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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 June 2016

Welcome to the Preservation and Conservation issue of ARC magazine. This month we're featuring articles which highlight the wide-range of activities undertaken in order to protect and make available our archives. The varied skill-set of conservators is clear to see and it is pleasing that there are contributions regarding the training of a new generation of experts.

As an archivist, I've been particularly struck by how important it is to remain aware of the activities of conservators. Whether it is in relation to new ideas about strong-room storage conditions or the role conservators play in preparing for a digitisation project, the articles clearly demonstrate how we all contribute to the same fundamental goal: to safeguard the collections in our care.

Of course, the issue also features details of the specialist treatment of documents. What is readily apparent is that conservators are very good at sharing information. Even if they are lone workers within their immediate departments, conservators do not work in silos sealed off from the rest of the world. The concepts of collaboration and exchanging ideas permeate many of the articles in the issue.

Elsewhere, and also in the spirit of exchanging ideas, we have a conference report. You can also find an article about the successful completion of a cataloguing project - and details of a funding opportunity should you be planning a project of your own.



As ever, our thanks go to everyone who has contributed to the issue, particularly Sarah Volter for coordinating the preservation and conservation content.

Enjoy the issue!

Richard Wragg
Editor

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Front cover: The Stuart and Cumberland papers digitisation project at Windsor Castle.
Picture of Prince James Francis Edward Stuart.

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.

www.archives.org.uk

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opening lines



I spend most days in almost silence, scratching away with a quill on vellum in my workroom or applying leaf and shell gold and colour to miniature paintings. My life as a scribe and illuminator is, of necessity, rather solitary, probably similar to many people who work in archives and conservation.

Last November, though, much of that changed. I heard from William Cowley, the last parchmenter in the UK and one of the last in the world who still uses the traditional craft techniques, that there was a move to stop printing Acts of Parliament on vellum. This would have a serious effect on their business and there was a chance that they may cease production altogether. As Vice-Chair of the Heritage Crafts Association we were also concerned that this was an endangered craft and we have lost too many traditional crafts already.

I wrote that day to the chair of the Administration Committee that had made the decision and wondered what else I could do. With my speciality being the skills and techniques used in mediaeval manuscripts I often lecture at academic conferences on how manuscripts were made, and have a number of contacts in museums and libraries too. There were also other practitioners like me, not just calligraphers but book binders, drum makers and those who use vellum in conservation, and many of them members of ARA's preservation and conservation section. We all sent out emails to as many people as possible, asking them to write both to the Commons Committee Chairman and also their MPs. Social media never ceases to amaze me and, by the evening, the emails had been resent and resent and were picked up by the media. There followed a number of press interviews, local, national and international.

The next day, with a thumping heart, I was interviewed three times on the radio and the following week was on BBC 2's

Daily Politics Show, and then Radio 2's Jeremy Vine Show. By now I was more sure of the points that needed to be got across so tweeted and put posts on Facebook. (I also send out a free monthly online newsletter for anyone interested in manuscripts, lettering, craft etc. and so wrote an item in that and also linked it to blogs on my website including a pro forma letter with the arguments that anyone can copy and use.) The figures were easily challenged - the average cost of vellum each year is £47,000 then the cost of paper has to be allowed for from this, so the actual saving is about £27,000-£37,000 because the costs of printing, despite what is being said by the abolitionists, are really the same for vellum and paper. This is nothing like the £100,000 or £80,000 savings quoted.

We then waited for a debate in the House of Commons so that a vote could be taken to confirm or block the end of vellum. But in February, we heard that the printers of the Acts of Parliament had been given notice. Sharon Hodgson, Shadow Minister for Women and Children, raised a Point of Order and the debate was mentioned again. It seemed, though, that a decision had been taken already and the cause was lost. More media interviews ensued including News at 10 but these were done with sadness and a heavy heart. However, late on the following Sunday, Matthew Hancock, Paymaster General, said that the government would pay for the vellum, he emphasised that our heritage was significant and we had lost too much of it. We knew that this was only an offer, it still had to be accepted.

In mid-April the promised debate finally took place and the vote was a resounding success for the use of vellum to continue, the vote being about three to one. It would be a relief if that was the end of the matter, but this decision can be overturned in a future parliament; however it is saved for now and the true costs are in the public domain. What this experience has shown, though, is that you don't have to be a chum of the Prime Minister nor have friends in high places to make a difference. From my workroom in Kent, emails and social media, and individuals all working together in contacting their MPs can make a difference and can effect a change. This is how democracy should work.

Patricia Lovett MBE

Vice-Chair, Heritage Crafts Association

Registration **news**

Newly registered members of the Archives and Records Association

Following the most recent assessments of portfolios submitted to the assessors, the successful candidates are as follows:

Louise Clough

Principal Library Advisor (Special Collections and Archives),
University of Gloucestershire

Lynsey Darby

Archivist, College of Arms

Stacey Dyer

Archive Director (Collections Manager), South West Film &
Television Archive, Plymouth

Rosemary Everitt

Archivist, Berkshire Record Office

Carol Ince

Archives Assistant, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Archives

Lucy Shepherd

Freelance Archivist

Matthew Tantony

Archivist (Cataloguing), The Postal Museum

The committee would like to congratulate the newly registered members on their success.

We would also like to acknowledge the efforts of the successful candidates' mentors:

Heather Romaine

Matti Watton

Louisa Blight

Ivone Turnbull

Susan Corrigan

Susan Snell

Andrew Janes

The committee would like to thank them for the time and support they have given to their candidates.

Telephone Portfolio Consultation Sessions

Are you a Registration candidate who has been working on your portfolio for some time and planning to submit in the next 6-12 months, in advance of the upcoming changes to Registration and CPD?

Book now for a free one-to-one telephone consultation with a Registration Assessor to help get your portfolio ready for submission. Each session will last around 40 minutes, and will give candidates the opportunity to discuss their draft portfolio with an experienced Assessor and get advice on submission.

Sessions will be available by arrangement over the summer - to arrange a date and time, or for further details, please contact Kate Jarman at regschemeevents@archives.org.uk.

If you'd prefer to attend a workshop to discuss your portfolio, a Registration 'blitz-it' pre-submission workshop will be scheduled for the Northern region in the autumn - further details coming soon!

Contacts:

General Registration Scheme Enquiries:

registrar@archives.org.uk

Registration Scheme Events Enquiries:

regschemeevents@archives.org.uk

Registration Scheme Admin and Bursaries:

regschemeadmin@archives.org.uk

Registration Scheme Communication:

regschemecomms@archives.org.uk

Registration Scheme Mentor Queries & Advice:

regschemeementors@archives.org.uk

Richard Wragg

Communications Officer, Registration Sub-committee

“Don't forget: Existing candidates have 16 months to submit their portfolio under the existing Registration Scheme.”

ARA London Conference 2016

Records management at the ARA Conference

For the ARA records management professional looking to visit for a day, Thursday's proceedings may well provide the best 'bang for your buck'. We have a morning of speakers with international standarding followed by the chance to discuss and think in the afternoon workshop sessions.

We will have a keynote speaker who will be speaking on the future of digital preservation methods. Concerning digital preservation, a glimpse into this future will allow records managers to think how their skills can help contribute - it's important we all work together! Please do look out for future announcements of this keynote speaker.

The keynote speaker will be followed by Elizabeth Shepherd and Andrew Flinn's paper on the influential INTERPares project and access to open government data. After a coffee break, a choice cookie and a chance for quick reflection, the future theme will continue with a triptych of papers on the role of the varying skills of the records manager from Jason King (UK), Ross Higgins (Ireland) and Marja van der Made (The Netherlands). You may face an agonising choice as in the digital preservation panel Patricia C Franks (USA), author of *Records and Information Management* and joint editor of the first ever *Encyclopaedia of Archival Science*, will be delivering a paper on software as a service and digital preservation.

After a spot of lunch, you can browse the Information Village, visit the ARA Hub or browse the poster exhibition before choosing a workshop of interest. This year we will have five workshop streams consisting of three sessions which aim to be 30 minutes long with 30 minute breaks to allow brains to recharge and be stimulated by more caffeine. In particular, the digital archives and digital preservation streams will be focussing on lifecycle management issues which RMs need to keep abreast of in order to make sure we can secure records for long periods of time.

So, where is all this happening? At the Hilton, London Wembley, right next to 'the stadium'. We will be taking the place over, making full use of their meeting and social spaces, which will be ideal for interacting with colleagues across the profession and debating issues arising from the papers and workshops. A digital preservation and digital records stream runs throughout the conference, so please do take a look through the programme to see if full conference attendance suits your professional needs.

On behalf of the Conference Committee, we hope to see you there!

Lee Pretlove
Conference Committee

Collecting matters

We are pleased to announce The National Archives' first ever Knowledge Transfer Partnership (<https://connect.innovateuk.org/web/ktp>) project with the IMC group has been successfully completed.

The project developed specialised software for risk-based assessment of environmental conditions in storage. The aim was to incorporate energy considerations, emerging standards and scientific knowledge to a reporting tool for users with different degrees of expertise.

The tool is largely based on the kind of analysis Collection Care has successfully applied to environmental monitoring data collected in our repositories, which has contributed to reducing our energy consumption, meeting our sustainability targets and improving the preservation of our collection.

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships is a UK-wide programme, run by Innovate UK (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/innovate-uk>), helping businesses to improve their competitiveness and productivity. KTP achieves this by helping organisations to access knowledge, technology or skills from the UK's knowledge base, which includes universities, further education colleges and research and technology organisations.

The National Archives was granted Knowledge Base status at the end of 2012, which provided access to the programme's funding. Soon after, Collection Care initiated the first

two year KTP project in collaboration with the IMC Group (<http://www.the-imcgroup.com/heritage-monitoring-services>), the industry partner in the project.

The IMC Group designs and manufactures electronic monitoring systems that are used in cultural heritage applications for monitoring predominantly humidity and temperature, in storage spaces, exhibitions and during transport of heritage collections.

The company recognised our knowledge and expertise in analysing, interpreting and assessing environmental monitoring data, as key to making the reporting functions of their products relevant to their customers, especially to other archives and libraries.

The new product was launched in April 2016.

Our intention is to use the reporting tools to provide evidence that supports continuous improvement in the care of TNA's collection, savings in energy consumption and advice to the wider sector.

Kostas Ntanos

The National Archives

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/our-role/collection-care/heritage-science-research-and-development/

The BAC Launches its 2016 Business Arts Cataloguing Grant



The Business Archives Council (BAC) is delighted to announce that once again it is offering a cataloguing grant of £3000 specifically for business archives related to the arts. This grant is in addition to the BAC's main cataloguing grant for business collections.

The aims of the grant are to support an under-represented area of business archives and to complement wider initiatives for archiving the arts by The National Archives (TNA) and the Campaign for Voluntary Sector Archives. In addition, it aims to:

- Provide financial support for institutions/businesses that manage business archives related to the arts,
- 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 arts-related business collections accessible.

We envisage that the £3000 grant will be 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 work should produce either a detailed catalogue of a small collection or a top-level catalogue of a more substantial collection. Grant recipients should provide the BAC with an article for its newsletter, and the catalogue should be made available on TNA's DISCOVERY database.

We welcome applications from a range of organisations including (but not limited to) businesses, local record offices, universities, museums, charities, specialised repositories and other organisations that hold business archives of, for example: theatre/film/dance/music/animation companies, art galleries, publishing houses, production companies, photographic/sound recording studios, festivals, heritage companies, tourist attractions etc.

Applicants who have previously applied to the arts grant or the main cataloguing grant for business archives are welcome to 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 related to the Arts (2016) opens on 28th April 2016 and the deadline for applications is 28th July 2016. For more information – criteria and application form – see the BAC's website at www.businessarchivescouncil.org.uk (select 'Activities & Events'). Any questions about this grant should be addressed to Anne Archer, Administrator, BAC Arts Cataloguing Grant.

Anne Archer

email: Anne.Archer@lloydsbanking.com
Tel: 020 7012 9253

An art history of the archive?

Alan Crookham reports on the CAA conference which took place this year in Washington D.C.

This year's College Art Association (CAA) conference took place in early February in Washington D.C, a week after a major blizzard ("Snowzilla!") had struck the east coast of the United States. I was fortunate enough to attend the conference in pleasant spring-like weather instead of freezing snow. My attendance and wider research trip was generously supported by both my employer, the National Gallery, and an International Engagement Bursary from the Archives and Records Association.

CAA Conference

The CAA is the leading international organisation of scholars and teachers in the history and criticism of the visual arts. Its annual conference is an important event for scholars from around the world and attracts several thousand delegates to a wide range of sessions.

My own interest in attending the conference was to explore a number of sessions that had a cross-disciplinary approach to exploring the archive as an historical and physical construct as well as its relationship to works of art. For example, the panel on *Living Archives: Latin American and Latino Art Materials in US Institutions* included an interesting discussion of artists as archivists, i.e. the creation of sites of alternative memory and evidence by artists during periods of conflicts such as the civil war in El Salvador. The session examined the blurring of the boundaries between art work and archive, and how the concept of each can be re-interpreted depending on the context.

The theme was picked up elsewhere in the conference, particularly in the two-day session, *An Art History of the Archive*. Aaron M.

Hyman introduced the session by stating that the hyperinflation of the term 'archive' had led it to mean any collection of objects. Hyman posed several questions: why do archives exist; what value do they have; and what does the archive consist of? A number of speakers sought to address these questions. Nathaniel Jones framed his paper in terms of the absence of archives in the study of ancient art and how this differs from scholars of renaissance art who have access to this type of source material. Alex Hidalgo gave a fascinating paper about indigenous archival sources in Mexico and their treatment by the Spanish colonial authorities during the 18th century. These archives were written in a pictographic script and therefore, for the authorities, occupied a space between art work and archive.

Other papers similarly considered such boundaries: Gregory Zinman on the work of Nam June Paik; Carolyn Trench on the performance documentaries of the Ballroom Archives Project; and Sarah S. Archino and Siofra McSherry on the works of Cornell and Duchamp. All these papers were not only very interesting in themselves but also highly beneficial for my own research on the relationship between archives and works of art.

The conference was not all conceptual. The session *Activating the Archive: Keeping Collections Alive* considered how to engage students with hands-on exercises using archives of art and design to create and develop their own projects while considering the meaning of the archives they were using. One of the more eye-catching initiatives presented during this panel was Speed Dating Archives. Students were asked to select one archive item and then had only a few minutes to ask questions and share thoughts about the item with the rest of their class.



Photograph of CASVA, © Alan Crookham

Research visits

In addition to the CAA conference, my trip to the USA enabled me to carry out research visits to the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts (CASVA) at the National Gallery of Art and the Archives of American Art, both in Washington D.C., and to the Frick Center for the History of Collecting in New York. As the National Gallery looks to develop its own resources in a new Research Centre, it was an invaluable opportunity to learn from the experience of a number of peer institutions. I looked at the funding models and research culture of the institutions, as well as at the opportunities they offer for pre-doctoral, post-doctoral and senior fellowships.

CASVA in particular has an impressive range of fellowships and an extensive programme of symposia, conferences and publications. They also have an enviable location in the East Wing of the National Gallery of Art with senior fellows enjoying offices that overlook Capitol Hill. The Frick had many similarities and the American model of funded fellowships is one that the National Gallery will certainly investigate in the near future.

The visits not only proved invaluable in looking at best practice in important comparable centres of expertise but they have also helped me to form a network of fellow professionals that I will continue to value in the years to come.

Alan Crookham

The National Gallery

“One of the more eye-catching initiatives presented during this panel was *Speed Dating Archives*”

Hannah Rice teaching the group how to create digital models of architecture from archive material



Transforming paper to pixels with *Archives in 3D*

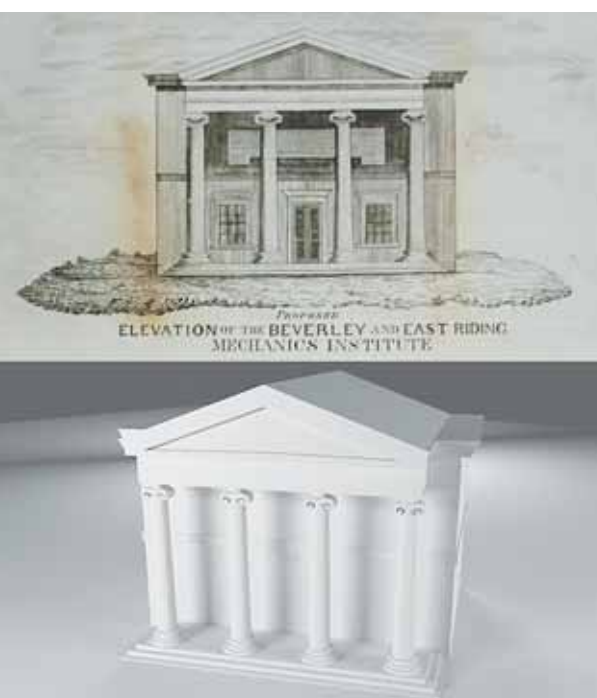
Hannah Rice explains how 3D visualisation techniques can offer new ways to engage with archives.

If you enjoy watching historical documentaries you may have noticed the digital reconstructions of places, artefacts and buildings from the past. You may even have wondered how to create the reconstructions yourself. In March 2016, the East Riding Archives took their first steps into this technological world of digital visualisation with *Archives in 3D*, a new series of full-day workshops teaching participants how to use archives as the foundation for creating reconstructions of historical buildings.

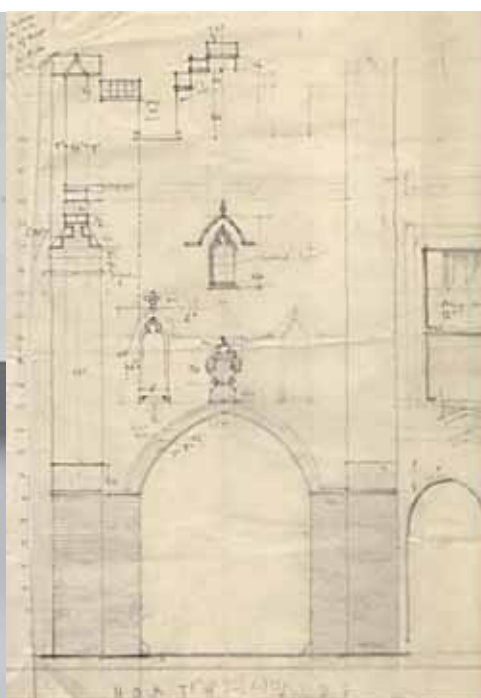
I was very excited to facilitate *Archives in 3D* as it combined my architectural history background with my longstanding hobby for creating 3D models. There are lots of fascinating architecture-related documents within our archives, which I was keen to share whilst demonstrating the learning potentials of the 3D modelling process. With the assistance of Sam Bartle (Archivist) and Kat Saunt (Conservation Technician), we set out to inspire a wider audience by using the region's architectural heritage. We sought to promote 3D modelling as a highly creative method of archives engagement and outreach.

With the home of the East Riding Archives located in Beverley, it seemed fitting that the picturesque market town should provide the theme for our first workshop. Participants would not only be learning a new digital skill relevant to heritage interpretation, they could also learn about the history of our selected Beverley buildings and see the original documents on display.

Archives in 3D involved both formal and participatory elements. I introduced the group to the wider applications of 3D modelling in the heritage sector. I demonstrated the potential of their new digital skills, for example in creating models for animation backdrops and video game environments. This was followed by an overview of how to use our resources to research buildings information for similar projects. In the creation of a 3D model, the initial research stage can be part of the learning process, making the role of archives invaluable when researching the history of a building. Documents such as architectural plans, property leases and maps can provide important contextual information when trying to form a 'picture' of



Original elevation drawing of the Mechanics' Institute (DDBD/5/41) with a digital reconstruction below



Beverley's medieval North Bar rendered in 3D, modelled from a measured drawing (DDX1289/1)



what a building looked like in a particular period, including information on location, building fabric, architectural style and dimensions. Participants needed to piece together this information in 3D modelling software.

The central 3D modelling element of the workshop involved a 'bring your own device' format. Participants were advised to pre-download the software *Blender* onto their own laptops prior to the session so they could continue their projects at home.

With the group following along, I led a tutorial on how to transform a simple, digital cube into an ionic-style column from the lost Beverley branch of the Mechanics' Institute. We used an elevation drawing for reference. The tutorial introduced basic modelling, texturing and lighting tools to provide participants with the skill-set to create their own digital models independently. The group were also shown documents relating to five other buildings from Beverley's past and present townscape: the medieval North Bar, St Mary's Parish Church, Beverley Minster, Hotham House, and the Poor Law Union Workhouse. A variety of architectural styles were selected so participants could choose to model a simple classical form or a more advanced gothic structure if they were feeling ambitious.

To help with the modelling activity, we provided the group with digital versions of key ground plans and elevations of the selected buildings to import into *Blender* as background images - a technique often used in professional 3D modelling projects.

The feedback from the group was very positive, with many commenting that seeing the original documents was a particular highlight, along with being able to engage in discussion with

archives staff and learning a new digital skill. Overall they said that the workshop was "enjoyable and educational".

Archives in 3D has the capability to start engaging our event attendees - and wider community - with using archives for creative works whilst increasing awareness of the region's architectural heritage. This could be particularly effective when incorporated with the service's social media channels such as Twitter, where the community can be encouraged to use the hashtag #ERArchives to share their work inspired by the archives. There are also possibilities of creating a digital archive of 3D reconstructions of the East Riding - an entire topic in itself!

Using a technique from the film and video game sector, *Archives in 3D* hopes to establish 3D visualisation within archives as a tool to connect wider audiences with original material. The future of the workshops looks bright with the next series being planned for the 2017 events programme. With the whole of the East Riding of Yorkshire to cover we won't be short of country houses, churches and monuments to visualise in 3D.

Hannah Rice

East Riding Archives

Images courtesy of East Riding Archives

Available for research: Thos. Agnew & Sons Ltd archive at the National Gallery

Rachael Merrison reflects on the successful completion of a cataloguing project.

The National Gallery is pleased to announce the completion of the cataloguing project of the Thos. Agnew & Sons Ltd Archive, which is now accessible to researchers through our online catalogue. The archive (1817-present day) is an incredibly rich resource for research into the provenance of paintings, drawings and prints, and the history of collecting and the art market. From stock records giving insight into the acquisition and sale of significant works of art (information which remains valuable to those currently operating within the art market), to an amusing cartoon detailing the 1901 adventures of Charles Morland Agnew as he rushed to the USA to rescue Gainsborough's painting *The Duchess of Devonshire* (stolen from the firm some 25 years before), there is a great deal to interest a wide range of researchers; from academics and curators, to the private owners of works of art and art dealers.

Generously funded by the John R. Murray Charitable Trust and the National Archives' Cataloguing Grants Programme for a total of 18 months, the following project objectives were achieved:

- c.2,400 records have now been appraised, arranged, and catalogued
- 182 book enclosures were measured and fitted by a conservator
- 12 Picture Stock Book volumes (1853-1918) have been digitised by the National Archives' digitisation services, and will be released online.

In January 2016 we also benefited from the cataloguing to item level of the correspondence (c.1820s-1930s) which had survived the firm's regular clear-outs to save space. Without this work, undertaken as a separate short-term cataloguing project funded by the Business Archive Council's Cataloguing Grant for Archives related to the Arts, we would have been unable to provide access to

these valuable records, as many of the unsorted letters were fragile, and inaccessible within a rusting box file.

Public interest was high throughout the project, despite the lack of a catalogue! Following the conservation work carried out on the 19th and 20th century stock books, day books, and ledgers, we were able to support approximately 200 remote and visitor enquiries during 2015, and provide access to volumes up to 1918. The archive is already used extensively by independent researchers and two collaborative doctoral students (at the National Gallery in collaboration with the Universities of Manchester and Liverpool), as well as supporting the recently established MA in the Art Market and the History of Collecting (University of Buckingham and The National Gallery in association with Waddesdon Manor). We look forward to continued interest, especially following the success of our conference *Negotiating Art: Dealers & Museums (1855-2015)* held in association with the University of Manchester at the beginning of April 2016. The two-day event, in celebration of the completion of the Agnew Cataloguing Project, saw over 120 attendees enjoy talks and discussion on the roles of and relationships between the art market, dealers and museums. There was also a great deal of interest in the newly accessible archive!

All Agnew records up to the end of the First World War are now available for consultation and listed within our online catalogue (either by keyword search or using the reference NGA27). For records which may be covered by the Data Protection Act, please get in touch with the Research Centre for information regarding access.

Rachael Merrison

Agnew's cataloguing archivist

A welcome to the Preservation and Conservation special issue

Welcome to this Preservation and Conservation special issue of ARC.

This issue explores the evolving nature of preservation and conservation, to reflect current cultural and environmental practices and concerns, and showcases the diverse and wonderful work of conservators and preservation professionals.

Featured are conservation projects on a wide range of collections, including fragile volumes and transparent plans and a multi membrane parchment map.

Discussed in this issue is a minimal intervention approach to repairing oversized maps, to efficiently keep within a tight time frame for a digitisation project. We have a report on a strategy to reduce the running of environmental control systems, which highlights the important role we have as custodians of archival history to maintain a safe environment for collections whilst saving energy.

I hope you enjoy the issue.

Sarah Volter

Special Issue Content Editor
Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre

Conserving a large-scale parchment map

Jenny Halling Barnard explains how a large 17th-century estate map was conserved.

In July 2014 I was asked to conserve an estate map from 1659, belonging to the Earl of Shaftesbury. The hand-drawn, colour map shows field systems and land ownership in mid-17th-century Wimborne St. Giles and provides details of the topographical and agricultural features of the day. It is significant because relatively few maps from this period have survived and it is one of a very small number that can inform us of continuity and change in our landscapes. The map consists of six pieces of parchment of various sizes, the whole map amounting to 115 x 194cm. The adhesive joining the skins had failed and some attempt had been made to sew along three of the joints to keep the map together. Consequently the map arrived in three sections.

The trouble with parchment

In addition to being in six pieces and partially sewn together, the map had at some point been stored in unfavourable conditions and each skin had reacted to this in its own way. In high humidity, parchment

The map as it arrived in the studio





Severe cockling and misalignment of the skins



Needle and thread



Dry cleaning the map



Re-adhering the skins



Drying the map under tension



After conservation

tries to revert to its original animal shape. There was severe distortion, a number of small tears and a slight loss of ink, especially to the edges of each skin.

An important part of conservation is being aware of the limitations of your knowledge, and so, having not encountered a six-skin parchment map of this size before, I garnered advice from my peers. The consensus was a long-term approach, giving the parchment time to 'acclimatise' to being manipulated back into its previous position.

A long-term treatment

The sewing was carefully removed and saved, along with a hand-made needle still attached to one end of

the thread. Each skin was then cleaned with a soft goat hair brush and latex sponge, and small tears in the parchment were repaired using gelatine as an adhesive. The six skins were then re-attached in small sections at a time. Where the skins had shrunk or expanded and the drawing no longer aligned, localised humidification was used to gently manipulate the skins back into position. This process was carried out over several weeks due to the size of the map. It was also important to allow time for the skins to adapt to being re-adhered and to relax to their original positions.

Once all the skins were in place, the whole map was slowly humidified and bulldog clips, padded with foam and carefully attached to the edge of the map, were

“In high humidity, parchment tries to revert to its original animal shape”

pinned to a board, holding the map under tension whilst it dried. This technique is a replica of that used to make parchment. Where the joints overlap and are adhered the parchment is less malleable, therefore the flattening effect is lessened and slight cockling remains; however, the map is much improved on its previous condition.

Once dry to the touch, the clips were removed and the map was placed between felts and blotter and dried under weights for a further six weeks to ensure it was completely dry.

Future protection

A bespoke box was created from archival box board for storage. The map is rolled onto a tube with Tyvek, with cotton ties to keep it in place. The box has two supports of Plastazote at either end to suspend the tube. This prevents excessive weight being placed on any section of the parchment.

The map is now in a stable condition and is stored safely, protected for future generations to come. It was also digitised meaning it can be studied without the need to access, or risk potential damage to, the original.

Jenny Halling Barnard

Dorset History Centre

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Anna Starkey at work, photograph courtesy of Lancashire County Council

ARA trainee conservator awarded Churchill Fellowship

Anna Starkey discusses her plans for a unique research trip.

I am delighted to announce that I have been awarded a Travelling Fellowship, by the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, to study traditional papermaking techniques in the Netherlands, France and Italy. The trust was established shortly after Churchill's death in 1965, as a national memorial and living legacy. It offers people a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be funded to travel overseas to meet and work with others, in order to share ideas, innovations and to revive skills that may be dying out in the UK. The prestige is lifelong and internationally recognised, and each Fellowship is unique. I cannot believe my luck in having received one!

I hope to gain a deeper understanding of this wonderful material that we work with on a daily basis by developing my knowledge and skills through hands on experience. One of the key aims of this journey is to see if it is possible to create a type of western repair paper, with similar properties to that of Japanese Kozo. While I don't expect that this is likely to be achieved during the time of my travels, I am hoping to build lasting relationships overseas and that we will be able to continue work on this paper upon my return.



Anna Starkey and Mark Walmsley, photograph courtesy of Alexandra Duggan

I am still in the early stages of planning my journey to work with artisan papermakers. I have been in contact with, and plan to visit, the Museo della Carta e della Filigrana in Fabriano, Moulin du Verger in France and De Schoolmeester windmill in the Netherlands. Each place has been carefully selected to reflect the aims of my proposal. Fabriano is famous as a historic centre for papermaking and has an excellent reputation for engaging with other communities. De Schoolmeester is the only remaining wind driven paper mill in the world that is still active and manufacturing paper. Moulin Du Verger produces paper for conservation use and has already been experimenting with papermaking methods and fibres for many years making it a key location for my project.

This Fellowship is made all the more special for me as my boss, mentor and friend, Mark Walmsley, Conservation Manager at Lancashire Archives, is also a Churchill Fellow. He visited Russia and

“One of the key aims of this journey is to see if it is possible to create a type of western repair paper”

Eastern Europe to study parchment and pigments 30 years ago. Mark began as a trainee conservator at Lancashire Archives as I did and I have seen first-hand the lasting impact that his travels have had on his work and his life. Mark is retiring this year and I hope to follow in his footsteps, by flying the flag for conservation and sharing my knowledge with anyone who will sit down and listen to me for long enough on my return!

Anna Starkey

Lancashire Archives

ARA Continuing Professional Development Programme update

Shirley Jones gives a report on the CPD Pilot Group's recent activities.

ARA has developed a formal CPD Programme that will support those working in the archives sector. The programme is about continuous development through an individual's career, be they a volunteer, professional practitioner or senior policy maker. A framework of competencies has been created in consultation with the ARA membership that will underpin recognition at each of three status levels; Foundation, Registration and Fellowship. The Programme will enable conservators, archivists and records managers to map, plan and progress their CPD.

The CPD pilot group has been an especially valuable part of this development, fine-tuning the requirements of the CPD Programme and testing the competencies; for example adding the 'specialism' competency to cater for those with niche expertise.

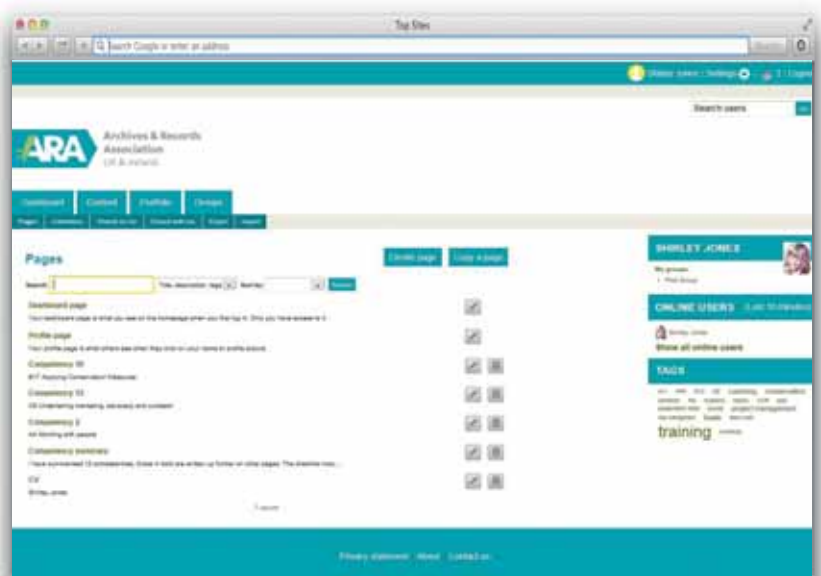
The pilot group has also been testing the CPD software, a version of an established online portfolio building software called Mahara, adapted specifically for ARA. Mahara (ARA) allows users to chronicle their CPD in the form of journals and uploads in many formats, as well as to formulate other documents such as CVs or material for other schemes such as work place appraisals or PACR (Professional Accreditation for Conservator/Restorers). This content can then be harvested to produce a portfolio for submission to assessors. Users can also share content with mentors, as well as make use of templates designed by the pilot group to organize and reflect on their CPD. All ARA members will be able to make use of Mahara (ARA), whether or not they choose to submit a portfolio for assessment. Final glitches are now being ironed out; the next step being to make a link available via the ARA website.

The framework of competencies and their five levels of attainment are the basis for participants' CPD evidence, evaluation and reflection. As such, there is a subtle difference between the existing Registration

Scheme and the new CPD Programme. To compare, consider both as a job application process: the Registration Scheme portfolio is reminiscent of a CV approach, with a structured and reflective description of distinct roles and experiences to make up the required credits; whereas the new CPD Programme echoes a more specific job application which answers to identified requirements, or competencies.

There are 39 competencies, born of a development stage which showed clearly what a wide range of skills people working in our sector make use of. This approach will enable ARA members to select competencies which reflect their roles and experiences and allow them to grow and evolve across themed areas; this was felt to better reflect the modern archive workplace than ring-fenced "traditional" practitioner areas of conservator, archivist and records manager.

Pilot group members have written up selected competencies and in the summer, a team of assessors will be using these to benchmark and moderate assessment levels. Their work will inform the set of



Screenshot of Mahara

“Keep records of your CPD activity, especially those reflective thoughts which can easily be so fleeting”

guidelines which will shortly be commissioned to set out and explain the operational aspects of the CPD Programme.

The current Registration scheme is still running and will initially operate in tandem with the new CPD Programme, to allow existing candidates to complete (don't panic, you have until October 2017 to submit your portfolio). No new enrolments are now being accepted for the current format Registration Scheme, but you can now enrol to begin work towards the new format Registration assessment. See the Registration pages of the ARA website for details.

While the new CPD Programme is still under development, there are plenty of things you can do to get started. Keep records of your CPD activity, especially those reflective thoughts which can easily be so fleeting; these will help capture your development journey from where you were, where you are now and where you would like to be. Familiarise yourself with the framework of competencies and the levels of assessment; try benchmarking yourself against them as a starting point and pick a competency you would like to focus some development around.

Watch out for further information on the ARA's website under the Careers section and at conference in London.

Shirley Jones

CPD Pilot Group

Mining the archives

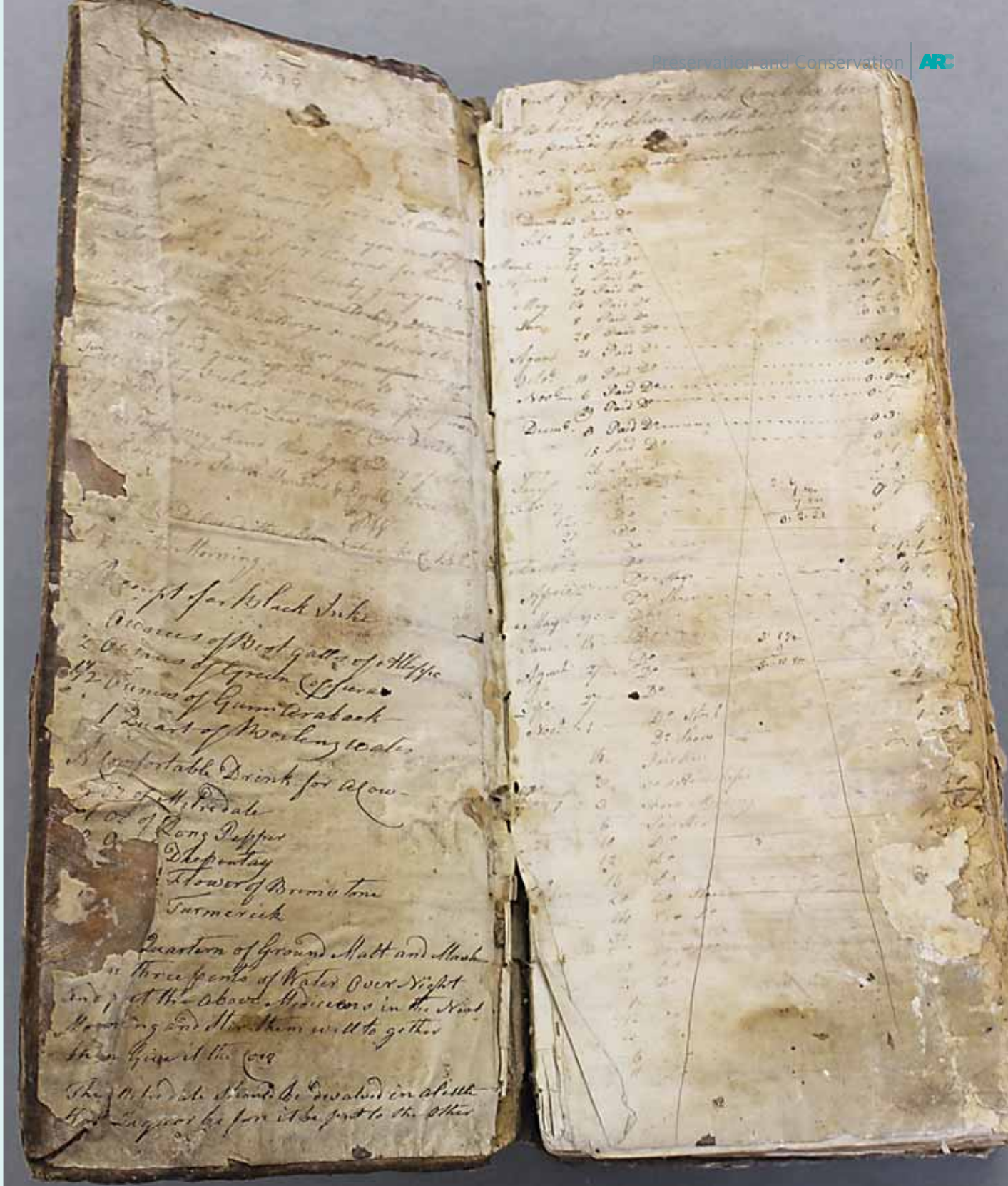
Lien Gyles, Clare Mosley and Madeleine Marshall discuss their efforts to save a part of Derbyshire's lead mining history.

When in 2013 Derbyshire Record Office (DRO) entered into a PhD partnership with Lancaster University to support research into Derbyshire's rich and unique lead mining history, we decided to take a look at the condition of our lead mining related records and carried out a detailed preservation assessment. We unearthed a plethora of documents spread out amongst many different collections and in various states of preservation. Two items in particular, two very different account books, were in such a dire state it would have been impossible for any researcher to look at them; even scanning the pages was too risky and would have led to an unacceptable loss of information. As the amount of work needed was more than we could accomplish with our conservation resources, we decided to look for external funding. Early in 2014, we put in a bid with the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust and crossed our fingers - their extremely generous reply has allowed us to rescue these two important volumes.

Puzzling the pieces

We started with the most challenging item: a 19th-century Barmaster's account book (DRO reference D7925). The Barmaster was the most important figure in the Derbyshire lead industry; he was responsible for upholding the local laws and collecting taxes. Their account books provide very detailed information regarding the running of different mines and the names of miners. This particular account book however, was no longer in book form: at some point it had been disbound, with all the pages and fragments carefully laid between sheets of archival paper. Two pages had been rather unsuccessfully repaired, but we couldn't find any documentation regarding this previous conservation attempt. Someone clearly had had a go and gave up - leaving us with no context and no idea what the volume used to look like.

What was clear was the extensive damage that had been caused by damp, with all the pages being extremely fragile and many having crumbled away into fragments. Clare Mosley, the project conservator,



D307/B/19/1 before treatment

painstakingly puzzled everything back together, matching up fragments wherever possible. In the end only those fragments she could identify with a hundred percent certainty - because of the text matching - were repaired together. This still left quite a few fragments which were impossible to be absolutely certain of; these were all left loose and encapsulated in archival polyester. Once the pages were repaired with Western repair paper and strengthened with spider tissue, all pages and fragments were scanned. We will now leave it to the researchers to decide for themselves where the various fragments belong.

Finding lead

Our second volume dates from the late 18th century and is the account book of Robert Thornhill (DRO reference D307/B/19/1). This seemed a much more straightforward job: the volume was still in its original binding, but had also suffered extensively from damp. The plan was to take it apart, clean and repair the pages and then scan all the pages before re-binding. Clare studiously started the dismantling process, only to find little shiny pieces of lead scattered in the gutters of the pages. This gave us an immediate health and safety



Clare matching fragments



D7925, close up of damage



Carefully dismantling the lead-containing volume.



Lead galena found in the guttering



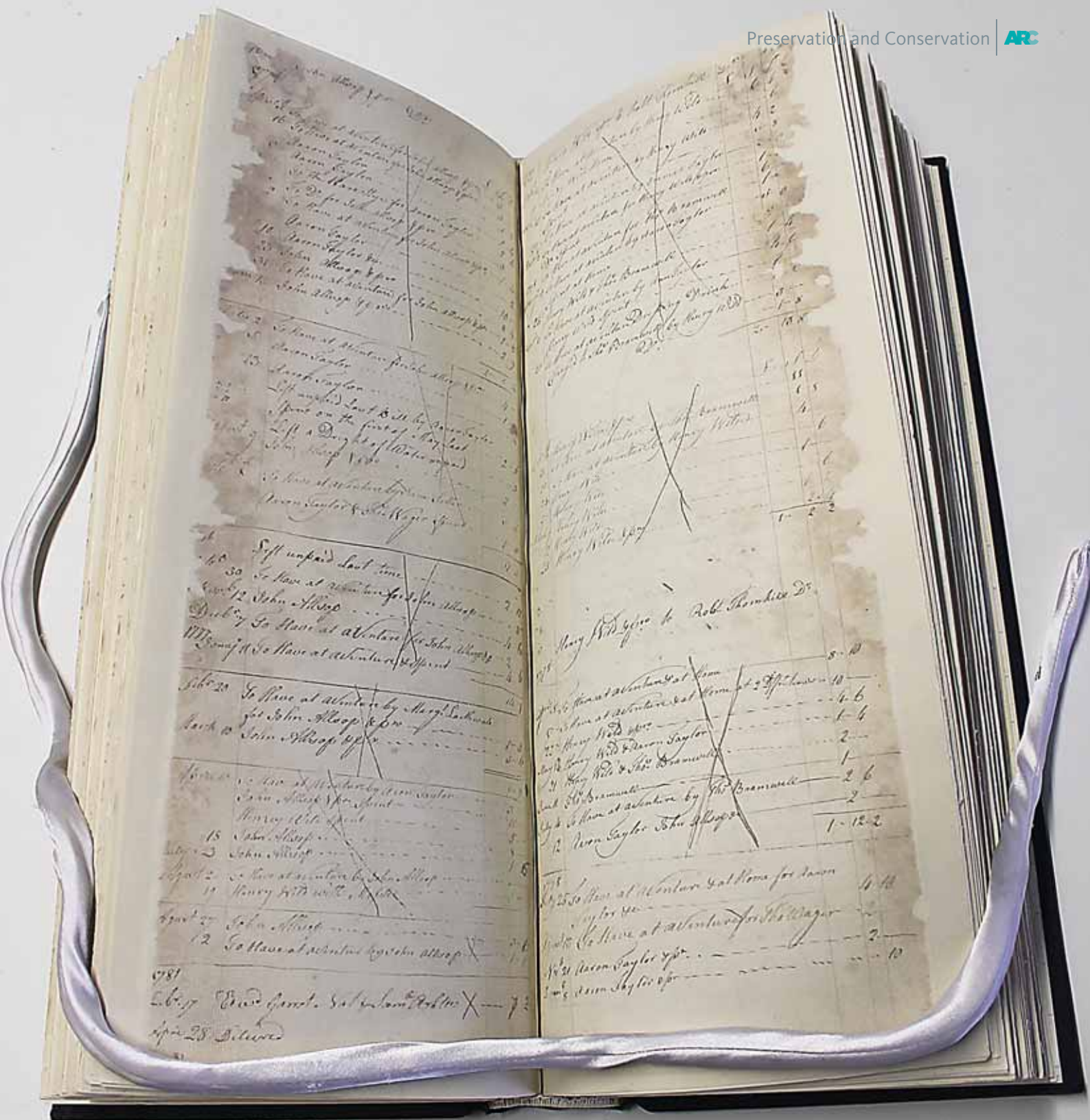
Madeleine carrying out repairs on D307/B/19/1



Showcasing conservation repairs as part of the exhibition

headache - lead, after all, is poisonous. Fortunately our health and safety officer decided the particles were too big to be inhaled and would not be harmful provided we wore a suitable disposable mask and gloves. Excited by our discovery we mentioned it on our blog (recordoffice.wordpress.com), where one of our lead mining researchers suggested the British Geological Survey (BGS) might be able to analyse our find. We're very grateful to Richard Shaw from the BGS for doing exactly that, confirming

that we had found lead galena, the typical lead ore from Derbyshire. Due to the exact composition of the other minerals present, he deduced the lead probably came from mines in the Matlock-Cromford-Wirksworth area. We look forward to finding out from our lead mining researchers whether this tallies with the text. At the time of writing, the work on this volume is scheduled to be completed by the end of March 2016, with the help of maternity cover project conservator Madeleine Marshall.



D307/B/19/1 after re-binding

Spreading the word

To make sure our lead mining enthusiasts and anyone else who was interested were kept informed with what we were doing, we not only wrote regular blog posts, but also held an exhibition in the display wall in our reception area and Clare gave a very successful public talk about the project. We had great comments about both, with people really appreciating the amount of effort that goes into conservation.

We're very grateful to the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust for giving us the opportunity to rescue these important remnants of Derbyshire's unique lead mining history, and to Ian Maver for his help with the re-binding of D307/B/19/1.

Lien Gyles, Clare Mosley and Madeleine Marshall
Derbyshire Record Office

Books on a shelf before treatment



Revealing the Greek collections of John Stuart Blackie

Katharine Richardson and Emily Hick highlight the work undertaken to safeguard an important collection of Greek literature.

In November 2015, a three-month project began to conserve and preserve a rare collection of Greek books once belonging to John Stuart Blackie, Professor of Greek at Edinburgh University from 1852 to 1882. This is the first stage of a three phase plan which will include cataloguing and digitisation of the collection. This initial conservation work has been generously funded by the A.G. Leventis Foundation.

The Blackie collection is the University's most important single collection of Greek literature, and it

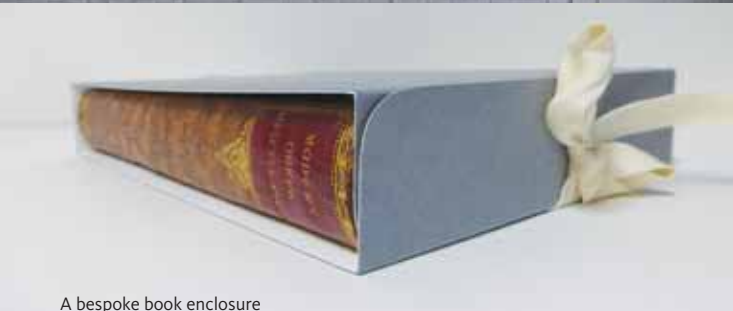
is made even more significant by its association with Blackie, who was a prominent figure in 19th-century Scotland, championing Scottish nationalism and educational reform. This noteworthy collection had not been used to its full potential due its poor condition. Most of the books were very dusty and had suffered some degree of physical damage from years of repeated use. Damage included deterioration of leather causing red rot, loose and detached boards, detached spines and broken corners. In this state, the books were unable to be used without suffering further injury.

The aim of this project was to stabilise and protect the collection, making it available for research, and subsequent cataloguing and digitisation. As part of this project, a Conservation Intern, Katharine Richardson, was employed to carry out the surface cleaning and rehousing of the collection, allowing Project Conservator, Emily Hick, to focus on interventive treatments.

The first step of the project was to surface clean the collection. As time was limited, only the edges of the text block and endpapers of the books were cleaned; these typically being the areas



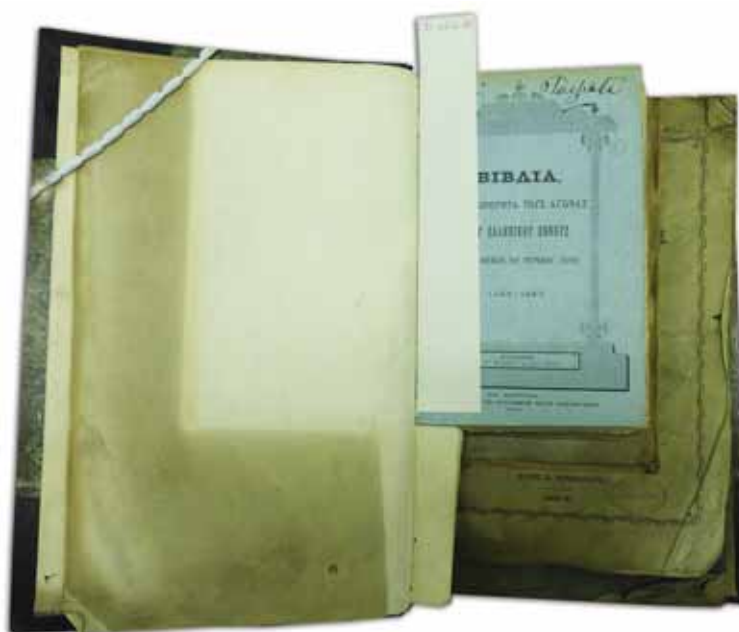
Books on shelves after treatment



A bespoke book enclosure



Katharine surface cleaning a book



A book before treatment showing extensive surface dirt

where most dust accumulates on books. The loose surface dirt was removed using a museum vacuum cleaner on a low suction setting and a soft brush attachment, and then the ingrained surface dirt was removed using a chemical sponge.

After the surface cleaning was completed, remedial treatments were carried out. Leather was consolidated using a 2% solution of Klucel G in Industrial Methylated Spirit, and loose or detached boards were reattached using Japanese paper and wheat starch paste. Detached spines were re-adhered using a hollow made from 90gsm acid-free paper, and damaged corners were repaired using wheat starch paste. Outer repairs were carried out using Japanese paper toned with acrylics.

The last stage of the project was to re-house the collection. A bespoke enclosure made of boxboard was created for each book. The enclosures are a relatively simple, but very effective design. The boxboard is cut to fit the book's shape as closely as possible, folded together and fastened with cotton tape. The enclosures protect the books from physical damage caused by handling, and act as a barrier against dust and incidental light while they are in storage.

This project has stabilised the material and increased accessibility to it, ensuring that the collection can be safely consulted for generations to come.

Katharine Richardson and Emily Hick

Centre for Research Collections, Edinburgh University

Images courtesy of the Centre for Research Collections: Edinburgh University Library

Nicholas Hadgraft Memorial Scholarship

Conservation By Design Limited (CXD) has announced that Samuel Foley, from the UK, is the lucky recipient of this year's coveted Nicholas Hadgraft Memorial Scholarship. Sam is a final year student studying for an MA in Conservation, specialising in Books and Archive Materials, at Camberwell College of Arts. The renowned scholarship, first awarded in 2005, offers one conservator each year the opportunity to learn more about unique bookbinding techniques from a host of well known and highly regarded tutors. The judging panel, this year made up of Cheryl Porter, Jim Bloxham, Alan Farrant and CXD's Caroline Checkley-Scott, felt that Nicholas Hadgraft would have approved wholeheartedly of their unanimous choice.

Sam will receive £1500 to put towards attending all the courses offered at the Montefiascone Summer School in Italy. Feeling that the timing is perfect for his professional development, Sam is keen to learn as much as possible to develop skills and knowledge so he can offer those to a future employer within the conservation field. He commented:

I feel extremely lucky to be chosen, it was very unexpected and caught me off guard. It is a huge honour that the panel felt I was deserving of such a generous prize. Winning the scholarship means a tremendous amount not just to me professionally, but also personally. I am lucky enough to love what I do and to be given the chance to pursue that further through the summer school is a once in a lifetime opportunity. It is amazing that my work has been recognised and the award gives me the impetus to drive forward, learn and achieve more.

Dirk Hendrickx, CXD's Managing Director, delivered the news to Sam by telephone shortly after the judges had made their decision. Dirk commented:

It is encouraging that year after year we are attracting outstanding applicants, an indication, perhaps, that our heritage will continue to remain in good hands. We are proud that the scholarship is so highly regarded within the conservation sector, this year taking applications from India, Egypt, USA, Greece, Estonia, Malta, France, Germany, Italy and the UK, to name just a few, reinforces this.

For the fourth year running, we have decided to award a runner-up prize. Marco Fagiolo, who is a restorer of library materials, paper and parchment and is based in Rome, will receive £1000 towards attending the summer school. In addition to this, a special mention must go to Lisa Camilleri, a freelance book conservator in Malta, who also impressed the judges and has been offered the course of her choice free of charge.

For further information on the Nicholas Hadgraft Memorial Scholarship, contact Conservation By Design on +44 (0) 1234 846300 or visit www.conservation-by-design.co.uk.

Emma Murphy

Conservation By Design



Sam Foley, Nicholas Hadgraft Memorial Scholarship winner 2016, image courtesy of Conservation By Design Limited

www.archives.org.uk

Preserving archives in a more sustainable way

Mandy Garratt explores new approaches to the storage of archive collections.

Last year, I spent six weeks on a work placement at the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre (WSHC) in Chippenham, as part of my Master's Degree in Preventive Conservation at Northumbria University. The main goal of my placement was to investigate the possibility of running the existing environmental control system in the large strong-rooms for shorter time periods, in order to save energy, but still maintaining suitable conditions for the many thousands of archival documents. Following on from many years of debate and research among conservation professionals into appropriate environmental conditions for museum and archive collections, organisations such as the International Institute for Conservation (IIC) have more recently recommended that parameters for temperature and RH can be widened without harming collections. The WSHC has therefore been keen to investigate their options for reducing the use of their environmental control system, and this project was ideally suited to my degree programme.

Initially, I familiarised myself with the environmental control system used by the WSHC, and their most recent environmental data, as well as analysing the current British Standards documents (*PD 5454:2012* and *PAS 198:2012*).



Hanging maps



Archive collection



Strong room

In addition, I was provided with examples of other archives that had already undertaken such a project, and I was able to talk at length with the Principal Archivist at the Dorset History Centre. Another important element of my research was to find other examples of archives and museums that had already implemented system shutdowns, which I did by creating a short online survey and then advertising it on the Archives-NRA and Conservation DistList distribution lists.

The online survey generated a great deal of interest in the project, with survey responses from all over the UK, as well as one from Australia and another from New Zealand. Most of the respondents took a seasonal approach to managing their environmental system, such as by shutting down their system entirely during autumn and spring months when external conditions are generally more stable. However, others such as the Australia Museum shut down nightly and during some weekends, resulting in significant energy savings but still providing safe and stable conditions for their collections, as reported in *Outside the Comfort Zone* (Mitchell et al., 2013).

History centre building

Therefore, the survey provided many different ideas for ways to reduce energy usage, and my next step was to research which of the solutions would be most appropriate for the WSHC. Museum and archive buildings are often very different in their construction materials and size, let alone in their individual approaches to environmental control, so not all solutions would have been suitable for the WSHC. It was beyond the scope of my project to undertake my own research into the effect upon collections of shutting down the environmental system for long periods, but conservation scientists such as Tim Padfield and the Image Permanence Institute have previously done so, and have published many informative articles on their websites.

Another important aspect of my research was to talk to the WSHC's heating, ventilation and air-conditioning engineer, to find out if it was possible to implement some of the ideas that had been raised. Despite my lack of technical expertise in this area, the engineer was very helpful and explained how the system works. The engineer was confident that the environmental conditions in WSHC's

“The International Institute for Conservation have recently recommended that parameters for temperature and RH can be widened without harming collections”



archives would remain stable during system shutdowns, as this had been the case when the system had previously been shut down for maintenance. Additionally, the engineer confirmed that shutdowns would not put any additional stresses or strains on the system and that running the system for less time would prolong the life of the parts.

At the end of my placement, I collected my research together into a short report for the staff at WSHC, in which I made recommendations for how they could take this forward. I proposed introducing gradual shutdowns starting on weekends, but suggested that this be extended to evening shutdowns, subject to the environmental conditions being satisfactory in the initial shutdowns. The WSHC staff members were very satisfied with my findings and are currently in the process of implementing system shut downs during weekends and evenings. Once this is in place, the environment will be carefully monitored and the conditions will continue to be checked daily and recorded once a week. It is very much hoped that this approach will provide a suitable long-term solution to preserving the archives in a more sustainable way.

This project was very rewarding, providing benefits for both the WSHC and myself, and I would like to thank everyone who contributed to my research and helped during my work placement.

Mandy Garratt

MA in Preventive Conservation

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Archive collection

ENVIRONMENTAL MONITOR and LOGGER



Humidity
Light
Ultra-violet
Temperature
Dewpoint

The new ELSEC type 765 enables the measurement of all the conditions that damage valuable objects.

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The conservation of a series of late 19th and early 20th-century architectural plans

Antony Oliver and Sarah Oliver explain the steps being taken to ensure the long-term preservation of an important collection of plans.

In the early part of 2015 Sheffield Archives put in a bid with the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust to conserve and preservation-package a series of badly damaged architectural plans, which illustrate the development of key buildings within the city's boundaries, from the late 19th century up to the end of the First World War. For example, the collection includes plans tracing the development of Sheffield Town Hall, terracing at Sheffield United Football Club and the Empire Theatre.

This collection of plans is particularly important to the researcher as it traces the expansion of buildings from the very beginning of their development right up to completion. In their current condition they cannot be accessed or issued.

The techniques used in the conservation of these plans will ensure their long term preservation while making them accessible and safe to handle. The duration of this project is one year. Work on the project was started in summer 2015 and is due to be completed in summer 2016.

The collection contains architectural plans on a wide range of media, including oil based tracing papers, wood pulp based machine made papers and wax coated fabrics.



Plans tightly folded in badly damaged envelopes, ref: CAzo6



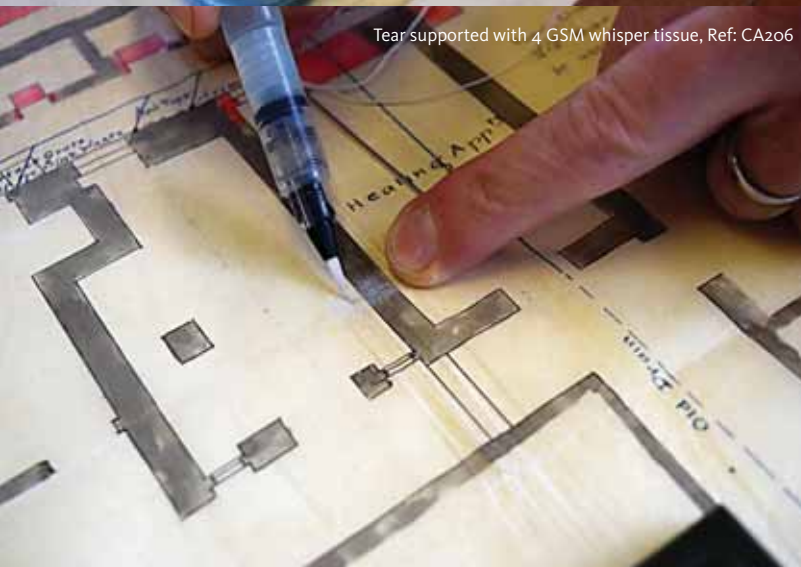
Removal of surface dirt with smoke sponge, Ref: CAzo6



Testing of inks/pigments using cotton wool swab, Ref: CAzo6



Damp pack to humidify item, Ref: CA206



Tear supported with 4 GSM whisper tissue, Ref: CA206



Infill using remoistenable Japanese paper, Ref: CA206



Conserved items in bespoke 4 flap enclosure, Ref: CA206

The plans vary in size greatly and are currently housed within badly damaged paper envelopes.

The plans have been folded multiple times to fit the envelopes and this has contributed significantly to their current condition. The oil based tracing papers and wood pulp based machine made papers have suffered the most from previous poor storage and handling. The media are very brittle and fragmentary and in some instances items have been very hard to piece back together, not unlike the most complicated jigsaw!

First of all, the items must be carefully removed from their envelopes and unfolded prior to conservation treatments. Each plan is then cleaned with a dry chemical sponge to remove surface dirt. Creases and paper distortion are then relaxed and flattened. In some cases a warm tacking iron is used to flatten out sharp creases prior to the items being placed between sheets of multisorb, Perspex sheets and weights.

On other types of media such as wax coated fabrics, inks and pigments are spot tested prior to wet treatments. A damp pack can then be prepared to gently humidify the plan. A sheet of multisorb is saturated with water and placed on the bench, on top of which lies a sheet of Sympatex. Sympatex, which is available from Conservation By Design, is a synthetic moisture-permeable material which can be used for humidification treatments. The plan is carefully laid down on the Sympatex and a sheet of polyester placed on top completes the damp pack. Weights are then evenly distributed to keep the item flat.

Tears and damaged areas are supported with a remoistenable tissue; Whisper tissue: 4gsm, available from Conservation By Design. The adhesive on the tissue is activated using a Japanese water brush. This method of application is used to support tears and damaged areas.

Infills are applied using a remoistenable Japanese paper which is made in-house. The conserved plans are then encapsulated in protective polyester sleeves and housed in bespoke four-flap enclosures made from 650 micron folding boxboard with integrated ties for storage.

We are grateful to the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust (www.nmct.co.uk) for the grant to conserve and preserve these important items.

Antony Oliver and Sarah Oliver

Sheffield Libraries, Archives and Information

The images are reproduced by kind permission of Sheffield Archives

The Stuart and Cumberland papers digitisation project at Windsor Castle

Roberta Giubilini and Puneeta Sharma highlight a project providing greater access to two important collections of papers.

The Royal Archives at Windsor Castle, Berkshire, is home to an extensive collection of documents related to the Royal Family and the British Monarchy spanning over 250 years. There are two collections, which are the focal point of a current project: namely the papers of William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland, dating from 1721 to 1765, and the papers of the exiled Stuarts, dating from 1719 to 1766.¹ The project consists of the surveying, conservation and digitisation of these papers, which the Royal Archives are carrying out in collaboration with Gale, a part of Cengage Learning who have employed UK Archiving to undertake the scanning.²

Since the start of the project, a conservation survey of the collection has been carried out in order to verify the condition of each document. Essential preparatory works are carried out if a document is identified as having obscured text or suffering from any form of damage, which causes a loss of information prior to image capture. A large portion of the affected material is mounted, guarded and bound into volumes, and as a result some of the documents contain areas where the text has been obscured by the mount.

In order to rectify the issue of obscured text, a decision was made by the project partners to manually complete the missing text in pencil on the mount where at all possible. In order to assist with this, a light sheet is currently being used which allows the Archives Project Assistant to read the text through the mount. This has the added benefit of limiting the number of documents removed from the volumes. An additional issue is that a number of the documents are in French, Spanish, Italian and Latin.

The conservation aspect of this project ensures the completeness of the text of each document to be captured. In addition, it also minimises any potential damage that can occur as a result of handling during image capture. The items constitute handmade paper, and various inks including carbon ink, iron gall ink and printing ink. Occasionally, parchment and newsprint documents can be found within the collection as well. There are also some more unusual items, such as leather and cloth samples, possibly collected for military uniform designs, which are mounted and bound in the volumes.

The most common types of damage to the documents are areas of

Prince James Francis Edward Stuart



William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland



weakness or loss, where iron gall ink has caused corrosion to the paper structure. These areas are stabilised using remoistenable repair tissue, which has been coated with isinglass. Other conservation interventions are the humidification of distorted areas of a page and the removal of letters from their guards to allow any obscured text to be seen clearly. Post scanning conservation will include the re-integration of removed items back into the relevant volumes.

In addition, there are two further aspects to this project. Firstly, the typing and formatting of an early-twentieth-century handwritten manuscript of a section of the Calendar of the Stuart Papers, which forms part of the correspondence of Prince James Francis Edward Stuart (The Old Pretender). Secondly, the identification and creation of an inventory of a collection of wax seals, which were previously removed from some of the letters in the Stuart Papers. This will also require them to be re-housed in more suitable storage.

Once the project has been completed, the documents will be available for trial and purchase to institutions ranging from public libraries and academic institutions to museums and galleries as part of the State Papers Online programme published by Gale.³ They will also be made available onsite to visitors at The National Archives, Kew, UK and the Royal Archives, Windsor Castle.

The project to digitise the Stuart and Cumberland Papers in the Royal Archives is led by Laura Hobbs, Archivist (Digital) with Megan Gent, Senior Archives Conservator. The preparatory work is carried out by Roberta Giubilini (Project Assistant: Archives) and Puneeta Sharma (Project Assistant: Conservation).

Roberta Giubilini and Puneeta Sharma

The Royal Collection Trust

¹ For a better insight into the history of the Royal Archives and how these two collections came to be part of them, see Sheila De Bellaigue, 'The Royal Archives: Windsor Castle', *Archives et Bibliothèque de Belgique*, LXII, 3-4, Brussel 1991, pp. 395-422.

² The documents will be available through subscribing libraries or onsite at The National Archives, UK and the Royal Archives, Windsor Castle.

³ Any interest in purchasing the Stuart & Cumberland Papers should be sent to: emea.galereply@cengage.com.

Images: Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, 2016



Removing part of a guard to reveal obscured text



Showing how documents are mounted in Stuart volumes



A wax seal with paper protector in a Stuart volume

Know Your Place - West of England

Rachel Wales celebrates an exciting Heritage Lottery funded project.

At Gloucestershire Archives, we gather, keep and share the documented heritage of two counties - Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire.

To this end, Gloucestershire Archives is involved with a fantastic Heritage Lottery funded project known as Know Your Place - West of England. This project is headed by South Gloucestershire Council and involves a huge number of heritage organizations. When completed, the project will allow unprecedented online access to historic maps of South Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset, and Bath and Northeast Somerset. Our main challenge at Gloucestershire Archives was to digitize our collection of 200 19th-century tithe maps.

Most of our tithe maps are drawn in a variety of media on heavy wove paper which is adhered to unbleached linen. Most have an apportionment - a



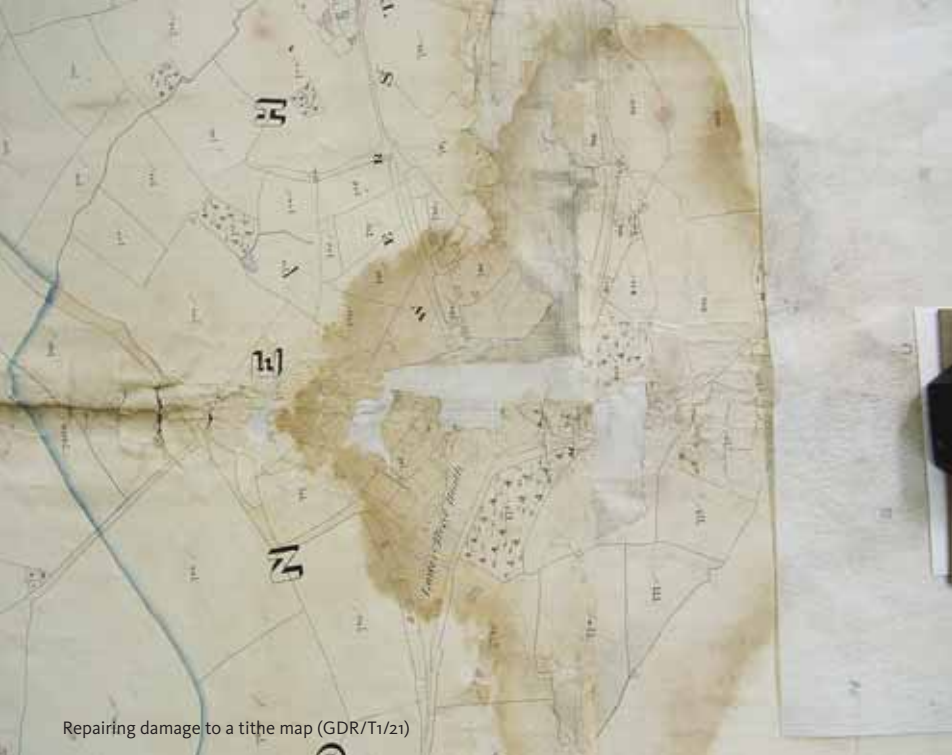
Detail of a tithe map (GDR/T1/21) showing damage



Repairing damage to a tithe map (GDR/T1/21)



Repairing damage to a tithe map (GDR/T1/21)



Repairing damage to a tithe map (GDR/T1/21)



A large tear in the fabric and paper of a tithe map (GDR/T1/207)



A tithe map after repair

document written on sheets of parchment which provides information about land ownership - sewn onto one edge of the map. The maps were folded around the apportionment, creating a characteristic pattern of tears, crumpling and losses, particularly at the intersections of the vertical and horizontal folds. Many were also grimy with dust and sooty deposits.

After a careful survey of the collection, Conservation Manager Ann Attwood and I found there were 116 maps needing treatment. So, we had a daunting challenge facing us - two part-time conservators with busy schedules, and roughly one year before digitising was scheduled to begin - how would we manage? Thankfully, the Heritage Lottery Fund grant allowed us to work some extra hours, without which we would not have been able to complete the work in time.

We decided to adopt a minimalist intervention approach - doing only what was necessary to obtain a good digital image, and to ensure that the maps could be handled safely during the imaging process. This meant that we would repair significant tears, and surface clean to remove any grime that obscured map features and could become ingrained during handling, and we would repair areas where folded and crumpled paper obscured information. The process of mending fragile areas along folds required care and patience; weights were strategically positioned by the affected fold lines to pull taut the damaged area to flatten the map and support the tear. Missing areas were filled with lightweight Japanese Kozo paper, adhered with wheat starch paste then dried flat under blotters and weights. Where there was significant damage, heavier Japanese paper was applied to the back. Working on large maps often meant that every weight in the Collections Care room was used, and we took to pinching random cast iron objects from other parts of the office in order to continue working.



A tithe map after repair

The equipment and setup of the digitisation process played a large part in persuading us that this approach would work. The layout of the ICAM Atlas equipment meant that the maps were laid flat onto a large powder-coated steel bed, with the camera positioned overhead. Small maps were captured in one shot. With larger maps, the steel bed could be rolled back and forth to permit multiple shots that were stitched together digitally. Weights and magnets were used to gently pull the map flat

if needed. With careful handling and positioning, even fragile maps could be imaged. This approach is in contrast to what we have done at Gloucestershire Archives in years past, when damaged maps underwent full relining on the wallboard.

I gave a talk at the ARA annual conference in Dublin in 2015 about this project, just prior to ICAM's arrival to begin digitizing. At that point, we still had 49 maps to repair, including one

“Many of the maps were grimy with dust and sooty deposits”

that measured almost 2m x 3m. But this approach is so quick we were able to carry out all the necessary repairs. Not only that, we had time to treat a small number of additional maps which were included in the KYPWoE project.

As well as being time-efficient, there are other advantages to this ‘light touch’ approach. There was a reduced risk to water-soluble material. Also, it meant the retention of all original material such as the linen backings, and there was no need to remove any attached apportionments. This preservation of evidential value was especially important to the Archives. In most cases, we were able to retain the storage format (i.e. the maps could be folded again and put in boxes), which suited the available storage space. Carrying out small, local repairs meant that we were able to work on maps larger than our wall board and the largest table. We did this by partially unfolding the maps and working on one small section at a time. Most of the work could be done by a single conservator, with occasional help from colleagues to assist with moving and refolding. And, of course, this minimalist approach does not preclude more in-depth treatments in the future.

To explore Know Your Place - West of England, visit www.kypwest.org.uk.

Rachel Wales

Gloucestershire Archives

Images courtesy of Gloucestershire Archives

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