatively new field, there seems to be a general lack of understanding and confidence when treating these items. To address these issues and share the knowledge we had gained, we held a symposium at the end of November last year. The event was funded by the Wellcome Trust’s small grants scheme and proved to be extremely popular. The interest



Take Care banner



Watches

in this day points to the growing concern surrounding the conservation of modern materials and the need for further information on the subject. The conservation issues raised in this project will become more and more important as the amount of modern material in our collections increases in the future.

Emily Hick

Project Conservator, Lothian Health Services Archive

www.lhsa.lib.ed.ac.uk/projects/HIVAIDSCollections.htm

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Ingenious Impressions: The Coming of the Book

Conservation treatment of early printed books at the University of Glasgow Special Collections

The University of Glasgow Library holds over 1000 fifteenth century printed books ('incunabula') and is one of the UK's most important collections of those books published over the fifty years from the invention of printing in ca. 1450.

Over recent months, the University of Glasgow Special Collections Conservation department has been involved in the exhibition preparation of over 64 of these incunabula. The primary focus of the exhibition *Ingenious Impressions: The Coming of the Book* which opened on the 27th of February 2015 at the Hunterian Art Gallery in Glasgow is to explore the transition from manuscript to print and its impact on late medieval society and present the results of new research from the Glasgow Incunabula Project <http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/incunabula/>. The University's collection is the largest in Scotland and more than half comes from the collection of Hunterian founder Dr William Hunter (1718-83).

Conservation assessment

In preparation for undertaking this project the first step was to carry out a condition assessment of all the selected books that were initially chosen to go into the exhibition. It was important to maintain good communication and work closely with the senior librarian in reviewing and discussing more interventive work before it was carried out. As part of all conservation, there has to be full justification



Before Treatment

for carrying out remedial work. There are no treatments which are ‘one size fits all’ and each volume was reviewed case by case.

Given their use and handling over five hundred years, generally the overall condition of the books was not surprising. Although they are currently stored in environmentally controlled rooms and are always supported as much as possible during handling, such care has not been taken in the past by a variety of previous owners.

Prioritisation and treatment planning

The condition of the books varied quite considerably, ranging from very poor whereby further handling would present a risk of loss to either textblock and/or binding, to those which were in a fair condition and really only needed a thorough cleaning, custom cradle and storage box. From those chosen to go on exhibition, there are a few vellum text blocks but the majority are produced on paper from good quality stock. Bindings which required work mainly tended to be 18th century rebinds, several of which had failed to function at the joints which led to detached boards and loss of leather.

There were also some parchment bindings which had suffered losses at the head and tail of spines etc. During the course of the exhibition planning there were the inevitable ‘swaps’ as more and more of the volumes were being fully catalogued and many more interesting features came to light that boosted them as a priority for public display. We maintained flexibility in our treatments to accommodate this to ensure the best possible outcomes for the exhibition!

Treatment

It was felt that minimal intervention wherever possible was the line to take and that all treatment as far as is practical should be reversible. There were, of course, exceptions. Many of the bindings could no longer be handled safely and were at great risk of further loss during handling. Therefore the preparation of these volumes for exhibition was an excellent opportunity to really focus in on these wonderful books and prioritise their stabilisation which otherwise may not have been able to happen. Several months of intense work then followed in the studio covering an array of interventions such as board reattachment, re-backing, rebinding, repairing broken text blocks, tear repairs and the more basic cleaning and repacking/housing upgrades needed for each book.



Exhibiting

The main challenge in exhibiting these works was to maintain a consistent flow to the look of the display whilst never compromising the suitability of supportive mounts for each book. As the size and shape of each tome has varied considerably, this has been overcome by the construction of individual acrylic cradles atop tulip wood lecterns to hold each book comfortably. The aim of the display is to emphasise the information held in each volume (and they have therefore been presented against a dark background with individual lighting for every item).

It is hoped that the exhibition will increase access and interest in these early texts.

Glasgow Incunabula Project

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/incunabula/>
Exhibition <http://www.gla.ac.uk/hunterian/visit/exhibitions/major%20exhibitions/ingeniousimpressions/#d.en.350569>

Louise Robertson

University of Glasgow

What Else Could Have Been Used to Stick These Documents Together?

Removing Old Repairs from Nineteenth Century Insurance Papers

At the beginning of 2014 I started the conservation of 92 individual nineteenth century insurance documents from the archive of Aviva plc. In the mid twentieth century they had been repaired on both sides with several varieties of pressure sensitive tape and bound into a volume. As the tape had degraded it had become tacky and in some cases the carrier had become loose. As a consequence the individual documents had become adhered to one another. It was very difficult to access the documents. When the volume was opened the documents moved as one but they also tried to move as individual pages, plus those areas where the carrier had become loose flapped around. Looking at the documents posed a huge risk to them and was quite frightening for the user.

Not only had the documents been repaired with pressure sensitive tape, they also had earlier repairs. The documents had been repaired with moisture sensitive tape. This also had been adhered to both sides. Most of the documents had been repaired with moisture sensitive tape and pressure sensitive tape. Generally the pressure sensitive tape overlaid the moisture sensitive tape. One document had been repaired by applying a canvas backing.

After completion of the condition report, the documents were removed from the binding by cutting the guard. The guard papers were

delaminated by hand to leave only a small residue of paper. Any loose carrier from the pressure sensitive tape was removed by hand. Dry residues of adhesive were removed by careful abrasion using a thin bone folder.

The residues of guard paper and adhesive used to attach it were removed during washing. It took about 10 minutes for the water to penetrate the paper and soften the adhesive. The paper was gently pulled off. The residues of adhesive were removed by brushing with a sable brush. It was also during the wash that the moisture sensitive tape was removed. The water was allowed to soften the adhesive and the tape was slipped away. The adhesive residues were again removed by brushing with a sable brush. To make sure that all the water soluble adhesive had been removed, I lightly rubbed the documents with my fingertip. This allows you to feel where the adhesive remains and to remove it.

To remove the pressure sensitive tape that was adhered to the documents a warmed spatula was used. Two spatulas were heated on a tacking iron. (This ensures that there is always a warm spatula available.) The tip of the spatula was gently inserted under the carrier and moved along under the carrier. This melts the adhesive and allows the carrier to be pulled away. The tacky adhesive was removed with small pieces of shaped crepe eraser.

To release the canvas lining the document was humidified in a sandwich made from wet blotter, gore-tex, document, gore-tex, wet blotter and a sheet of plastic.



Verso of document showing moisture sensitive tape and pressure sensitive tape



Document with canvas attached



Loose carrier removed



Equipment used to remove pressure sensitive tape



Document during humidification

It took several hours for the moisture vapour to penetrate the canvas and to weaken the adhesive sufficiently to allow the canvas to be peeled off. Some areas were so heavily adhered that they had to be brushed with water before the canvas could be removed.

Although this article is concerned with the removal of the different types of tape and earlier repairs that had been adhered to the documents, it may be of interest to readers to have details of the conservation treatment. After removal from the binding and removal of the guard paper as outlined above, the documents were surface cleaned using a combination of smoke sponge and Mars eraser. They were then washed individually by immersion in cold water, followed by immersion in warm water (40°C). They were then repaired using lens tissue adhered with wheat starch paste. Some documents needed flattening. They were humidified and then placed between blotters and under weight. The conserved documents were placed in polyester wallets (one per wallet) and housed in a made to measure box.

This project was immensely satisfying. The documents are now easy to handle and accessible to researchers.

Lorraine Finch ACR

LF Conservation and Preservation

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Tape partly removes



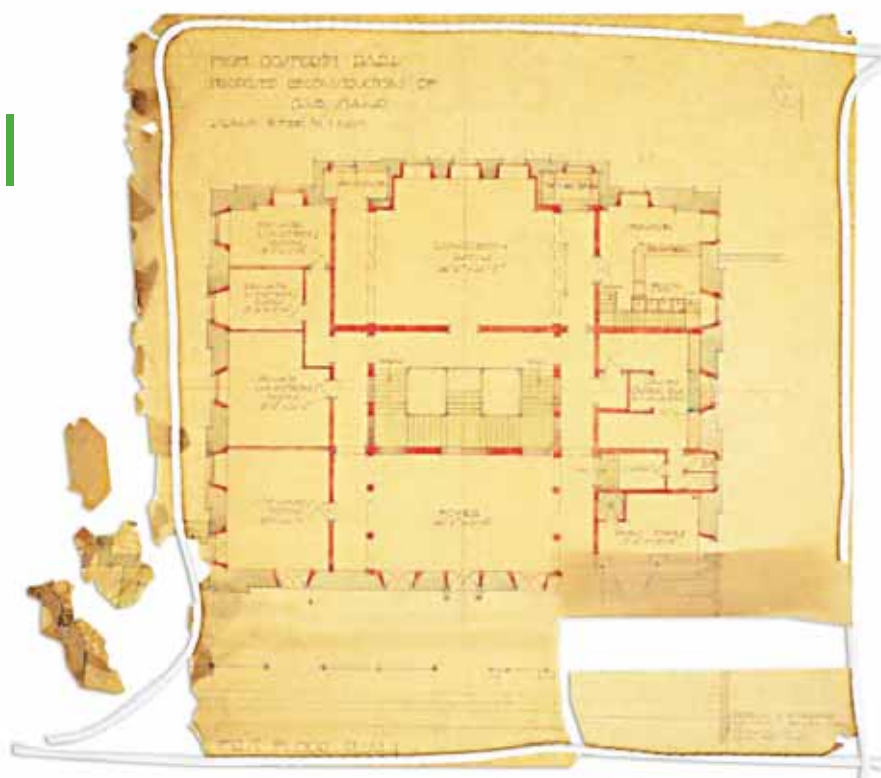
Canvas after removal

Working with an Architectural Archive: A Flexible Treatment for Transparent Paper Plans

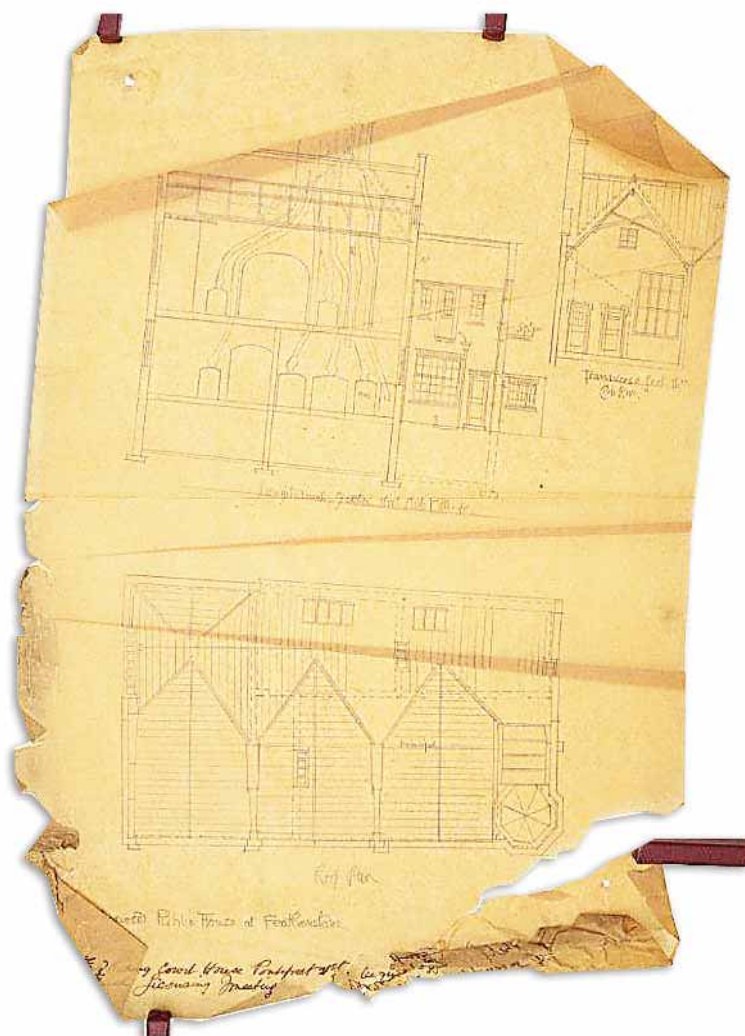
Catherine Dand describes how a variety of architectural drawings have been preserved at the Borthwick Institute.

In 2011 the Borthwick Institute for Archives received a generous grant from the Patricia and Donald Shepherd Charitable Trust to undertake work to care for the archive of Atkinson Brierley, a prominent York architectural firm. A large proportion of the items within the collection are maps, plans and drawings. These are stored both flat and rolled, and encompass a wide range of different media and support materials. Many of the plans were used as working drawings, a description that signifies that the plans may have been used on site, or travelled, or simply that they have been stored with a regard for convenience over preservation. As a result, many of the plans are in a damaged and unstable condition.

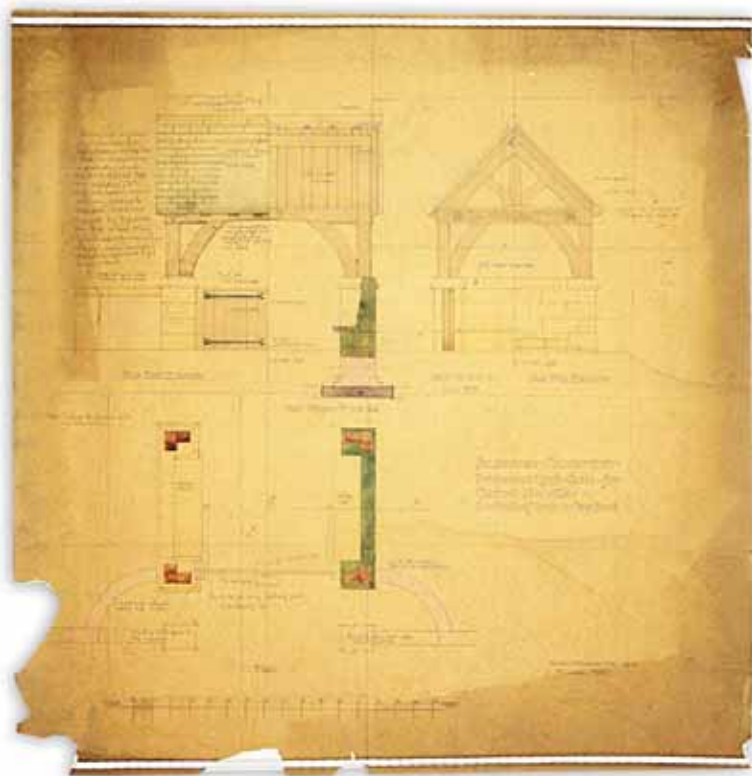
There are 672 rolls of Atkinson Brierley plans, and initial surveying and assessment of the plans indicated that around 140 of these required conservation work, which is around 1 roll in every 5. A roll of plans can contain anything from 1 to 170 items, and the work required in the roll might refer to one plan or the whole roll. It was clear from the beginning that we could not treat all of the plans in need of conservation.



Damaged Plan Before Treatment



Damaged Plan Before Treatment



Plan After Treatment

Our condition assessment highlighted that the plans at most risk of further deterioration were the tracings. The most vulnerable were stiff, brittle and discoloured. They resisted being unrolled, and fragments were lost from the plans when they were handled or came into contact with the packaging material. It was decided that these plans were in greatest need of treatment.

When developing a treatment proposal for the plans we tried to keep two opposing aims in mind: the need for a flexible method of treatment and the objective of treating as many plans as possible in the time available. Investigations were undertaken into various support materials, adhesives and methods of application. The extent of the damage to many plans and the fragility of the tracing papers we were working with soon made it clear that local repairs would not be sufficient for the condition of the plans or suitable for the time scale, and so we decided to line the majority of the identified tracings.

Roll of damaged plans



Our final method was as flexible with regard to these areas as we could manage. The plans to be treated were brought into the workshop in batches of 5-10 items. All of the plans in the batch would be dry cleaned and measured, and the solubility of all of the inks would be tested. Sheets of tissue would be prepared as a lining for each plan, with a coating of adhesive which could be re-activated when it was needed for the lining procedure. This allowed us to adapt the lining support and the adhesive to the needs of the item where necessary when preparing the lining. Each tracing would then be gently humidified in a humidity chamber, so that the folded and damaged areas could be unfolded and realigned. Once relaxed the tracing could be transferred to a suction table, which would hold the damage in place while the lining was applied to the reverse of the plan. The adhesive was generally re-activated with a mixture of water and alcohol, but this could also be adjusted depending on what the results of our solubility tests had been. Once the lining had been applied the plan would be dried between blotters and under boards and weights. Once dry, any losses to the plan were repaired with an infill paper that had also been pre-coated with adhesive. Once these were also dry the repairs could all be trimmed.

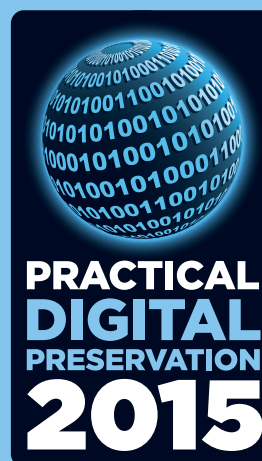
As experience with the plans, repair materials and procedures grew, confidence and the speed of processing items also increased. Our main limitation was space. The preparation of the lining tissues and the drying of the plans required large, flat surfaces for significant periods of time, and the drying of the blotters and felts that had been used to dry the plans also required large areas of space. This restricted progress, but it also enabled us to keep the workflow steady and predictable. This was critical in allowing the workflow of the project to run smoothly alongside of the rest of the workshop.

The repaired plans were returned to their rolls in thin polyester sleeves. The sleeves are wrapped around the rolls, offering the contents of the roll some protection on the shelves. This increases protection with a minimal increase in weight and bulk, and we are now looking into implementing this technique for all of the rolls in the archive. As a result of the project the archive is better protected; plans that were previously unfit for production have been stabilised and can now be accessed; and this access can be provided safely and confidently by the Searchroom team.

With thanks to Chris Taylor for the images.

Catherine Dand

Borthwick Institute for Archives



Practical Digital Preservation 2015 is a series of workshops and webinars on how to manage, preserve and give access to digital records. Each full-day workshop and one-hour webinar is offered **FREE OF CHARGE** to ARA members.

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Antoinette demonstrating tissue coating

Blood Fish and Bone – an exploration of modern protein adhesives

Edward Hems

I am a PhD student with a background in organic chemistry researching synthesising toxins from algae. As part of my PhD funding I was obliged to take 3 months out of the lab to complete a 'Professional Internship for PhD Students' (PIPS). This involved working 'in the real world' with a host organisation on a short project which is completely unrelated to my PhD research. Whilst standing in the queue at an internship fair to talk to a chemical patenting company I noticed a stand for the Norfolk Record Office (NRO). I had never heard of them, let alone archive conservation, but something about it caught my imagination...

The project on offer was to investigate the differences that conservators at NRO had observed between the protein adhesives which are currently used in conservation. Scoping this project in a chemistry lab would be fairly straight forward, but finding safe and cheap methods suitable for use in a conservation studio environment was tricky. However, we feel that we succeeded in the end, and have now submitted a manuscript detailing the project for publication.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my 3 month departure from academia at the NRO. As well as my time spent looking at protein adhesives, I have also enjoyed learning about book binding and had great fun being creative with the box making machine.

Antoinette Curtis

With the prospect of an opportunity to have a chemistry graduate in our studio for twelve weeks I felt it important to be creative and practical in what could be explored. I spent a large part of a newly completed National Manuscripts Conservation Trust project wrestling with the challenge of finding an adhesive to repair some very friable, dehydrated parchment. This brought up many questions about the adhesive used. I hoped that we could answer some of these questions during the project.

The initial way in which Edward took on board the practicalities and limitations of working in a conservation studio and not a fully equipped chemistry laboratory was admirable. The patience with which he explained complex chemistry theory was appreciated, as was his real interest in the work of the conservators. We were pleasantly surprised by his excellent hand skills, which really did prove profitable, not only for coating very thin tissue with adhesive, but helping with exploring the new box making machine we had installed during his time with us.

By the end of the twelve week placement I felt everyone in the studio, plus visiting conservation students, had profited from the presence of such a fresh new mind to the work of the conservator and I had some clarity on the subject he had explored.

Comment by Gary Tuson, County Archivist

The PIPS placement has been a great example of the ways in which Record Offices can support learning and employability in new and imaginative ways. Particularly satisfying is the way in which the learning and development has been a two way process with NRO staff also benefitting from the placement. We will be keen to explore further options for working in this way in the coming year.

Antoinette Curtis

Archive Conservator, Norfolk Record Office

Edward Hems

John Innes Centre, Norwich Research Park



Coating remoistenable tissue



Edward bookbinding

“The PIPS placement has been a great example of the ways in which Record Offices can support learning and employability in new and imaginative ways”

Findmypast publishes new School Admissions records

Family history website Findmypast has just published the second tranche of records from National School Admission Registers and Log-books 1870-1914. This project, which was facilitated by the ARA and The National Archives under the National Digitisation Consortium banner, brings together over 100 archives and schools in the largest collaborative digitisation project that there has ever been.

New records from 22 archives and over 1850 schools from around England and Wales have been added to the existing collection, which launched back in September 2014.

The records comprise fully searchable scanned colour images of the original handwritten admission registers and log-books from the archives. Details contained within the log-books from the period leading up to World War One include attendance records, reasons for absence, visitors to the school and the daily activities of school life. The admission registers provide many useful details for family historians, including dates of birth, names of parents and addresses.

As well as adding more schools to some of the existing counties, this second phase sees the online publication of records from Flintshire, Conwy, Glamorganshire, Denbighshire, Wrexham, Suffolk, Lincolnshire, Caernarfon, Gwent, Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion and Hampshire for the first time. In addition, records from maritime schools held at Liverpool Maritime Museum are now available to search as part of the collection. A third and final



release of school records will take place in September 2015. More information about the records is available at <http://www.findmypast.co.uk/school-registers>

As part of ARA's commitment to the Schools Registers initiative, a link on the website homepage goes straight to the records.

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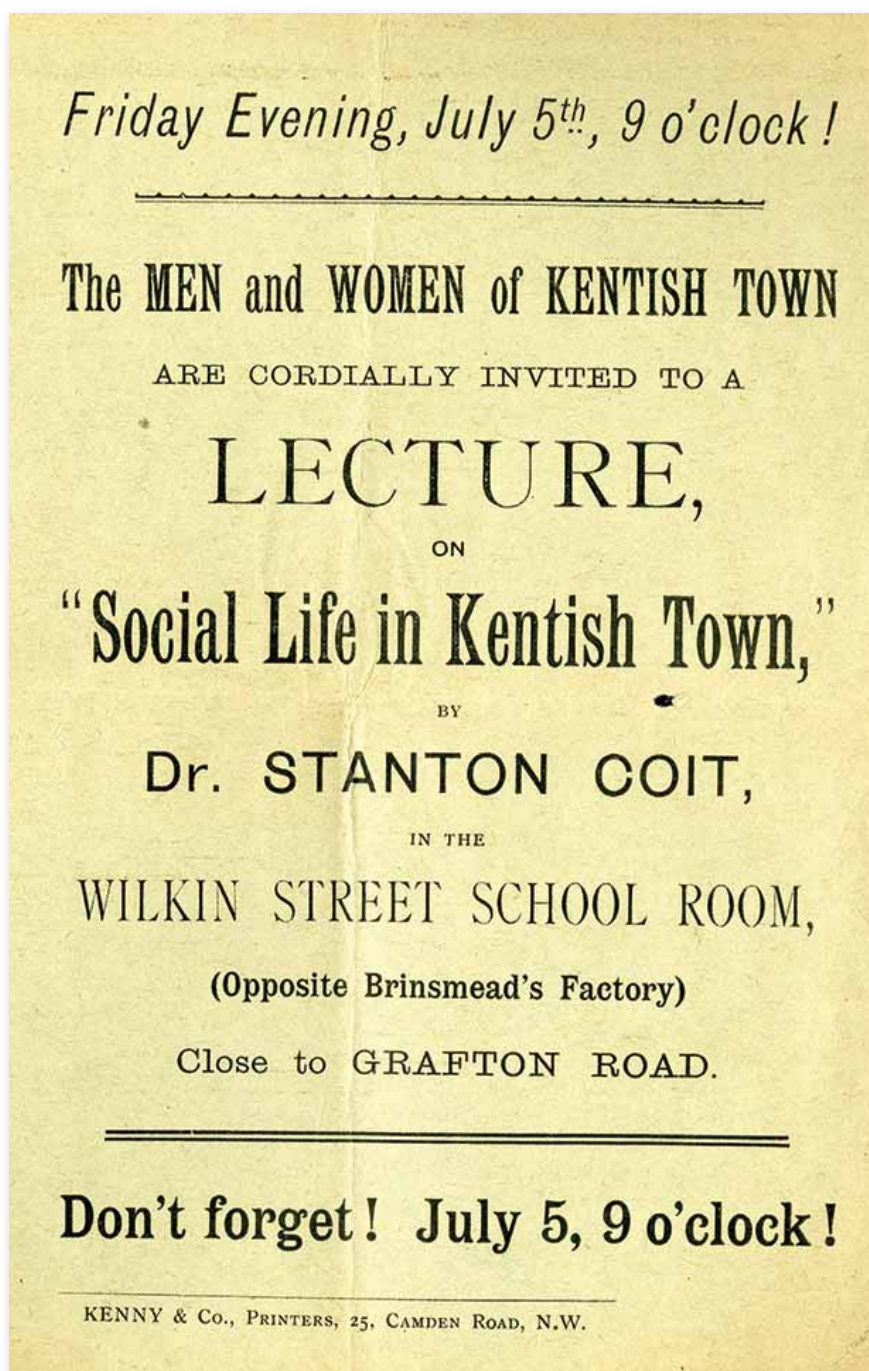
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Rediscovering the records of three non-theistic organisations in England

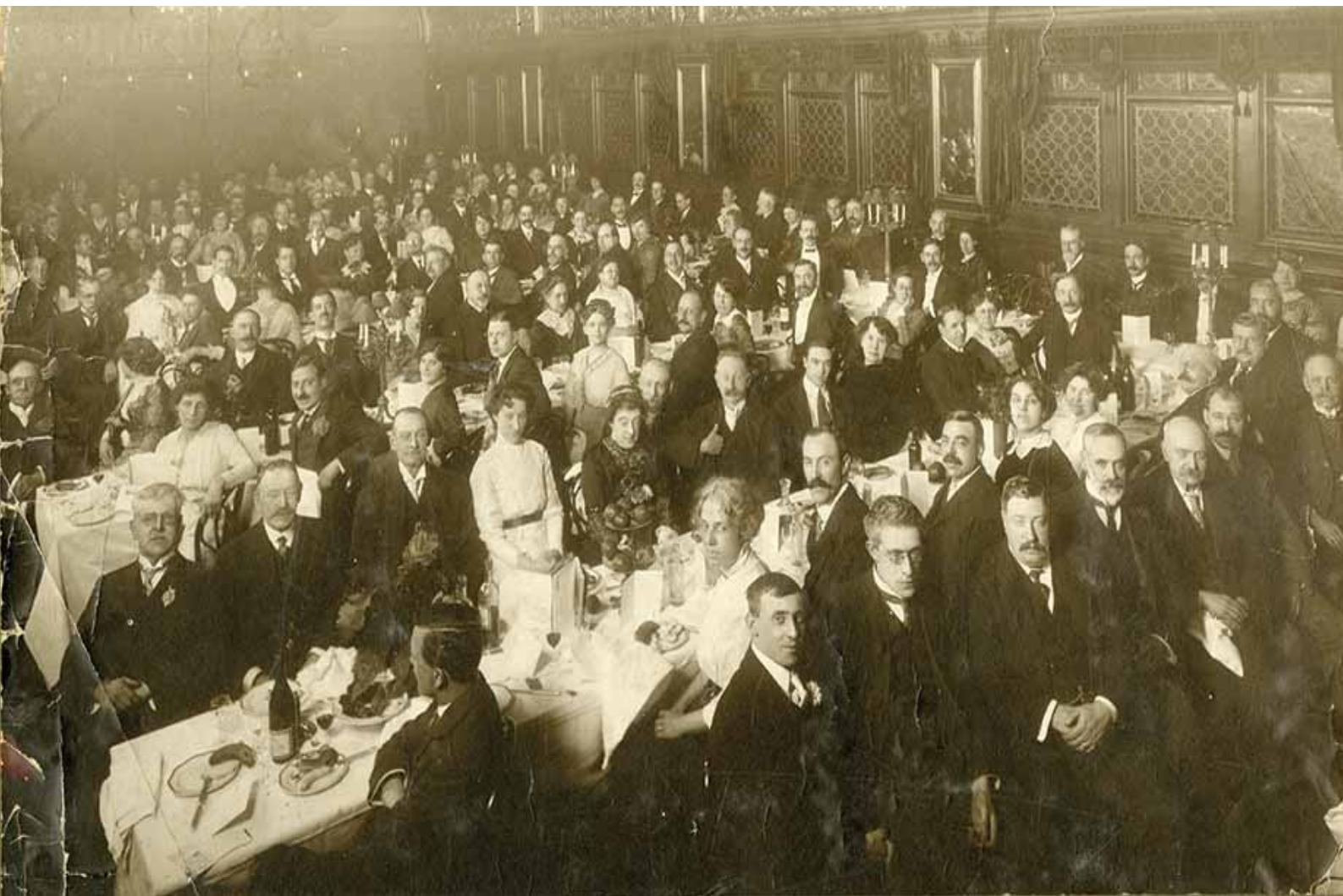
Nicky Hilton describes a project to revive a collection of long forgotten archives.

The Alternatives to Religion Project started in 2010 when retired archivist Carl Harrison descended into the basements of Conway Hall, Holborn, on a mission to rediscover the records of Conway Hall Ethical Society (CHES) and the National Secular Society (NSS). What he discovered was over 200 years of forgotten history. Some of the documents were in a poor state – leaking pipes, mould and damp had done their worst to uncovered documents; although thankfully the large majority escaped with nothing more than a substantial covering of dust. So it was with these tentative steps out of the gloomy basements and into a specially designed strongroom that the archives started their long journey back to life and back into use.

In 2012 Conway Hall became aware that Bishopsgate Institute, City of London, had received the archive of the British Humanist Association (BHA), an organisation with historic links to the NSS and CHES. Working together, Bishopsgate Institute and Conway Hall created the Alternatives to Religion Project. It was hoped that the Project would revive the little known history of the ethical movement in the UK and that use of the archives by the creating organisations and academics would in turn increase. The value of this project was recognised and in 2013 it was awarded a grant from the National Cataloguing Grants Scheme.



Handbill for lecture given by Dr Stanton Coit, as part of his vision for a 'Neighbourhood Guild' in Kentish Town, London. (c.1890)



Dinner in honour of the MP Charles Bradlaugh, in Holborn, London. Guests include Hepatica Bradlaugh Bonner, George Bernard Shaw and Charlotte Shaw [back row from the right: twelfth, eleventh and tenth]. (c.1910)

In the spring I took up the post of Project Archivist with responsibility for the continued recovery of these distinctive archives. I was immediately confronted with a large number of misleadingly neat archive boxes which concealed a mass of chaotic papers. The organisations had been founded in the 19th century and the records had seen multiple office moves and numerous changes of staff. Furthermore, with members serving on more than one committee and offering their time to all three organisations, records had become jumbled, duplicated, and destroyed, making it difficult to quickly identify provenance or original order. Therefore, considering that I only had 18 months to complete the cataloguing, I chose a functional approach to physically and intellectually arranging the records. This allowed me to quickly design a structure for the catalogue and immediately start working through the records!

After my first few months it became very clear that these forgotten archives did indeed include a

wealth of information and treasures. The archives date from 1865 to 2014, and include a large amount of correspondence, minutes and committee papers charting the history of the non-theistic movement in the UK. The collections also contain marriage registers, membership records and papers from local Humanist and Secularist groups, making them a useful resource for family historians. Campaign files from the post-war era onwards also provide an atheist view on contemporary issues such as nuclear weapons, apartheid, and human rights. Of special interest to the marketing departments of Conway Hall and Bishopsgate were the charming Victorian adverts for concerts and soirees, as well as the propaganda materials which included leaflets, car window stickers, and even lunchboxes!

One item which really sparked my interest was a scrapbook kept by Dr Stanton Coit. Coit grew up in the American Ethical Movement, and travelling to the UK in 1888 he was soon appointed minister of South Place Religious Society (now CHES).

IF YOU'RE NOT RELIGIOUS FOR GOD'S SAKE SAY SO



TICK "NO RELIGION" IN THE CENSUS
CENSUS-CAMPAIGN.ORG.UK



Car window sticker produced by the British Humanist Association encouraging non-religious people to select 'no religion' on their census forms. (2011)

Eager to align more closely with his counterparts in America, Coit convinced his congregations to adopt the name South Place Ethical Society, removing the last connotations of theism from the Society. However there was dissatisfaction with his leadership, and in 1892 he was forced to give up his position. Undeterred by his removal, Coit turned his attention to maintaining his Neighbourhood Guilds (a type of localised trade union with the aim of teaching practical skills to the working classes), and providing Londoners with an alternative to Sunday Services at his West London Ethical Church. Perhaps his most notable achievement was to strengthen the local ethical societies through the creation of the Union of Ethical Societies. The Union began as an annual conference for local groups in 1896, but soon became a permanent national body – The Ethical Union. Unlike his short ministry at CHES, Coit retained his leadership of this organisation until his retirement in 1935. He handed the Union over to Harold Blackham, who oversaw a rebranding of the organisation as the British Humanist Association in the 1960s. Coit's scrapbook charts these ups and downs of his early career, his influence on the ethical movements of the USA, UK and mainland Europe.

It was this almost unexpected variety of material and stories in the NSS, BHA and CHES archives which made me want to reach out to the project stakeholders whilst the cataloguing was still underway. To me it seemed a real shame that whilst my colleagues and I were seeing the archive evolve from dusty papers to treasured history every day, BHA, NSS and CHES members, as well as those who identify as atheist, secular, humanist or agnostic, weren't being given this opportunity. I wanted to take them on the privileged journey of a project archivist too! Therefore, I decided to publish

a weekly blog where I could share things which had sparked my interest, and where items could tell their story and open the door to the rest of the collection. Tumblr was chosen as the platform for the blog because of its versatility when uploading images, and its format which encourages quick, digestible posts. The blog <http://alt2religion.tumblr.com/> was a huge success reaching 6000 hits a week, and importantly it injected the archives with a new lease of life from this early stage in the project.

The Alternatives to Religion cataloguing project was completed in September 2014 and all three catalogues can be accessed online. Visit Bishopsgate Institute (www.bishopsgate.org.uk) and Conway Hall (www.conwayhall.org.uk) for more information.

Nicky Hilton

Archivist: Bishopsgate Institute

Calling all colleagues!

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www.archives.org.uk

British Postal Museum & Archive Chairman Helen Forde steps down

Chairman of the British Postal Museum & Archive, Dr Helen Forde FSA, has announced that she will be standing down this year, with a new Chairman to be recruited as a replacement.

A trustee since the charity was founded in 2004, Chairman from 2011 and now in her final term, Helen has decided to relinquish her Chairmanship a year early in order to provide BPMA with the longest possible window to identify a successor and ensure plans for The Postal Museum with Mail Rail remain on track to open at the end of 2016.

“With my term due to end in 2016, I felt the time was right to hand over the reins”, said Helen.

“Bringing this forward a year serves the best interests of the organisation, allowing it to continue on its upward trajectory with minimum disruption, and in turn helping ensure its sustainability and success. With a new Chairman, the BPMA has an opportunity to bring new skills to its leadership, skills that will be essential as the organisation undergoes massive transformation over the next two years. I will continue to be actively involved in its work and look forward to supporting the new Chairman once in post.”

The post will be advertised publicly in the near future.

Sarah Carr

British Postal Museum & Archive

The Everyday Muslim Project

The Everyday Muslim project endeavours to preserve Muslim history and heritage. While there are a few Muslim religious archives in the UK – notably the newly re-opened East London Mosque Archives – there are none that focus exclusively on Muslim culture in the UK. It is because of this that the Everyday Muslim project is so important. In partnership with Bishopsgate Institute, where the records will be stored, the project hopes to establish the first archive specific to Muslim heritage. It is the goal that this central archive will increase the representation and visibility of Muslim culture as well as open interfaith and cross-cultural channels of communication.

In order to achieve this goal, community outreach is paramount. The importance of archives needs to be disseminated not only to the older generations, but to the younger ones as well. After all, young people are the ones who will be charged with maintaining and growing the archive in years to come.

To this end, the project planned several outreach events and exhibitions. At an event at Walthamstow’s Vestry House Museum, the local community was invited to share their stories and experiences of living in the area, as well as meet and network with the project organisers.

Additionally, in order to reach the younger generation who may have not been interested in coming to an outreach event, Everyday Muslim

partnered with Year 10 students at George Mitchell School in Leyton. There the students learned the importance of heritage conservation and gained the skills necessary to conduct oral history interviews. In this way, the importance and skills of archiving will be passed on.

The community events culminated in a symposium held in late January. This day-long event combined academic discourse, an art exhibit and a spoken word poetry event. When combined with activities that visitors are more familiar with attending, such as an art exhibition, archives are made more accessible to a wider audience.

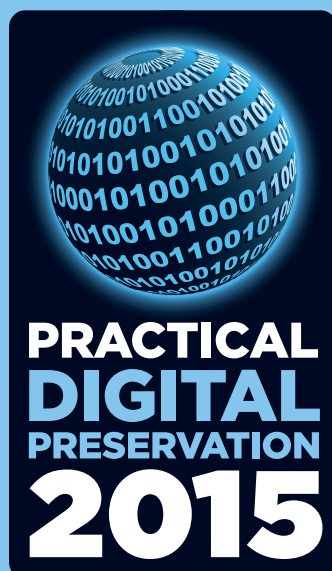
The day was a success, with stimulating discussions and essential networking with colleagues. The profile of Everyday Muslim was raised, as well as that of its partners.

Our on-going plan is to continue to build and catalogue the archive. We will also continue to liaise with colleagues in other fields and communities, both Muslim and non-Muslim. In this way, the history and heritage of the Muslim community in the UK will be preserved and understanding between people of different cultures improved.

For more information about the project, please visit www.everydaymuslim.org.

Emmy Tither

Bishopsgate Institute



Making digital preservation a natural part of your information life-cycle

Martin Springell, Product Director at Preservica, explores ways to make digital preservation a natural and integrated part of the information lifecycle.



Every organization – from archives and libraries to government agencies and businesses – faces the challenge of how to properly manage and safeguard their rapidly growing volume and diversity of digital content,

collections and records. Ensuring important digital content and records can be found, understood and more importantly read over the long-term (>10 years) requires a robust strategy and approach to digital preservation.

Adding to the challenge is the range of different systems across the overall information landscape that are being used today to create and/or manage digital content and records – including traditional digitization systems, catalogue systems, Enterprise Content and Records Management systems, Enterprise Resource Planning systems, websites – as well as content that needs to be acquired from other divisions or external agencies.

Trying to manually acquire and ingest all the content that needs long term preservation from this wide variety of systems would rapidly become a full time job, and so your chosen digital preservation system should offer ways that make it easy to integrate and automate this task.

Having closer integration between systems can benefit archivists and records managers alike. Archivists get more automated and authoritative access to information held in upstream systems, and records managers can be confident that electronic records are safe and will be readable and useable when required.

The good news is that some digital preservation providers are waking up to this challenge and providing “out-of-the-box” connectors for a variety of different systems.

For example, as discussed in this column last month there are now ways to integrate digital preservation with Enterprise Content/ Records Management systems like SharePoint. There are connectors available today that can automate the bulk ingest of business records from SharePoint into a digital preservation system at the end of operational use. In the future this will become more sophisticated where the digital preservation system becomes a fully synchronized part of the overall record management lifecycle.

A more traditional example of the need for integration and automation is the synchronisation of hierarchies and metadata between a catalogue system and a digital preservation system, for example in a hybrid archive made up of physical photographs and their equivalent digitized versions (which could be both a hi-res preservation manifestation and a low-res presentation version). The obvious benefit is to avoid having to manually rekey or “cut and paste” metadata and descriptive information between the two systems.

Axiell CALM is a popular catalogue system, particularly in Europe, and in our regular Practical Digital Preservation webinar in April (Wednesday 15th) we will explore how CALM and other catalogue systems can be easily integrated with digital preservation systems like Preservica.

Digital Preservation is increasingly important for both long term temporary business records as well as traditional permanent digital content. Make sure your digital preservation system has open interfaces and APIs that make integration easy, and that your chosen supplier has a clear commitment and roadmap for making digital preservation a natural part of the information lifecycle.

Practical Digital Preservation 2015 webinar:

Synchronising Axiell CALM with Digital Preservation
Wednesday 15th April 2015, 11am-12pm (UK).

<http://www.archives.org.uk/events/viewevent/338-practical-digital-preservation-2015-synchronizing-axiell-calm-and-digital-preservation-webinar.html>

Martin Springell

Product Director, Preservica

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