



**Archives & Records
Association**
UK & Ireland

November 2011

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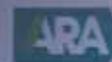
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ARA Conference Special Issue



Archives & Records
Association
UK & Ireland



International Council on Archives



8

**Conservators
Honoured at
Gala Dinner**

13

**A Conversation
between
Delegates**

16

**SPA Steering
Committee: A
Conference
Organiser's View**

19

**Ripples in a Pond: A
Speaker's View**



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contents



EDITORIAL

Welcome to November's issue of *ARC*.

This month we bring you our annual conference special. I think it's fair to say that this year's conference, the first under the auspices of the ARA, was a great success. With the theme of Advocating for Archives and Records, it was an opportunity to reflect on what we do and why what we do is important. Crucially, Conference was also about making ourselves heard - not just whispering quietly to each other how useful we are, but shouting our message to those people who we need to start listening to us. I hope this issue gives a flavour of what took place for those of you who weren't able to attend - and reaffirms the enthusiasm felt by those who were in Edinburgh.

The amount of information provided, advice offered, and opinions expressed over the course of three days was quite staggering. To paraphrase Marie Owens, we may well need another conference to get to grips with it all. If this issue serves any purpose at all, it's surely to continue what was started in Scotland. After all, what's said at Conference must not stay at Conference.

We have articles from Conference speakers, organisers and, of course, delegates. Thanks go to everyone who contributed something. Take with a pinch of salt any mention of successful Ceilidh dancing and enjoy the issue!

Richard Wragg, Gary Collins, Ceri Forster, Sarah Norman and Rose Roberto

Conference 2011 Cover Images:

Fiona Hyslop speaking at General Register House.

Katie Jordan, West Yorkshire Archive Service, receives Archives and Records Association Certificate in Archive Conservation.

Arleen Cannata Seed takes to the stage at Conference.

SPA Steering Committee gather outside Conference venue.

ASSOCIATION NEWS

- 4 Opening Lines
- 6 Collecting Matters
- 6 Registration Scheme News

CONFERENCE 2011

- 7 Conference Report 2011
- 8 Conservators honoured at Gala Dinner
- 8 Online Information International Exhibition & Conference
- 9 John Chambers (Archives and Records Association): A Conference Organiser's View
- 10 Katy Goodrum (West Yorkshire Archive Service): A View from the Outgoing Chair of the ARA
- 11 Caroline Brown (ARA Conference Committee): A Conference Organiser's View
- 11 Vicky Holmes (Royal Holloway, University of London): A Delegate's View
- 13 Anna Flood and Adam Hillhouse (British Postal Museum and Archive): A Conversation between Delegates
- 14 Jessamy Carlson (The National Archives): A Delegate's View
- 14 Ben White (Bank of England): A Delegate's View
- 16 Claude Roberto (SPA Steering Committee): A Conference Organiser's View
- 17 Eleanor Cracknell (St George's Chapel Archives): A Delegate's View
- 18 Martin Taylor (Chair of the ARA): the View from the Chair
- 19 Elizabeth Oxborrow-Cowan (Consultant Archivist): A Speaker's View
- 21 Steven Davies (Flintshire Record Office): A Delegate's View
- 22 Stephen Willis (Lothian Health Services Archive): A Delegate's View
- 23 Katie Jordan (West Yorkshire Archive Service): A Delegate's View
- 24 Louise Williams (Newly Qualified Archivist): A Delegate's View
- 25 Rachel Hosker (ARA Scotland Chair): A Conference Organiser's View
- 26 Fiona Johnston (East Riding of Yorkshire Archives): A Speaker's View
- 28 Tracy Wilkinson (King's College, Cambridge): A Delegate's View
- 30 Catherine Taylor (West Yorkshire Archive Service): A Delegate's View
- 32 Marie Owens (ARA, Head of Public Affairs): A Speaker's View
- 33 Mary Garner (Book Conservator): A Delegate's View

DATA STANDARDS

- 34 A Guide to Archival and Related Standards

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Opening lines



From October, responsibilities for the archives sector transferred to The National Archives from the Museums Libraries and Archives Council (MLA). Nick Kingsley, Head of Archives Sector Development, shares his thoughts with ARC.

Across The National Archives we have extensive experience of leading practice and innovation. We have always had a leadership role for archives and have a track record of working with archives across the country, providing advice and guidance and driving up archival standards.

We are unable to replicate all of MLA's archives activities. Our discussions with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, only concluded in September where we agreed to focus on key activities that add the greatest value and have closest synergy with our current work. Our expanded role allows us to provide, for the first time, a single point of contact for consultation, regulation and policy advice for all types of archives and to work in partnership to sustain, preserve and facilitate access to the nation's records.

As well as opportunities, our new responsibility brings challenges with it. We recognise that our single leadership role is a significant step up, and that the sector faces urgent issues. In these tough economic

times, it has never been more important for everyone to work together, to ensure we all continue to adapt and change, not only to survive, but also to innovate and remain relevant to the public, communities, and researchers.

So whilst the MLA closure was the trigger for this transition, we have used the opportunity to review our work and ensure we take into account the changes in the wider environment.

Going forward, we intend to develop our proactive engagement approach - strengthening our relationships with decision-makers - to influence and support archives in making the case for their impact. This will be underpinned by the new Archives Accreditation Scheme which will support archives in benchmarking and developing their services - further building a confident and outward-facing sector.

We will also establish a memorandum of understanding with the Arts Council England, setting out how we work together in a way that will benefit those working with and accessing cultural assets. As well as collaborating on policy and strategic planning, this includes the cross domain functions such as Designation, V&A Purchase Grant and Prism Funds, and 2012 programmes, which will remain accessible to archives.

We are not aiming to recreate MLA's regional infrastructure, nor will the National Archives' Sector Development team continue in its current format. We are working to evolve a 'third way' that provides a named contact for each repository and works with national and regional stakeholder networks and key partners to ensure influence.

To be meaningful, such significant changes won't happen overnight. Building on our preparatory work over the summer, we will continue our path of incremental change, but driven at pace, so that we take the best from the past and adapt it so it is fit for the future in a way that brings everyone along with us. It should be noted that this year's planned programmes such as the local authority web archiving project, cataloguing grants programme, funding research and national digitisation consortium will continue to roll out and we are keen to explore how we can make a difference in other areas such as philanthropy and new business models.

A final thought - at this time of change we are really energised by the opportunity this presents us and the sector to achieve positive differences by working together better, to make sure the sector reaches its potential.

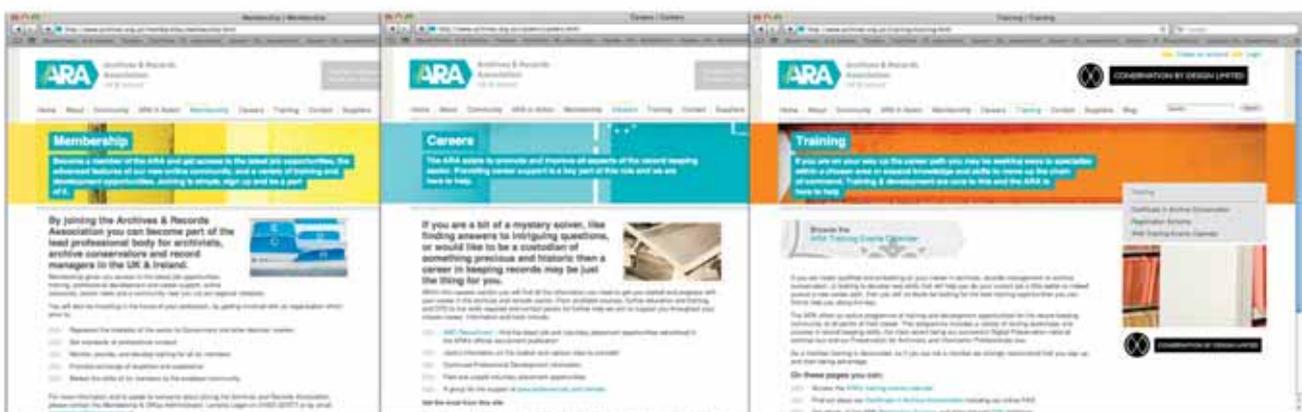
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Nick Kingsley
 Archives Sector Development
 The National Archives



When did you last click on www.archives.org.uk?

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

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



Collecting Matters

If the sustainability of the archive sector is dependent on advocacy, then we need to learn to speak as a single voice.

To borrow from children’s literature, it’s what saves the Whos in Dr. Seuss’ Horton Hears a Who! The tiniest Who finally plays his part, tipping the balance to assure their future.

So what can even the smallest archives do to be heard?

Presentations at this year’s ARA conference talked of communicating our value to parent organisations and funders, reminding them how vital we are to achieving ongoing business aims and managing risk.

They advocated taking advantage of surprise occasions when a champion presents themselves, having that ‘lift speech’ prepared to encourage them to spread the word on our behalf.

All good advice but you can’t just rely on random opportunities.

Be your own best advocate and let The National Archives work with you and for you. Tell us what you’re doing, respond to our consultations and engage in our initiatives.

To paraphrase Dr. Seuss, ‘an archive’s an archive, no matter how small’ but together we’ll not only be heard, we’ll assure our own collective future.

.....
Cathy Williams

The National Archives
.....

Registration Scheme News Bursary Report

An Introduction to Oral History: A one day course organised by the Oral History Society in partnership with the British Library Sound Archive

I recently attended this intensive one day course at the British Library. The course was led by Graham Smith, Chair of the Society, who has a number of years experience conducting oral history interviews across the UK, as well as training people like myself how to go about setting up an oral history project.

The day began with a discussion of attendees’ perceptions of what oral history is, and the opportunity to share the details of each other’s proposed projects. I was pleased to see that within the group there was a real range of projects. This included PhD students wishing to include oral histories as part of a thesis, community project workers hoping to get local involvement in heritage, and myself preparing to carry out an oral history project amongst indigenous communities in Ecuador, South America. We were each given tailored advice from the trainer to help us achieve success in our chosen projects.

The day, as the title suggested, provided an excellent introduction to collecting oral histories. There was a session on how to conduct an interview, which included asking open questions, encouraging body language and careful planning of questions in advance of the interview. There was also a practical session during which we took turns to interview our fellow trainees, giving us the opportunity to try out our new found skills. A discussion of recording equipment and the storage of audio files also proved useful. The day was rounded off with a look at the transcription and summarising of interviews, in addition to a vital note on copyright. It was a thoroughly enjoyable day, and I now feel ready to embark on my oral history project, knowing that I have also made useful contacts willing to offer their help and advice.

.....
Josephine Dodd
.....

Information about applying for a Registration Scheme Bursary can be found on the ARA website at <http://www.archives.org.uk/registration-scheme/bursary-support.html>



Conference Report 2011

Advocating for Archives and Records: The Impact of the Profession in the 21st Century

Thirty seconds out of Waverley Station and I heard my first blast of the bagpipes. Played for the tourists, but no mistake about it - I'd arrived in Edinburgh. The walk from station to hotel was longer than expected, and not a tram in sight along Princes Street to speed my way (a taxi driver explained to me the reason for that later). However, I was soon at the Hilton Grosvenor hotel, refreshed, and looking forward to what was to come.

Day 1

Katy Goodrum welcomed delegates from around the world and the conference was under way. Arleen Cannata Seed gave the keynote address and inspirational it was too. I vaguely recall pop songs being mentioned in a session at last year's conference. This time things were a little more militant with Bob Dylan's "The Times They Are A-Changin'" the point of reference. As Arleen pointed out, in the 'information age' now's our chance - to recognise change, adapt to it, and prove our worth as a profession.

On a number of occasions, the merits of having a voice from outside one's organisation speaking on behalf of the service was noted. It might be an archive champion, an active user-group, or a professional body such as the British Library's Preservation Advisory Centre. Whatever the source, good advocacy is, in part, about encouraging others to speak for the importance of what we do.

The first day culminated in a drinks reception hosted by the National Records of Scotland. After a lively day of papers, this provided the perfect setting to unwind.

Day 2

Thursday morning began with Larry J. Hackman discussing what advocacy actually is and how best to go about advocating for our services. The 'lift-speech' may produce results, and certainly I'll be preparing one or two myself; an effective outreach

programme can build a strong community of supporters, but we must also have something structured in place. As Larry explained, good advocacy isn't necessarily difficult, but it requires persistence and planning. It requires a tailor-made approach, not assuming there is a one-size-fits-all method, rather identifying individuals or groups who can help us and knowing exactly what it is we can offer them.

That evening's entertainment was far from a chance to relax. As a spectator rather than a participant in the Ceilidh it's perhaps not for me to pass comment. Suffice it to say, I'm amazed bones weren't broken.

Day 3

Lest we forget what can be achieved through advocating for our services, a glance at the programme for Friday's sessions provided an instant reminder. The title of Nick Barratt's paper, "How to Save Your Local Archive", couldn't have been much clearer. There followed a number of fascinating papers - like Simon Wilson's "From Archivist to Digital Archivist", his suggestion to 'experiment' with technology and digital record-keeping felt like a refreshingly sensible attitude.

Marie Owens gave the assembled delegates a well deserved pat on the back (metaphorically of course, it was a big crowd) and outlined how the ARA can support the work that we do. Marie has written an article for this issue and I hope you'll agree that positive things are taking shape.

The traditional concluding remarks brought the conference to a close and, all too soon, it was back to where I had started - Waverley Station and a (very delayed) train south.

Richard Wragg

ARC Magazine

Conservators honoured at Gala Dinner

A real highlight of the conference was seeing the achievements of four conservators being recognised.

Catherine Dand, Rowena Doughty (nee Jones) and Katie Jordan all received awards for passing the Certificate in Archive Conservation. Completing the course requires considerable commitment, typically taking 3 years and culminating in both written and oral exams.

Mark Allen has qualified as an instructor in parchment conservation, demonstrating his expertise in this area.

Mark, Catherine, Rowena and Katie were presented with their awards by George MacKenzie, Keeper of the National Records of Scotland, at the Gala Dinner.

Conservators interested in the scheme, or becoming an instructor, are encouraged to contact the Registrar, Deborah Phillips, at Deborah.phillips@devon.gov.uk



Top left to right: Catherine Dand, The Borthwick Institute, University of York. Rowena Rowena Doughty (nee Jones), Gwynedd Archives. Bottom left to right: Katie Jordan, West Yorkshire Archive Service. Mark Allen, Flintshire Record Office.

Online Information International Exhibition & Conference



29 November to
1 December 2011

National Hall, Olympia, London, UK

www.online-information.co.uk/promo/ara

Online Information 2011 comprises a free to attend exhibition of more than 150 international vendors, a comprehensive seminar programme and a world-class international conference. This unique and comprehensive event showcases the best and the latest in the information and information management arena and gives you the chance to source new products, network with industry peers from around the world and update your knowledge in presentations from industry experts.

The Online Information Exhibition covers the full spectrum of online content and information management solutions and with vendors exhibiting from all over the world, it is the definitive showcase for the information industry covering: Content Resources; ePublishing Solutions; Library Management; Content Management; Social media and Search Solutions.

Conference Programme - this popular conference attracts in the region of 700 delegates each year, from more than 40 countries worldwide. This year the conference programme takes as its theme Information and Collaboration: Meeting the challenges of a mobile generation.

The programme has five seminar tracks to choose from

- Going mobile: information and knowledge on the move
- Social media: exploiting knowledge in social networks
- Building a framework for the future of the information profession
- New frontiers in information management
- Search and information discovery

and a host of international speakers including keynote presentations from Craig Newmark, Founder, Craigslist, USA and Rachel Botsman, Author of 'What's Mine is Yours: The Rise of Collaborative Consumption'.

ARA members can benefit from a special conference discount of 25% if booking by 28 October 2011 and a 15% discount thereafter. For further information or to book your place visit www.online-information.co.uk/conference or email jane.lewis@incisivemedia.com for a copy of the conference brochure.



John Chambers (Archives and Records Association): A Conference Organiser's View

Each year the Archives and Records Association puts on an annual conference for the benefit of its members. The conference is budgeted to break even in order to keep the costs to members as low as possible. This is the main reason why conference is always held in the week of the English August Bank Holiday (last Monday in August). Very few conferences are held in that week and we therefore get half price offers from hotels which are keen to host the conference and get income in what can be a slow week. When I say half price I mean it.

We have looked at moving the conference date several times but we always come back to this particular week when we can get extremely good deals which keep costs low. These deals are not available at any other time. Hotels with conference facilities are also now as competitive as universities with their pricing. We were therefore able to move away from the poor accommodation offered by universities and into four star hotels at no extra cost. In fact the Bristol Marriott Hotel in 2009 was cheaper than York University in 2008. We will therefore not be moving back to university and student accommodation.

Any surplus made by a conference is used to pay for bursaries for members to attend the following year. In 2009 and 2010 we made surpluses of £1500 each year. Budgeting is

very tight and for each year (until this year) we have had to keep 'em clenched as many members book so late to attend that we don't know whether we will lose money or break even until the week of the conference itself.

This year it was very gratifying to get so many early bookings that we sold out the accommodation and drinks reception quite early and we could be relaxed about break even for the first time in years.

Conference is organised by a small team each year. The Society of Archivists used to ask different regions and sections to organise its annual conferences each year. By the time the conference organisers understood the process they were stepping down and handing over to the following year's group.

We now have the continuity of the same people being on the organising committee for a few years and as one person leaves a new member joins a group which knows what it is doing. I believe the improvements being made to conference are as a result of this continuity.

The organising committee is led by Caroline Brown. Mark Allen, Jacalyn Davidson, Rachel Hosker, Andrew Nicoll, Lorraine Logan, Joan Smith and I make up the current membership.

The idea to have a joint conference in 2011 between the Archives and Records Association and the ICA's Section for Professional Associations in Edinburgh was first suggested by Andrew Nicoll in early 2010. We were keen to see if we could afford Edinburgh so in May 2010 we spent a day visiting possible venues. Heriot-Watt has a great conference centre but the accommodation was unacceptable. Many city centre hotels have removed their conference facilities because of the Edinburgh International Conference Centre (spectacularly outside our price range). The hotels that did have accommodation were also hideously expensive so we decided to think about Glasgow or England as a venue.

Then, from the back of her mind, Joan Smith remembered the Hilton Grosvenor Hotel so she and I jumped in a taxi, wandered into the hotel unannounced and subsequently spent several hours with the general manager, Stephen Hall. He decided he wanted the business and gave us English Bank Holiday prices, even though it's not a holiday in Scotland, and the Festival was still on.

Caroline Brown then came up with the theme and we were off.

.....
John Chambers
.....

“
There were so many great stories told by so many enthusiastic, articulate speakers that I found myself feeling very optimistic.
”

Katy Goodrum (West Yorkshire Archive Service): A View from the Outgoing Chair of the ARA

Katy Goodrum welcomes delegates to Edinburgh



The advocacy theme of this year’s conference felt very timely. There were so many great stories told by so many enthusiastic, articulate speakers that I found myself feeling very optimistic about the prospects for our professions. However I still feel that we need to improve at packaging those stories to impress and influence supporters, opponents and employers. Since we are often stuck in a cycle of short-term funding grants, it is too easy to deal with the impacts as discrete objects. If we could work, individually and collectively, at building a coherent, cumulative story, I feel it would be very hard to resist. It’s something I will be working on in my own service.

Our international colleagues added a buzz. I particularly enjoyed hearing what Arleen Seed and Larry Hackman had to say. I wish I could work in an organisation so committed to development and improvement as the ones they describe. The discussion about what skills a record-keeping professional needs in the next few years is a hot topic and I thought that Arleen gave a fascinating insight into the space we need to occupy.

Just over a year ago we formed ARA; one of the main aspirations being to give the archive sector a stronger influence. It has been a year of building relationships and developing a way of working. As I looked round at the enthusiasm and commitment being displayed at Conference, I was so impressed. This is what will make sure the profession and Association achieve what they need to. Oliver Morley gave us the outline of what he feels TNA will seek



to do as it takes over the Sector policy role. I will be very interested to see how that and the relationship with ARA develops. This will be a key year for ARA and the sector.

As I step down as Chair I hope I shall have a little more time for reflection. I have enjoyed being so closely involved in the creation and development of ARA for the last 2 years and I shall miss that to some extent. However I plan to use the extra time to work on developing the evidence and storytelling for my service and Conference gave me many things to think about.

The memory of the Ceilidh, twirling kilts, enthusiasm compensating for skill will stay with me for a long time.

Katy Goodrum

Caroline Brown (ARA Conference Committee): A Conference Organiser's View

Busy, thought provoking, tiring, fun - not adjectives I associate with every conference I have been to but this year's ARA conference was all of this and more. Every speaker was worth listening to and every session offered something new to think about.

I found the papers of both keynote speakers, Arleen Seed and Larry Hackman, interesting and stimulating. Both have a huge amount of experience working with and for archives and managed to pitch their presentations perfectly. I particularly liked Larry Hackman's exploration of the difference between advocacy and outreach. Outreach is about promotion but advocacy is about persuading, or making, someone do something for you. So advocacy is all about attracting supporters to speak up for you to people who count, persuading others to fund projects, and convincing people to give their time and energy to help your service. I think this distinction is important to make. Outreach activities are important but are about giving our services to others. These activities do attract users and supporters and interest but in a relatively unfocussed way. Advocacy, however, is about targeting individuals and bodies with the intention of receiving something specific in return. Larry's paper gave some examples of how we can do this and his book *Many Happy Returns* goes into more detail.

“
Advocacy is about persuading, or making, someone do something for you.
”

Geoff Pick, at the end of the conference, discussed some of the ways that ARA can help individuals and archives advocate. It is good to see that ARA has appointed a Head of Communications, Marie Owens, who reminded us that we should be proud of our achievements, particularly the high rates of customer satisfaction revealed by the recent PSQG survey. She also pointed out that, in our collections, we have a ready made set of unique, interesting and important tools that we should use. We should have the confidence to speak up for ourselves. Geoff asked whether we were to do this 'behind the scenes or with a megaphone'. I think all of us who attended were, by Friday afternoon, inspired enough to pick up our megaphones and start shouting.

.....
Caroline Brown
.....



Nick Barratt, Broadcaster and Historian

Vicky Holmes (Royal Holloway, University of London): A Delegate's View

Arriving at Dundee station to catch the train down to Edinburgh on 31 August, I was slightly alarmed to see the boards announcing that the train would be travelling via Aberdeen, some 66 miles north of Dundee. When I queried the route, the guard laughed and explained that the statement referred to where the train had been not where it was going! I found this to be quite an apt metaphor for the conference and was looking forward to finding out more about where we should be going and how to stay ahead of the curve. Some impressions:

Advocacy theme: both theory and practice of how to get yourself noticed and supported by the right people - the balanced scorecard and future operating model are tools I would definitely like to have a go at back at the office.

Records Management - how to be indispensable: do what you have been trained to do!

Arousing call by Marie Owens, at the closing of the conference, to be more confident in going out and telling people what we do, how to find the stories our collections tell and being proud of our successful performances so far!

Envoy at those who have had capital investment and can give improved service to users, take better care of their collections, become a more confident service, welcoming to all, feeling the “euphoric intangible” Elizabeth Oxborrow-Cowan talked about.

Don't be scared of exploring entirely new sources of funding or revenue generation - from transcription services, allowing data to be used by large companies like Google, or getting on the ancestral tourism trail - Nick Barratt encouraged us all to get support wherever we can find it.

International flavour - a useful reminder against thinking too much inside your organisation, sector or country. There's a whole world out there - have a look at what other countries are doing, share your experiences, join the ICA and have a say in global standards, become an 'archiveilleurs' (but only if you like chocolate!)?

Networking with friendly colleagues - chatting between sessions can be as useful as the content of the talks and workshops! Where else can you find so many expert archivists/records managers/conservators?

Born-digital materials - as Arleen Seed pointed out, we are suffering from “information obesity” and people think that because storage is cheap and you can search file titles and contents with Google, you can keep everything! Our skill at sorting, arranging and making data accessible is useful, but we must now go out to meet our users in whatever way they wish, present data in a form they will find useful, and become information entrepreneurs.

Untangling the “corporate hairball” - thanks to Rachel Hosker for introducing me to this phrase and encouraging us not to get stuck in it, with some lovely examples of how to achieve a lot with relatively little.

Register House drinks reception - great to have a look round, hear from the Keeper of the Records and celebrate the launch of ‘Scotland’s Archives Matter’, showcasing some great archive services and stories of how research is being used. Relief that no harm came to the BMD volumes lining the walls!

Get your ‘lift speech’ prepared - 30 seconds on what your service does, how you can benefit particular people, groups or departments - have a few different ones to appeal to whoever may happen to be taking the lift at the same time as you! (Susan Mansfield)

Helpful reminder from Sarah Higgins that we already have the broad skills to facilitate accessioning, long-term preservation of, and access to, archival materials in stone, paper, photographic



formats, and we shouldn't worry too much about not being able to apply those skills to digital materials; followed up by useful description of the AIMS project from Simon Wilson. I like the idea of keeping a forensic computer!

2nd conference, looking forward to the next one already!
0 injuries from successfully executed Ceilidh dance!
1 sore hand from taking so many notes!
1 happy, enthused and inspired attendee!

Vicky Holmes

Anna Flood and Adam Hillhouse (British Postal Museum and Archive): A Conversation between Delegates

Larry J. Hackman delivering his keynote address

AH: I found the conference to be hugely enjoyable and an inspiring experience. It provided me with ideas to take back to work and gave an insight into the importance of advocacy both nationally and internationally. One interesting aspect expressed by Larry Hackman was the need to focus advocacy efforts in order to achieve the greatest benefits. Archivists too often are misunderstood by those with the most power to influence the future of services and many speakers called for persistence, willingness and some risk-taking in ensuring that our message is heard.

AF: Reassuringly for archivists who are already overwhelmed by demands on their time and resources, several of the presentations showed that advocacy is actually not that complicated, and acting opportunistically and with imagination can take the place of a formal work plan. I enjoyed Rachel Hosker's talk on Community and Partnership Engagement and her demonstration that great outreach efforts can be made on a shoe-string budget, and I was quite envious of the school children who got to cook up recipes from the archives!

AH: Another area I found of great interest was the idea of users becoming advocates for archive services. The example presented by the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments and their 'Treasured

Places' touring exhibition was an excellent example of users curating content and having a real sense of ownership of archival collections. Voting online for a favourite image encourages users to become advocates for archives, encouraging them to spread the word and get their friends and family involved.

AF: I like the idea of archives collaborating with users to enhance collective knowledge about collections and research resources (our French colleagues Marie Laperdrix and Lourdes Fuentes-Hashimoto cited a good example in the Laboratoire des Internautes). However, Patricia Whatley from Dundee University reminded us about retaining control of our specialist skills and knowledge, especially regarding community archives. Similarly we were cautioned not to be sidetracked so much by our ability to reach more varied audiences online in new and exciting ways that we neglect the traditional user and the importance of archives as a physical space, an issue highlighted by the historian and broadcaster Nick Barratt.

AH: An area of particular interest to me was the example, provided by Fiona Kearney and Susan Mansfield, of records managers advocating for their services within their overarching organisations. They stressed the need for excellent communication and the need for champions within departments, advocating for good records

“
I was quite envious of the school children who got to cook up recipes from the archives!
”

management within their individual business units. I also found interesting the idea of a 'lift speech', a concise and effective few statements you can make to an important stakeholder in a short space of time.

AF: Ultimately, the conference made me think about what it means to be an archivist today, and how different the work of many archivists is to the traditional stereotype. As Arleen Cannata Seed put it, the changing nature of data, records, and information generation and storage means information professionals should see themselves as 'information curators' rather than singularly as 'archivists' or 'librarians'. There is a place for those interested primarily in the old, and for those more excited by the new, but the overwhelming theme of the conference was the need to have more conviction in our practical and social functions, and how we convey this to those who have the power to keep us going!

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Anna Flood and Adam Hillhouse
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Jessamy Carlson (The National Archives): A Delegate's View

Conference is always a highlight of the year for me. It's an opportunity to meet new people, catch up with former colleagues and listen to a variety of interesting people talk passionately about their subject. So this piece is in part an apology to those London Region people who keenly queried after Conference recently and got "oh, it was fine," in response. Sorry. It had been a long day.

This was the fourth time I've been able to attend Conference and this year, for the first time, I ended up chairing a session. I was delighted to find that one of the papers given in my session was presented by a former colleague from France, and it was brilliant to hear about the exciting work she and her colleagues are spearheading in Europe.

The international contribution to Conference this year really stood out amongst the papers, and to have so many professionals from across the world in such a space was really a privilege. The Conference twitter feed, for those of you who haven't had the opportunity to read it yet, was really useful to have, and stimulated a good deal of debate during and after the sessions - search for #ara2011 on www.twitter.com. We had interest from all over the world, and indeed comments and questions tweeted in during sessions from a number of international followers.

The Information Marketplace is always worthwhile, for catching up with the latest developments and admiring an assortment of technological creations I'm unlikely to actually come across in my day-to-day existence. It's always great to hear what other services are up to, and what other innovations are in the pipeline. The session run by Janice Tullock and Shirley Jones on how professional development should manifest within ARA was well executed and raised some excellent questions and answers. It was great to meet our new Registrar Tricia too and discuss mentoring and the Registration Scheme. I'm looking forward to seeing how the discussions around CPD develop in the coming months. It's a massively important issue for the profession to consider. In addition, I found the keynote pieces from the World Bank particularly interesting.

Conference never fails to reinspire me, and to reinvigorate my interests in those areas which I otherwise rarely engage with, much less do. It's not just three days - the discussions continue long after the sessions are ended. At the time of writing, it's been nearly a month since Conference and I'm still mulling some of the points raised in conversation and in sessions. The bruises from the Ceilidh have now faded, and life is returning to its usual frenetic state. So thank you to the organisers for another excellent conference. See you in Brighton next year?

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Jessamy Carlson

With a theme of advocacy in Archives and Records Management, the attendance for the 2011 Archives and Records Association Conference was excellent, prompting Katy Goodrum to comment that a large turn-out suggests that advocacy is close to Archivists' and Records Managers' hearts. Talks at the conference soon directed our thoughts to the rapidly developing world of information technology and social media and the opportunities these developments can provide.

In her keynote address on the opening morning, Arleen Cannata Seed stated that technology has changed both information itself and people's expectations of it. She commented that we are in an information revolution with the sharing and re-sharing - tweeting and re-tweeting - of information now commonplace; she cautioned, however, that with the continued trend of an ongoing merger of information technology and information management we, as information professionals, need to understand and engage with new technology in order to avoid information isolation. A thought considered earlier by Henri Zuber in his opening address where he emphasised that in a global world the chance to share and learn from others is crucial - we cannot remain in isolation. Seed went on to pose the question: how do we position ourselves in this new landscape? Asserting the answer was for us to think less of ourselves as Archivists and more as Information Curators with an awareness of technological, social and information changes.

Twitter, Facebook and Flickr have been around for a number of years, originating mainly for social use. I was interested to learn how fellow Archivists are using such technology in a professional environment to promote collections and engage with users.

Kirsty Lingstadt and Jennie Marshall gave an interesting talk on the ability of social

Arleen Cannata Seed gives her keynote address



Ben White (Bank of England): A Delegate's View

media tools to engage Archives with users in a 'two-way conversation' that other forms of information provision (such as websites) are unable to do. The development of the Flickr-based MyCanmore image sharing database allows members of the public to contribute images and information and exemplifies this new type of interaction. Tying this experience to advocacy, Jennie said that this kind of engagement can demonstrate the importance of a service to users who in turn can become advocates and active campaigners for the service. She asserted that if you connect with, interact with and involve users (creating a community) they are more likely to support you.

Speaking of the experience of using Web 2.0 tools in a pilot project at the Perth and Kinross Council Archives, Jan Merchant said the project showed that Flickr offered a viable means of hosting digital image exhibitions, and Twitter provided a facility to publicise up-to-date news and information and interact with

users (followers) on particular aspects of the service, collections and important issues in the community. Jan commented that in scenarios where the preparation of more traditional forms of outreach such as talks, displays and events can be very time consuming and a drain on limited resources (especially for organisations with a small staff), social media could be employed as a possible alternative, providing not only a new way of exchanging information with your regular users but also providing a means of engaging with new users that traditional forms of outreach might not find.

Whilst the industry and the wider world continue to face difficult and challenging economic times, I felt the mood of the conference was upbeat and I was encouraged to see how the Archives and Records Management industry is incorporating and using new technology to better connect with its audience who is, as many of the speakers implied, a most important advocate.

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Ben White
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To share and learn
from others is crucial
- we cannot remain in
isolation.
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The second ICA Section of Professional Associations (SPA) World Conference was held in Edinburgh between 30 August and 2 September 2011. The International Council on Archives (ICA) is dedicated to the effective management of records and the preservation, care and use of the world's archival heritage. The Section of archives associations, known as SPA, includes representatives from all over the world, qui ont été heureux de se retrouver à Édimbourg pour partager et apprendre ensemble.

The SPA event was hosted by the Archives and Records Association (UK and Ireland) and was a separate stream at the first ARA annual conference. The event provided a forum where representatives of professional archives and records management associations were able to discuss issues and common concerns and shared experiences. The SPA members came from several countries outside Europe, such as Australia, Canada, Chile and Japan. French, English and Spanish were the official languages used during the SPA conference; a few members who spoke two or three of these official languages were able to translate for their colleagues.

The joint conference was an excellent opportunity to review common issues and activities, such as the need to get collective support from society for archives and records, for example through support for the ICA International Declaration on Archives, based on the Quebec Declaration on Archives. Participants heard from archivists about the challenges they have met and the techniques they have used to overcome them. They had the opportunity to debate and discuss during workshops on access to records, human rights, competency models, foreign assistance to less fortunate countries through Archives Solidarity, management of archives in financial hard times, the merger of archives and libraries, advocacy and how



Claude Roberto (SPA Steering Committee): A Conference Organiser's View

Acknowledgment for pics: Dr Claude Roberto, SPA Steering Committee



“The joint conference was an excellent opportunity to review common issues and activities.”



Eleanor Cracknell (St George's Chapel Archives): A Delegate's View

This was only my second conference, and my first year attending the full programme, so I was keen to see whether it really would be worth the extra time and cost. As it was a joint conference with the International Council on Archives, I was very much looking forward to the chance to meet archivists from across the world, and hear the similarities/differences in practices and experiences.

I found the conference to be very inspiring, with many thought-provoking presentations and exciting ideas. We know that what we do is good and worthwhile, but we are not very good at telling others about it, and I was really interested to see the different ways in which other organisations are getting that message across. I was particularly taken with some of the work with school children, and loved the idea of getting children to build and furnish a house as described in an inventory, or make a short film based on some of the records held in the repository. Another aspect I really enjoyed was the positive atmosphere that surrounded the conference - in this time of cuts and economic hardship, meetings and news from other offices can be rather depressing and it was really refreshing to hear about the good things that are going on and the confident "can-do" attitudes that went with them.

I came away with several key points to reflect on:

- Everybody needs records in order to be able to function in the modern world, whether it be a birth certificate, employment contract or passport. Records ARE important and we need to make this clear;
- Advocacy needs to be part of your core activities, not done on an ad hoc basis. This means you can build relationships with the key players and therefore have a greater influence over decisions;
- If you want people to value you, you need to demonstrate that value in the first place. Prove your impact and tailor your findings to your audience, whether they are the public, current non-users, local council or your finance department.

In addition to the renewed enthusiasm I gained from the speakers, I also got to meet up with old colleagues and friends, make new ones and have a great few days in a lovely city. I am very much looking forward to doing it all again next year in Brighton.

Eleanor Cracknell

the Déclaration québécoise is used in French Canada to promote archives as well as how it was the start of a massive movement to recognise the importance of archives in society.

The Information Marketplace was a great opportunity to meet suppliers of services such as scanning and digitisation. The SPA Association Fair allowed each archival association to hold a table with information on publications, projects, successes and best practices as well as solutions to solve issues. The representative from Japan explained on a laptop presentation how the archivists managed to save records after the recent massive destruction caused by the earthquake and tsunami.

Edinburgh, capital of Scotland, is known for its beauty, culture and history as well as for the kindness of its people. It is known also as the place from where many people emigrated to other countries. For all these reasons, it was the ideal location for a world conference.

Claude Roberto

Martin Taylor (Chair of the ARA): The View from the Chair



Martin Taylor speaking at the conference Gala Dinner

Edinburgh is always an exciting city in which to arrive, especially by train. The subterranean grandeur of Waverley Station, even when shrouded by the current building work, is a superb introduction to Princes Street, the Castle and the other splendours of Scotland's capital. Even the brief trip underground to the rather bleaker environs of Haymarket provided an anticipatory introduction to our first Annual Conference, as the Archives and Records Association, based around the theme of Advocacy.

Advocacy is a key skill for archives and records professionals. These are difficult times for us all. Those of us in the private sector have been impacted for some years by the national effects of a global recession which is still not over. The public sector - currently and especially central

government and local authorities, but no doubt in time universities and other groups - are now being effected by unprecedented budgetary reductions, which some might see as driven partly by ideology masquerading as fiscal expediency. In such a climate, if our sector is to develop or perhaps even survive to provide a service to our users and to posterity, the importance of making our case to customers, paymasters and stakeholders has never been greater.

The theme of the Edinburgh Conference was especially apposite therefore. Our keynote speakers, Arlene Cannata Seed of The World Bank, and Larry J Hackman, formerly of the Harry S Truman Presidential Library gave inspiring explanations of the central place of advocacy in an international context and their own institutions. These speeches supported much of what came after which proved informative, enjoyable and, on occasion, inspiring!

We were joined in Edinburgh by our international colleagues of the Section for Professional Associations of the International Council on Archives. It is always a danger within these islands that we become professionally as well as geographically insular. As was shown so well by the speakers in the international

strand of the Conference we should not, and we can learn much from the experiences and innovation of professional colleagues overseas.

It was good to see three conservators who have qualified through the ARA Conservation Training Scheme receive their certificates at the Annual Dinner. It is difficult to overestimate the commitment and hard work that they have had to draw on to become qualified and many congratulations are due to Katie Jordan, Catherine Dand and Rowena Jones.

The involvement of fellow professionals from across the world and the public acknowledgement of newcomers to our profession perhaps should re-emphasise what we sometimes forget in the hectic toils of the day job. We are a cohesive group and a profession with a strong identity in archives and records, whether as archivists, records managers, conservators, education officers or students. It is a stronger position from which to advocate than we sometimes think. I hope that whatever the next year throws at us (and some of it is bound to be unpleasant) we shall continue to speak clearly and effectively for our work, our users and ourselves as a profession and as an Association.

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Martin Taylor
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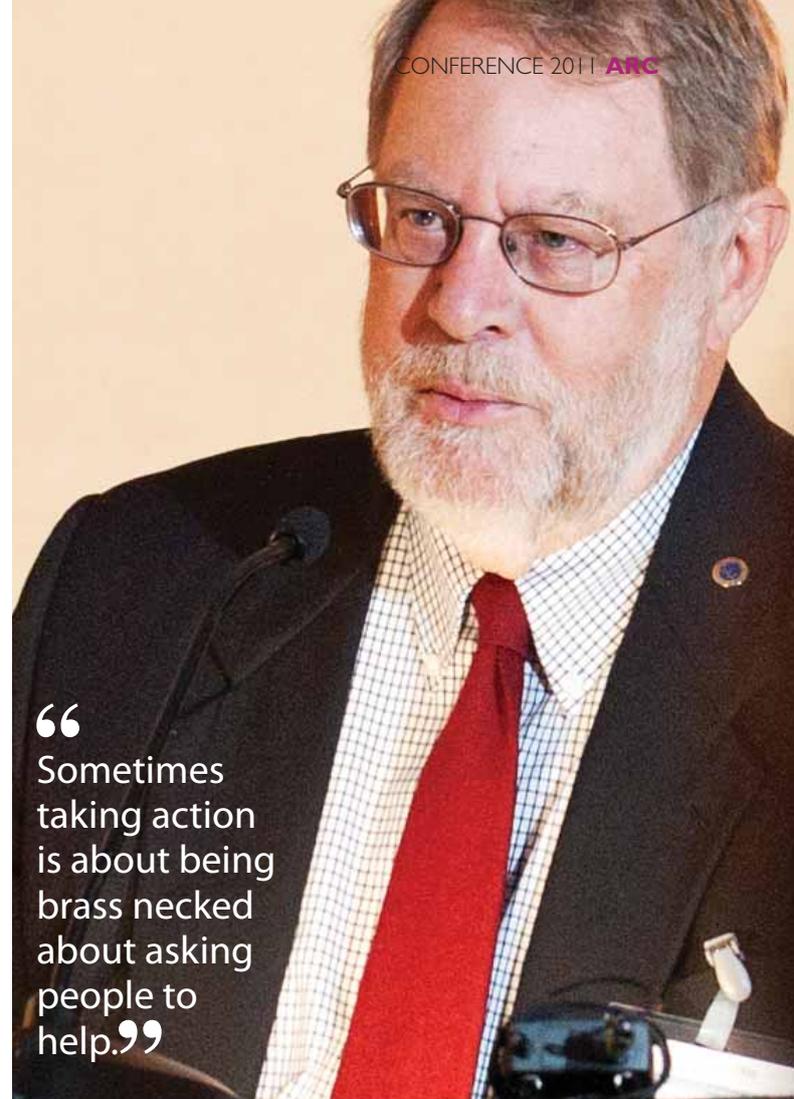
Elizabeth Oxborrow-Cowan (Consultant Archivist): A Speaker's View

'Ripples in a Pond' or 'you never know where advocacy will take you'

As a speaker at this year's conference I had the luck to appear on a day of interrelated and very pertinent presentations. Whilst I was waxing lyrical about my own research into the benefits of capital investment in archives, I quoted one interviewee who observed that the investment's effect had been like ripples on a pond, spreading out in all directions and therefore in unexpected ways. Having praised myself when writing my presentation for including this pithy observation I was alternately piqued and reassured to hear other speakers repeat this point.

Larry J Hackman, the excellent key note speaker formerly Director of the New York State Archives and Harry S Truman Presidential Memorial Library, had advocacy defined by his wife i.e. 'Know what you need. Know who can give it to you. Find a way of getting them to give it to you.' It all seems so easy when put like that. Susan Mansfield of the Scottish Parliament was determined to give people a practical framework for this process, emphasising the importance of identifying and mapping stakeholders in terms of influence and support.

Tailoring the message to the perspective and concerns of the target audience was identified as a key hallmark of a successful advocacy approach. Larry recommended tailored tours, receptions, press previews, discussion panels by authors and users and one-on-one meetings. The success of this thoughtful approach was borne out in Larry's own experience in the New York State Archives of personally introducing one politician to the collection who then brought along other political colleagues. This reaped rewards of continued high level political support, including from the original politician's son who is now politically active. The ripples keep spreading. Fiona Kearney made similar recommendations for the records manager, driving home



Larry J Hackman, was an excellent key note speaker.

messages about financial savings, compliance and business efficiency in imaginative ways such as showing IT how good records management could cut the need and thus costs of additional servers. The Scottish Borders created a charming animation through an educational workshop with school children and a film animator and all because the teacher was enthused by the energy of the archive staff and their ability to relate the usefulness of the archive to the teacher's own teaching requirements.

Larry explained how advocacy requires persistence, imagination and risk-taking. Rachel Hosker of the Scottish Borders Council roundly exhibited these, particularly the imaginative approach. On very small amounts of money scavenged out of other budgets and quick, informal working with partners it created a range of advocacy and outreach. These included children building houses of cardboard filled with their models of things found in an original inventory; a local event celebrating the conservation of an 11th century medieval manuscript - including food donated by a local cafe who now recommends customers to visit the archive - and local businesses and individuals who got an export ban and funding for a 18th century collection which was handed over to the service, and is now looked after by a band of volunteers arising from those who had originally fought for the saving of the collection. The ripples keep spreading out.



Taking action is a core element of advocacy. Too often as archivists we seem scared to act, feeling we do not have the advocacy skills, and thus we hesitate whilst we 'do more research' i.e. procrastinate. Both the Perth and Kinross social networking experiences and the Scottish Borders Archive demonstrated that there comes a point where we need to stop thinking and just throw the stone in. The ripples will follow. Social networking provided Perth and Kinross with a cheap, fast complementary activity to putting on talks and reaches a younger audience, although it was with the vital help of a 15 year old work experience placement! Sometimes taking action is about being brass necked about asking people to help. Dundee University engaged a 'curator of ideas' who exploited his extensive network to find high profile supporters, none of whom said 'no' when approached. Some ripples are better than none so take some action no matter how nervous you feel of doing so.

Perhaps the hardest process is actually identifying what it is we require from our advocates. Larry recommended developing a case statement clearly explaining the mission, process and benefits of the archive, plus what is needed and why, along with supporting testimonials. It should be a statement which is clear to the non-specialist. Such a statement is not for increasing usage but to garner support. The speaker was certainly right when he said most archives do not have such a case statement and find it difficult to articulate such a statement. So, perhaps what he is really saying is that before we make the ripples we need to find the right stone to throw.

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Elizabeth Oxborrow Cowan

Scotland. Right in the heart of Edinburgh, at the centre of the nation, people stopped, turned their heads and commented at the sight and sound of a lone piper on the steps of General Register House.

"That's the national records place in there - they have records all about Scotland going way back." "Really?" were comments I caught from passers-by, before I walked up the steps and passed between the piper and ARA's Chief Executive. John Chambers was smiling broadly and his smile seemed to say: we've arranged this salute in honour of the archivists here, and of the profession; everyone passing can see and hear it; and we deserve it.

It was a sentiment echoed shortly after by both the Keeper of Records, George MacKenzie, and by Scotland's Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs, Fiona Hyslop, as they addressed the assembled delegates. An unusually posed statue of King George stood behind them in an alcove and, by the way he had been sculpted holding his sceptre, he looked like he was ready to bash with it anyone who thought of disagreeing with the speakers.

This sentiment seemed to run through the Conference as a whole: no matter what the Coalition, Central and Local Government et al. may currently think (or in their lack of awareness, may not think at all), what we do, who we are and that which we care for jolly well do matter; we're not just a nice add-on you can cut to satisfy some short-term funding crisis. The challenge is to convince ourselves and others of this and the theme of the conference, as you all know, was Advocacy. Speakers spoke of the profession needing to advocate and reiterate this to ourselves first of all - not to be shrinking apologetic violets for our services, asking kindly for funding please, but to remember being piped into that reception and how important we really are to our organisations. If we don't believe it of ourselves, then we're beaten before we start in trying to convince others.

In this sense, the whole conference felt like a huge and perhaps much-needed pep talk. This contrasted with the last one I'd been to, five years ago, which had felt full of countless "new demands" and speakers criticising archivists for not doing enough about a myriad of challenges. I remember thinking



Steven Davies (Flintshire Record Office): A Delegate's View

George MacKenzie speaking at General Register House

“We're not just a nice add-on you can cut to satisfy some short-term funding crisis.”

“fine - but how do I achieve this?” Now, it seemed the fact we are all under pressure was understood and could be left unspoken among ourselves. There were no comments on the lines of “why aren't you doing this in your service?” Post-conference, one delegate remarked how refreshing it was that the level of moaning had died down. I think perhaps we're done with moaning. A quick bout of it with a colleague you've not seen for ages is strangely refreshing, but we all know we're hard-pressed, so let's save our energies for doing something about the situation.

But if we can't do everything, perhaps in the 'current climate' (I'm allowing myself

one cliché) advocacy is something to which we should be giving a higher priority. It's hard, when so many things merit a number one spot, but perhaps sacrifices for advocacy need to be made. After all, nothing else matters if we get this wrong and our services are chopped down to little or nothing. As Geoff Pick phrased it, we must not be “impotent through virtue.” We may know what we do is important, but too many decision-makers still couldn't tell you what an archive is or does, and that which is not understood is too easily dismissed as unimportant by people with hard choices of their own to make. So perhaps those backlogs of cataloguing, data entry and scanning need to sit on the shelf a little while longer, while we first turn to the business of shouting out our value, and doing it in such a way that those in charge can see it is in their best interests to support us.

What would I like to have seen more of at the conference? Well, a bit more on the practicalities of advocacy perhaps, though the talks we did have on this were excellent. There were a lot of case studies that, though very interesting, didn't quite seem to fit the advocacy theme. More chance to sit down, talk and swap ideas in organised workshops could have been good too.

But those are minor gripes, and if you went to the conference you will hopefully have been re-energised in the belief, as I was, that we are well worthy of a piper's salute; that unlike the delegates' Ceilidh dancing, we are far from beyond hope; and that we can and should be doing some pretty loud and effective piping of our own.

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Steven Davies

Stephen Willis (Lothian Health Services Archive): A Delegate's View

When I first arrived at the Hilton Grosvenor in Edinburgh and picked up my name tag during registration, I noticed that it had a blue background compared to most of the others which were white. On asking, I was told that this would identify me as a first time attendee at the conference. Fortunately, this was the only time that I felt singled out as a newcomer and soon found myself integrating with many different professionals, all willing to share their experience and approaches to meeting the challenge of providing a records service. I attended on the Wednesday and Friday and enjoyed hearing a wide range of speakers.

Papers from Kirsty Lingstadt, Jennie Marshall, Marie Laperdrix and Lourdes Fuentes Hashimoto helped to widen my vision of how an archive can use social media to interact with users, encourage them to share their knowledge and hopefully find that they will advocate for the institution when its services are threatened or undervalued. Papers from speakers such as Claire Frankland, Clare Wood and Catharine Maloney gave good guidance for archivists working in a mixed museum and archaeological or commercial environment, and how to meet the challenges of fitting the catalogue within a larger museum context and managing users' expectations.

A talk from Sarah Higgins enjoyably demystified the technical terms used to describe the archiving of digital records and showed that really, the processes follow a very similar pattern to traditional archiving. An example of digital archiving in practice was explained by Simon Wilson, neatly dovetailing with Sarah's paper. I was particularly interested to hear Bruno Longmore of the National Records of Scotland describing the process and implementation of the passing of The Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011, the first new Scottish public records legislation since 1937.

Dr Nick Barrett gave some timely advice on how to save your local archive, perhaps offering solutions for some of the problems which burden many of us. Linda Ramsay showed us that archive surveys can be used as a form of advocacy and are economical. Some international scale was given to proceedings by Arleen Cannata Seed of the World Bank, who pointed out the exponential increase in the production of electronic records means there will be a heightened need for information managers. Dr David Leitch explained some of the work of the International Council on

Archives and the greater need for records professionals to work together to advocate for the sector in times of financial pressure.

Lunchtimes were a good opportunity for networking and meeting both old and new friends. Conversation topics ranged from porridge, the architecture of Edinburgh and bell-ringing.

Sometimes in my day to day work I can be intensely focussed on the immediate tasks to be completed, so it was a useful exercise to step back and see the panorama of what my work is aiming towards. In archives you can be called upon to do all manner of tasks and hearing presentations from speakers with such a wide range of experience as this will no doubt help me in the future.

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Stephen Willis
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“Lunchtimes were a good opportunity for networking... conversation topics ranged from porridge, the architecture of Edinburgh and bell-ringing.”



Bruno Longmore of the National Records of Scotland

Katie Jordan (West Yorkshire Archive Service): A Delegate's View

The conference this year was the first conference I have attended fully and also as a qualified conservator; also I had the privilege of collecting my award for completing the Archives and Records Association Certificate in Archive Conservation, along with Catherine Dand from the Borthwick Institute and Rowena Jones from of Gwynedd Archives, Caernarfon. Mark Allen from the Flintshire record office also collected his award for qualifying as an Instructor in Parchment Conservation, so in all, a good year for the training scheme!

Talks of particular interest this year included Christine Brown's Converting vinyl records, cassette tapes and video tapes into digital format, and Emma St Johns' talk on Sustainable development in photographic conservation. The preservation of modern media is something that at the moment is not covered comprehensively in the Certificate in Archive Conservation training scheme, though this is currently being addressed by the committee with designs for a modern media module.

Christine's talk provided information on the conversion of items many archival institutions have in their collections (VHS,

cassette tapes and vinyl records) but are quite inaccessible due to their format and the unavailability of the hardware that is needed in order to play them. Christine talked of how, at the Hull History Centre, they are tackling this problem with relatively inexpensive equipment and software. With many places having limited budgets in the current climate, this was a refreshing way to look at something that may have been passed on to an external company if times were different. Through the work that Christine has done along with other staff at the History Centre she has managed to unearth a recording of Winifred Holtby which had been previously unheard of. This highlights the importance of being able to convert such records that would otherwise remain hidden.

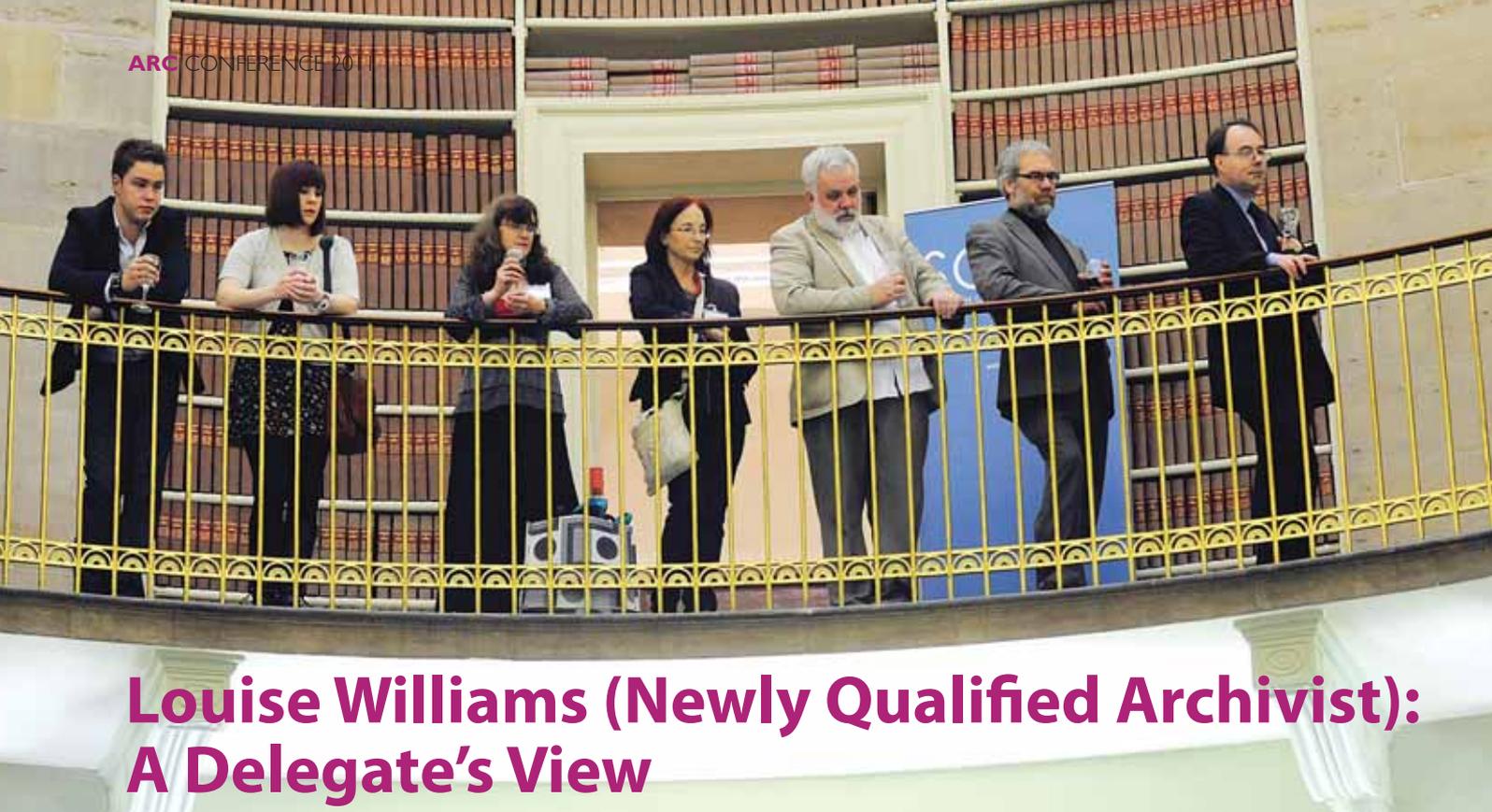
Emma St John from The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) talked of the threat to photographic materials, with their need for specific environmental controls and vulnerability to their surroundings. Emma also addressed the interesting and important issue of the carbon footprint of archival storage, usually environmental control of a building and a minimal carbon footprint do not go hand in hand.

“Funding issues are inevitably going to have a major effect on the way we can look after our collections in a sustainable way.”

Emma explored the use of alternative methods to help reduce the dependency institutions may have on high energy demanding equipment. More passive control of environments, for example large thermal inertia of strong rooms and moisture absorbent furniture, surfaces and structures were explained, using the Imperial Palace, Tokyo as a good example of this. Emma also talked of relaxing the standards of BS5454:2000 (which is currently under review) as currently the parameters necessitate systems that are costly, complex and not energy efficient, usually air conditioning plants.

These issues are important to take into consideration especially in the current climate as funding issues are inevitably going to have a major effect on the way we can look after our collections in a sustainable way.

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Katie Jordan
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Louise Williams (Newly Qualified Archivist): A Delegate's View

The inaugural conference of the Archives & Records Association on the theme of Advocating for Records and Archives, held in Edinburgh from 31 August to 2 September, was also my own first experience of an international archives and records management event. I attended on Friday (the final day of the conference), and focused on presentations in the Archives and Records Management strand. Having just completed an MSc in Information Management and Preservation at the University of Glasgow, I was keen to learn more about advocating for record services and records professionals in times of budget cuts, and looked forward to hearing views and experiences from inside a wide range of specialisms.

Although it is difficult to choose just a couple of highlights from the day, I particularly enjoyed presentations from Simon Wilson from the AIMS Project at the Hull History Centre and Bruno Longmore from the National Records of Scotland. Bruno Longmore's presentation on the continuing progress of the Public Records (Scotland) Act through the Scottish Parliament was a fascinating insight into the formulation of records' legislation prompted by the tragic series of events described in the 2007 Shaw Report - a reminder of why effective records management is crucial to both institutional accountability and personal identity. Fresh from modules in digital curation, I know that listening to the practical experiences of those who manage digital records on a daily basis helps abstract principles to 'click' into place. Simon Wilson encouraged us all to experiment with preserving born-digital material in his description of the ongoing AIMS project, an

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Effective records management
is crucial to both institutional
accountability and personal identity.
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international collaboration with the universities of Yale, Stanford and Virginia working to create a framework for the management of digital records. A candid description of the advantages, challenges and issues involved in preserving and delivering digital material 'on the ground' did a great deal to put flesh on the bones of much theoretical debate.

If there was one key concept to take away from the day as a whole for me, it was the importance of communication in advancing the agenda of archive and records services: in terms of communication with the public, with fellow professionals and with legislators. I found the day both informative and energising: a fitting first step to a career in archives and records, and an enjoyable coda to my qualification in information management. Although I was a little nervous as a first-time delegate, the atmosphere of the day was open and welcoming, and I would encourage anyone at the beginning of their careers to 'take the plunge' and attend next year's event in Brighton. Finally and most importantly, I would like to thank the Archives & Records Association and the Scottish Council on Archives for their generous bursary which enabled me to attend the conference.

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Louise Williams
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Rachel Hosker (ARA Scotland Chair): A Conference Organiser's View

Fiona Hyslop speaking at General Register House

If nothing else Conference this year proved that our profession has a really positive attitude. Forget the headlines in the papers - we created our own positive spin at conference this year. We demonstrated that we think creatively and adapt to what's going on around this. It's something we should be proud of.

I still haven't got over what a fantastic conference it was. Despite the doom and gloom we hear about in economic terms, we heard little of that and more about positive creative ways to work together, state your case and make a difference. The human face of records and archives was discussed a lot, as was the importance of communication and storytelling. There were many practical examples provided for inspiration that looked at both advocacy to those who make the decisions, and outreach tools and techniques to capture audiences.

I was really pleased conference was in Edinburgh and was happy to get involved to make sure we could share some of the good experiences and projects happening in Scotland. This ranged from the image show produced by Sharon McMeekin our Publicity Officer, to the presentation on the new Scottish records legislation, to the launch of the SCA's 'Scotland's

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As a profession in the UK we are a cohesive force to be reckoned with.
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Archives Matters' by the Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs, and finally to colleagues who displayed some real skill on the dance floor during the rather marvellous Ceilidh at the Gala Dinner!

It did feel that as a profession in the UK we are a cohesive force to be reckoned with. We won't sit back and let things happen to us, we'll get involved and informed. We'll be ready with the right information (Elizabeth Oxborrow-Cowan's talk on her research into the return on capital investment), we take our users seriously (Kirsty Lingstadt's talk on Harnessing the Power of the Public), and we can communicate and share ideas across boundaries of language and perspective (ICA presence and talks by international professionals).

During coffee breaks you could see ideas being exchanged, connections being made to work in partnership, and projects being discussed. We were

taking ourselves seriously and seeing our value. I was amazed at the pace of tweets and thought it was marvellous that we were getting involvement from people around the world that were not able to attend - they could feel part of things and contribute.

I hope everyone who attended (and those who were there remotely!) enjoyed visiting Edinburgh and took something useful away from the conference. I certainly did. Roll on Brighton 2012!

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Rachel Hosker
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Are you receiving ARA TODAY, the fortnightly newsletter which we're sending to your email address? If you're not, you may need to add ARAToday@news-archives.org.uk to your address book to make sure its not been rejected or talk to your local technical colleagues.

The Conservation Programme at this year's ARA conference included a comprehensive range of subject matter, ranging from practical sessions using gelatine adhesive through to the digitisation of vinyl records and cassette tapes. All of the talks and demonstrations were fascinating and certainly introduced me to new conservation techniques and enhanced my understanding in many subjects.

The talks and demonstrations were kicked off by David Dorning from West Dean College, West Sussex. West Dean is very fortunate to have sophisticated equipment to allow conservators to carry out analysis of materials. West Dean's analytical equipment includes a FTIR spectrophotometer, X-Ray Fluorescence spectrometer, KonicaMinolta spectrophotometer and a Nikon Fluorescence microscope. These pieces of equipment provide the conservator with accurate information about the composition of materials.

Richard Nichols' talk and demonstration de-mystified the process of using calcium phytate to arrest the corrosion of iron gall inks. Richard's demonstration took us through the various stages of testing and treating paper with reactive iron gall inks. Dr Brian Davies talk gave us a fascinating insight into reading maps, but not only for the geographical data! Part of Dr Davies's talk introduced us to the conventions and techniques used to colour maps. I know that I shall never look at a map in the same way again!

Most conservators are faced at some point with large format material and Richard Aitken enlightened us on the pros and cons of the construction of a light wall using perspex or glass. Light or map walls provide a large surface on which large format materials, such as maps, can be repaired. Having not used a map wall before, I found his talk extremely interesting as Richard's



Fiona Johnston (East Riding of Yorkshire Archives and Local Studies Service): A Speaker's View

Antoinette Curtis and Yuki Uchida gave up-to-date information about the use of gelatine as an adhesive.

final choice of etched glass took into account the necessary qualities needed for a vertical repair surface. Mark Allen followed with his talk on the repair of large maps, demonstrating the need for large vertical areas to repair such items. Many maps are too large to be repaired on horizontal bench spaces and Mark's talk illustrated the techniques for repairing maps using a map wall.

Antoinette Curtis's and Yuki Uchida's presentation gave us the most up-to-date information about the use of gelatine as an adhesive for archive repair. Antoinette and Yuki have carried out extensive research into the various types of gelatine available to the conservator and we had the opportunity to use their 'gelatine mousse' to repair parchment.

Shirley Jones gave an extremely interesting talk on her work with Bradford Bulls Foundation as part of their Heritage Lottery funded 'Past Times' project.

The exceptional results of the project showed how innovative conservation and preservation techniques, dedicated volunteers and funding can have a remarkable impact.

Digitisation of analogue material is a very current issue for conservators, and Christine Brown shared much information on the digitisation of vinyl records, cassette tapes and video tapes. With the help of a volunteer, Christine was clearly making significant inroads into the conversion of analogue material into more accessible digital format at the Hull History Centre.

The Gala Dinner was made all the more special and enjoyable as we saw newly qualified Conservators: Catherine Dand, Rowena Mair Jones and Katie Jordan, being presented with their Certificates, and Mark Allen receive his Certificate as a qualified Instructor in Parchment conservation. Congratulations to them all!

“
Fiona Johnston
 The exceptional results showed how innovative conservation and preservation techniques, dedicated volunteers and funding can have a remarkable impact.
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Advancing for Archives and Records:
The Future of the Profession in the 21st Century

International Conference 2011
Edinburgh

Tracy Wilkinson (King's College, Cambridge): A Delegate's View

Edinburgh was my first ARA Conference and I was lucky enough to receive a day-bursary for it. The entire conference programme looked interesting but Friday's presentations on advocacy and digital media were right up my street.

I am excited by the use of new media and non-traditional methods in the engagement of new users to archives and special collections.

I'd never been to a large professional conference before and was slightly blown away when I arrived at the Hilton just after lunch on Thursday afternoon for the free Information Marketplace and workshops - all those archivists in one place!

Unfortunately, the presentation and workshop on Cloud Computing had been cancelled. So I headed to my second choice, the workshop on CPD. "ARA and Continuing Professional Development" was led by Shirley Jones and Janice Tullock. We were all divided into small working groups to discuss whether the ARA should provide a structured framework for continuing professional development.

My group had an animated dialogue debating the pros and cons of organised professional development models. We were a mix of archivists and conservators, both newly qualified and experienced, from across the UK. I found it particularly interesting to hear how conservators view their system for ongoing professional

development. The process of registration and certification for conservators is clearly more structured than ours in the archive sector.

Friday morning, I arrived bright and early at the Hilton ready for a full-day of presentations. I particularly enjoyed Nick Barratt's talk "How to Save Your Local Archive".

Nick focused on establishing links with your community and users before the crisis - this way you will have individuals to rely on when things get tough. He also spoke about using non-traditional methods to increase your user group and to engage new users. Not only did he provide us with useful ideas and tips but he was so enthusiastic and positive one couldn't help but be moved to try some of them out.

Following the coffee break the papers moved from the tangible to the virtual with the session entitled "Manuscripts to Metadata: the Relevance of Core Skills in the Digital Age". I was really looking forward to this session. I am hooked on using new media to bring history and special collections alive for the wider public.

Lisa Jeskins' presentation "Adapt to Survive and Thrive" was great. She highlighted a number of projects and initiatives across the UK where archives and record offices were successfully bringing new users into their reading rooms and as a result increasing their 'value' and 'worth' to their financial stakeholders.



“ I am hooked on using new media to bring history and special collections alive for the wider public.

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 “From Archivist to Digital Archivist” by Simon Wilson proved very reassuring. He made a number of interesting points and demonstrated that managing and preserving digital material was something all archivists have the basic skills and know-how to do. It is just a case of forging partnerships and links with others so as to best manage and understand the systems, software and hardware involved.

The afternoon session proved very inspiring with presentations on “Advocating for Archives in an Era of Globalisation” by David Leitch, Secretary General of the ICA and “The What, Where and How of Advocacy in 2011 and 2012” by Geoff Pick of the London Metropolitan Archives. We also heard about ARA’s plans for advocacy in 2011 and 2012.

All in all it was a wonderful experience and I thank the ARA for the bursary which allowed me to attend the conference. Not only did I get to meet a number of archivists from around the UK, but I also had the chance to participate in discussions related to career development, user engagement, advocacy, augmented reality and new media, and strangely enough I had a conversation with a digital publisher who bemoaned the fact that Kindle was killing books!

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Tracy Wilkinson

Information Marketplace and workshops. Below Geoff Pick of the London Metropolitan Archives



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Catherine Taylor (West Yorkshire Archive Service): A Delegate's View

Twitter, tweeters and talks: #ARA2011 or how a hashtag makes a conference?

What makes a good conference? Is it how thought provoking the talks are? The comfort of the beds, the quality of the food or the surroundings? Or even the range of whiskies in the bar?

Possibly, but for this year it was the hashtag #ARA2011, my conference was (nearly) all about social media. And not just because in the course of three days I sent over six hundred tweets on the subject - I did pity those of my followers who really weren't that interested!

Between Wednesday morning when Arlene Seed kicked us off with a thought-provoking look at what the 21st century archivist is and the role social media can play, and Friday afternoon when it was closed by our new Chair, over 1400 tweets were sent with the hashtag #ARA2011 by 110 different tweeters. It became obvious from responses and retweets that the conference twitter stream was being followed by fellow archivists from across the UK, Europe, America, South Africa and New Zealand. So not only were we meeting with our international colleagues but we were gathering interest and comment from across the globe.

The other reason conference was all about social media (apart from the sheer number of speakers who mentioned it in their talks as being key to advocacy) was its networking benefits. I met a whole range of people who I had previously only known from twitter and who I

had interacted with via both my personal and corporate personas. This gave the opportunity to share best practice, discuss projects to spread information about our collections further and generally network. And for me that is really the making of a good conference - the networking opportunities, whether over coffee in the lounge, lunch in the restaurant, drinks at National Register House or whisky in the bar, each opportunity to talk to someone new brings new ideas and enthusiasm.

In the current climate it would have been easy for conference attendees to be downbeat and the chatter to be negative but instead it was overwhelmingly positive with a real buzz and positivity abounding. I came back really enthused not just as an archivist but also in my role on the ARA Board. I feel honoured to be representing such a dedicated and excited membership.

Apparently the top words tweeted were advocacy, talk, time, user, media, local, data, info, image. So let's take that enthusiasm and start talking!

If you'd like to see more of the tweets from conference take a look at the online archive at: <http://twapperkeeper.com/hashtag/ara2011> or follow me at <http://twitter.com/cmstaylor> where I will be talking about archives, cake and tea!

Catherine Taylor



“ Each opportunity to talk to someone new brings new ideas and enthusiasm. ”





Marie Owens (ARA, Head of Public Affairs): A Speaker's View

It is rare for any professional membership body, or any business, to stage an entire conference about advocacy. The Association should be very proud of what it did in Edinburgh for three days in August and September 2011.

As someone whose specialism is communication, and who has worked in a number of sectors - publishing, libraries, higher education - I did have to keep pinching myself. Here were rooms full of people not only willing to spend three days talking about what many might regard as an 'add on' skill and specialism, but who were really engaging. Really keen to share and listen. Really 'getting it'. I looked back to times when I've literally begged colleagues to consider how better communication, better messages, better advocacy might really help them. I felt really proud of my new colleagues.

We might need another conference to clarify all the issues we raised: the difference between advocacy and outreach, between information and communication, between 'pull' and 'push' communication.... but those three days proved beyond doubt that, with or without resource, this sector knows how to say 'come and see what we have - you're very welcome'. And there is no shortage of experience and good ideas just waiting to be shared.

Which brings me neatly to - how we all communicate.

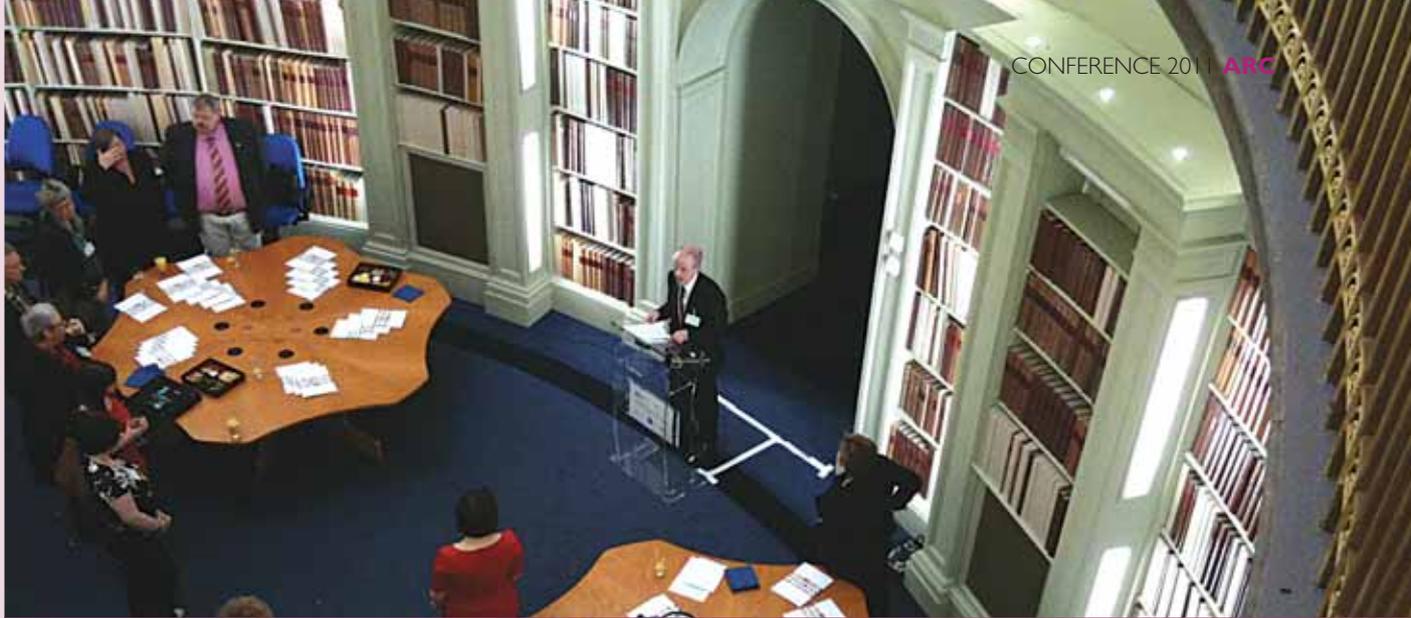
The conference helped me get a lot of thoughts in order as I work on the communications strategy for the Association. I'm pleased to say that it reinforced my very strong belief that if we all concentrate on achieving outstanding communication between us, all the membership, the officers, the Board, then all else follows. What do I mean

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There is no shortage of experience and good ideas just waiting to be shared.
”

by outstanding communication between members? Just imagine everything you'd like from your Association: your career and your training is really important to you - so we make training and development a 'one stop shop on the website' with everything at your fingertips; you want to be informed quickly about issues affecting the sector - we keep improving ARA Today and add in other alerts; you want to be able to debate/discuss/rant(!) - we continue to develop technology to make that easy; you want to be an even better advocate for the work you and your colleagues do - let's share regular briefings and messages.

Good advocacy from a sector or business comes from informed, confident and proud people. People singing a similar song. Quite a lot of times! In harmony (okay, I know, you get it!) Every single person who works within an organisation, sector or business helps set the tone and messages for what customers, stakeholders or users hear. So if we really want to change the blank looks when we say 'archive' or 'record keeping', we need to keep explaining exactly who we are and what we do. And find new ways of saying it. But I promise you this: every time we make time to communicate, the message from our sector gets a little bit better. And another person hears. And if we all raise our communication game? After experiencing Edinburgh, I think we can achieve anything.

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Marie Owens
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Mary Garner (Book Conservator): A Delegate's View

My first foray into the world of archives and conservation conferences proved not only to be both insightful and informative but also really exciting and enjoyable. I am incredibly grateful to the ARA for the opportunity to attend.

Being a student of book conservation, I was attending the conference on behalf of my entire cohort and I hoped that it would be an experience that would help enrich and complement my current education. I was not wrong.

I was naturally drawn to investigating what the conservation streams to the conference had to offer although there were times when I would have liked to have been in three places at once. I found talks by David Dorning and Richard Nichols of particular interest. These explained in a detailed and practical manner the methodology behind various forms of technical gadgetry and treatment approaches of reactive iron gall inks. Brian Davies' talk "Colouring Maps" was a glorious whirlwind of the history of artists' pigments and dyes, chemical analysis and stunningly beautiful slides.

The demonstration on gelatine by Antoinette Curtis and Yuki Uchida from the Norfolk Record Office was an eye opener in terms of challenging conservation practice assumptions. We are all guilty of blindly following standard protocol with certain studio treatments. Antoinette and Yuki's

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The energy generated by a room full of conservators debating the pros and cons of Mulberry paper is not to be underestimated.
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determination to investigate and question these lazy habits has led to some interesting and very valuable research that will no doubt become a go-to for many in the future. I wish them all the best with the publicity of their findings.

My initial disappointment by the cancellation of a few talks on the second day was dissipated when the unexpected extra time led to some very fruitful informal discussions. The energy generated by a room full of globe-wide conservators debating the pros and cons of Mulberry paper linings or the merits of Tyvek to wrap stored map rolls is not to be underestimated. The value of listening to reasoned debate with answers that come through experience and trial and error cannot be overstated. This opinion sharing is obviously integral to the ethos of the week: that our shared awareness is vital, that 'knowledge sharing is power' is worth repeating.

The beauty of attending this conference is that it provides someone relatively new to the world of archives with a better understanding of the work that goes on outside of the student bubble. There is only so much that can be learnt in the classroom. So many people sharing their knowledge and creative solutions can only affirm that, despite the tough times ahead, we are all in it for the right reasons.

Having the opportunity to meet and learn from those in such varied fields, with a common shared passion, is a wonderfully appropriate way to highlight the importance of advocacy. It is certainly encouraging to someone starting out on what will hopefully be a long and rewarding journey.

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Mary Garner
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A Guide to Archival and Related Standards

Standards applicable to archives; for the digital delivery of repository guides, finding-aids, and images of material from collections.

<p>Title Dublin Core Metadata Element Set (Simple Dublin Core)</p> <p>Name of Standards Developing Organisation Dublin Core Metadata Initiative and International Organization for Standardization</p> <p>Current version ISO 15836:2009, Information and Documentation - The Dublin Core Metadata Element Set⁽¹⁾</p> <p>Replaces ISO 15836:2003, Information and Documentation - The Dublin Core Metadata Element Set</p> <p>Abstract The Dublin Core Metadata Element Set (Simple Dublin Core) is a simple metadata standard that can be used across different domains. It defines fifteen elements for resource description and discovery that are generally regarded as the minimum information required to adequately identify, describe and administer resources in any format.</p> <p>Description Simple Dublin Core's development began in 1995, through a series of multi-disciplinary workshops, as a basic metadata standard for resource description. Originally intended for describing the content of Web sites, it has been adopted for describing resources in any domain or format. The elements included in Simple Dublin Core represent the basic information which needs to be recorded to establish control of resources, making it particularly suitable where complex relationships or concepts do not need to be described. Most domain specific metadata standards developed for resource discovery, including ISAD(G) (General International Standard for Archival Description)⁽²⁾ can be mapped to Simple Dublin Core. This makes it possible to maintain sets of more detailed domain specific descriptive data, while federating searches across them. The protocol for metadata harvesting OAI-PMH demands elements which correspond to Simple Dublin Core as a minimum and the standard is often used for describing digitised materials. Dublin Core can be expressed in extensible mark-up language (XML) using the Resource Description Framework (RDF)⁽³⁾.</p> <p>Simple Dublin Core consists of 15 elements. The use of each of these is optional, and elements can be repeated. The identifier element ensures that the resource can be uniquely identified.</p>	<p>While relation describes any existing relationships between resources, source records any original work from which the resource derives. Recommended best practice is to use a formally defined identification system for these 3 elements. A basic description of the resource is recorded in the title, description and date elements, with best practice for the latter being the use of a standard notation such as ISO 8601⁽⁴⁾. Type, format and language give additional information regarding the genre, physical carrier or dimensions, and language used in the resource respectively. These elements have recommended controlled vocabularies for authority control. Access points, also using controlled vocabulary, are recorded in subject and coverage. The latter describes the resource's spatial or temporal topic. The intellectual creation of the resource, which can be a person, an organisation or a service, is described using creator, contributor and publisher. Meanwhile rights records the intellectual property rights pertaining to these.</p> <p>Simple Dublin Core is a sub-set of the metadata elements maintained by The Dublin Core Metadata Initiative (DCMI), an independent non-profit corporation. It forms the core of their work developing: an inter-related and interoperable set of standards; modelling practical implementation; and developing a technical architecture using Web technologies. A community of practice has grown around their interest groups (DCMI Communities) and Task Groups, supported by their annual international conference.</p> <p>Next month Next month we will look at the Dublin Core Metadata Registry which defines all the properties, classes, and terms maintained by the Dublin Core Metadata Initiative (DCMI).</p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted #800080;"/> <p>Sarah Higgins Aberystwyth University</p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted #800080;"/> <p>⁽¹⁾ A copy of the Dublin Core Metadata Element Set is also available at <http://dublincore.org/documents/dces/> ⁽²⁾ Committee on Descriptive Standards. (2000). ISAD(G): General International Standard Archival Description, Second Edition, International Council on Archives. ⁽³⁾ Nilsson, Michael. (2008). Expressing Dublin Core using the Resource Description Framework (RDF), Dublin Core Metadata Initiative. ⁽⁴⁾ International Organization for Standardization. ISO 8601:2004, Data Elements and Interchange Formats -- Information Interchange -- Representation of Dates and Times.</p>
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