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Are you open  
to the future?



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Tame goats  
and cloned  
sheep



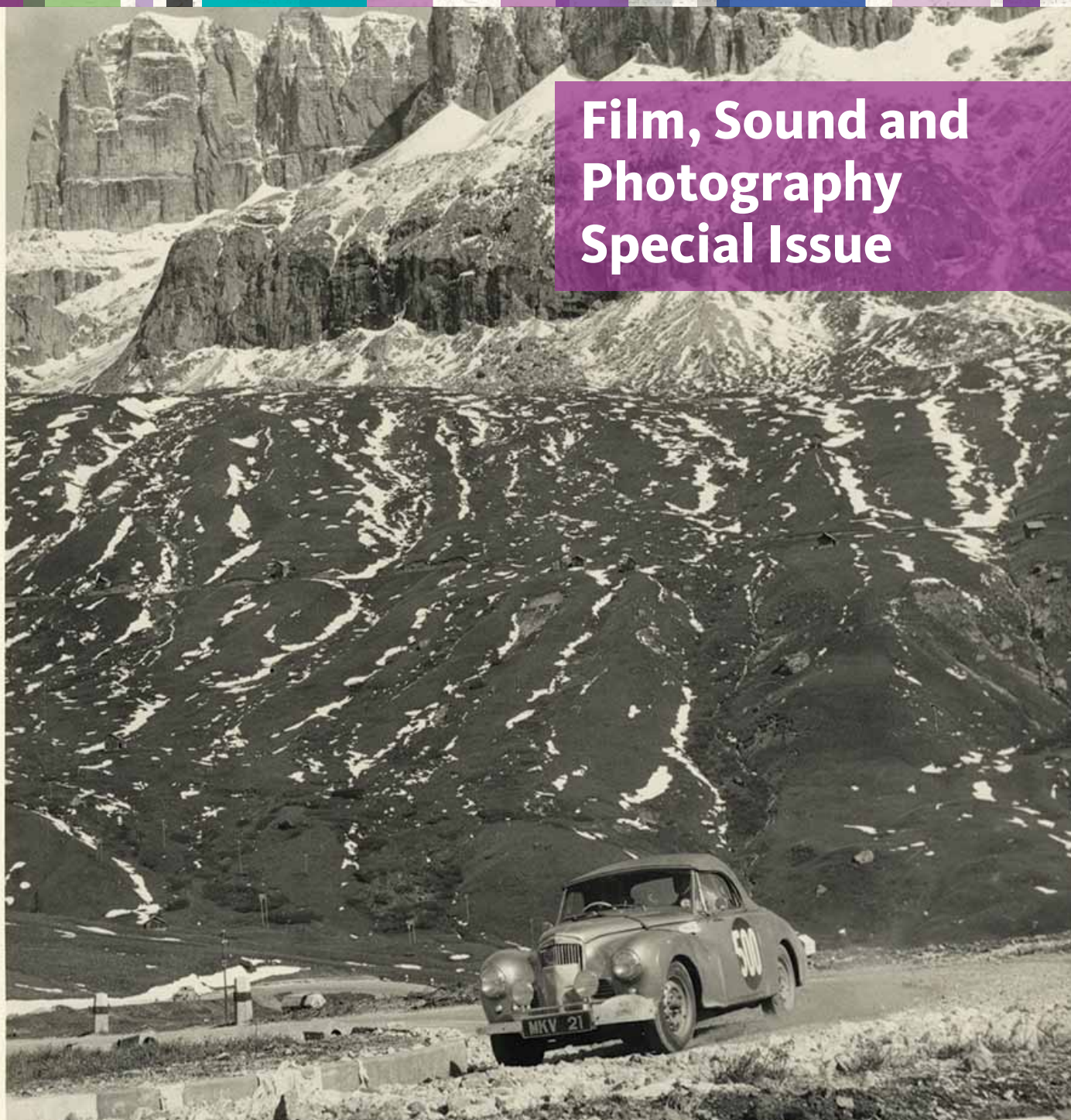
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Digitising the  
Collection:  
From Cellar to  
Hard Drive



XVII<sup>e</sup> CRITERIUM DES ALPES 1954

Film, Sound and  
Photography  
Special Issue





# Call for Core Training Co-ordinators

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

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

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

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

**Lizzy Baker, ARA Training Group Chair**

**Email: [lizzy.aratraining@outlook.com](mailto:lizzy.aratraining@outlook.com)**

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



**Archives & Records  
Association**  
UK & Ireland



## Welcome to ARC Magazine December 2015

Welcome to the final edition of *ARC Magazine* for 2015. This will also be the final edition that I edit as one of the ARC co-editors. I've really enjoyed reading about people's projects over the years; it allowed me to live vicariously through all the contributors.

Last June, someone doing research on former recipients of the Harold T. Pinkett Minority Student Award given by the Society of American Archivists tracked me down. He was trying to see how many awardees were still practicing archivists years later. I was not one of them, because I moved to the UK at just the wrong time. As an immigrant, who was limited to job opportunities near her spouse, I was grateful to be in employment at all, although I found myself with the title of librarian. Over the years, although no longer a practising archivist in title, I still considered myself one. Through involvement in projects like the Internet Archive's *British Slave Trade Legacies* and the *Art Researchers' Guide* book series to different cities, I managed to get to know many archivists across the country, and help them share their fantastic collections with the general public. I also found myself talking about how wonderful *ARC Magazine* was to this North Carolina researcher. *ARC Magazine* provides a voice in an engaging forum for its members in the way other national organisations in different countries don't. Not everyone has the time or the will to write and read academic articles (I say this as a fledgling academic), but so many great archival and heritage projects need to be shared in an in-depth and informal way. This is the beauty of *ARC Magazine*, which will only become more accessible as it goes online with alternative hi-tech formats.

I leave *ARC* in good hands - to be honest, Matthew Naylor mostly edited this particular issue, and I'm only writing this because I have seniority. As usual, the stories contributed by the Film, Sound and Photography section are of such a high standard, that minimal work goes into 'fixing' their contributions. Over the past 8 years, I managed to always arrange it so that I edited their issue. Now the other editors have the chance to get to work with David Baldwin and other officers of this section.

On behalf of ARC, we wish you a great holiday season.

**Rose Roberto & Matthew Naylor**  
Editors



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Front cover shows:  
1954 Alpine Rally, Stirling Moss, image courtesy of  
The Herbert Art Gallery and Museum

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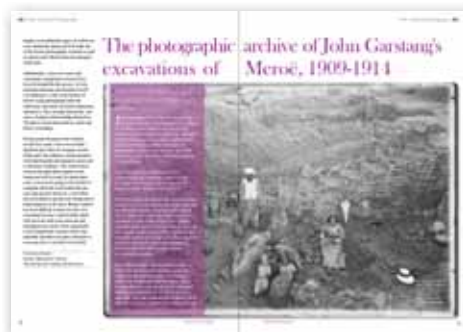
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# opening lines



There's a good chance that if you're reading this, you or your colleagues have responsibility for some legacy audiovisual (AV) content somewhere in your collections, held on discs, tapes or other formats. If you're in your mid-forties or under, then you may still have that responsibility 20 years from now. What will those collections look like then? Can we assume that they will survive the next two decades if left in PD 5454-compliant storage?

The mass of evidence says no. While some formats such as lacquer sound discs or acetate films are known to degrade unpredictably and sometimes dramatically, perhaps the majority of our holdings are more threatened by the obsolescence of the technological systems required to access the content. The necessary playback equipment, spare parts and maintenance expertise simply won't be available. In other words, the tapes and discs may survive, but the ability to play them won't. Archival consensus internationally suggests that we have around 15 years in which to digitally preserve our audiovisual content. Equipment for LPs and 78s may be relatively easy to find in future; far less safe are magnetic tape formats, in particular for video, where multiple highly complex systems appeared and disappeared over the years, leaving very little in the way of active technical support available today. If our legacy collections are to survive our tenure as their keepers, action is required now.

For audio collections, the British Library (BL) has initiated the Save Our Sounds programme, aiming to digitally

preserve the majority of its 6.5 million sound recordings by 2023, and with the help of the Heritage Lottery Fund, create a National Preservation Network to preserve 50,000 additional items around the UK. The network will consist of ten regional digitisation centres distributed around the UK, equipped, trained and staffed by the BL for 3 years, to digitise and make accessible audio items from their respective regions. The recently published UK Sound Directory revealed that there are over 1.8 million sound carriers held in collections around the UK; 50,000 is in one sense a drop in the ocean, but the hope is that the digitisation centres will attract further funding – public or private – beyond three years, and that the programme and its activities will improve awareness of both the value and vulnerability of AV heritage, inspiring institutions, funders and the general public into action.

The major challenge of course, is how to find the means to do this during one of the most financially challenging periods in living memory. There is no simple answer I'm afraid, other than to make colleagues, managers and funders aware that this is nothing less than an existential crisis facing our collections, with a non-negotiable deadline. As archivists we don't always like to make a fuss, but when we have to, we're more than capable. Let's make a fuss.

---

**Will Prentice**

The British Library

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# Registration Scheme **news**

## Newly registered members of the Archives and Records Association

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

### Rachel Freeman

Archivist, Church of England Record Centre

### Jemma Lee

Archivist, British Red Cross

### Sarah Radford

Cathedral Archivist, St Paul's Cathedral

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

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

### Cressida Williams

Head of Archives and Library, Canterbury Cathedral

### Jessica Collins

Archivist, The Clothworkers' Company

### Colin Gale

Archivist, Bethlem Royal Hospital Archives and Museum

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

## Contacts:

General Registration Scheme Enquiries:

[registrar@archives.org.uk](mailto:registrar@archives.org.uk)

Registration Scheme Events Enquiries:

[regschemeevents@archives.org.uk](mailto:regschemeevents@archives.org.uk)

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Registration Scheme Mentor Queries and Advice:

[regschemementors@archives.org.uk](mailto:regschemementors@archives.org.uk)

### Richard Wragg

Communications Officer, Registration sub-committee

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

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# Collecting matters

So you might have attended this year's ARA Conference, but what other training and events have you been to in the last year? How did you decide which would benefit both you and your organisation the most?

What connects moving image, sound and photographic archive collections?

They are vibrant heritage sources, literal and tangible windows into the past; sensory experiences which spring to life in the research, working lives and imagination of archivists and audiences.

But they have specific needs for storage, preservation and processing and pose complex challenges for access and management. It is widely acknowledged, too that skills shortages are emerging both for analogue and digital processing and handling, understanding rights, and managing the pace of change.

The good news is that the sector is rising to the challenge.

*Archiving tomorrow 2015* brought together speakers from public and commercial archives, highlighting the need for funders to understand that commercial is a necessary activity; the potential for technology to transform what is kept and shared; and the urgency of transfer due to obsolescence and lack of equipment.<sup>1</sup>

There is an associated training programme, *ASSET*, to provide archive sector professionals with skills to unlock and preserve screen heritage, and strengthened digital and business skills to process and exploit content.<sup>2 3</sup>

In September, *Film Archives for the Future*, funded by Creative Skillset, hosted by Yorkshire Film Archive and the University of York, was the first in a series of training events and an excellent platform to learn about the key issues facing the sector: implications for

digital and analogue skills, professional development, technology and rights. More in the series coming soon...<sup>4 5 6</sup>

At the heart of sector collaboration is ARA's Film, Sound and Photography group, bringing people together to share knowledge and ideas, and provide support to those new to the profession and such specialist disciplines.

Look out for these and emerging schemes, aiming to support our capacity to preserve and make available these vital, inspiring collections.

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## Fleur Soper

Collections Knowledge Manager  
The National Archives

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[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector)

<sup>1</sup> FOCAL and Kes International, *Archiving tomorrow*, <http://www.focalint.org/focal-international-news/news/1942/archiving-tomorrow-archives-at-risk-2016-save-the-date>

<sup>2</sup> Archive Sector Enterprise Training [http://creativeskillset.org/cy/news\\_events/events/3905\\_asset\\_archive\\_sector\\_enterprise\\_training\\_kes\\_international](http://creativeskillset.org/cy/news_events/events/3905_asset_archive_sector_enterprise_training_kes_international)

<sup>3</sup> Creative Skillset <http://creativeskillset.org/>

<sup>4</sup> Film Archives for the Future <http://www.yorkshirefilmarchive.com/content/film-archives-future-training-programme>

<sup>5</sup> Yorkshire Film Archive <http://www.yorkshirefilmarchive.com/>

<sup>6</sup> University of York, Theatre, Film and TV department <http://www.york.ac.uk/tftv/>



# Thoughts from a first-time attendee at the ARA Conference

As a regular attendee of archives-related talks, launches and training days in Dublin over the past few years, I have become used to the general pattern of such events. You turn up, you realise you know (or know of) at least half the attendees, you talk to everyone about how they are getting on, you pick up some useful knowledge or insights that you can apply to your work, and in the evening you inevitably end up continuing the earlier chats over a few beverages in a public house on Dublin's south side.

So, was this year's ARA Conference, the first in Dublin since 1999, any different? The usual familiar faces from the Irish archives scene were there, but this time we were outnumbered by more than 200 archivists, conservators and records managers from all over England, Scotland, Wales and further afield. They were a welcome bunch. The chats were similar, but the perspectives more varied. I was impressed by new thinking emerging from initiatives such as 'Archives for the 21st Century' and the trusted digital repository in the University of Hull. More familiarly, there were still beverages in the evening.

It was the sessions on the moral and ethical dilemmas faced by archivists that I found most stimulating, particularly those which centred on the issues of access to sensitive or personal records. James King, Leah Benson, Kirsten Mulrennan, Niamh Brennan and Wesley Geddis articulated many such issues, drawing on their work relating to archives on either sides of the border in Ireland. A thought-provoking workshop run by Jessamy Carlson, Gary Brannan and Lizzy Baker on Thursday afternoon, meanwhile, made those present think about the need for

*“Another common theme which emerged in the conference was the need for us to be self-assured and advocate at every opportunity for our profession and sector.”*

some professional support for archivists who work with sensitive records.

Given that I am currently serving as Outreach Officer for the ARA Ireland, Jon Elliot and Isobel Hunter's session on 'Explore Your Archive and advocacy' provided me with a great store of ideas on how to become more 'activist' in promoting our sector. On Friday morning, Dara Price's talk on making Canada's government archives available showed how archives services can begin to solve previously intractable problems by taking an assertive stance.

The conference was an excellent social occasion and a great opportunity for networking. There were plenty of laughs too, not least when witnessing sore heads on Friday morning post-dancing.

My thanks to the ARA for providing me with a bursary which enabled me to attend the conference.

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**Fergus Brady**

Archivist, National Archives of Ireland

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Jon Elliot and Isobel Hunter. Photograph copyright Carrie Davenport for the ARA.



Thursday night dancing session. Photograph copyright Carrie Davenport for the ARA.





Drinks reception at the Royal College of Physicians, Dublin. Photograph copyright Carrie Davenport for the ARA.

# Conference 2015: overview from a first-time delegate

I have been a member of the ARA for nearly 15 years, but have never had the opportunity to attend the ARA Conference. I applied for an ARA bursary, and to my delight I was awarded one at first attempt. I was looking forward to hearing more about the role of the record keeper in the 21st century, and the balancing act between shrinking budgets and enhanced access, and legal compliance and Freedom of Information (FOI). For the first time, the conference included a digital preservation strand, and I had already pencilled in these sessions relevant to my current role.

A delayed start due to a fire at Dublin airport meant that I missed the opening session and keynote address. I arrived at coffee time (most welcome after such an early start!), and headed straight into the session examining the retention of personal data for historic and research purposes and human rights. Leah Benson, Archivist at the National Gallery of Ireland, examined the key concepts of privacy, access, consent, the right to research and legislation in her excellent paper on data protection legislation in Ireland. It covered the tensions between the privacy rights of the individual and

the rights to historical research, and how to accommodate them in the current legislative framework – relevant to both archivists and record managers. I also enjoyed the thought-provoking paper delivered by Julie Brooks, who discussed the different interpretations of information governance in a number of international organisations (ARMA, and the National Archives of Australia - NAA), and examined the differences between records management and information governance.

Simon Wilson presented an excellent and practical paper on the moral maze of liaising with depositors over born-digital archives, and cited the ARA Code of Ethics when creating deposit forms for born-digital material. The profession needs to retain its trusted status with depositors of born-digital material by demonstrating we can securely manage content in our digital repository. Perceptions of archival storage also need to change. Ian Song, Digital Initiatives Librarian at the Simon Fraser University Library in Canada, offered a technical case study on how to add associated metadata to digitised materials backed up in recognisable formats. This paper hinted at possible collaboration in



expertise between record keepers and the wider information management sector. The break-out sessions on teaching ethics, and Explore Your Archive, offered stimulating discussions on two important issues for the profession.

I also took the opportunity to attend a conservation session, something I would not be permitted to do in my place of work. I particularly enjoyed Caroline de Stefani's paper about conserving the Middlesex Session Rolls over the last 100 years, which offered an example of developments in conservation practices. The paper discussed the evolution of methods and treatments used on the session rolls, with excellent use of images and assessment criteria tables for each period.

The craic was alive and well as you would expect! Delegates were warmly welcomed by the Mayor of Dublin at a drinks reception at the Royal College of Physicians, and on the final evening, the gala dinner offered another opportunity to relax with fellow archivists, fortified with lovely food and wine. Throughout the conference, I was able to put faces to names and chat with acquaintances.

I thoroughly enjoyed my first ever conference, and would like to thank ARA for this opportunity to listen and contribute to thought-provoking sessions on important issues and practices within the sector, and to share these ideas with colleagues and researchers back in Stratford-upon-Avon. I'm already looking forward to the ARA Conference 2016 in London.

---

### **Helen Hargest**

Archives and Imaging Coordinator,  
Shakespeare Birthplace Trust

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Conservators at the reception at the Royal College of Physicians, Dublin. Photograph copyright Carrie Davenport for the ARA.



John Chambers, Ross Higgins, the Mayor of Dublin, and Andrew Nicoll. Photograph copyright Carrie Davenport for the ARA.



Caroline de Stefani. Photograph copyright Carrie Davenport for the ARA.



Rachael Muir and James Elder.  
Photograph copyright Carrie  
Davenport for the ARA.



# Why I am an archivist: a reminder from the ARA Conference

On finding out that I was next in turn amongst my colleagues to attend the ARA Conference, I was excited to say the least. However, on discovering that it was to be held in the beautiful city of Dublin, and that we would be dissecting the ethical and moral role of the archivist, well, it was fair to say I was raring to go! I would be attending with two hats on: that of an eager first-time delegate, as well as representing the ARA Section for Business Records, where I currently hold the position of secretary.

In the hope of making the most of my first conference, I spent many a lunch break poring over the programme of events, selecting those which would be useful back in the office, the sessions which were of a personal interest to me, as well as allocating time aside to actively promote business archives at the information marketplace. Many of the sessions on offer served as a reminder of how determined we are as a sector to be relevant and adaptable in the 21st century, with the inclusion of a digital preservation strand for the first time at the

conference certainly reflecting this. Of particular interest was a workshop led by Claire Tunstall from Unilever Archives about their own experience of implementing Preservica. It was a brilliant case study on how to set the wheels in motion, as well as how to embrace an issue that many of us would perhaps rather avoid. The workshop proved to be a practical session touching on challenges from the ingesting of oral histories to the interoperability of Preservica with other software - issues which I am sure every archive will encounter at some point. The daunting size of the task to preserve the business's electronic content was illustrated by the fact it was a project initially highlighted back in 2006, and is very much still in progress. However, rather than feel overwhelmed about the complexities of preserving electronic records, it was reassuring to hear of active digital preservation in a business archive context.

My time spent contemplating the successful work of business archives at the conference continued as I helped to co-ordinate a business archives stand at

the information marketplace. The marketplace provided delegates with an opportunity to speak to those in the digital and conservation trades, as well as getting advice on initiatives such as the ARA Registration Scheme. It was also the first time a stand focussing on business collections had been held collaboratively between the Section for Business Records and the Business Archives Council (BAC). This was a great opportunity for myself, and my work colleague and chair of BAC Mike Anson, to promote the work of both bodies as well as to network with those currently working with, or custodians of, business records, especially in Ireland. One of the most interesting discussions from the afternoon was the discovery that the Jacobs Biscuit Factory records are currently being catalogued as part of a large project at Dublin City Library and Archives - another historically-valuable business collection soon to be accessible.

As a delegate experiencing my first three-day conference, I was spoilt for choice over which sessions to choose from. I was fortunate to be able to attend a fascinating afternoon of discussion surrounding the managing of historical medical records in Ireland, with Kirsten Mulrennan providing food for thought by touching on the balancing act of the 'human right to privacy and societal rights to memory'. An illustration of how engaging this session was for delegates was perhaps best measured by the energised debate that followed in the question and answer session. This included discussions on both the digitisation and online publication of such sensitive records, as well as what we see as the rights of the deceased. However, perhaps most importantly the conference reminded me why I do what I do. Bruno Longmore, National Records of Scotland asked:



Business archives at the conference information marketplace. Photograph Copyright Mike Anson.



The information marketplace. Photograph copyright Carrie Davenport for the ARA.

'How do we know who we are?', whilst examining the moral imperatives of our sector. More often than not, the answer to this question lies in written records. What more of a reason do we need for performing our record-keeping roles to the best of our ability?

For further information about the BAC:

[www.businessarchivescouncil.org.uk](http://www.businessarchivescouncil.org.uk)

Twitter: @\_BusinessArch

[www.archives.org.uk/about/sections-interest-groups/business-records-group-brg.html](http://www.archives.org.uk/about/sections-interest-groups/business-records-group-brg.html)

Twitter: @ARABusinessrec

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### **Rachael Muir**

Assistant Archivist, Bank of England Archive

Secretary, ARA Section for Business Records

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# Are you open to the future?

Any museum director must surely envy the ability of her archival peers to generate revenue from their digital collections, and in a time of tight budgets the idea of 'collections which pay for themselves' is very seductive. All the more urgent to look ahead at a fast-changing landscape in which users visit websites in preference to search rooms. What are the costs to ourselves and our users of pursuing our current charging models and what would we like the future of digital collections to be?

**D**igitisation is generally linked to providing improved access to collections, but some users experience little improvement. It is tough luck for history students whose universities cannot afford access to Gale-Cengage's State Papers Online or ProQuest's Colonial State Papers. It is even tougher luck for independent researchers: neither site offers access to individual users. It is difficult to justify putting public records into online systems which the general public cannot use. It also suggests that we need to hold

these companies to firmer account since, in 2015, it is not difficult to build an online shopping cart. More worryingly, there is evidence that when family historians get their records from third party sites, they do not really understand where the information is coming from, and they do not much care. This can only erode archives' significance as institutions in the minds of the public.

Paywalls are also souring relations with scholars. Ancestry and Findmypast are not optimised for

use by professional historians, and their existence prevents provision of the same records in a form more useful to scholars, particularly the new generation of digital humanities researchers. Placing a lock on digitised records perforce restricts what can be done with them. It prevents certain forms of historical interpretation – an algorithm, after all, is merely an interpretation of some data. As academia becomes increasingly interested in open access publishing, they will ask, with growing vigour, what our excuse

is. Archives have never allowed historians unfettered access to collections, but those decisions are preservation decisions, linked to the best interests of documents. Decisions to make certain kinds of digital research impossible are based on other kinds of interests, which may in the future cause our publics to judge us harshly. For instance, The National Archives calls Domesday Book 'England's greatest treasure', and at £3.30 a folio they are not wrong. It is very difficult to defend charging to view such a significant text. The revenue involved is negligible, and the access embarrassingly restrictive, particularly when set alongside Anna Powell-Smith's brilliant Open Domesday website. Then there is the WWI crowdsourcing project Operation War Diary. It is hugely successful. However, is it right that users should be asked to donate their time to improve the metadata of records so they can be sold back to them? That is Facebook's business model, and may not be appropriate for the archival sector.

When these questions are put to institutions or funding bodies, the response is that to fund digitisation and give away the results (though this is public money) is not sustainable. Unfortunately, neither is the current model. Consider how a site like Operation War Diary works. To contribute, the user has to be freely shown the pay-walled document. Imagine a programme that puts a button in the user's browser. As they view the document they click it and the scan is uploaded to a server with all of its metadata. Soon a complete set of public war diary pages is available for free. This is not fiction. It is RECAP - a tool developed to harvest material from the PACER legal database in the

United States. Sites like Ancestry have millions of users who could capture records and briskly bring an archive's revenue stream to nothing. What is surprising is that this has not already happened.

So if in the future there may be nothing to sell, we need to consider new digitisation models. Archives have made huge strides with open metadata. Now we need to move to open documents. Our users can help. Every day, in archives worldwide, readers digitise huge quantities of documents. Although systems like Discovery represent a technical quantum leap towards being able to ingest that material, we are no nearer the vision of collecting those images for one very simple reason - namely that they would have to be free. It is clearly impossible to collect images from researchers and then charge them to access them. Digital historians like Mia Ridge have already considered what such a system, a 'participatory commons' could be like. Certainly, such a records infrastructure would be able to support a huge range of truly user led projects. Tentative steps in this direction already exist in projects such as Marinelives or Yarn. But without open data these projects have no documents to work on.

The cost of not collecting images from users is that the same pages are digitised repeatedly - by researchers, archives or private companies. The irony of some of the deals archives are signing is that they might be unnecessary - their users might have the whole lot at home and may indeed be sharing it online with everyone except archivists. As the computer scientist Greg Wilson has warned, the opposite of 'open' is not 'closed'. It is 'irrelevant'. So we need to roll up

“ *The opposite of 'open' is not 'closed'. It is irrelevant.* ”  
Greg Wilson

our sleeves and rebalance the scales within our organisations: identify open projects with the same avidity as paid ones, find new partners who are inspired by our open approaches and to look beyond our sector at the crowdfunding achievements of libraries and museums. You might scoff at the idea that significant revenue can be generated from donations. However, as Corey Doctorow has so astutely pointed out, nobody today needs to pay for music yet iTunes gets along fine.

Fundamentally, public records are too important to be left languishing in digital bank vaults. An open future is coming. We will need new systems and structures if we are going to be prepared to meet it.

---

**Joseph Pugh**

PhD Student, University of York

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# Section for Film, Sound and Photography - a Word from the Chair

We hope you enjoy this special edition of ARC featuring the work of members of the Section for Film, Sound and Photography, and that it goes some way towards illustrating the range and value of these types of records, and the many ways they can be made accessible.

If you have a particular question or issue relating to film, video, audio or photographic items in your collections, or if you just do not know where to start with identifying and dealing with them, the Section for Film, Sound and Photography can help. There are a range of useful resources on our pages on the ARA website. Alternatively, you can contact us by sending an email [tofspg@archives.org.uk](mailto:tofspg@archives.org.uk) or via Twitter @ARAFSPG. If we cannot answer your question ourselves, we will do our best to find somebody who can.

---

**Jim Ranahan**

Chairman, Section for Film Sound and  
Photography

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# Tame goats and cloned sheep

The oral history of animal genetics in Edinburgh

Oral histories perform many functions. They can capture information missing from printed records, highlight alternative or marginalised histories and engage directly with communities. The animal genetics oral histories recently recorded at Edinburgh University Library Special Collections are a blend of all these things, but they were originally inspired by voices from half a century ago.

Since 2012, thanks to the Wellcome Trust's Research Resources funding scheme, the Library has hosted two consecutive projects to catalogue and preserve the printed and archival collections charting the development of animal genetics in Edinburgh. Covering animal breeding in the late nineteenth century through to cutting-edge cloning and stem cell research, these collections have required historical investigation as well as engagement with current science practitioners. As rich as the written material is, there are missing voices and incomplete stories. However, one valuable collection has been able to fill some of these gaps.

Between 1969 and 1971, the University's Science Studies Unit recorded eleven scientists who pioneered genetics research in Edinburgh at the beginning of the twentieth century. Among those recorded were Francis Crew, who established Edinburgh's international genetics reputation and whose experiences in early genetics and medicine span both world wars; and Charlotte Auerbach, who fled Nazi Germany to pioneer the study of chemical mutagens such as mustard gas. These recordings provide detailed, animated and sometimes controversial information about the first 20 or so years of genetics in Edinburgh, about which little documentary evidence survives (Crew himself provides a clue as to why this might be, as he recalls the tame goat which he trained to consume all his pesky official correspondence).

It soon became clear that we needed to provide the 'second chapter' to these recordings. The last half century has seen major scientific advances such as molecular biology, genomics, stem cell technology and regenerative medicine: Edinburgh has been a world leader in these areas, and we wanted to capture individual stories and perspectives. With the help of Professor Grahame Bulfield (our academic project adviser as well as former director of the Roslin Institute at the time Dolly the sheep was cloned), contact was made with several senior scientists, including Professor Sir Ian Wilmut (Chair of the MRC Scottish Centre for

[www.archives.org.uk](http://www.archives.org.uk)





Grahame Bulfield and Ian Wilmut in conversation

Regenerative Medicine), Professor Sir Adrian Bird (University Buchanan Professor of Genetics) and Professor Nick Hastie (Director of the Institute of Genetics and Molecular Medicine). Grahame chaired the interviews whilst I was on technical duties (apart from on two occasions when I led the interviews myself). The interviews ran to around two hours each and followed a chronological, biographical approach. Interviewees were encouraged to speak freely, with the possibility of later redactions. Topics covered include science in the media and public eye (such as Professor Sir Ian Wilmut recalling the extraordinary public and political reaction to Dolly the sheep) the future of science (Professor Sir Adrian Bird describing the potential for modern gene modelling to reverse degenerative conditions); the influence of funding, visiting groups, and politics; and also how different schools and disciplines work together. While Grahame's position as former boss of many of those interviewed could be viewed as a methodological issue, his scientific and personal knowledge enabled him to establish a rapport and gain specific information which might otherwise have escaped us.

Curating these oral histories, both old and new, presents some particular challenges. The historic recordings exist in digital format taken from an originally analogue source (files extracted from CDs made from cassette tapes made from old reel-to-reels), while the new recordings are born-digital. We identified the 'golden copy' of each recording, assigned accession and reference numbers, and provided an EAD description via our cataloguing and collections management database, ArchivesSpace.

Digital recordings are migrated to a bespoke area of the Library's secure server designed for audiovisual and image content. This has required liaising with our Digital Preservation Curator to conduct integrity checks before and after migration, investigating crosswalks for different metadata, and exploring ways to link the archive catalogue to digital content. Pending the successful return of release forms, we hope to make all of these recordings freely and publicly available online. We recorded nine interviews in all, but there is the potential to carry out a larger project which could expand in scope to

redress the gender and age balance. Together, these recordings reveal often overlooked details about how institutions, geographical location and working cultures impact on science, as well as personal stories and asides (like Crew's goat) which so rarely survive in official documents. Working alongside archival and printed collections, oral histories show that the story of science is a human one, with many voices, disagreements and revelations.

#### Clare Button

Project Archivist, Edinburgh University Library Special Collections

'Towards Dolly: Edinburgh, Roslin and the Birth of Modern Genetics' and 'The Making of Dolly: Science, Politics and Ethics' are funded by the Wellcome Trust's Research Resources scheme.

<http://libraryblogs.is.ed.ac.uk/towardsdolly/>  
<http://www.archives.lib.ed.ac.uk/towardsdolly/>  
<http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/>

With thanks to Professor Grahame Bulfield and to all who took part in the recordings.



Charlotte Auerbach

# SOIMA 2015 and online learning

*“We only have until 2028 to save our audio-visual heritage”*

This was a stark message which Chris Lacinak brought to the Sound and Image Collections Conservation (SOMIA) conference in Brussels in September, during his keynote speech, entitled ‘The Cost of Inaction’. He was referring specifically to audio and video recordings, but could equally have included cinefilm, as film labs close and digital production takes over. By 2028 it is estimated that the means and expertise to play back these media will no longer exist, and any new technology developments, such as 3D printing of equipment, will be too complicated, expensive and too late for most archives. The items themselves are also physically degrading, so action needs to be taken now to digitise the contents for preservation and access.

Debra Hess Norris gave an equally stark message in her keynote speech regarding photographic collections. ‘Collections are threatened by inadequate environmental

conditions, poor management, improper housing and handling, natural and man-made emergencies, and inherent instability.’ Although she offered hope by illustrating conservation and preservation work being undertaken in many countries.

These were just two sessions in a conference which attracted 140 delegates from around the world. The main theme was ‘Unlocking Sound and Image Heritage’ which, as we know, must follow conservation and copying for widespread access. The conference was organised by ICCROM - the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property. It set up the SOIMA programme - a ‘priority area’ - to address the challenges of sound and image collections conservation in cultural institutions where such materials are not their primary holdings, and lack the necessary competencies in dealing with them. SOIMA provides conservation training for ‘mid-career professionals’ responsible for looking after these collections, helping them to recognise the risks to these vulnerable materials, make informed choices for their preservation and access, and communicate effectively - across disciplines - the value of these archives and advocate for their effective treatment.







Copyright courtesy of KIK IRPA



Copyright courtesy of KIK IRPA

Apart from annual conferences (which are preceded by workshops), SOIMA offers short, intense courses (3-4 weeks) hosted by various countries, involving AV archive specialists. There is a useful resources area on the ICCROM website: <http://www.iccrom.org/resources/>.

The conference identified a need for a directory to bring education and training courses available across the world to a wide audience. As delegates from the University of Dundee, it occurred to photographic conservator Susie Clark and myself that our online distance learning course – Sound and Vision - complemented the work of SOIMA very well. This course is an optional module offered by the Centre for Archive and Information Management

at Dundee within a growing number of short courses in archives, records management and digital preservation. Their masters programme includes specialised courses in AV archives and oral history which are taken by students wishing to be professional archivists, and those wanting to specialise in or already working in those fields can take single courses or modules as CPD. The Sound and Vision module now incorporates photography and has been studied by people across the world, as well as in the UK, since 2008. The advantage of such a 15 week course is that it can be studied anywhere from a computer and provides education and training by means of suggested reading, case studies, videos, tasks, assignments, discussion boards and weblinks, via a carefully constructed virtual learning environment aimed at guiding the student through the morass of information and jargon out there. See <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/cais/> for more details.

Clearly, the ability of online courses to reach a wide audience quickly and efficiently is the way forward, if the Cost of Inaction is to be addressed.

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### David Lee

Honorary Teaching Fellow

Centre for Archive and Information Management, School of Humanities, University of Dundee

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# Registration of Photographs for Copyright Protection at Stationers' Hall

Insight into the processes of early copyright registration of photographs

This all began a while back whilst I was replying to an enquiry received at The National Archives concerning the supposed registration of a photograph for copyright protection at Stationers' Hall that was prior to the Fine Arts Copyright Act of 1862.

Registration at Stationers' Hall had been a condition of protection in all copyright legislation since 1709. An Act of 1842 covered books both literary and commercial with a copyright term of 42 years from publication or for the life of the author plus seven years, whichever should prove the longer. The wording of the Act: "...to literary matter of lasting benefit to the world", suggested limited application despite the subjectivity of lasting benefit.

With the development and growing popularity of photography in the second half of the nineteenth century, the question of copyright protection for photographs became an issue. Could a photograph be considered fine art? The case *for* argued the considerable expenditure of time, labour and money photography involved, as well as the reluctance of photographers to exhibit their work in the absence of any protection. Eventually the Solicitor-General steered a bill through the House of Commons and the resulting Fine Arts Copyright Act 1862 saw photographs and artworks given copyright protection under statutory law for the first time - at least this was my understanding.

The Stationers' Hall registers covering 1842 to 1924 are now held at The

National Archives. Over the past eight years a substantial part of my time has been spent cataloguing the photographic material subsequently entered under the 1862 Act. But with my interest piqued by the enquiry I had received, I began to work my way through those earlier registers covering books literary and commercial.

There was a lot of interesting material, with books and journals covering photographic techniques and processes, such as *Photographic Manual No 1 – plain directions for obtaining photographic pictures by the Calotype and Energiatype Processes*, published by Thomas Willats and registered on 14 March 1845. Thomas and Richard Willats of 98 Cheapside were leading scientific instrument makers and keen photographers.

I knew that entries for maps could be found in the registers, but I also found entries for lithographic prints such as a *Panoramic view of Birmingham*, published by Ackermann & Company and registered by John Henry Banks on 24 April 1847. Then, whilst working my way through a register covering 1857<sup>1</sup> I came across an entry registered on 2 June 1857 by James Elliott of 48 Piccadilly, described as *A Morning Call. 1 to 30 Photographic Slides*. Elliott was a professional photographer who ran a number of London studios. A little later appeared the well-known studio of Negretti & Zambra who registered *The Royal Visitors at the Handel Festival, Crystal Palace – Photographic Slides Nos 1 to 14* on the 18 June 1857, and so on.

Like Fox Talbot's *The Pencil of Nature*, privately published in six parts

between June 1844 and April 1846, a number of books comprising folios with pasted photographic plates were published. This blurs the line between registering a book for copyright protection and registering photographs in their own right. But it appears that at least as early as 1857, professional photographers had begun to make use of the 1842 Act to protect their work - five years prior to the passing of the 1862 Fine Arts Copyright Act.

The copyright process consisted of the copyright proprietor filling in an entry form, and for many of the entries made under the Fine Arts Copyright Act 1862, a copy of the photograph was annexed to the form. Looking at the entry forms for the earlier above entries I was disappointed but not surprised to see that there were no photographs annexed to entry forms. There was an obligation to provide complimentary copies of publications to copyright libraries, but enquiries at the British Library to see if any copies of the photographs registered before 1862<sup>2</sup> had been submitted met with no success.

If anyone reading this has information or any thoughts that may throw more light on early copyright registration of photographs under statutory law, I would be very pleased to hear from them.

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**Steven Cable**

Photographic Records Specialist  
The National Archives

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<sup>1</sup> The National Archives' document ref: COPY 3/9/109

<sup>2</sup> The National Archives' document ref: COPY 3/9/116

# Audio preservation and oral history at the British Library

Emily Hewitt reports back from the 'Save Our Sounds' survey and informs of new training opportunities for oral history resources.

We can all appreciate that sound recordings are of high historical value to archives, as they document the UK's creative endeavours, key moments in history, personal memories and local and regional identities. The British Library's Sound Archive holds a collection of over 6.5 million audio-visual recordings on over 1.5 million physical carriers, in more than 40 different formats, covering the spoken word and interviews, performances, music and wildlife and environmental sounds, from the 1880s to the present day. The Library's collections, along with hundreds of thousands of sound holdings across the UK, face a real and immediate threat from the degradation of physical media and as the means of playing them become obsolete and disappear from production.

In January 2015 in an attempt to mitigate this threat, the British Library launched a new initiative titled Save Our Sounds. A key part of this programme is to preserve as much as possible of the nation's rare and unique sound recordings, not just those in the Library's collection but also key items from sound collections across the UK. With a generous grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund in May 2015, the British Library has received £9.5 million in ear-marked funding for Save Our Sounds to help in this mission to save the nation's sounds and provide worldwide access to them online.

As part of the development phase for Save Our Sounds, project researchers Adam Tovell and James Knight conducted a survey of recorded sound collections in the UK in order to further understand the extent of the preservation needs for sound heritage. The aim of this survey was to gather information on the number of items existing in collections held across the UK, their formats, the subject areas covered, their uniqueness and their status of digital preservation, copyright, access and description. Between January and May 2015, Adam and James collected information on 3015 collections, from 488 collection holders, with collections totalling 1,870,946 items. Further information about the Save Our Sounds project and full



A selection of audio recording formats at the British Library. © Clare Kendall, British Library.



AV archive stores at the British Library. © Clare Kendall, British Library



Oral history interview at the British Library - Sarah O'Reilly interviewing Dame Penelope Lively for 'Authors' Lives'. © Elizabeth Hunter, British Library.



results of the 2015 survey can be found online.<sup>1</sup> The British Library would like to thank all collection holders for generously contributing their time to complete the survey.

Due to the time constraints under which the survey was conducted, its results cannot be deemed fully comprehensive, but the impressive number of returns give an indication of the subjects of recorded sound collections extant in the UK, and an indication of the requirements for their preservation. Oral history was the largest single subject area reported by collection holders, with 36% of the 3015 collections described as containing oral history recordings.

In addition to the threat of disappearing technologies, the management of audio recordings in archives can be resource-intensive, and present challenges such as the negotiation of the complex areas of the ethical and legal implications of providing access to these collections. This sentiment has also been recognised by the Oral History Society Archives Sub-Committee, and members Elspeth Millar, Craig Fees and Andrew Flinn led a workshop at the ARA Conference in 2014, to canvass the feelings of fellow archivists. The workshop was well attended and those who attended noted that there was little training available on the specific area of archival management of oral history material.

In light of this feedback from the conference, and the identification of the large number of oral history collections across archives in the UK from the 2015 survey, the British Library and Oral History Society training liaison group have added a new training course to their existing training programme entitled Archival Management of Oral History Collections. It is an exciting prospect, not least because this course will be run in conjunction with the Archives and Records Association.

The first training course takes place on the 30th October 2015 at the British Library, covering the practical, technical and ethical issues around the selection, collection and description of oral history and other recorded personal testimony and spoken word on multiple audio-visual formats. It will also explore opportunities that oral history-based partnerships offer archives for community engagement.

We were overwhelmed by the response for the course and look forward to welcoming and receiving feedback from fellow colleagues in October; we hope to run further courses in 2016 to meet demand. Further information about the course can be found on the Oral History Society website<sup>2</sup>, and we hope to include a feature about how it went on the British Library's Sound and Vision blog<sup>3</sup>.

Twitter: @BL\_OralHistory #SaveOurSounds

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### Emily Hewitt

Assistant Archivist, National Life Stories & Oral History, British Library

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.bl.uk/projects/uk-sound-directory>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ohs.org.uk/training/archival-management-of-oral-history-collections/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/sound-and-vision/>

# Records of public information films in The National Archives

The National Archives is not a specialist film archive and our collections do not include any films or videos in analogue formats. We do, however, hold some records of central government's interest and involvement in film production and distribution. In particular, the fonds for records of the Central Office of Information and its predecessor bodies (reference code INF) contains several relevant series of paper records.

- INF 5: Files of the Crown Film Unit (1936-1954). Some of these are about individual productions; others are more general administrative files
- INF 6: Film production documents (1937-1997). The contents of these files vary but they often include commissioning letters, contracts, shot lists and scripts
- INF 15: Manuscript music scores from selected films (1958-1973)
- INF 17: Correspondence files of the Empire Film Library, subsequently the GPO Film Library (1931-1951).

All of these series are catalogued to file level in our online catalogue, Discovery.

We also hold some digital copies of a selection of government-sponsored films. This collection was curated in 2006 to mark the 60th anniversary of the Central Office of Information, and forms record series INF 32. It contains some of the best-known public information films, including the post-war 'Coughs and sneezes spread diseases' and road safety campaign films from the 1970s featuring Tufty the Squirrel and the Green Cross Code man. As well as being catalogued individually in Discovery, all of the films in INF 32 are available to view on our website.

The British Film Institute (BFI) holds several thousand analogue films on behalf of The National Archives that were produced or sponsored by government departments and have the legal status of public records. These are described in the BFI's online catalogue along with its other collections. We are now working with colleagues at the BFI to make descriptions of the public record films searchable in Discovery too. Crown Film Unit productions and National Coal Board films have been selected as pilots for this work and we will be adding descriptions of them to Discovery in the coming months. These will be cross-referenced to the BFI catalogue and to information about how researchers can access the films.

Many more records held at TNA have a bearing on the history of film and cinema. Two podcasts by Jo Pugh exploring this topic – 'The National Archives goes to the movies' and 'The last thing we need is a sequel' – are available on our website.

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### Andrew Janes

Senior Archivist, Cataloguing and Taxonomy Team, The National Archives

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# Have cameras, will travel: photography and film at Tate Archive

Tate Britain is coming to the end of a Heritage Lottery Funded project to digitise and upload online 52,000 pieces from around 80 collections held by Tate Archive. These pieces were chosen from the collections of artists from all parts of the UK, in a variety of formats including letters, sketchbooks, registers, diaries, artworks and photographs.

The digitised items that might be of most interest to readers of this special issue of *ARC* relate to photography and film. One of the revelations of this project has been the outstanding quality of the photographs kept in negatives in many artists' collections. These photographs have many overlapping functions, not all of them intended by their creators. The artists themselves made photographs for three primary reasons. First, artists, like the rest of us, took snaps of family, friends, special occasions and on holidays - it's just that their snaps tend to feature the likes of Pablo Picasso and Henry Moore. Secondly, in the days before spreadsheets and databases, photograph albums served as visual registers of works before they were sent to dealers, buyers and exhibitions.



Agar, Man Ray



Finally, and perhaps most traditionally, artists took photographs for use in their own work. British Impressionist Henry Scott Tuke, famous for his sunlit seascapes of nudes in boats, used photos to fix complicated poses or register the play of light and wind on water. Paul Nash, Eileen Agar and Nigel Henderson, who could all in their different ways be classed as British surrealists, took photographs of natural forms, urban back alleys or whimsical groupings of objects which they then re-processed as collages, paintings or Henderson's 'stressed' photographs, images deliberately distorted during the printing process. However, these exceptionally vivid source photographs - Agar's anthropomorphic rock formations in Brittany; Nash's dead trees in the Home Counties re-imagined as beached monsters; Henderson's post-war London East End - are increasingly valued in their own right, exhibited, published, studied and even sold by art dealers.

The cinema was such a social and popular medium for most of the last century, and had such a decisive influence on artists, that it is no surprise to find its presence scattered throughout the collections in Tate Archive. Cinephiles can find photographs of experimental film-makers Man Ray, Len Lye and Jean Cocteau, and a self-portrait sketch with a familiar-looking mouse by animator Charles 'Joe' Noble, while the letters of Jacob Epstein describe the sculptor working on busts of directors Gabriel Pascal and Jill Balcon, and the actress Anna Neagle. On a more humble level, Josef Herman's expressionist record of a South Wales mining village includes a rare illustration of leisure, with an audience waiting in front of a blank cinema screen. A gaping audience watching Westerns in a thumbnail sketch by Klaus Hinrichsen is even more desperate for escape – they are four of the 'enemy aliens' rounded up by Churchill in July 1940 and placed in internment camps.

There are two collections, or at least substantial parts of two collections, dealing more specifically with film as an art form. The letters of Marie Seton to her protégée, the sculptor Ronald Moody, document at length and in detail her friendships with and biographies of pioneer film directors Sergei Eisenstein and Satyajit Ray, and legendary singer and actor Paul Robeson, with whom she worked in the African-American civil rights movement; her involvement with the Academy Cinema, the first place in the UK to show many of the classics of world cinema; and her work for the Indian Government developing film societies and education. Perhaps Seton's most powerful letter records a screening of Alain Resnais' famous concentration camp documentary, *Night and Fog*, which she watched with a German audience in 1956.



Agar, Plouman'ach



Tuke, Tom White posing on Newport beach

“After the war, hunger for escapism continued into the age of austerity, as proved by Henderson’s photographs of audiences queuing outside cinemas, and posters blaring the latest Hollywood exotica against the blitzed and derelict streets of Tower Hamlets.”



Herman

The one real film-maker whose collection has been digitised is Ian Breakwell. ‘Film-maker’ is a woefully inadequate descriptor for a man who was the very definition of a multi-media artist. His films were usually screened in the context of events that also combined some permutation of performance, sound, slide projection, painting, print-making and sculpture. His notebooks burst with ideas for realised and unrealised projects. The best documented of all his films is *The Institution*. Breakwell was a member of the Artist Placement Group, which sought to attach participants to government departments or businesses in order to produce more socially engaged work. Breakwell worked with the Department of Health and Social Security in several psychiatric hospitals, and produced, with musician Kevin Coyne, a 1971 performance piece, a report criticising the structure of care in such institutions, and a 1978 film. The archive includes scripts and treatments, photographs and transcripts of the performance at Alexandra Palace, stills, posters and several logistical documents.

Most of the items discussed above are already available to consult online at [www.tate.org.uk/art/archive](http://www.tate.org.uk/art/archive)

#### **Darragh O'Donoghue**

Subject Index Manager, Transforming Tate Britain:  
Archives & Access project



Nash, “Lon-Gom-Pa”



# Digitisation of audio-visual material at the Modern Records Centre

The Modern Records Centre is a repository at the University of Warwick specialising in sources for modern social, political and economic history, particularly the national history of industrial relations, industrial politics and labour history. Over the years we have received (and continue to receive) a lot of audio-visual material, usually among deposits or donations mainly consisting of paper records.

Many of these items are sound recordings of interviews of trade unionists, employers and others conducted as part of academic research projects in the 1970s and 1980s. There are also recordings of meetings and discussions, films and videos made for campaigning, propaganda and historical purposes, and the odd (sometimes very odd) piece of music and drama. The following items illustrate the diversity of the material:

- the original recordings of dictation by Richard Crossman for his controversial *Diaries of a cabinet minister*;
- the reminiscences of Harry Wicks, a leading British Trotskyist;
- interviews with twenty-six social work pioneers;
- a war-time propaganda film on industrial production (see fig.1);
- a mock game show satirising the privatisation of public services;
- an animal cartoon on seafarers' rights (see fig.2);
- unedited interviews shot for a video history of the Grunwick strike (see fig.3);
- 'Confessions of a socialist', a theatre production at Skegness;



Fig 1. Still from Our film made at Denham Film Studios to promote industrial efficiency and "Anglo-Soviet Unity and Victory over Fascism", 1942 (ref. MSS.233/12)

- a single by Acker Bilk and his Paramount Jazz Band used to recruit workers to the National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives (see fig.4);
- 'Bicycle boogie' (don't ask).

We realised that this was an under-used and potentially vulnerable resource so in 2011 we conducted a detailed survey to find out exactly what we had. This revealed that we then held 1403 sound recordings, 679 videos and 47 cine films. These were in 16 different formats, only four of which (audio cassette, compact disc, VHS

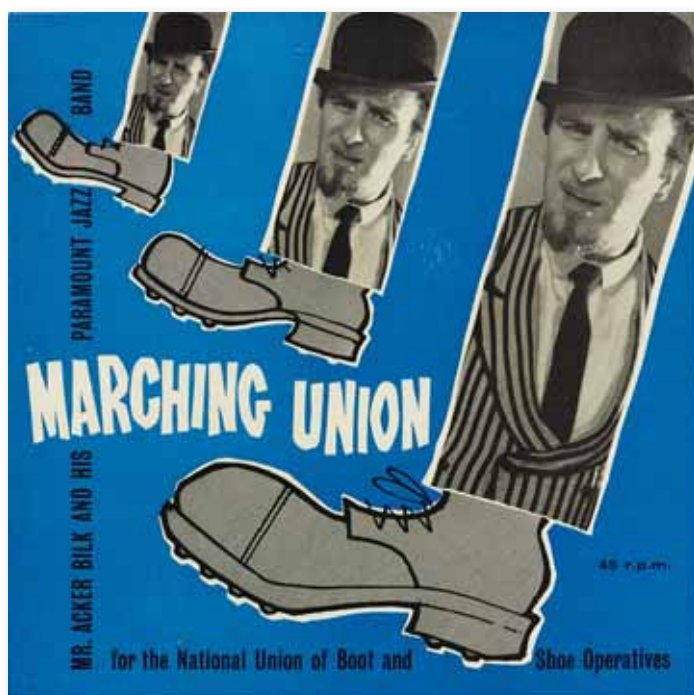


Fig 4. Sleeve of Marching Union by Acker Bilk and his Paramount Jazz Band, 1960s (ref. 597/100)

## Speaking archives! Sound recordings from our holdings.




Highlights		Catalogue links
	<b>A veteran Trotskyist remembers: interviews with Harry Wicks</b> A stalwart of the left recalls his Battersea childhood, the General Strike, his experiences in the Soviet Union and with Trotsky in Copenhagen.	Click on the links below to find catalogue descriptions of various types of sound recording in our holdings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Interviews and reminiscences</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Speeches and discussions</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Training</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Music and drama</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Diaries</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Broadcasts</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Ceremonies</a></li> </ul> Most of the recordings are on vulnerable formats such as cassette tapes.  In 2011 we began the long process of digitising them in order to preserve them and make them more accessible.  You can listen to the digitised recordings direct from the catalogue.
	<b>The Minister speaks: the diaries of Richard Crossman</b> Tales of strife and exhilaration in government, musings on the universe and a meeting with influential Israelis, 1964-1970.	
	<b>Social workers speak out</b> Twenty-six interviews with the pioneers of a profession.	

Fig.5 Part of the web page showcasing our sound recordings.



Fig.3 Mrs Jayaben Desai, former strike leader (still from video interview for The Great Grunwick Strike, 1976-1978 - a history produced by Chris Thomas for Brent Trades Union Council), 2007 (ref. 803/20A).

“ One of the advantages of converting information into digital files is that access to it is no longer dependent on the use of its original carrier. ”



Fig.2 Extract from preview in the ITF seafarers' bulletin of A seafarer's tale, a cartoon promoting the International Transport Workers' Federation campaign against flags of convenience (Animage Films Limited), 1998 (ref. MSS.159/12/26).

and DVD video) were playable in house. As most of the material was also in the form of inherently unstable signals on magnetic tape, it was clear that digitisation was essential to enhance both preservation and access.

Since the survey we have been sending annual batches of recordings to external audio-visual digitisation specialists. For each recording they have produced a preservation copy, in which all of the original information has been preserved, and an access copy in a compressed format. Wherever possible we have of course obtained the copyright holders'

consent to this process and to the subsequent wider dissemination of the recordings.

Because we can only make relatively slow progress with digitising such a large volume of material we have had to decide which items to prioritise. The criteria for this have naturally included the items' potential research value and general interest, their uniqueness, the absence of transcripts (although these can themselves be digitised as a useful adjunct to the recordings) and whether the original is still easily usable. Unfortunately in a few cases the original



signals have been found to be beyond rescue even by technical wizardry, and there have been quite a few less serious examples of poor recording quality. These seem to be mainly down to rudimentary and inexpertly-used recording equipment, but the passage of time may already have caused deterioration and in many cases it certainly will in the long run. This underlines the importance of preserving the best of what we have as quickly as we can.

We have exploited this by making all the digitised recordings available via their descriptions in our on-line catalogues and presenting selected films and videos and sound extracts, with supporting information, on our website (see fig. 5). Some of these have been added to the on-line resources we have produced for students studying particular undergraduate modules.

Most of these recordings can broadly be described as being of academic or general interest, but last year we were reminded that some could also have personal value when the son of a trade unionist in the motor industry contacted us after hearing the digitised recording of his father. It was, he wrote, “particularly poignant for me, not just because my father died fourteen years ago, but because he had a tracheotomy in 1983 and was afterwards only able to speak with great difficulty. My children never heard his natural voice. Now we can all hear him.”

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**M Sanders**

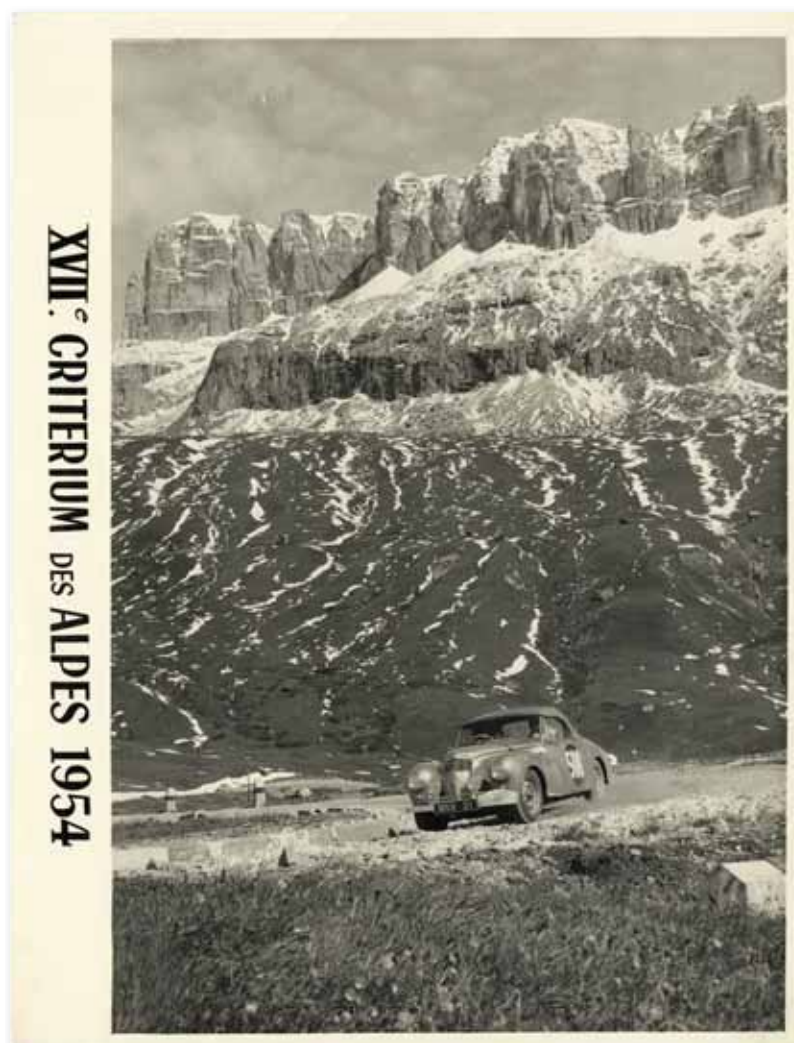
University of Warwick

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# Digitisation Project in the City of Cars

Housed at Coventry History Centre at The Herbert Art Gallery and Museum is the Rootes Photographic Collection. The Rootes Group were a motor manufacturer and distributor founded by members of the Rootes family. It existed from the 1920s-1960s before being taken over by Chrysler and shortly after by Peugeot.

Funding of £87,000 was awarded by Arts Council England in 2014 to digitise and preserve the material. For The Herbert this is its first large-scale digitisation project. Previously any digitisation of material has been carried out sporadically to create imagery for specific events or promotional material.



1954 Alpine Rally, Stirling Moss



Left to Right, Sir William Rootes, Mr Brian Rootes, Mr Geoffrey Rootes

However, this project aimed to digitise the Rootes Photographic Collection and make it more accessible for the public to enjoy. A long term goal is to create a website to showcase these images. The photographs are an important resource for Coventry residents, ex-Rootes employees, social historians and motor enthusiasts. As part of the awarded funding I was hired as the Digitisation Trainee in March 2015 for one year. This is my first job after graduating from the MA Photographic History course at De Montfort University, and as a trainee I receive ongoing training in image capture, cataloguing, conservation, volunteer management and community engagement. I have been encouraged to work independently and to problem solve. I will also attend external training days on archive skills, photograph conservation and digitisation.

There are approximately 26,000 photographic prints, 130 photograph albums and 70,000 glass plate negatives and acetate negatives. The photographs document the design, manufacturing and advertising of Rootes Group vehicles across the UK and globally. The collection highlights how photography as a medium has been adopted within the motoring industry.

Unfortunately a large proportion of the acetate negatives have Vinegar Syndrome. The conservator and project team have been in discussions over how to handle this part of the collection. All of the negatives are currently

held at The Coventry Transport Museum which is the Herbert's sister museum. It has been decided that the acetate negatives should be left at The Transport Museum and the glass plate negatives brought over to The Herbert for processing. Ultimately the acetate negatives should be frozen to halt the progression of the Vinegar Syndrome, however, the existing funding does not stretch this far.

One of my responsibilities as a trainee has been to manage a pool of volunteers. I have devised work for the volunteers to carry out which includes organising photographs, cataloguing and digitising. None of the material had previously been catalogued and this project was the prime opportunity to do so. The photographs have an original reference number which match up with their corresponding negative. At one time the photographs had been organised thematically across 160 boxes. The task now for volunteers is to reorder the photographs numerically within their individual boxes and identify duplicates, with the intention of reducing duplication within the digitisation process as much as possible. I have made a selection of boxes for an initial round of cataloguing and digitising.

Currently I am creating content for an exhibition at both The Herbert and Coventry Transport Museum. The exhibition will be in 'pop-up' form and will be made available to local community outlets after it has been on



display in an exhibition space. It will be on view during the spring and will make use of the Rootes photographic material as well as objects and vehicles from the transport collections.

Additionally, a series of events and community engagement sessions have been developed for this project. In July, motoring historian and journalist Geoff Caverhill gave a talk on the history of Rootes using photographs from the collection, and many ex-Rootes employees attended it. They brought enthusiasm, and were a fountain of knowledge themselves. We plan to invite them back to create oral history recordings.

By this point the project has reached its half-way mark. I have successfully digitised more than 30 company minute books and I am making steady progress with digitising the photographic prints and a selection of albums. The conservation work on the glass plate negatives has begun and they will be ready for digitisation soon. It was never going to be possible to complete all of the work within the one year time period. However, a real effort has been made to get the ball rolling and to make progress in all areas. Being a trainee has been difficult at times but also very rewarding because I gained skills which will serve me well in my next job and throughout my career. Most importantly I have learned that a project rarely runs smoothly and there are many obstacles to overcome but it can still be successful.

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**Francesca Issatt,**

Rootes Digitisation Trainee  
The Herbert Art Gallery and Museum

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# The photographic excavations of

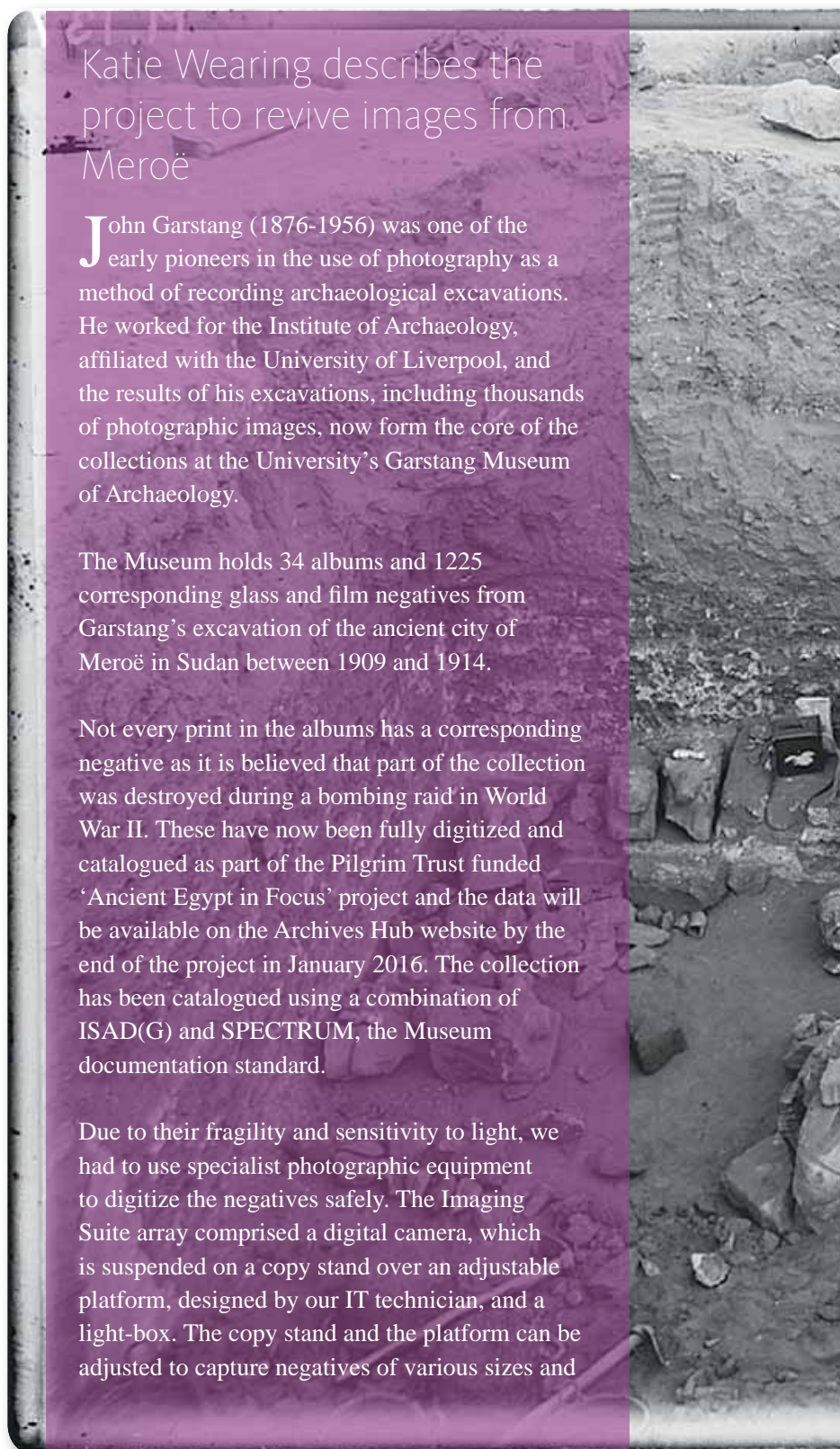
Katie Wearing describes the project to revive images from Meroë

**J**ohn Garstang (1876-1956) was one of the early pioneers in the use of photography as a method of recording archaeological excavations. He worked for the Institute of Archaeology, affiliated with the University of Liverpool, and the results of his excavations, including thousands of photographic images, now form the core of the collections at the University's Garstang Museum of Archaeology.

The Museum holds 34 albums and 1225 corresponding glass and film negatives from Garstang's excavation of the ancient city of Meroë in Sudan between 1909 and 1914.

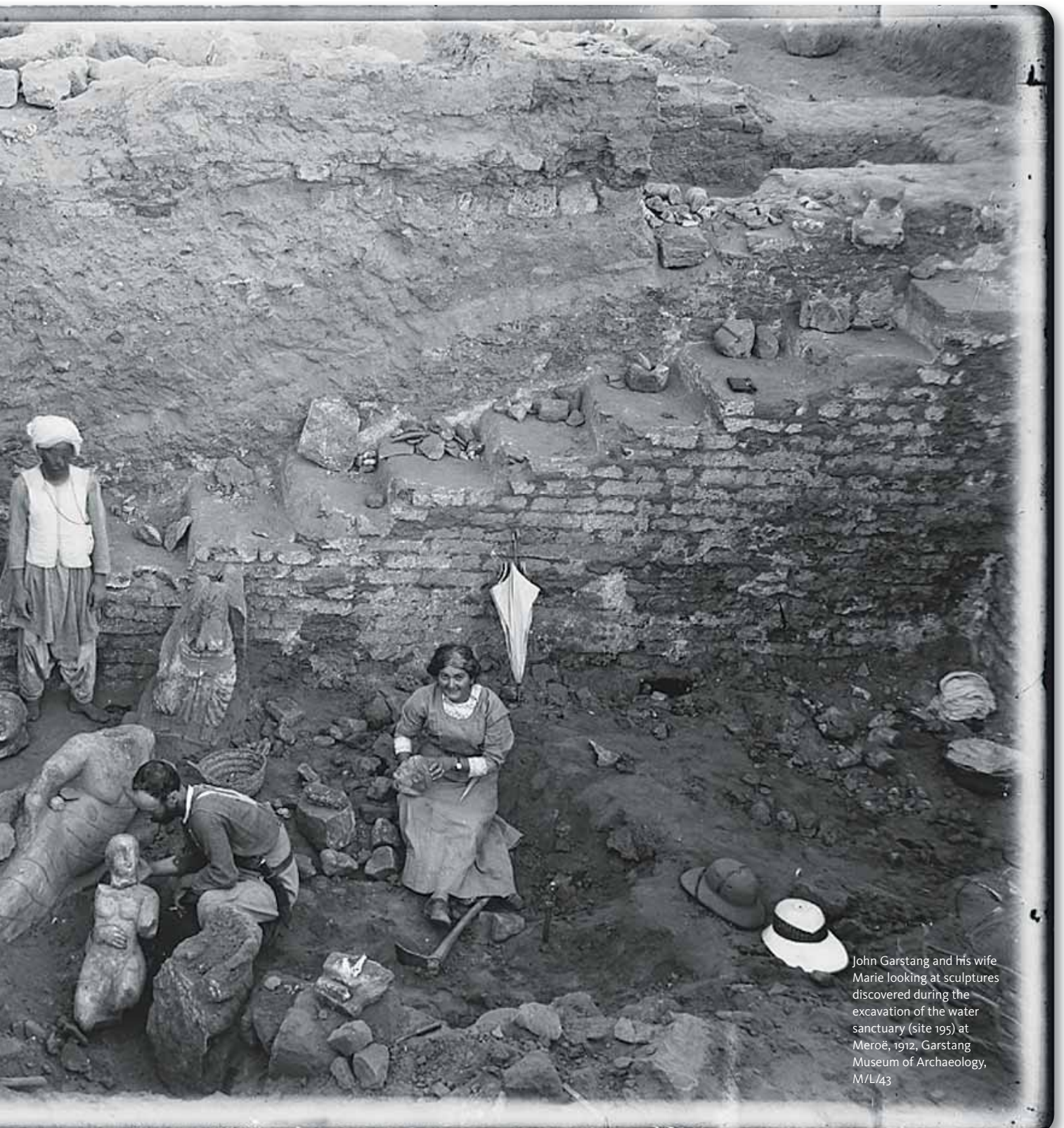
Not every print in the albums has a corresponding negative as it is believed that part of the collection was destroyed during a bombing raid in World War II. These have now been fully digitized and catalogued as part of the Pilgrim Trust funded 'Ancient Egypt in Focus' project and the data will be available on the Archives Hub website by the end of the project in January 2016. The collection has been catalogued using a combination of ISAD(G) and SPECTRUM, the Museum documentation standard.

Due to their fragility and sensitivity to light, we had to use specialist photographic equipment to digitize the negatives safely. The Imaging Suite array comprised a digital camera, which is suspended on a copy stand over an adjustable platform, designed by our IT technician, and a light-box. The copy stand and the platform can be adjusted to capture negatives of various sizes and





# archive of John Garstang's Meroë, 1909-1914



John Garstang and his wife Marie looking at sculptures discovered during the excavation of the water sanctuary (site 195) at Meroë, 1912, Garstang Museum of Archaeology, M/L/43





A Sudanese family outside a traditional Tukul house near the site of Meroë, 1911, Garstang Museum of Archaeology, M/A/36

“Each album covers a geographic area of the site or a theme, such as 'site at work' and 'excavators at play’”

formats. This equipment minimized the amount of light the negatives were exposed to as the light box was a safe distance away from them, without compromising on the quality of the images produced. This arrangement means that nothing other than the negative is in focus, meaning that problems of dust or scratches on equipment do not contribute to the final image. The digital images are downloaded directly to a PC and converted to positive images using a simple inverted linear curves profile with photo editing software. The master copies are stored in TIFF format, though we also maintain lower resolution JPEG files for research use and publication. We also retained the RAW captured images should any new techniques or mechanisms become available, or flaws are discovered in individual TIFF files.

A total of 1352 images from Meroë were processed during the project, bringing to light some which had not been seen for over a century. The images show archaeological techniques at a period when the standards of today's archaeologists were still being developed



The digitization equipment in use, © University of Liverpool

and give provenance to objects which today are held by museums across the world.

The collection shows excavators relaxing by playing golf in the desert and visitors to the site taking part in hunting expeditions. The images also capture the



John Garstang playing golf near the dig house at Meroë, c.1914, Garstang Museum of Archaeology, M/ZZ/10/b

“Far from being a detailed collection of images of the excavation and artefacts discovered, the images also show scenes of the archaeologist’s life in the field and pictures of local people.”

hundreds of local workers employed by Garstang and document life in the nearby villages. The collection has already been of interest to archaeologists who are currently excavating the site and hopefully will be of interest to researchers in other fields when they are published on the internet.

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**Katie Waring**

Project Archivist, Ancient Egypt in Focus:  
The Photographic Archives of John Garstang

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# Digitising the Collection: From Cellar to Hard Drive

Starting a digitisation project completely from scratch has its challenges but it also offers the great advantage of being able to thoroughly research and think through the workflow and methodology in advance. The challenges of the Past on Glass project, namely a limited budget, tight time frame (two years of funding), reliance on a volunteer workforce and need to use pre-existing kit could have proved difficult but in fact these limitations actually helped to clarify decisions and simplify the process.



Cataloguing





David Knights-Whittome 22172A

The Sutton Archives collection of David Knights-Whittome's glass plate negatives is vast and in varying states of repair. It was clear from the onset that even with careful handling there was no way that we could digitise a large number of these without conservation. The limited time scale of the project has meant that our selection of plates for digitisation has been very clear cut. If it's damaged, we set it aside.

We leaned heavily on the professional experience of others to understand how best to tackle the plates. While the guidelines with regard to handling, storage, cleaning and conservation were clear, the advice around digitisation was varied and contradictory. Advice was plentiful - to the point of becoming confusing - and ultimately it boiled down to the specific needs of our project, the limitations of our set-up and the compromises we were prepared to accept, and those we were not.

The aim of our project is primarily to make safe and available this wonderful collection of material,



Pte C G Lovegrove 10 July 1916 ref34655

which contains a wealth of images of local people, places and events. As a once in a lifetime opportunity, it needs to be done correctly from the off so there is no need to revisit the work. Images must be available online but are also required for exhibition and print purposes. The scans also need to be large enough to show details such as cap badges, military insignia, jewellery and handwritten text.

**The process:** plates are removed from their original envelopes, assessed for damage, cleaned (using cotton wool and distilled water) on the glass side, and rehoused in four flap folders by trained volunteers. All handling of the plates is done wearing powder free nitrile gloves.

Plates pass along for scanning in small batches. They are positioned directly onto the scanbed, emulsion side up, inside pre-cut cardboard masks which enable scan marquees to be pre-set and saved. Scans are taken in 24-bit RGB colour at hi-resolution, and the files are saved as TIFs.



Cleaning

These files become our archive masters. Minimal retouching and colour correction is undertaken to duplicates of these files. Original envelopes are scanned as a quick visual reference, and metadata is recorded to a spreadsheet.

This is not the method everyone has taken. One common piece of advice is to scan plates emulsion side down. This is to obtain the sharpest focus and avoid distortion such as Newton Rings. However, placing the emulsion straight down on the glass increases risk of damage to both plate and scanner. Working with multiple volunteers, we needed to avoid as much risk as we possibly could. Tests showed no discernible issue with image focus from scanning emulsion side up, despite the varying thickness of the plates. Adding a sheet of mylar material between the plate and scan bed was another step we deemed unnecessary. Issues with distortion if they occur can be dealt with individually on a scan by scan basis. Working with an

*“We leaned heavily on the professional experience of others to understand how best to tackle the plates”*

inexperienced team, every stage of the process offers chances for error to be made. The smaller the number of steps, the better.

Most colleagues we spoke to felt that a grayscale scan was sufficient for their needs. We felt that by scanning initially in 24 bit RGB, we could achieve a scan with a far greater tonal range. These plates are not just flat black and white. There is colour in the oxidation of the emulsion and the discolouration of the glass, in the original retouching and masking undertaken by the photographer, and this detail is lost by reducing these images down to simple grayscale scans.

The most important piece of advice I would offer to any colleague undertaking similar work, is to take on board all the advice and then think specifically about your project and your material. There are no definitive answers. Keep things simple, consistent, and be methodical about all elements of the process. Adaptations along the way are inevitable but these should be tweaks rather than major changes of direction. It is the nature of this kind of project that you will find issues in your data, but consistency in your approach means that usually you can spot and resolve issues without too much difficulty.

You can read the full article here  
<http://bit.ly/1MNTrtc>

The Past on Glass Flickr albums  
[www.flickr.com/photos/pastonglass](http://www.flickr.com/photos/pastonglass)

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**Abby Matthews**

Project Officer, The Past on Glass, Sutton Archives

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## Call for papers: Beyond Text in the Digital Age? Oral History, Images and the Written Word

Next year the Oral History Society's annual conference will be, **'Beyond Text in the Digital Age? Oral History, Images and the Written Word'**. They are currently seeking submissions for individual papers and panel proposals to take place 8-9 July 2016. They invite you to interpret the conference themes broadly.

Please note the deadline for submissions is 18th Dec 2015. A small number of bursaries are available to successful applicants. More information is available here: <http://www.ohs.org.uk/conferences/2016-conference-beyond-text-in-the-digital-age/>

## Calling all colleagues!

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

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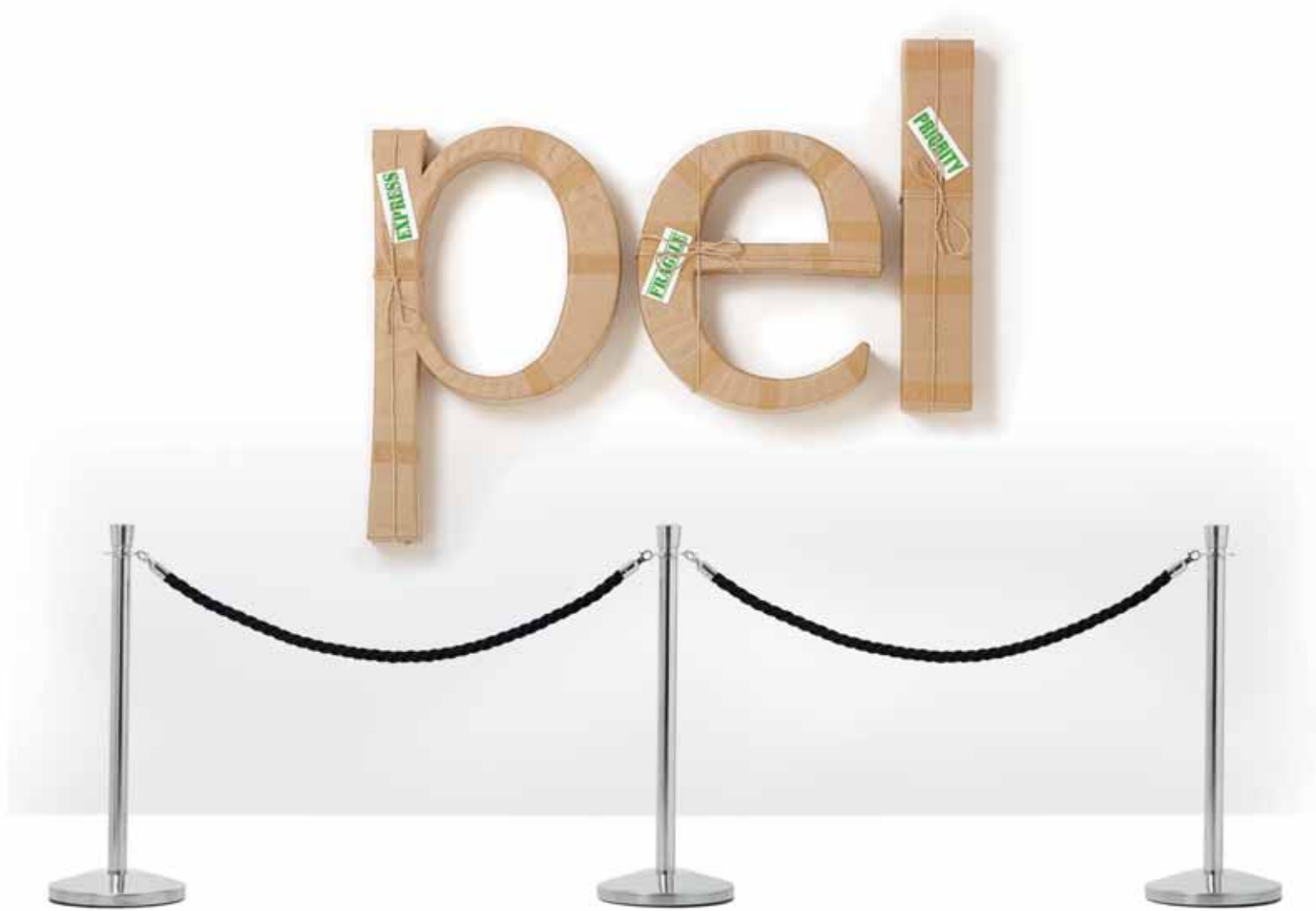


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