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UK & Ireland

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Archives and Technology

14 Up and AtoM!

23 Along the write lines: where the crowd meets AI

27 Yammer: making noise about heritage at Boots



Crowne Plaza, Chester
2nd – 4th September

Conference
2020

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Welcome...

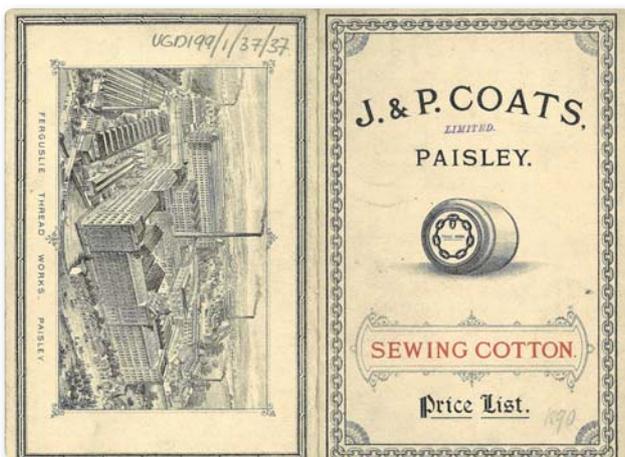


Welcome to the Archives and Technology issue of ARC

Welcome to my first issue as Joint Editor of ARC. This issue is themed around Archives and Technology, a topic at the forefront of our profession's development. Whether it's online catalogues as our shop windows, engaging new audiences through technology, or embracing emerging technologies such as AI; our contributors this month show how technology influences our work in a multitude of ways. But it's not all about new technology; Jenny Bunn takes us on a trip down memory lane as she looks back to the profession's early adopters of the world wide web.

This month's *Backchat...* comes from Dr Ros Lynch, whom many of you will have heard as one of the keynote speakers at ARA Conference 2019. Her maxim 'bad data in, bad data out' is a pertinent reminder that technology can only take us so far; we're not out of a job just yet!

Many thanks go to Elisabeth Thurlow for her work gathering and vetting submissions from the ARA Archives and Technology Section, and to the authors of the articles, without whom this issue would not have been possible.



Darning Scotland's Textile Collections
Page 19

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Annabel'.

Annabel Valentine
ARC Editor

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Front cover: Sorting skeins of wool at Templeton's carpet factory in 1960s. Courtesy of the University of Glasgow Archives Services.

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

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Opening lines

Can you help find the missing pieces and complete the jigsaw?

Will Steel MIPROW, 2026 Project Manager for the British Horse Society, fills us in on a change in the law that will stop up unrecorded public rights of way in England and Wales.

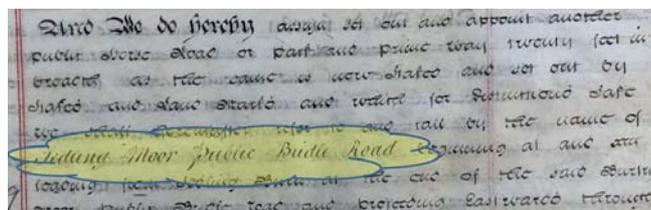


On 1 January 2026, the law is due to change and thousands of historical bridleways and footpaths, which are still not recorded on a local authority's Definitive Map (the legal record of public rights of way), are in danger of being extinguished and the public's ability to use them lost forever.

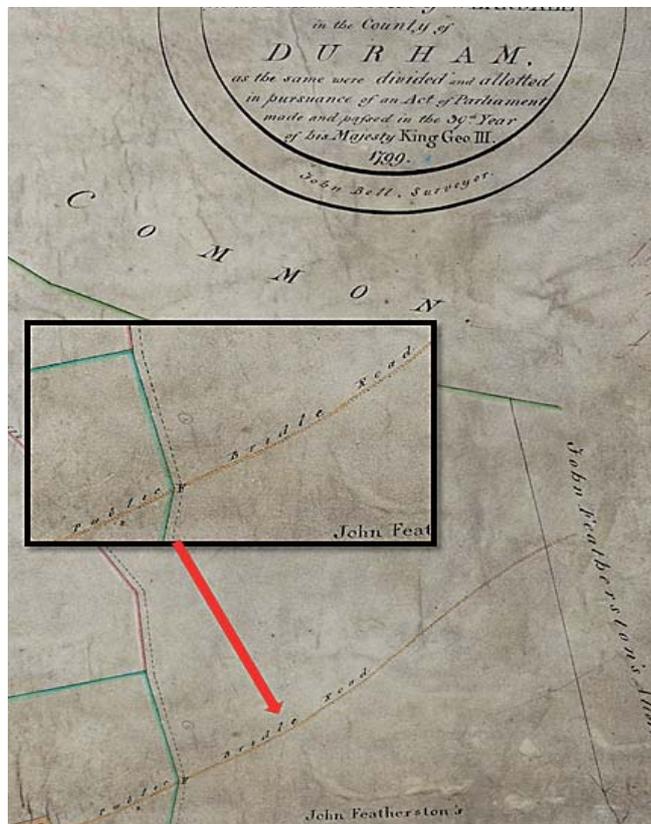
This could have a seriously detrimental impact on horse riders, walkers and cyclists right across England and Wales, and the British Horse Society (the BHS) is spearheading a project to protect the public's rights. With generous funding from Sport England, recognising the part the rights of way network plays in enabling people to participate in outdoor activity and exercise, the BHS's Project 2026 seeks to encourage people to research and submit what are known as Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) applications to their local authority. This is the first and key part of recording the right of way.

Currently the law in this area is based on the maxim "Once a highway, always a highway" - in essence, once a highway has been created, it continues in existence unless, and until, it is stopped up by a formal legal process. What this means in practice is that for a DMMO application to be successful, the applicant needs to find sufficient evidence to demonstrate, on the balance of probabilities, that the route in question was a highway at some point in the past. The evidence is often found in sources such as inclosure awards, tithe awards, quarter sessions records, 1910 Finance Act maps, deposited plans for canals and railways, estate plans, and sales documents.

Sometimes, one source of evidence may be almost enough on its own. Careful examination of an inclosure award, map, and relevant Act, for instance, might show that a new public carriage road or bridleway was created, which is almost conclusive evidence in itself. More often though, researchers find a variety of different pieces of evidence

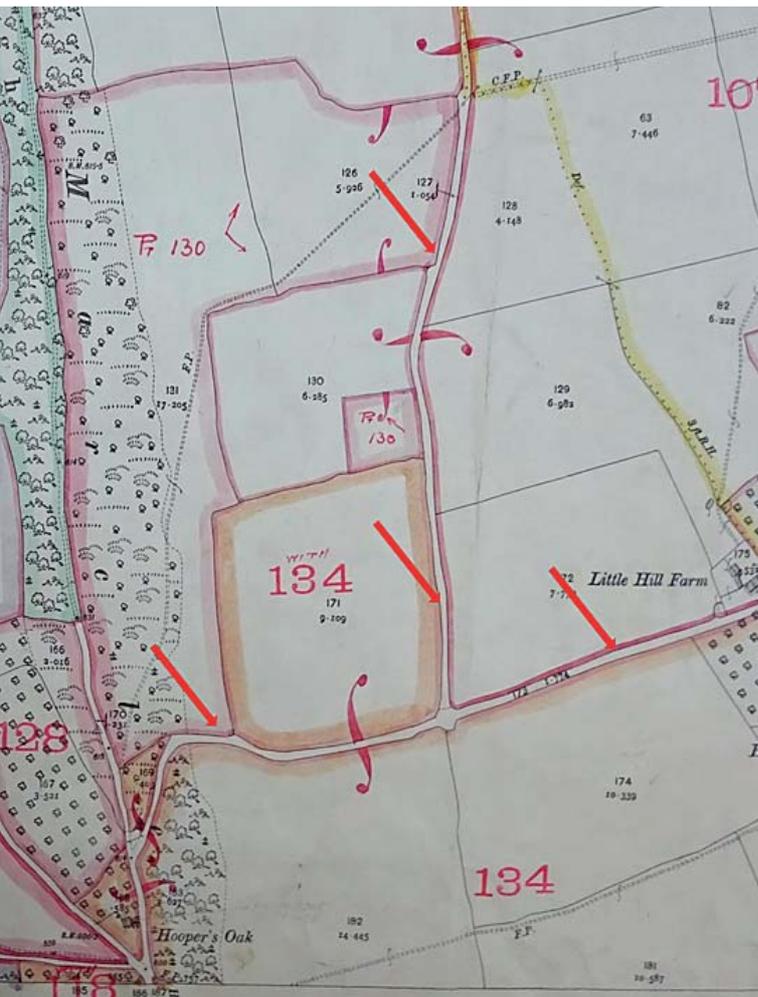


Sedling Moor inclosure award. Reproduced courtesy of Durham University Library (PAL 1/3/2)

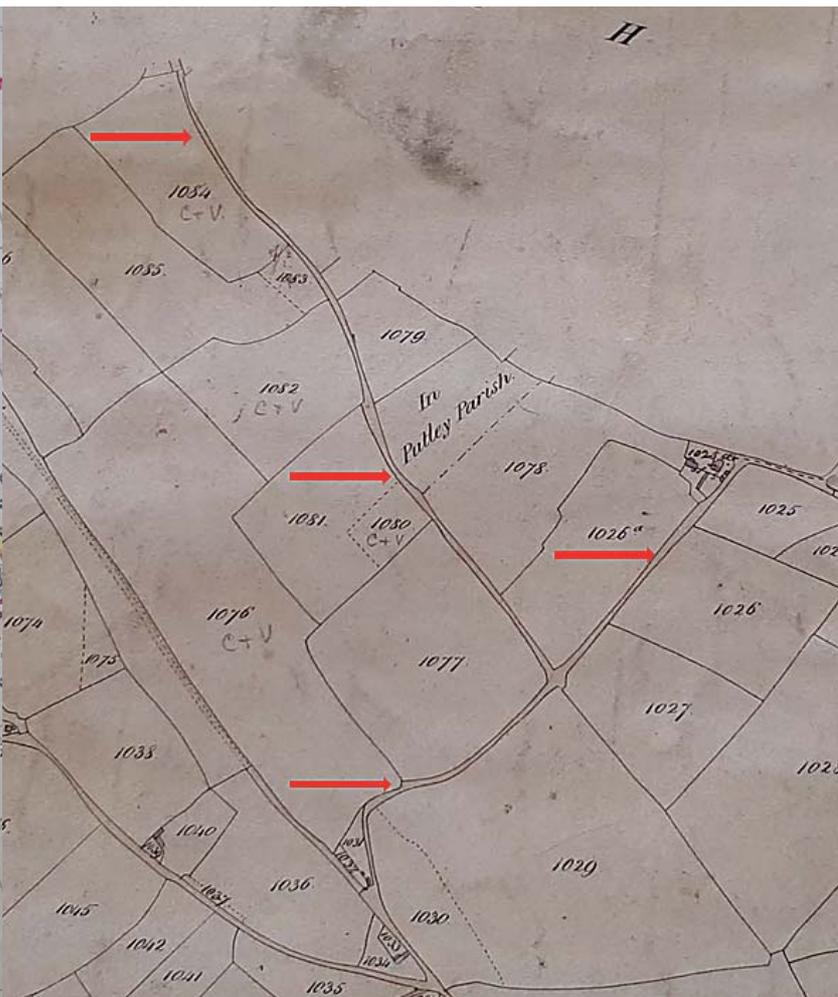


Sedling Moor inclosure award. Reproduced courtesy of Durham University Library (PAL 1/3/2)

The inclosure process had the power to legally create new highways. Examination of an inclosure award and map together with the Act of Parliament under which they were made can provide almost conclusive evidence of an old highway.



An extract from the Woolhope tithe map of 1844. Reproduced courtesy of Herefordshire Archive Service (BJ68/3). The depiction of a route on a tithe map in a similar manner to other known public roads – for instance coloured sienna and unnumbered or otherwise excluded from titheable assessment – provides some evidence of highway status.



An extract from the "Finance Act 1910" map for Woolhope. Reproduced courtesy of The National Archives (IR 129/3/479). Evidence of highway status can be gleaned from the process used to value all land in Great Britain as part of Lloyd George's tax-raising proposal. In this example, the exclusion of a route – a 'white road' - from the surrounding taxable hereditaments is a good indication of a public carriageway.

“ the BHS is spearheading a project to protect the public’s rights ”

which individually do not prove the existence of a right of way, but collectively enable an inference to be drawn that a particular route was a right of way for the public.

Researchers Wanted

Whilst much of the work thus far has been done by volunteers, the BHS wants to find a small number of expert researchers to carry out focused and intensive research, typically in record offices and archives, in a number of areas of England. Currently it is looking at local projects in Staffordshire, West Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. The BHS is a charity itself, and whilst it can't afford to pay a huge salary for this, it can offer a reasonable honorarium plus expenses. Training and support would be available so that the person is able to generate suitable applications in the right format.

It is hoped that amongst the ARA membership there may be student or apprentice members (or indeed part-time or retired members) who might relish this type of project.

If you are interested in taking part in the project, please contact the BHS 2026 Project Manager, Will Steel at will.steel@bhs.org.uk or 07967779571. There is more information about it on our website at <https://www.bhs.org.uk/our-work/access/campaigns/2026>

The BHS is the largest and most influential equestrian charity in the UK with over 108,000 members. We aim to protect and promote the interests of all horses and those who care about them, including the 3.5 million people in the UK who ride or who drive a horse-drawn carriage.

Professional development news

Latest developments are welcome news for ARA members

In this month's edition, **Chris Sheridan** provides an update on recent developments and initiatives within the ARA and the wider industry.



Launch of an Archivist and Records Manager apprenticeship

We are moving closer to an apprenticeship route for the sector. Earlier this year, an Apprenticeship Trailblazer Group was formed to develop an apprenticeship route for anyone seeking a career in archives and records management. The development of an apprenticeship is a key objective set out in the sector's Workforce Development Strategy, launched by The National Archives (UK) (TNA) in 2018.

Once approved, we hope the apprenticeship will provide a new pathway for those seeking a career in record-keeping. Employers will be encouraged to use it to help the sector attract a more diverse range of employees. By developing and promoting more varied entry routes to the full range of careers within the sector, the apprenticeship will improve diversity in both skills and the workforce.

The Trailblazer Group includes TNA, the ARA, the Forum for Archives and Records Management Education and Research (FARMER) – the representative body for educators in record-keeping across the UK and Ireland – and a number of key employers.

A proposed Archivist and Records Manager apprenticeship standard has now been submitted to the Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education for approval and we expect to hear from them by the end of October. My thanks to those members who responded to the recent apprenticeship survey.

If approved, the proposed apprenticeship will deliver training at a level equivalent to a post graduate

qualification. Employers may decide to use the apprenticeship as a stand-alone route into the sector or, if preferred, a next step for apprentices completing the Library, Information & Archives Services Assistant apprenticeship launched earlier this year. We will keep you updated on these positive developments.

Professional Development Programme goes from strength to strength

We now have 183 members enrolled onto the programme, an increase of more than 200% from this time last year!

- 57 members have enrolled onto the Foundation Member of the ARA programme
- 110 members have enrolled onto the Registered Membership programme
- 16 members have enrolled onto the Fellowship programme

Earlier this year we launched a programme blog (arapdp.blog/) to provide additional advice and insight for candidates as they navigate their way towards a successful application. Mentors may also find the blog a useful resource. I am also available to help candidates and their mentors, so please contact me at the ARA should you have any questions or comments.

We're recruiting more assessors

The ARA's assessor team performs a key voluntary role by ensuring that applications for Foundation, Registered and Fellowship Membership meet the required standards. Assessors also assess the evidence submitted by members in their CPD Review, the process by which members demonstrate their continuing professional development.

“There is a lot of positive progress being made both within the ARA and further afield in our sector. Collaboration between different sector bodies has been instrumental in driving this change and will continue to deliver further benefits in the years ahead.”

We're looking to recruit more Registered members to this voluntary role. Training is provided, and assessors are invited to an annual meeting hosted by the ARA. This provides a fantastic opportunity to share experiences and advice, advise the ARA of any matters of concern and review published guidance and advice.

Anyone looking to develop their own governance, line management and critical thinking competencies, for example, should find the role beneficial. It's also a great way to gain perspective and expertise whilst contributing to the development of the profession and the next generation of the ARAs qualified members. Please contact me if you would like to know more.

As you can see, there is a lot of positive progress being made both within the ARA and further afield in the sector. Collaboration between different sector bodies has been instrumental in driving this change and will continue to deliver further benefits in the years ahead.

chris.sheridan@archives.org.uk



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Membership renewals

Karl Magee, Chair of the ARA Board of Trustees writes: it's the time of year when we send out membership renewals. Please renew as quickly as you can – and tick the gift-aid box, too: it helps us keep membership fees down. Also, why not encourage colleagues to join? They can do it online at www.archives.org.uk/membership/membership-categories.html

Membership of your association remains strong – numbers are up on 2018. We're doing more than ever for members and have big plans for the next 18 months, all without increasing membership fees. So we'd be really grateful if you could renew as quickly as possible when you receive your reminder email from the ever-dependable Lorraine Logan.

For UK members, if you are able to tick the gift-aid box on your renewal form, it makes a big difference: in real terms, about 5% of our income at the moment, which helps keep everyone's fees down.



Karl Magee, Chair of the ARA Board of Trustees

As a reminder of why your membership is such good value, here are some of the new things we have on the stocks for 2020 and beyond. We're launching the new Archives Card for services in England and Wales – looking to expand to Scotland and Ireland from 2021. Over 100,000 people were registered under its predecessor – the CARN and Wales reader tickets – a huge potential pool of visitors, users, tourists and researchers. We're also revamping our core training offer to members, the ARA website and the ARA app, along with our Code of Ethics. We have a new ARA Ireland website in development and will undertake dedicated research into pay levels and skills in Ireland in 2020.

Our ARA annual Conference next year will be in Chester, covering north Wales, where we will again aim to increase bursaries on offer and build on our (just-finished) and hugely successful 2019 Conference in Leeds and Glasgow in 2018. Our Pay Review Group will explore training in pay negotiation and job descriptions. We will maintain momentum in our work on apprenticeships and our professional development qualifications. We will continue to advocate for the records management, archives and conservation community in public and in private, on issues such as data protection, public interest recordkeeping and protecting standards and services.

To recap, the benefits of your membership include:

- **Professional Development (PDP):** based around three levels of in-work, professional qualifications (Foundation, Registered and Fellowship) and centred on a range of managerial, technical and engagement competencies, this is the ideal means of getting established in the records sector and maintaining your professional development throughout your career (including if you don't have an academic degree, come 'late' to the sector, take a break at some point or move across for a time into other professional areas).
- **ARC Magazine**, your full-colour digital monthly magazine, which is full of interesting articles written by your colleagues and peers, including special features and association news updates.
- **ARC Recruitment**, the regular circular advertising job vacancies within the profession at all levels. Who knows? You might even find your first job via ARC Recruitment.
- **ARA Today**, your monthly e-newsletter, keeping you up to date with the latest ARA topics and the UK, Irish and International record keeping community, such as details of grant funding, events and awards.
- **Archives and Records (the Journal of the Archives and Records Association)**, which is now publishing three issues a year (up from twice), and which covers recent research and professional issues in greater depth. Archives and Records has been classified as a Grade 1 Research Journal by the European Union and is a journal of global record in the recordkeeping sector. (See the Taylor and Francis website for the cost of a subscription outside your ARA membership.)
- **The ARA Conference**, our biggest (three-day) annual event. Next year we will be in Chester on the England-Wales border. We have a range of bursaries on offer, including some dedicated to members in the local government sector in the UK and Ireland (sponsored by Ancestry), diversity bursaries (sponsored by Kevin J Bolton Ltd), open ARA bursaries and a crowd-funded bursary for a new professional. You can apply for a conference bursary to help with the cost of attending either one day or all three.
- **ARA international bursaries** are available to members for attending conferences, training events and other overseas activities. We also have research grants, annual awards, prizes (including for the best student dissertation), and an annual lecture in the UK Parliament.
- **Training events**, organised by the association's (volunteer) training officers. These give you the opportunity to train alongside other ARA members and qualified professionals from a wide range of organisations.
- **Networking opportunities**, to exchange ideas and gain knowledge through interaction with fellow members, volunteering to help run sections or regional/national groups and by attending regular ARA section meetings.
- **The ARA website**, gain access to the member-only section, where you can seek advice and guidance on career development, current professional issues, such as data protection, emotional support, resilience indicators and copyright, take part in forums and have the opportunity to download association guidance, codes and publications for free, or obtain hard copies at a reduced rate.
- **Nations/Regional Groups**, all members are entitled to free membership of their nearest national/regional group, where regular regional activities are organised by elected officers. We have national groups for Ireland (north and south together), Wales and Scotland, and eight English regions. We are looking at creating a designated international section in 2020 to better serve our 100 or so members across the globe. We also support the Community Archives and Heritage Group (CAHG), which works to help the 1,500 or so community archives across the UK and Ireland.
- **Sections for Special Interest**, we now have nine special interest groups, which are all free to join. These groups cover a wide range of recordkeeping areas, such as:
 - archives and museums
 - archives and technology
 - business records
 - film, sound and photography
 - preservation and conservation
 - records management and information governance
 - specialist repositories
 - archives for learning and education
 - new professionals

In addition to groups working on volunteering, pay, security/access, skills audits, workforce surveys and accrediting university courses, the ARA also provides the chair of the Archive Service Accreditation committee. All these groups hold regular meetings and training events, enabling you to participate and to increase your knowledge, networks and skills.

We hope you'll decide to renew – participate in the multiple ARA debates on social media, starting with @ARAUK_IE - and encourage colleagues to join!

Collecting matters

Caroline Catchpole, Digital Development Officer at The National Archives (UK), highlights the potential of digital storytelling to reach new audiences.

Technology is fundamental in making archives accessible and usable, from publishing catalogues online to storing and preserving digital records. Another exciting use for technology in archives comes in the form of digital outreach and engagement. Digitisation has been a real boon for our sector, and has allowed us to open up our collections in new and exciting ways, one of those being digital storytelling.

In its simplest meaning, digital storytelling refers to the use of digital tools to tell stories. Archives are brimming with stories, and surfacing stories through digital storytelling is a great way to reach audiences who may not have previously engaged or who may think archives aren't for them. To reach new and diverse audiences, we have to experiment with new and diverse ways of presenting archives.

How do you create a digital story though? There are plenty of tools out there to experiment with; the Hackastory Tools Directory tools.hackastory.com is a great place to start for some inspiration. Earlier this year, I experimented with Esri Story Maps storymaps.arcgis.com and created a digital story of Peterloo using scans of original documents from ten UK archives to tell the story and its impact. It proved a simple yet powerful way to bring the documents to life, and I think the tool has lots of potential to inspire archives to experiment and create new ways for audiences to engage with their collections.

Backchat...



Beth Grant, ARA Conference Social Media Coordinator, caught up with **Dr Ros Lynch**, Director of Copyright and IP Enforcement for the UK Intellectual Property Office (IPO), after her keynote speech at ARA 2019, to talk about her role and how technology has the potential to change record-keeping practice.

What was the main message you were seeking to get across at ARA 2019?

What I hope I said clearly in my speech is that we live in a technology driven world and because of that, and because of the importance of data to technology, your members need to be thinking about the data that they have, the new technologies, and how they can help them to do what they do better, more efficiently, and reduce some of the risk. Intellectual Property (IP) is a key underpinning factor to all the things that archivists and record keepers do: thinking about what rights you own, and how you can use those rights to make available the many millions of records that you have within your collections.

Can you give some examples of what the IPO is doing to maintain UK and international standards for IP enforcement?

The UK is seen as a role model at the top of the league as far as IP enforcement is concerned and we put a lot of effort into making sure that we provide the framework for those that own the rights to protect those rights. As an organisation we cannot take action ourselves because we don't have any enforcement powers, so there are a number of things that we do. We make sure that the legislation is fit for purpose and is up to date. We fund a dedicated police unit, which is a Police Intellectual Property Crime Unit based in the City of London Police, and their sole focus is to help rights holders protect their intellectual property rights. We're currently undertaking a project to look at the whole enforcement framework, to make sure that there aren't any barriers that are particularly hindering small businesses, individual creatives etc. from taking action to protect rights. We help to broker voluntary agreements, we run a mediation service, and we provide guidance. So there is a range of things we do, from making sure the legislation is in place and fit for purpose, to the voluntary softer end, where we provide lots of activities to help whoever needs to take action to protect rights.

Do you have any advice for institutions that have applied the EU Orphan Works Directive to their records?

If we do leave the EU without a deal at the end of October, UK institutions who have put things in the EU Orphan Works Directive database will have to

Dr Ros Lynch, Director of Copyright and IP Enforcement for the UK Intellectual Property Office (IPO)



take a decision about whether to remove those from their website, because they could potentially be putting themselves at risk as the exception will no longer apply in the UK. Alternatively, the UK orphan works licensing scheme, because it is UK based, will continue to run, therefore institutions could consider applying to the IPO for a licence which would enable them to use those items within the UK.

What do you see as the biggest benefits and challenges of applying machine learning techniques to archives and records?

It would reduce the amount of resources that need to go in to track everything, find everything, and record everything. I think there are huge benefits around that. Resources could be used in other areas where, at the moment, machine learning doesn't go. I think it will create opportunities for using these records in different ways, potentially making them open and available to a much wider audience than currently. There are lots of areas where there are things that can be done but we haven't one hundred per cent explored where those are. A lot of this is going to be driven by the data, so we need to make sure that the data that goes in is good data. Bad data in, bad data out. We need to reduce the amount of data errors in the input so that we can make sure there's much more positive benefit from using that data.

Finally, do you think blockchain technologies will become applicable to day-to-day record keeping services?

I think there are possibilities. I know that the British Film Institute, for example, is looking at the potential of using blockchain in some of the work that it's doing. Again it comes back to the question of data, because my understanding with blockchain is that once you've inputted the information, you can't then go back and change it, so we have to make sure that the data that goes in is good data. If we put bad data in, we're going to get bad outputs. There is potential, we're only just starting to scratch the surface, the same with AI, and I think with time, people will start to recognise that there are probably a lot more potential uses for it than are currently envisioned.

Interactive acts of remembrance - the HSBC UK Digital War Memorial

Helen Ceci, HSBC Archives, describes how an interactive display has drawn on archival research and resources to commemorate two world wars.



Photograph of Gunner Edgar Branson Nurse, c.1917. ©HSBC Archives

On 9 November 2018, a new interactive, digital war memorial was unveiled at HSBC UK's head office in Birmingham, commemorating the lives of Midland Bank (now HSBC UK) employees who lost their lives during the First and Second World Wars.

Over the course of both conflicts, around 12,200 male and female Midland Bank employees enlisted with the armed forces and 1,195 members of staff lost their lives. In 1921 and 1950, memorials were erected at the bank's head office to honour these individuals. These now reside at the global headquarters of HSBC Holdings in London, where they continue to be the focus of the annual Remembrance Day service.

In 2015 it was announced that HSBC's UK subsidiary would be transferring to a new home in Birmingham. Moving the original war memorials again would be a huge challenge, so the archivists came up with an alternative proposal for an innovative digital facility that would encourage meaningful interaction with the history of the bank, and the experiences of the thousands of employees who served during the two world wars.

The team embarked on extensive planning with various departments in order to design and install the interactive war memorial in time to mark the centenary of the Armistice in 2018. The project was intended to:

- Enable broad audiences to engage with the war stories of past employees whilst strengthening HSBC's continued commitment to commemorate their memory in a dynamic way
- Extend our knowledge of the wartime stories and sacrifices amongst HSBC UK employees
- Use the latest technology to present visitors and colleagues with an interactive experience, in a respectful and moving manner.

SURNAME	Nurse		
CHRISTIAN NAMES...	Edgar Branson		
NUMBER AND RATING OR RANK	208890 - Gunner		
DECORATIONS ...	—		
REGIMENT OR OTHER UNIT ...	A. F. W. Recruits		
BRANCH.	DATE OF BIRTH.	DATE OF ENTERING BANK'S SERVICE.	DATE OF JOINING H.M. FORCES.
PADDINGTON	14 June 1896	18 Nov 1918	July 1919 [P.T.O.]



First World War index card of Gunner Edgar Branson Nurse, 1917. ©HSBC Archives

HSBC UK Digital War Memorial located at the HSBC UK head office, 1 Centenary Square, Birmingham. ©HSBC Archives

Inspiration from the archives

To help develop our plans, we worked with digital media specialists ON101, challenging them to, “create something digital and interactive that still had the reverence and gravitas of the original memorials at Canary Wharf.” ON101 drew inspiration from the archive collection to inform their design; taking poetic reference from photographs of bomb damaged branches, staff magazines and committee records.

The memorial's physical structure makes these references tangible; the three fumed-oaked pillars embody concepts such as shattered lives, bomb damage, battlefields and graveyards. Engraved with some of the military ranks and job titles of those named on the memorial, it reminds current employees that these men and women were ordinary people, just like themselves, who lost their lives serving their country.

A large 'attractor' screen positioned at the top of the memorial displays a rolling film of images, statistics and quotes from the archives, providing a poignant insight into the experience of the bank's employees during times of conflict. A smaller touchscreen is positioned at an accessible height, encouraging visitors to interact with the content to find out more about topics including the wartime role of women in the UK bank, and the impact of war on its daily management. Vitally, it allows users to search through the list of men and women named on the memorial to learn more about their lives and to find information such as the branches they worked at, the regiments they served with, and the decorations they received.

Engaging volunteers

This existing content is supplemented with new details via an exciting volunteer initiative. Existing and retired HSBC colleagues are making use of records within the archive collection, in addition to visiting local record offices and consulting online resources to prepare biographies on each of



A member of the HSBC Archives team digitising a First World War index card. ©HSBC Archives

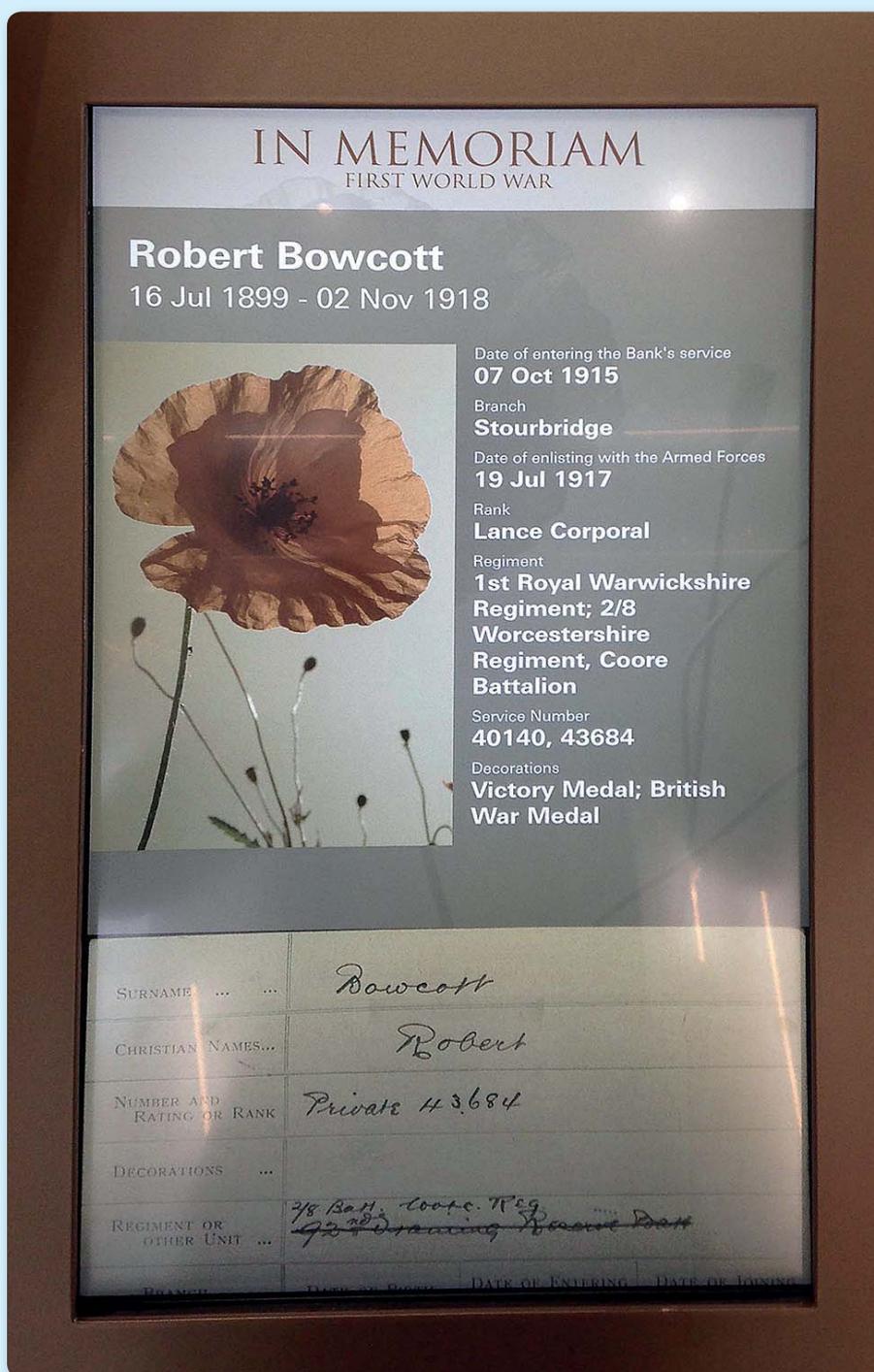
“ innovative use of technology has enabled us to facilitate a truly dynamic act of remembrance ”

the fallen. The new information is regularly uploaded to the memorial, ensuring that visitors have access to an ever-growing database of information.

The volunteers' research is proving invaluable in drawing out the personal stories of the fallen. Many volunteers have noted how moved they are to be able to trace the lives of these men and women and reported that the opportunity made them feel "valued and appreciated" within the business and that it has been "a life changing experience which has broadened the way [they] view and relate to HSBC." Many volunteers have made personal and emotional connections with the people they have been researching, one colleague noting in particular that, "the investigation process has been humbling and quite powerful."

This innovative use of technology has enabled us to facilitate a truly dynamic act of remembrance. Equally, by interweaving elements of a traditional, physical memorial with digital features, we have increased access to an important element of our archives collection. In addition to serving as the focus for annual Remembrance Day activities in Birmingham, the memorial is becoming an interactive part of school visits, employee inductions and formal tours of the new building; thereby reaching much wider internal and external audiences and promoting awareness of our rich history.

Volunteers conducting research at the HSBC London Archives Centre, June 2019.
©HSBC Archives



The war memorial's interactive touchscreen displaying biographical information about Lance Corporal Robert Bowcott. ©HSBC Archives



Up and AtoM!

Hannah Little reveals the secrets of her diary recording the first year of using AToM cataloguing software at the Clifton Suspension Bridge Trust (CSBT).

July 2018

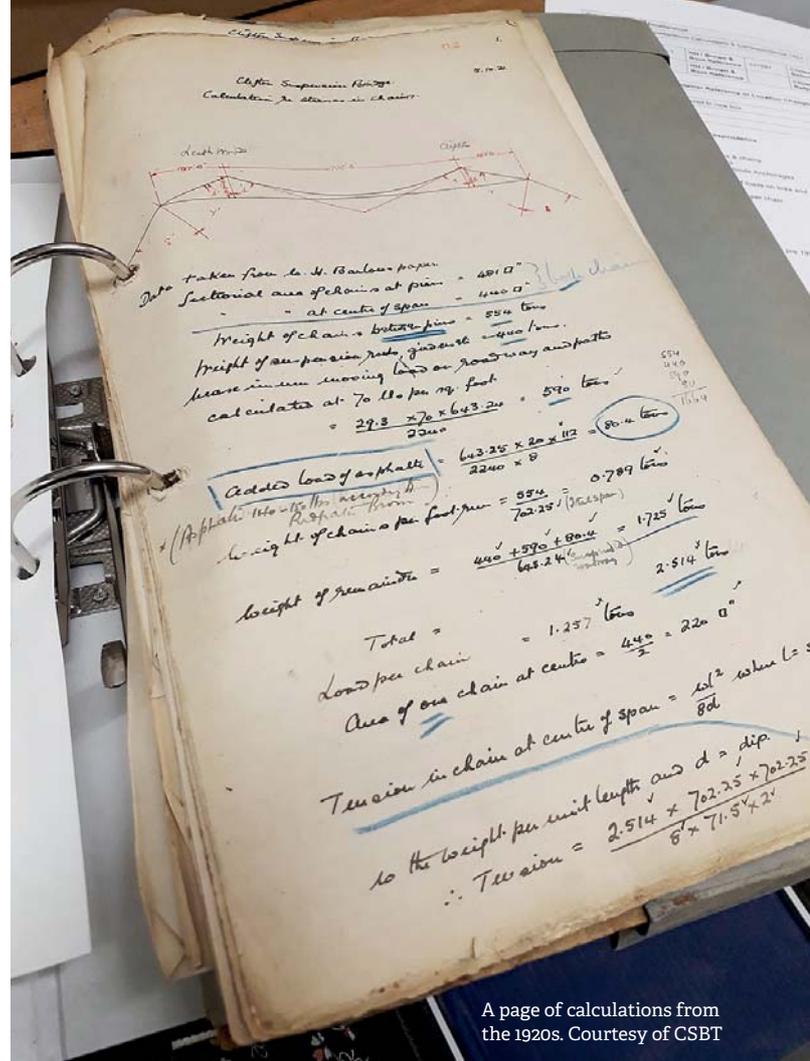
Nothing has been catalogued yet. We have a small collection dating from when Clifton Suspension Bridge opened in 1864 to modern technical records, which need to be accessed by our consulting engineers. There is the expectation that I will digitise - perhaps everything.

I am interested in Access to Memory (AtoM) - an open source application for cataloguing and providing digital access to archives. It is based on ISAD(G), and is free to download and use. It is multi-lingual and multi-repository.

I like that it is web-based and there can be public and private instances of it - volunteers, engineers, and the general public can access different information. I also like that it is standards-based, but that I can create my own subject taxonomy related to the bridge. My concerns are:

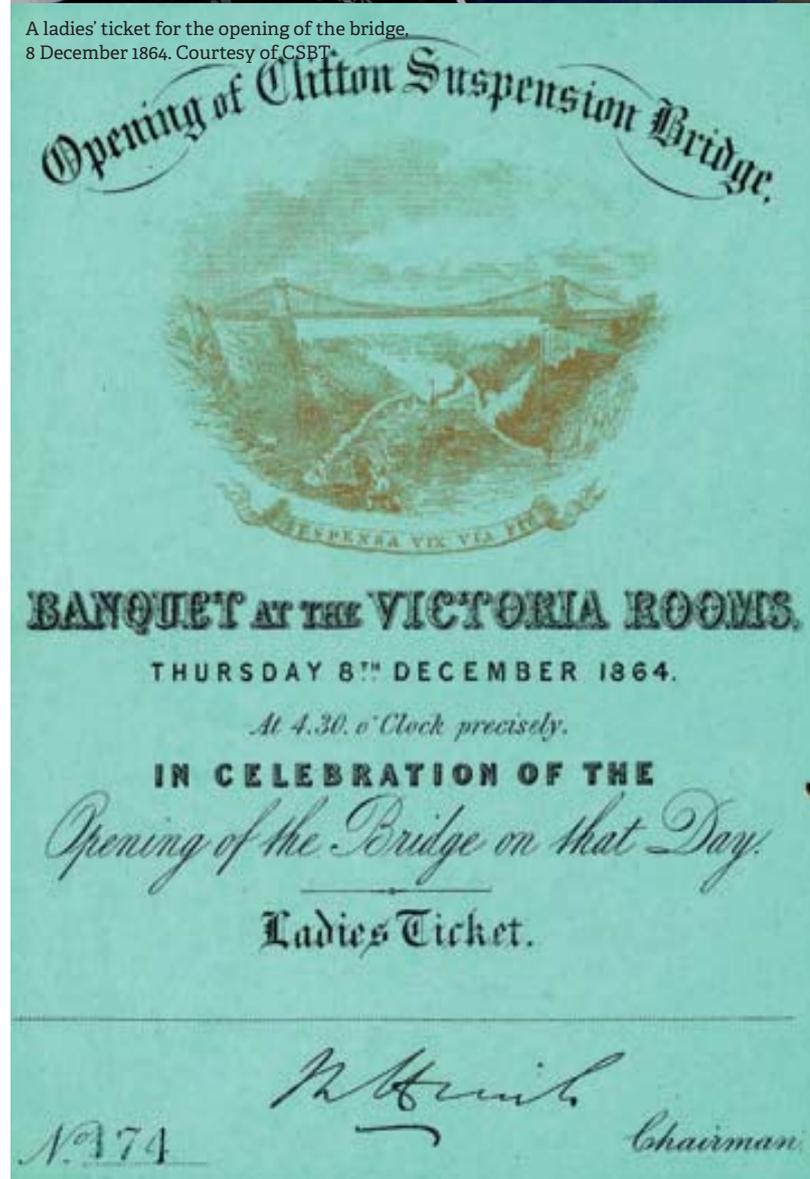
- Will AtoM continue to be developed and supported?
- How much will it cost?
- Can I export data?
- How easy it is for a non-IT expert to use?

“ I like that it is web-based and there can be public and private instances of it - volunteers, engineers, and the general public can access different information ”



A page of calculations from the 1920s. Courtesy of CSBT

A ladies' ticket for the opening of the bridge, 8 December 1864. Courtesy of CSBT



August 2018

After playing in the AtoM sandbox (<https://demo.accesstomemory.org>) I ask our IT contractors to install a test version so I can try importing and exporting - crucial for uploading our existing descriptions and also for moving to other systems.

I accidentally create loads of empty records in the database. Bracing myself, I copy some code taken from the online forum into the command line and I manage to purge all of the records. Note to self: a little bit of knowledge is a dangerous thing! I decide that I do not have the expertise to install and maintain AtoM by myself. However, I am reassured that I can export descriptions into EAD, Dublin Core, CSV or SKOS.

September 2018

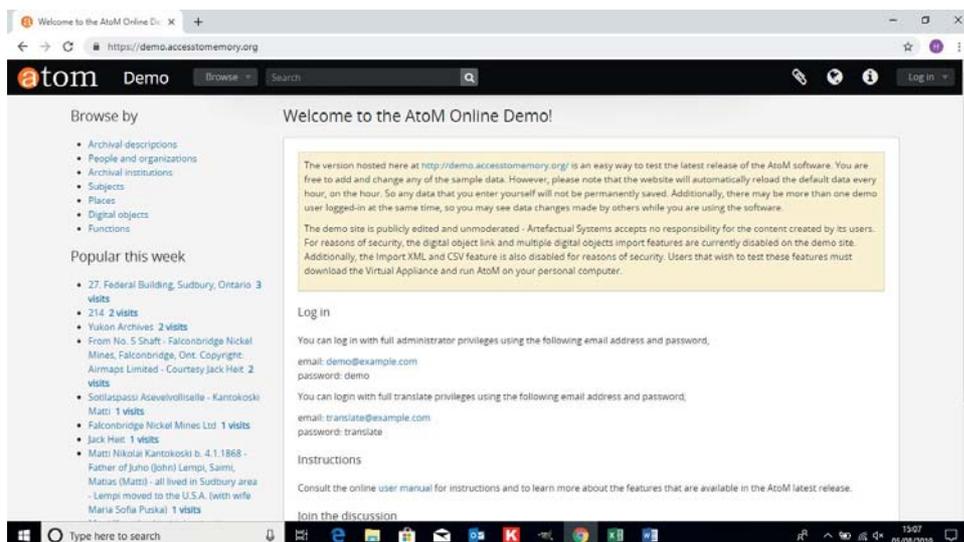
I investigate hosting AtoM - the issue is whether we want an internal or external instance of it and I am asked how many people will be accessing the online catalogue. At this point I have no idea. Our existing IT contractors are a bit uneasy with the unfamiliar software but they quote for extra service, hosting and maintenance costs. Artefactual Systems, a Canadian company, are the lead developers for AtoM. Looking at the services they offer, the price is comparable (around £1400).

November 2018

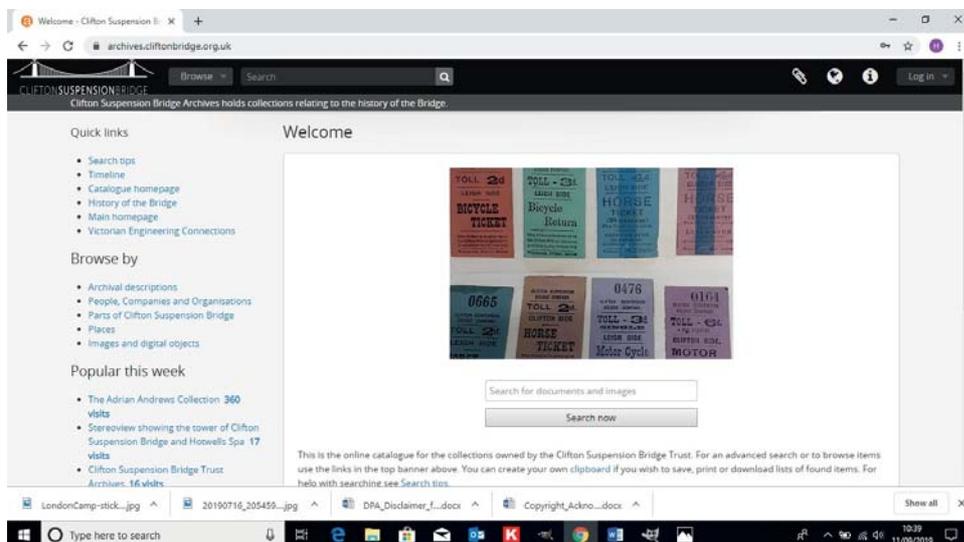
Our catalogue is now up and ready! I customise it using the user interface by adding our logo, writing my own search tips and playing around with creating hyperlinked images. I create a privacy notice pop-up, a static page and embed a timeline in it. By following the advice on the AtoM wiki (wiki.accesstomemory.org) I manage to upload 493 descriptions of engineering drawings to the catalogue - success!



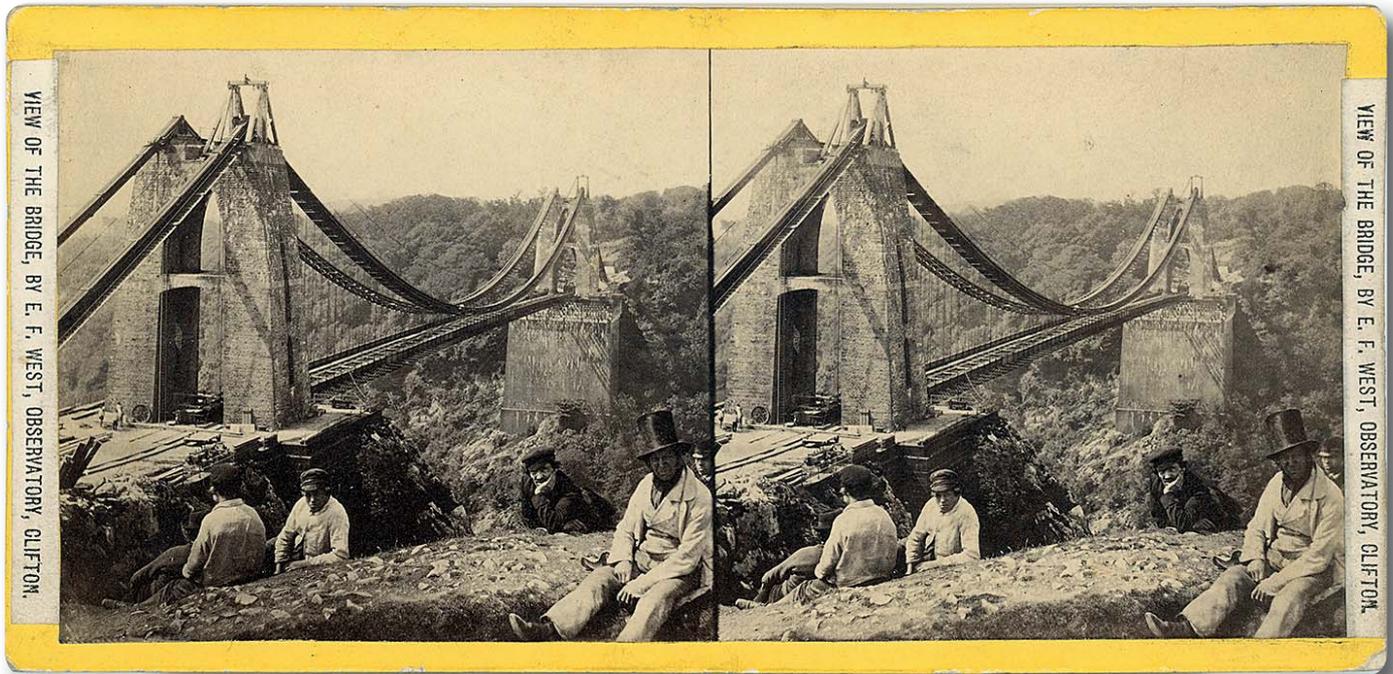
An engineer inspecting the bridge chains in 1973. Courtesy of CSBT



The AtoM sandbox at demo.accesstomemory.org



The homepage for Clifton Suspension Bridge Archives, archives.cliftonbridge.org.uk



A stereoscopic photograph showing Clifton Suspension Bridge under construction, 1864; when seen through a viewer, the two images create a 3D illusion. Courtesy of CSBT



A watermarked stereoscopic photograph, c.1865 - 1898, ref. GB 3493 AA/1/S/57. Courtesy of CSBT

January 2019

We have got the funding to have a collection of Victorian stereoscopic photographs digitised! I quickly catalogue them before they are sent to the conservator....

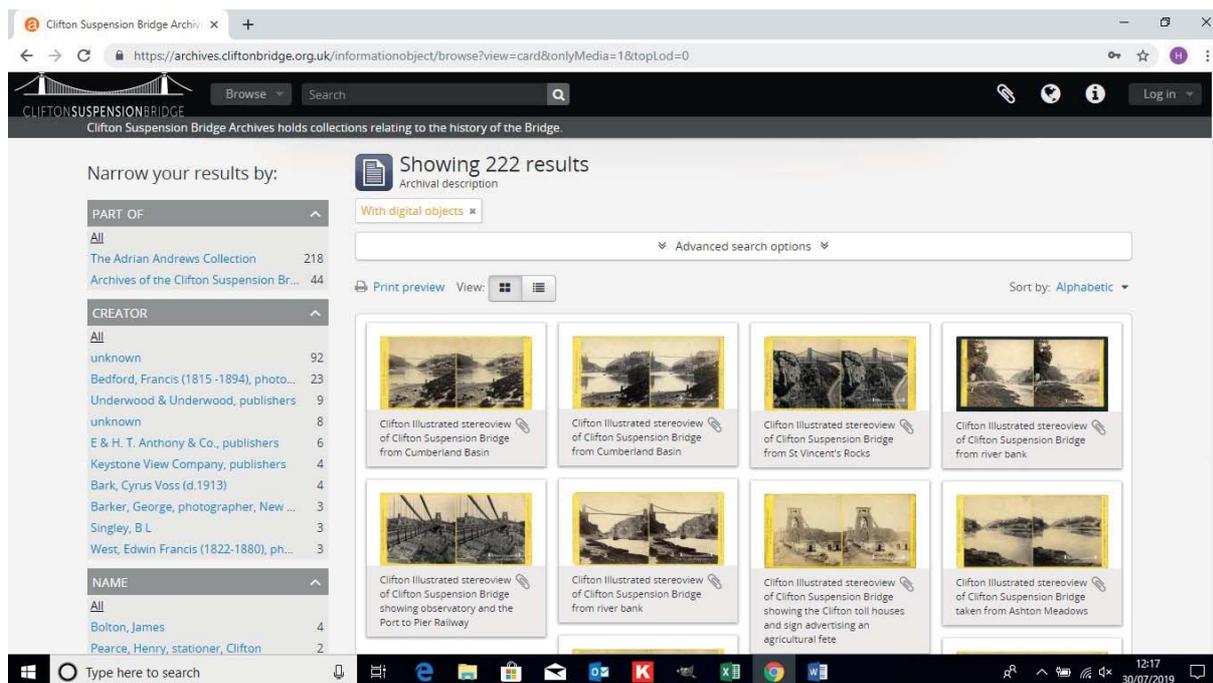
March 2019

I upload and create permissions for images and experiment with watermarks. Note to self: look into how others license and sell images. A list of AtoM users can be found here:
(wiki.accesstomemory.org/index.php/Community/Users)

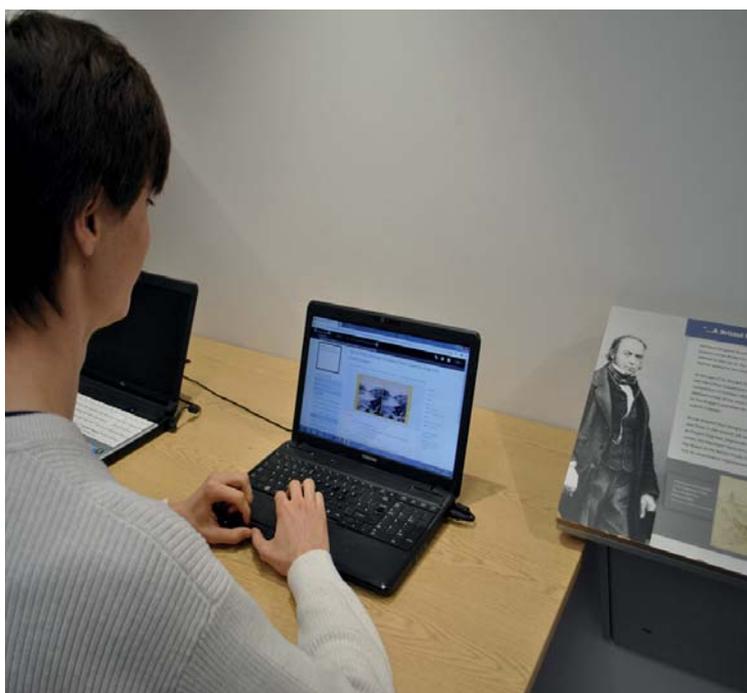
“ I manage to upload 493 descriptions of engineering drawings to the catalogue - success! ”

11 April 2019

It's the launch of the stereoscopic photographs project! It's now linked to our website - check it out here:
(archives.cliftonbridge.org.uk)



The CSBT collection of stereoscopes displayed as digital objects. Courtesy of CSBT



A user browses our online catalogue at the launch. Courtesy of CSBT

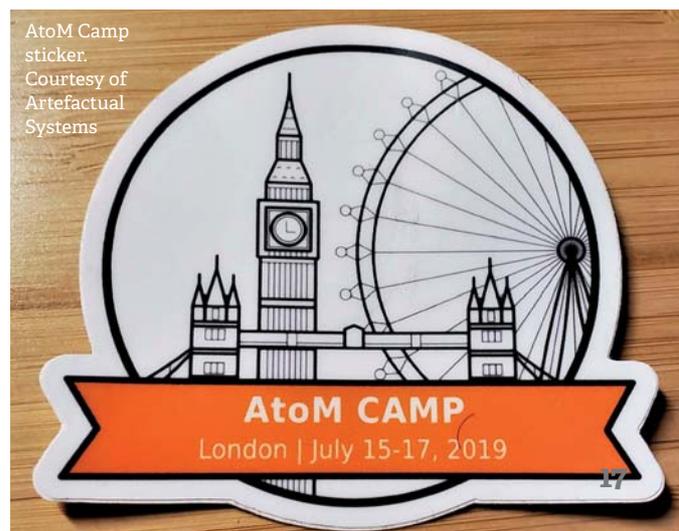


Looking through a stereoscopic viewer. Courtesy of CSBT

July 2019

I attend the AtoM Summer Camp and discover that there is a UK AtoM Users Group wiki.accesstomemory.org/Community/Groups/UK so I sign up to the mailing list jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?Ao=ATOMUSERSGROUP

The training covers some of the things I've already picked up from the online documentation, but I fill in some crucial gaps and practice using new features. I attend a session on how to integrate it with the digital preservation software, Archivematica. I learn how AtoM is being used, by whom, and where it is heading. Requirements for the next release, version 3.0, are being sought from users and developers and



“ *It is standards-based, interoperable and can be exported into different formats.* ”

a complete overhaul of the underlying code is needed. A non-profit AtoM Foundation has been set up to raise funds for this and to ensure that the people who use AtoM have a say in how it is managed and developed: acesstomemoryfoundation.org/ It's good to know that archivists are part of this discussion, working alongside developers.

August 2019

On reflection...some questions answered

Will AtoM continue to be developed and supported?

Yes, there is a large international community of users and the formation of the foundation is a step in the right direction.

How much will it cost?

It depends on what level of in-house IT support you have and whether you want additional features to be developed. It requires some technical knowledge, maintenance and hosting resources, so if you don't have these I would budget for between £1500 and £2000 for this.

How easy would it be to move to a different system?

It is standards-based, interoperable and can be exported into different formats. The code is open-source, so it can be hosted, managed, and developed how you like.

How easy is it to use?

I find the user interface easy and so do our volunteers. There is also a community of people to ask and plenty of documentation - there is always room for improvement though!

(The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author, who is writing in an individual capacity, and do not necessarily reflect those of Clifton Suspension Bridge Trust)



The friendly team from Artefactual Systems. Courtesy of Artefactual Systems



Cataloguing continues. Courtesy of Artefactual Systems

Innovative interfaces

Elisabeth Thurlow from the Section for Archives and Technology introduces this special issue.

Welcome to this Section for Archives and Technology special issue. For this we put out a call for articles on the theme of 'innovative interfaces'. An opportunity to share examples of work taking place across the sector which demonstrates how innovation is taking our interfaces beyond basic search and discovery. The articles received illustrate how archives are not just stuff to be found and retrieved, but sites of communication and connection, where people can come together to negotiate their own individual and shared meanings and understandings. The authors promote current and future developments, but also look back on the evolution of our interfaces.

Jenny Bunn provides a potted history of archives on the web, whilst Nicky Hilton celebrates a new interface for the Parliamentary Archives. In her article Nicky explores the growing role of User Experience (UX) to understand what our users want and how they behave online. The importance of accessibility is also highlighted - a hot topic for those of us working in the public sector as we work to ensure our websites and apps meet the new digital accessibility laws.

The Section for Archives and Technology centres its activities around the intersection of archives, records, and technology, and another subtheme of this special issue is the use of technology for new interactions. Francesca Mackenzie and Mark Bell at the UK National Archives examine the opportunities presented by crowdsourcing interfaces for engaging people. This is an improving area and their article demonstrates the great progress being made in using these emerging tools. Whilst the Peak in the Past Project is finding new ways to use technology to engage their local community in archives. The wide-ranging social contributions that can be made by archives are further demonstrated in the use of social networking tool, Yammer, to forge new links within the Boots company. Virtual access to collections, and the opportunities this presents, also plays a key part in the Darning Scotland's Textile Collections Project.

Thank you to all of our authors and we hope you enjoy this special issue.

Darning Scotland's Textile Collections

Claire McDade, University of Glasgow Archives, explores the different audiences reached by the Darning Scotland's Textile Collections project.

How do you tell the story of over one hundred textiles industry archive collections, make connections with people who worked in the industries represented, and reach academic and general audiences too? The Darning Scotland's Textile Collections Project has been tackling these questions and more for the last year and a half. It is a University of Glasgow engagement project funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund's Collecting Cultures initiative ending in September 2019. The collections are part of the Scottish Business Archive in the University of Glasgow's archives & special collections and include a range of companies from thread manufacturers to dyers, carpet makers, department stores, and many more besides.

We started the engagement process in March 2018 by reaching out to academics at the University who use the collections in their research and teaching. Consultation with them revealed that though they knew we had rich and diverse textiles archives, they were not entirely sure of the range of content beyond their specific research areas. We offered placements to students on the Art History: Dress & Textiles Histories MLitt, as well as the MSc in Museum Studies, and took on four students.

“We started the engagement process in March 2018 by reaching out to academics at the University who use the collections”

“eye-catching images were key to the delivery of the programme”

Working collaboratively with the students led to the decision to focus on four key collections: the carpet manufacturer Stoddard Templeton; the thread makers J&P Coats; the retailer House of Fraser; and the cloth manufacturer United Turkey Red Company Ltd. These collections have rich histories, strong visuals and clear-cut connections to local communities and geographic areas. Importantly, these collections had benefited from digitisation projects relatively recently and feature some excellent images of colourful dyes, designs and patterns. These eye-catching images were key to the delivery of the programme and the outputs we developed.

Working with community partners, we engaged with local audiences who accessed the archives in person as well as virtually. One of the groups we worked with is based at a special needs school in Clydebank, West Dunbartonshire, and although they did manage to visit the university archives, this was a special trip for them and involved a lot of planning. The group had been exploring the history of the local Turkey Red dye making industry and were delighted to see, in person, actual samples of textiles from our collections. They were almost more excited to learn that we had a digitised volume, searchable online via the Issuu platform, with high quality digital images which they could explore together back in the classroom. This enabled them to use the colours and patterns for inspiration in the development of their own scarves and jewellery.

The key output from the project was the exhibition, *Follow the Threads*, 19 April 2019-27 May 2019, at The Lighthouse Architecture and Design Centre in Glasgow. The environmental conditions in the gallery space meant we were unable to show original material. Instead we reproduced our digitised images in a large format and pasted them to the walls of the space. A new film commission made great use of the archive images and featured a range of people talking about their experiences of using the textiles collections. The exhibition had more than 10,000 visitors and was overwhelmingly well received with comments such as:

“Love the Follow the Threads exhibit. Think I need to visit the archive to see the product catalogues. As a milliner I think they'd inspire me”



Sorting skeins of wool at Templeton's carpet factory in 1960s. Courtesy of the University of Glasgow Archives Services



Design for Mart Quant carpet by Templeton's carpet factory. Courtesy of the University of Glasgow Archives Services



Page from United Turkey Red Co. cloth sample book. Courtesy of the University of Glasgow Archives Services

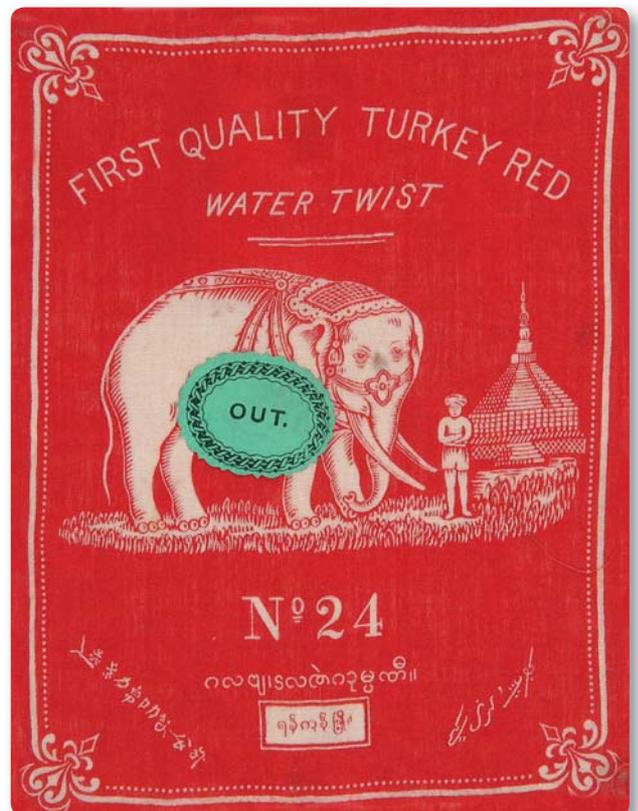


Women reeling yarn into skeins at J&P Coats Ferguslie Mill, Paisley. Courtesy of the University of Glasgow Archives Services

The film is now available on our dedicated Darning Scotland webpage: www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/archives/collections/business/dstc/. This site is the repository for all the other resources created for the project, and those which have been brought together during the course of it.

During the last months of the project we have recruited 20 people with an interest in archives and textiles to take part in special Darning Scotland placements. These placements are combining virtual and physical use of the catalogues and archives to expand our descriptions of our textiles archives. They are also helping to develop the story of the processes involved in manufacturing textiles, e.g. the making of a Templeton carpet. The outputs from this will be revealed at our final Darning Scotland event, on 24 August 2019: Voices from Scotland's Textiles Heritage, being held in partnership with the Glasgow Women's Library. This is an opportunity for us to highlight our Stoddard Templeton carpet manufacturing records to those, mainly women, who worked for the company during its final heyday up to the 1980s. Again, we will use digitised images but also digital oral history recordings and original designs and records, to engage and involve audiences in our extraordinarily rich collections.

Though the project ends in early September, the archives and special collections team at the University of Glasgow will continue to build on the work carried out over the last few years to reach wider audiences.



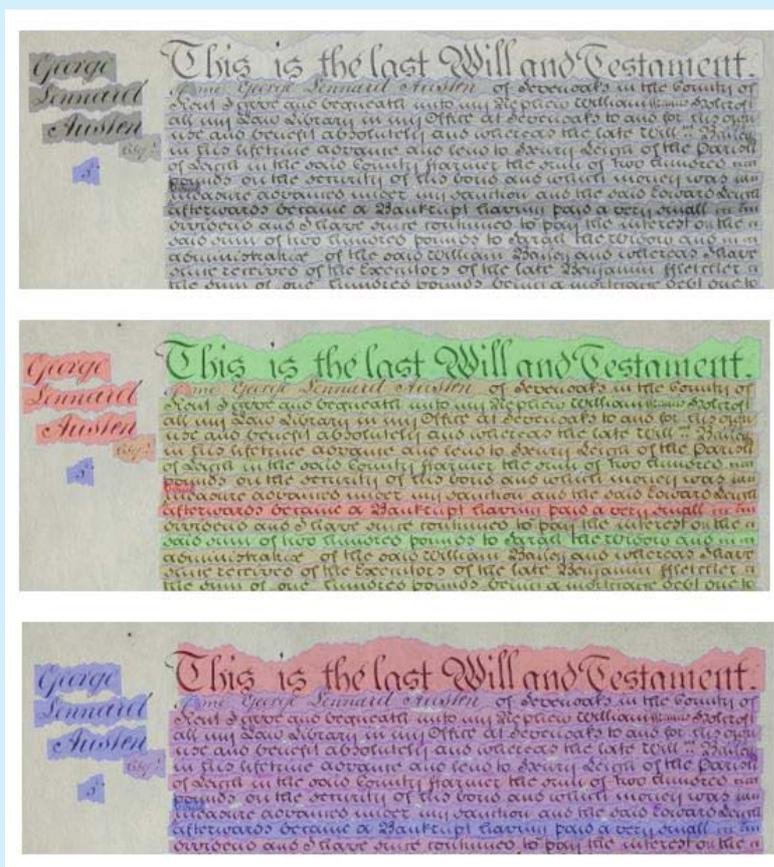
Sample of cloth from United Turkey Red Co. Courtesy of the University of Glasgow Archives Services

Along the write lines: where the crowd meets AI

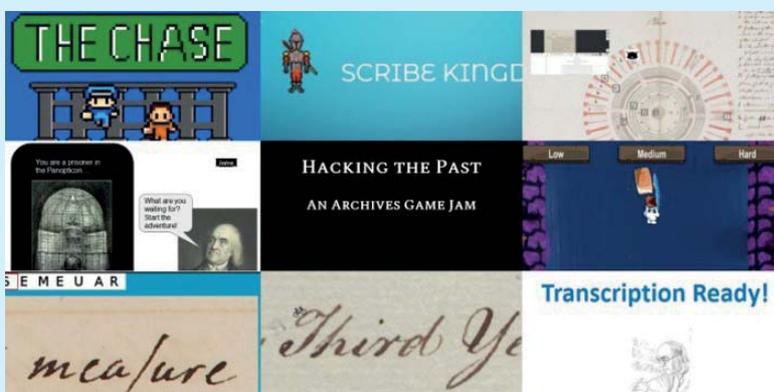
Francesca Mackenzie and Mark Bell, The National Archives (UK), look at how games can be used to enhance users' experience of transcription correction.

Over the last year The UK National Archives have been experimenting with different interfaces for crowdsourcing, ways in which online crowdsourcing could become part of everyday life, and specifically how this can work to improve machine generated transcription.

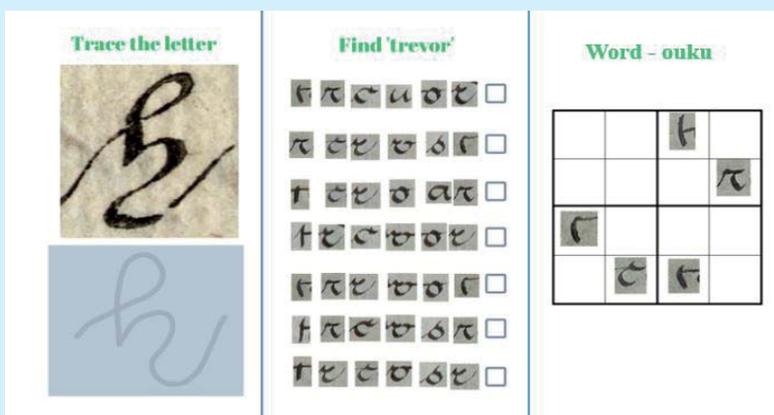
The Prerogative Court of Canterbury [catalogue reference PROB 11] collection of registered copy wills are held at The UK National Archives and are available in digitised form on Discovery, our online catalogue, to download. The wills are indexed by name, occupation, and location. What if you want to search for beneficiaries, or material goods? This just isn't possible. Typed documents could be turned into machine readable, searchable text using Optical Character Recognition (OCR); as has been done with the Cabinet Papers [catalogue reference CAB]. The wills are obviously handwritten but thanks to Handwritten Text Recognition (HTR) technology they can be machine read, even Early Modern secretary hand! The technology has improved rapidly over the past few years but reading handwriting, in all its forms, is still a difficult computational challenge. The computer must be trained, and the success, or failure, of the training is principally dependent on the quality of digitised



Screenshots of the prototype showing various different colour scales for highlighting errors and entities. Courtesy of The National Archives (UK)



Screenshots of games and presentations created during our Game Jam. The submissions themselves can be found at: nationalarchives.github.io/transcribegames/. Courtesy of The National Archives (UK), Transcribe Bentham Project and Game Jam participants



Screenshots of the prototype 'Many Hands'. Displaying examples of word games and puzzles designed to teach palaeography. Courtesy of The National Archives (UK)

images, the consistency of the handwriting, and the quantity of training pages provided.

To maximise the chances of success with the technology, we digitised some wills from the 19th century in colour, which are much clearer for both the human transcribers and the computer. The process to train software to learn a style of handwriting is as much dependent on people as clever algorithms. The training process begins by providing so called 'ground truth' transcriptions which are linked line by line to the document image. With clean colour images and immaculate, consistent handwriting, we were able to start with 15 pages of transcriptions to begin training an HTR model. Different materials may require more. We tested our model by generating transcriptions of new images automatically. This is where training becomes an iterative process. The automated transcriptions were around 90% accurate at the word level, which meant that it was easier to correct these than to start from a blank page in order to create more ground truth.

Making correction rewarding

This creates a new challenge. Most volunteers would rather transcribe a document from scratch than correct a transcription. Our research focussed on how we could tap into new audiences who enjoy puzzles and micro-tasks, and make the correction just as enjoyable and rewarding for volunteers. As a result we focussed on two areas: how do we automatically identify the parts of a transcription which needs correction, and can we make correction fun and rewarding for people on the move?

The errors were generally confined to rare words, usually names and places - the items we're most interested in! By leveraging the formulaic nature of these legal texts we built a statistical language model (e.g. 'the said' is followed by a forename 63% of the time). Using this model we created a quality measure for each line of text, and can identify entity types, such as names, even without a correct transcription. We developed an interface to display a full page

“The process to train software to learn a style of handwriting is as much dependent on people as clever algorithms.”

“Continuing with the importance of flexibility, we explored how interfaces can fit into the lives of volunteers”

document highlighting different lines on a colour range so that those that needed the most correction, or those most likely to contain an entity type of interest, could be specifically targeted. It was important in this interface to still give users full access to the document during the correcting process, so that it could be read and engaged with in a similar way to doing a full transcription. Similarly users could play with different colours or quality thresholds. The goal being to give the user the widest range of options for their experience, depending on how they wished to contribute.

Continuing with the importance of flexibility, we explored how interfaces can fit into the lives of volunteers. There is a rise at the moment with on-the-go, micro, and dual-purpose volunteering. Some crowdsourcing projects have multiple motivations for volunteers to participate. This could be anything from learning to exercise, to socialising. We created a prototype for an app called 'Many Hands' which gave the user puzzles and exercises to improve their palaeography skills whilst also correcting transcription. In February we ran a Game Jam, in collaboration with the Transcribe Bentham Project at UCL, asking participants to create games to make word/phrase correction fun, rewarding, and educational. All the submissions were incredibly inventive, from biking games, puzzles, mazes, and recipe reward apps. The winning submission was a version of the arcade classic Frogger that involved dodging and transcribing transcriptions from criminal entry books [catalogue reference HO13].

The ideas we wished to put forward in the prototypes were about learning, development, bringing people together, and opening our collections through digital interfaces. We want people to share, or develop, a love of transcription while helping archives leverage technology to further open their digitised collections.

Search

Advanced ▾

The Parliamentary Archives

Explore over 500 years of Parliament in the UK

Innovative interfaces: Transforming Archives Services

Nicky Hilton explains how a new web front end is improving user experience at the Parliamentary Archives.

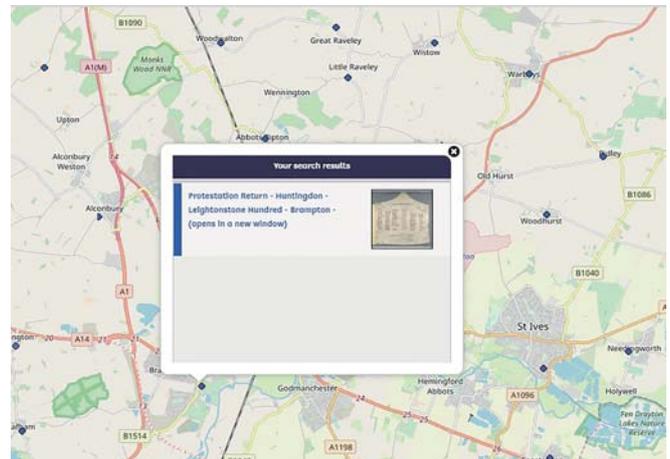
In 2016 the Parliamentary Archives launched Transforming Archives Services, an ambitious programme aimed at revolutionising the way our collections are managed, discovered and accessed.

Phase one looked to transform the online user experience by improving access to the archives' catalogue and digital content. To achieve this, the archives worked with Orangeleaf Systems to utilise two of their web applications (CollectionsBase and CollectionsPress), allowing our catalogue data (stored in an Axiell Calm database) to be delivered to the public in new and innovative ways.

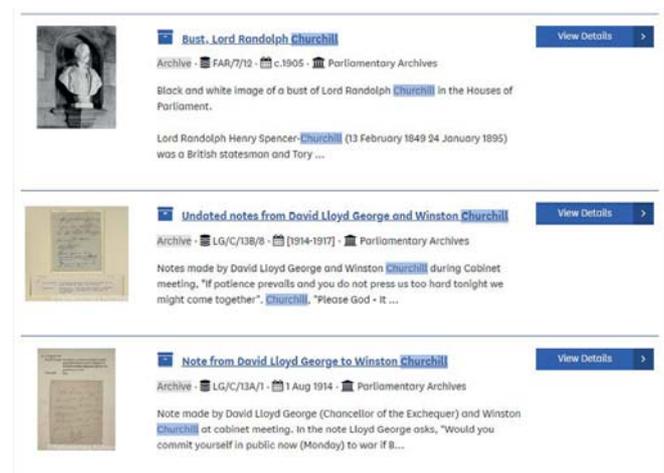
Drivers for change

Prior to the launch of the new search, our online catalogue was served up in a tabulated grey and blue display that had changed little since the early 2000s. In contrast, the modern interface supported by Orangeleaf delivered an immediate and positive change for our user community, giving a friendly and reassuring feel to the website. In addition, the application has several innovative features: an integrated IIF image viewer, faceted search, and a choice of search result views.

(Right) Thumbnails in the search results view enhance user experience. Courtesy of Parliamentary Archives



The built-in map view displays results by location. Courtesy of Parliamentary Archives



For the archives team the most exciting benefit of the new interface was the opportunity to capture qualitative data about who was searching the collections, what they were looking for and how they conducted their search.

Through the looking glass

We were fortunate to be supported by our colleagues in the Parliamentary Digital Service to undertake full public testing of the search function, allowing us to gain a unique insight into the thoughts of our potential researchers.

The testing took place in a lab in central London with several archivists and digital service colleagues huddled in a room behind one-way glass, eagerly watching every move of the mouse at a terminal in the adjoining room. As the testers conducted searches on areas of interest to them, we took notes and discussed findings. It was a fascinating experience. We were expecting the usual difficulty of navigating a collection, and the confusion between fonds, series and file level descriptions, but what we found instead was a good understanding of the hierarchy and a real willingness to explore and engage with content. Crucially the testing environment provided the opportunity to see how people sitting at home might approach their research without the pressure or support of search room staff.

There were moments of triumph, such as when a tester discovered the copy of a letter between Lloyd George and Churchill and were blown away by the quality of the digitised image. There were also moments of despair, such as when a tester typed in 'Jewish history in England in the mid-century' to be confronted with a list of results that didn't meet their expectations. However, it was these incidents that led directly to a catalogue enhancement stream of work to improve the compatibility of our data with modern search techniques and tools.

Accessible searches

Alongside this general user testing, we also undertook specialised accessibility testing with the Digital Accessibility Centre, providers of web accessibility services. Their dedicated team created an incredibly detailed report documenting the experience of navigating the online search when blind, colour blind, dyslexic or cognitively impaired. The site was also tested for ease of access by those using voice activation and keyboard navigation. The report directly resulted in multiple small but significant changes to the design of the website (especially around navigation) and the underlying HTML code. This is an area we are still

“ we can, for the first time, gather data about what researchers are typing into the search bar ”

“ The [accessibility] report directly resulted in multiple small but significant changes to the design of the website ”

actively working to improve, ensuring we meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines AA level requirements for public sector websites.

A data driven future

Building on this experience of controlled user testing, in the last days before the launch we worked with Orangeleaf to embed Google Analytics into the online search. We were keen to take the opportunity to support the qualitative data about search habits and interests our search room staff had built up over decades with quantitative data taken directly from the online search bar.

By capitalising on this fantastic feature of the Orangeleaf interface we can, for the first time, gather data about what researchers are typing into the search bar, as well as tracking journeys from search results to other pages such as copy requests and how to visit. As we gather more evidence over the next year, this body of data has the potential to completely transform how we arrange our content, what we digitise, and how we approach our online outreach.

Next steps

Building on the success of the online catalogue, we're continuing to work with Orangeleaf to deliver the next phase of the Transforming Archives Services programme. This will see additional modules added to our website that will allow researchers to register online, save search results to a wish list, book a seat in the search room, order documents, and request copying quotes. We hope these features will make the archives' amazing collections more accessible to more people in the UK and abroad.

If you would like to know more about our online catalogue search, or the Transforming Archives Service programme, please contact us at archives@parliament.uk.

Yammer: making noise about heritage at Boots

Tom Bell, The Boots Archive, looks at the use of social networking to engage with colleagues at Boots UK.

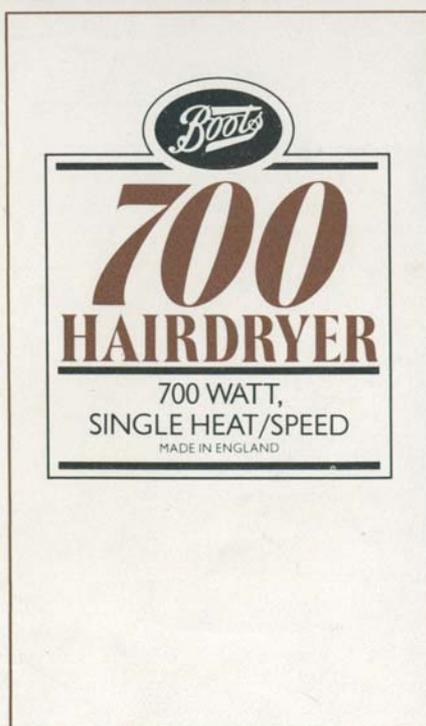
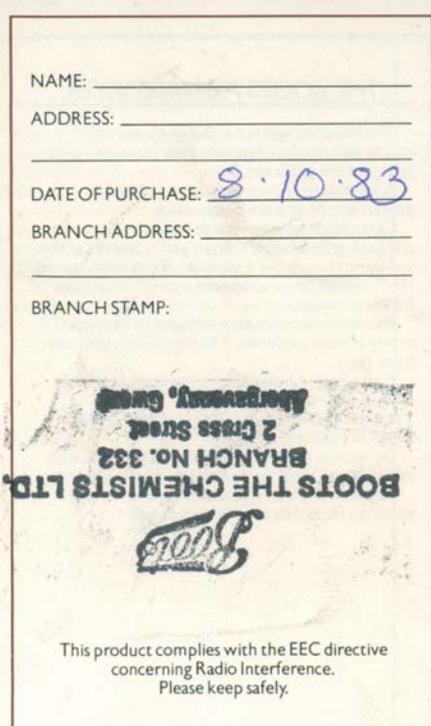
In June 2019 Boots introduced Yammer, an internal social networking tool by Microsoft that's designed to connect and engage around 56,000 colleagues across the organisation. Yammer is available any time on any device, and users can upload videos, post photos and GIFs, follow people, use hashtags to share and filter content, and join conversations by liking, commenting or sharing.

Before this, content produced by our archive team was regularly circulated to different teams throughout the business, who shared it both internally and externally with our colleagues and customers. As we had no direct access to the channels through which the content was shared, it was difficult to measure usage and engagement, and for us to be identified as the creators.

Similar in style and functionality to Facebook, Yammer has provided our team with a platform to share content directly with Boots colleagues and respond to opportunities quickly, whilst maintaining ownership that

allows us to see directly how people are engaging with it. When it first launched, we began by sharing content that we had already prepared for Boots's existing social media channels, which usually consisted of a short caption and an image celebrating a significant anniversary. Posts relating to the 50th anniversary of the discovery of ibuprofen by Boots, or the 80th anniversary of the launch of Soltan, are typical of the type of content that we post about.

However, Yammer has also provided us with an opportunity to share new content which would not have been suitable for Boots's established media channels. We've introduced a monthly theme which supports a current business objective and post daily to demonstrate how our heritage is relevant to business goals today. Our theme for July was the history of store innovation at Boots, which we highlighted to tie in with our current Store of the Future project and the opening of Boots's new flagship store in Covent Garden.



The Boots 700 Hairdryer instructions and guarantee, which shows the date of purchase. Courtesy of The Boots Archive

The Boots 700 Hairdryer donated to the Boots Archive following a post on Yammer. Courtesy of The Boots Archive



A Yammer post for the Boots 170 Time Capsule campaign, using White Heather Talcum Powder (Obj 5777) from Boots museum collection. Courtesy of The Boots Archive



A Yammer post celebrating the start of Wimbledon, using a store photograph (WBA/BT/21/46/1/990/3) and an article from Boots News Staff Magazine (WBA/BT/27/39/2/5/51). Courtesy of The Boots Archive



Boots Heritage page was made the first Yammer Group of the Week. Courtesy of The Boots Archive

“There has been an increase in the level of enquiries and interactions made by colleagues.”

Museum Collection

We've also used Yammer to promote our museum collection, which we'd previously found harder to share throughout the business. To tie in with Boots's 170th anniversary this year, we created a Boots 170 Time Capsule, which consists of daily posts about 170 different individual items from the museum collection which tell the story of the business. We found Yammer to be a very effective way to share large amounts of content like this, which would have been too much for some of our existing internal channels.

To supplement the regular content, we've also tried to provide colleagues with an insight into what we do as a team, helping to demystify the service that we provide. We've posted on subjects varying from how researchers are using our collection, to what records we're currently cataloguing and which photographs we've digitised and made available on our online catalogue (which can be accessed directly from a pinned link on Yammer).

We've seen an increase in the number of items donated to the archive as a result of increased visibility. An early success story involved the donation of a Boots hairdryer through Yammer that belonged to a 90-year-old customer for over 36 years. After receiving the donation, the post was picked up by the Boots Electrical Beauty team and they arranged for the customer to be sent a new hairdryer, demonstrating the ease with which Yammer can help colleagues from different areas of the business collaborate.

Yammer has also helped to develop our own understanding of the business by viewing content generated by other users. This helps to inform us of key events and activities that are happening that we can potentially support or record. There has also been an increase in the level of enquiries and interactions made by colleagues, and we now regularly receive emails explaining how people have seen the content we've shared and thought we should be involved in a project, helping to develop a positive culture surrounding our heritage.

Next steps

Moving forward we're going to continue sharing similar content, but we believe there's more functionality on Yammer that we can use. The ability to post videos and stream live content is an area that we feel could be used to share talks and presentations, particularly with our store colleagues who are based throughout the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.

While it has only been open to all colleagues for two months, we've found Yammer a popular and effective platform to share our heritage message. The heritage group is currently the 7th largest out of over 1100 groups on the platform and was selected and promoted as the very first 'Yammer Group of the Week'. It has provided us with access to a much wider audience, particularly with colleagues based in-store, and it has also helped to raise the visibility of both our archive team as a whole and individual team members who create the posts.



Archivist Tim Knebel with Great Hucklow Primary School pupils as part of a school history workshop delivered by the Peak in the Past project, enabling pupils to discover the history of their village. Courtesy of the author

Peak in the Past: engaging new audiences with archives

Tim Knebel reports on an innovative film and digital media project relating to Peak District history.

In recent years, our innovative community heritage project Peak in the Past has launched various activities designed to engage a range of people (from primary school children to elderly residents in residential care homes) with archive material. The project uses film and online digital media to shine a light on, and engage new audiences with, archives held in local authority archive services: Sheffield City Archives and Derbyshire Record Office, which illuminate the past of the Peak District region.

The idea for the project was conceived through my work as an archivist at Sheffield City Archives where we hold a rich body of relatively untapped archive material revealing fascinating aspects of Peak District history. I wanted to try and showcase archive sources in an imaginative and visual way, in synthesis with the natural beauty and drama of the landscape that had helped shape the stories found in the collections. I teamed up with my sister Holly Knebel,

a trained broadcast journalist, and an old school-friend Dave Mackie, a freelance film-maker. Together, we felt we could usefully draw on our shared love of history and the Peak District whilst combining our respective skills in archival practice, broadcast journalism, and film-making. The basic idea was to take a video camera into the archives and out onto the Peaks, creating what we hoped would be an appealing interface between archives and the local landscape, highlighting the wonder and storytelling potential of both, and thereby engaging new audiences in archive source material.

We established Peak in the Past as a community heritage group and, with the help of grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund, there have been two phases to our project. The first phase in 2015-2017 centred on the creation of a community-led online historical documentary series, exploring some of the more remarkable episodes in Peak

District history. The second phase, launched in 2018 and set to continue into 2020, revolves around a filmed series of folktales relating to the region.

Community engagement

Community engagement has been at the heart of the project. Our films have been made with the help of Peak District secondary school pupils, who have welcomed the opportunity to develop their film-production, journalism and media skills. We have also recruited members of Peak District community theatre groups (including teenagers from a local youth theatre) to act in historical reconstruction scenes. These form a central part of our films, providing participants with on-screen acting experience, who in turn help to bring our historical narratives to life.

Alongside our core filming activities, we have drawn on digitised archive sources to create local history workshops for Peak District primary schools and deliver historical talks and reminiscence sessions for Peak District residential care homes. Our school sessions have enabled pupils to discover the past of their immediate locality using historical material with added resonance to them - rooted around local landmarks and buildings with which they are familiar. Our care home reminiscence activities have enabled us to gather memories, oral histories and copies of photographs from residents, capturing important elements of the Peak District's remembered past before they disappear forever.

The project has also provided archival research placements for Sheffield University history masters students. Students have helped us to compile online historical information resources as well as writing blogs sharing their research findings. The films, blogs and information resources created through the project are freely available via our website: www.peakinthepast.co.uk.

Through the project, we have sought to harness and highlight the valuable contribution that older people in care homes, schoolchildren, and students can bring to local heritage. Interesting aspects of local history, previously concealed in obscure archive sources or locked away in individual memories, have been unearthed through our activities and shared widely through creative and visually-engaging means. Participants have consistently said how the project has helped to boost their self-esteem as well as helping to strengthen a sense of belonging and pride in their local community. Of particular satisfaction was the feedback from care home residents, who have spoken of how the project has made them feel revitalised and valued after facing the social isolation and loneliness which being in a home often brings.

Hopefully we can help inspire others to embark on similar projects. Wherever we live, there will be a treasure-trove of underused source material in local archives waiting to be accessed, as well as local people who are not typical archive users but who can usefully be engaged with a bit of imagination. With evolving technological tools like film, digital media, and website building becoming ever more readily available, affordable, and easy to use, there has never been a more opportune time to reach out to new audiences and excite them with archives.



Archivist Tim Knebel carrying out reminiscence activities with residents at a Peak District residential care home through the Peak in the Past project. Courtesy of the author



Broadcast journalist Holly Knebel and freelance film-maker Dave Mackie filming in Derby Gaol [the old 'County Gaol' for Derbyshire] on the trail of criminals of the Peak District's past for Peak in the Past's online historical documentary series. Courtesy of the author

Looking back at archives on the internet

Jenny Bunn, University College London, considers our profession's pioneers of webpages and the internet.

The interface between the profession and technology is a long-standing one, but it is noticeable that our connection with technology tends to be viewed only in one direction - towards progress, new developments, innovations and into the future. We rarely look back at our achievements and mistakes or consider the progress we have made to date. Given our profession, it is slightly odd that we should take such an ahistorical approach to this topic, and this is something I have been trying to rectify over the past few years through research into the history of our use of technology. This history is starting to be at

risk of loss; our documenting of our own processes is not always as thorough as we might think it is, and much of the knowledge of our development of technology and systems resides solely in the heads of earlier generations of archivists and records managers. This article is therefore also an appeal: if you have a story to tell about the implementation of technology in your work place, if you have screen shots or photographs or manuals and other documentation of systems of any date, please get in touch with me as I would love to hear from you.

WELCOME TO THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON HISTORICAL MANUSCRIPTS WEBSITE



National Register of Archives (direct link)	Information on National Register of Archives
Archivists information page	Researchers information page
Record Repositories and other historical sites	Research and Development
Internet Information	Web Editor's Acknowledgements

Last updated 6 August 1996 by [Web Editor](#), at the [Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts](#)
nb: the HMC search room will be closed from 25 December 1996 to 1 January 1997, inclusive

Number of visitors to this page since October 1995: **4 3 8 2 7**

This is one of the earliest captures (19 December 1996) of a UK archival website available through the Wayback Machine. It shows the homepage of the Historical Manuscripts Commission. Accessible at: web.archive.org/web/19961219212724/http://www.hmc.gov.uk/. Courtesy of the Historical Manuscript Commission

University of Southampton Library
Archive and Manuscript Collections

WWW Introduction

Welcome to the HTML version of the Guide to the Archive and Manuscript Collections. This contains the text of C.M.Woolgar and K.Robson *A GUIDE TO THE ARCHIVE AND MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS OF THE HARTLEY LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON* (Southampton: University of Southampton Library, occasional paper 11; 1992), together with entries for more recent accessions.

The entries have been split up with one web page per manuscript collection, except MS116 which has been subdivided.

Explanation of Control Buttons

[Next](#) and [Previous](#) These buttons at the top and bottom of each page allow browsing of the catalogue.

[Help](#) This button takes you back to this, the local help page.

[Contents](#) This button takes you to a [complete index of all pages in this section](#).

[Up](#) This button is only used in the sub-pages of record MS116. It takes you back to the MS116 contents page.

For the more general University of Southampton help page, click [here](#) or on the help button at the bottom of this page.

For the database version of this catalogue, or access to the detailed catalogues of the Wellington papers (MS 61), the Palmerston papers (MS 62) and the Mountbatten papers (MS 62), or the Survey of the Papers of Senior UK Defence Personnel, 1793-1970, please send an e-mail to: archives@soton.ac.uk

Also available is a [brief overview of the holdings of the Special Collections Division](#).

[Next](#) [Contents](#) [Help](#) [UoS](#)

 University of Southampton

Although captured in 1998, the last updated date would seem to suggest that this webpage from the University of Southampton Library dates back to 1995. Is this the first online archival catalogue from a UK institution? Accessible at web.archive.org/web/19980225004742/www.southampton.ac.uk/~papers/collections/wwwintro.html. Courtesy of the University of Southampton

“We rarely look back at our achievements and mistakes or consider the progress we have made to date.”

As an example of how little this history has yet been reconstructed, two questions that cannot currently be answered are: what was the first UK or Irish archival institution website, and what did it look like? A recent project has sought to recreate the world's first, or at least oldest known, web page - first-website.web.cern.ch/ - and this dates originally to August 1991. It should be noted however, that the history of the internet (and networking) is not the same as the history of the World Wide Web (WWW). As the Digital Preservation Coalition's Bit List makes clear, there were "pre-WWW telephone and television information services that allowed a degree of user interaction and data retrieval with modem-based two way communication", but such formats are now classified as practically extinct.

One near contemporary look at the birth of archival web pages is Simon Wilson's 1995 student dissertation from University College London. At the back there is a list of UK Archival Repositories on the Internet with a mere twenty entries. Although the list does not claim to be comprehensive, the first UK archival institution website is probably to be found amongst the twenty listed. Unfortunately case studies are only offered of eight of the twenty and, even amongst those eight, the launch date of the web presence is not always given. Nevertheless, this report would seem to support the conclusion that Southampton and Hull Universities were 'online' even before the World Wide Web and as early as 1985 in the case of Southampton. This conclusion is supported by evidence in a 1992 survey of automated practice by Jennifer Hogarth and Gillian Martin, and their article in the December 1991 issue of the Society of Archivists' Newsletter.

Following on from these two, the next generation of not-quite web pages as we know them, would seem to be the Institute of Historical Research's IHR-Info information server (August 1993) and the British Library's Portico Gopher Service (July 1994). It was through the former that the National Register of Archives and the Public Record Office first gained a web presence, before creating their own web pages in 1995. Within the dissertation there are screen shots of some of these early resources, but it is also possible to view examples which have been captured within the Internet Archive. It is always slightly difficult to date the pages available through the WayBack Machine, as capture date may not reflect last updated date, but examples can be found that seem to date back to 1996, and possibly even 1995.

We may never be able to say definitively which UK or Irish archival institution had the first website and perhaps it does not matter. What does matter however, is that we do not lose sight of our history with technology. Viewed through this lens, the prevailing narrative of our profession's inadequacy and lack of competence in the face of technology can hopefully be countered. We may not always be able to build it ourselves, but we can definitely get it built and use technology to our own ends.

Calling all colleagues!

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

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Crowne Plaza, Chester
2nd – 4th September

Conference
2020

We ♥ Records

