



Archives & Records
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Records Management Special Issue



TREASURER'S POST-OFFICE ORDER BOOK.

Amount of Order.	Con. or Order.	Name of Gallery.	Where Paid.	To whom Paid.	Balance.
10 0 0	1	John Glyn	Wotton Park	Wm Moss	Relief
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10 0 0	9	John Glyn	Wotton Park	Wm Moss	Relief
10 0 0	10	John Glyn	Wotton Park	Wm Moss	Relief
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MoReq2010



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WELCOME **ARC**



EDITORIAL

Happy New Year to you all and welcome to January's issue of ARC.

This month ARC's theme is records management, and to start the year with good habits we have articles discussing the nature of good records management and the skills it requires. Other subjects tackled include the need to keep both university courses and practitioners abreast of changes in technology, and the potential benefit – or otherwise – of MoReq2010. Our thanks go to Emma Davies and Jessica Silver of the Records Management Group for coordinating the articles.

Archivists, records managers and conservators can be reserved folk, so in an effort to encourage people to voice their opinions and be more provocative, we have taken the unusual step of publishing an anonymous article, 'Who Are We?', which chimes with John Chambers' report on discussions of the fate of the Archives part of MLA. Feel free to send in your thoughts on the matter.

Our features this month take in the archive of the first Director of the National Portrait Gallery and the road less travelled from archives to creative writing, as well as the vast contribution volunteers are making to facilitate access to the mining records of County Durham.

Finally, all that remains is to welcome to the editorial board our new joint editor, Ceri Forster of the Museum of Science and Industry.

Richard Wragg, Gary Collins, Ceri Forster, Rachel Freeman, and Rose Roberto

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Records Management Group Cover Images:

Sir George Scharf, by Walter Oulless. Oil on canvas, 1885. ©National Portrait Gallery.

Sketch of Lady Mary Stanhope in a boat, 1865. ©National Portrait Gallery.

Winners of the 2010 Records Management Society team award: Staffordshire County Council. Courtesy of SCC.

An example of indexing material: Post Office order book, 1896. By permission of Durham County Record Office.

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Association News



A word from John Chambers, Chief Executive of the Association

Happy New Year. I hope this year turns out better than many people fear it might.

We have continued a seemingly endless round of meetings in England with the Department for Culture Media and Sport, with the Chief Executives of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, The National Archives, British Library, Arts Council England, CILIP, Museums Association and others. We are trying to influence what will happen to the Archives part of MLA. It appears certain that Museums and Libraries will go to Arts Council. The Minister for Culture has been given a consistent message from all bar one organisation that we would all prefer Archives to go elsewhere.

The ARA Council recently decided to set up two new sections. One is for New Professionals and the other for International Engagement. The Section for New Professionals will represent, inform and promote the interests of all pre-course volunteers and trainees, students on courses, and newly-qualified professionals.

The Section for International Engagement will provide an

expanded network for members of the Association in the UK and Ireland to engage in issues which affect them either as professionals maintaining international collections in the UK and Ireland or those who have an interest in international activities.

Council also recently decided to do further investment into the provision of centralised training and the development of CPD. We will also be able to offer more support for training officers and our Registration and Conservation Scheme Registrars through a part time staff member based in Taunton. The merger has brought in the resources to do this.

We also have had the result of research into whether users of archives would be interested in joining the ARA. The result is that they are and so Catherine Taylor and Sam Collenette will see what we may be able to offer.

Councillors also decided that their term of office would be three years before they could seek re-election for one further term. One third of Council will stand down each year and either seek re-election or not. The *Journal of the Society of Archivists* will be re-named the *Journal of the Archives and Records Association* from 2012. This allows the publishers one year to publicise and promote the change of name to the 3000 plus organisations and individuals

who subscribe to the Journal. (That figure excludes ARA members).

We have recently responded to the following legislative proposals- the Ministry of Justice Civil Law Reform, Ministry of Justice Electoral Registers, DCMS Modernising public libraries, FOIAS s60 Code of practice, the Digital Economy Bill and the Legal Deposit of Non-Print Works.

We are close to finalising plans and the programme for conference at Edinburgh later this year. The All Party Group on Archives continues to prosper and we recently helped launch the Religious Archives Survey which was done in partnership with the National Archives, the Religious Archives Group and the Pilgrim Trust.

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

Collecting Matters

What's in the calendar for 2011? And which are the events to capture and anniversaries to celebrate in the coming year?

Looking back, the first international Women's Day was held in 1911, but it's not until 1971 that women in Switzerland are given the vote. In the same year in Britain, workers down tools in protest against the government's new industrial relations bill, and Education Secretary, Margaret Thatcher, decides to abolish free school milk.

There may be little which connects these events but it's the stories behind them that drive collecting: the reason why things happened, why decisions were taken, the impact of the unexpected or the planned.

2011 marks the 60th anniversary of the Festival of Britain, itself celebrating the centenary of the 1851

Great Exhibition. After the austerity of the post-war years, it was intended to raise the nation's spirits and promote the 'best of British'. Is that the intention behind the Cultural Olympiad in 2012? And if so, will the records created before, during and after the Games reflect such an historical golden thread?

A new year is an opportunity to revisit and reinvigorate collections, to invite new contributions and engage new communities of users; and The National Archives means to encourage and support such new thinking for collecting.

.....
Cathy Smith

The National Archives
.....

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.

Title

National Council on Archives: Rules for the Construction of Personal, Place and Corporate Names.

Name of Standards Developing Organisation

National Council on Archives.

Current version

National Council on Archives: Rules for the Construction of Personal, Place and Corporate Names, 1997⁽¹⁾.

Abstract

NCA Rules is the UK national set of rules for constructing personal, place and corporate names for use as index headings or access points in archive finding aids.

Description

The NCA Rules were published in 1997 in order to promote consistency in the formation of personal, place and corporate names for use in the description, cataloguing and indexing of archives in the UK,

particularly for use as index headings or access points. The aim was to replace the diverse in-house standards then in use by repositories with an agreed national standard in order to facilitate data exchange and retrieval and to pave the way towards a national name authority file. The Rules were firmly based on the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, 2nd edition (London, 1988), which means that data exchange with libraries was also allowed for. In addition, the Rules were developed in consultation with the authors of the first edition of the International Standard Archival Authority Record for Corporate Bodies, Persons, and Families (ISAAR (CPF)⁽²⁾ to ensure that the UK Rules were set in the wider international context.

The Rules are intended to help archivists form names which are unique and can be easily distinguished from others bearing similar names. Separate chapters are devoted to personal names (including family names), place names and corporate names. Each chapter begins with a set of general rules and principles for the construction of that type of name as well as a breakdown of the name into its various elements, some of which are mandatory and others optional. Each chapter then moves on to address special cases of that type of name. For example, the chapter on personal names gives specific rules for the construction of foreign names, royal names and papal names; the chapter on places gives specific rules for English, Welsh, Scottish, Irish and Northern Irish and foreign place names and the chapter on corporate bodies addresses such thorny issues as variant names, joint committees, office holders, subordinate bodies and when a corporate body becomes a new corporate body. Each chapter finishes with a very useful appendix of examples.

The Rules were not intended to be comprehensive. Instead, it was hoped that the rules and principles, together with the examples, would be clear enough to allow archivists to build on them. Furthermore, they were not intended to provide guidance on the selection of access points within finding aids. This was left to local practice.

The NCA Rules are now widely used by archivists. In a recent survey on indexing and resource discovery carried out by the UK Archives Discovery Network, 52 out of 75 respondents, when asked which rules they

used for the construction of names, stated that they used the NCA Rules.

1 <http://www.ncaonline.org.uk/materials/namingrules.pdf>

2 ISAAR(CPF) is now in its second edition: International Standard Archival Authority Record for Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families (ISAAR(CPF)), 2nd edition, 2004 <<http://www.ica.org/sites/default/files/ISAAR2EN.pdf>> (accessed 1 November 2010).

Next month:

Next month we will look at HTML.

.....
Victoria Peters

University of Strathclyde
.....

Registration Scheme News

NEW ENROLMENTS

We welcome the following new candidate to the Registration Scheme and wish her good luck with her progress:

- Sharon McMeekin, Digital Archivist, Royal Commission on the Ancient & Historical Monuments of Scotland

We also welcome Richard Wragg from the National Maritime Museum, who is taking over the post of Registration Sub-committee Communications Officer

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regscheme Mentors@archives.org.uk

.....
Liz Newman

Communications Officer, Registration Sub-committee
.....

Sketches of a Victorian Gentleman

Catalogue of Sir George Scharf's Papers, First Director of the National Portrait Gallery, goes online.

The National Portrait Gallery is pleased to announce the successful completion of a project to catalogue the papers of its first Director, Sir George Scharf (1820-1895), which ran for six months and was funded by the National Cataloguing Grants Programme for Archives.

The Scharf papers are one of the most significant collections held in the National Portrait Gallery's Heinz Archive & Library, comprising business, personal and family records. They include a huge range of material, including diaries, correspondence, research notes, notebooks and sketchbooks, tracings and printed material. The records reflect not only the history of the Gallery, but also the wider social history of Victorian England. They are also an exceptional resource for the study of portraits and portraiture. Alongside his responsibility, as Director, for building up the National Portrait Gallery's collection, Scharf also worked in a private capacity on various external projects. He was directly involved in some of the most significant exhibitions of the Victorian period including Crystal Palace in 1854, after it was relocated to Sydenham, and the Manchester Art Treasures exhibition in 1857.

Scharf's achievements extend far beyond his role as the first Director of the National Portrait Gallery.

“
Scharf was able to observe and capture life in aristocratic country homes in intimate detail
”



Sir George Scharf, by Walter Oules. Oil on canvas, 1885.
©National Portrait Gallery

Thanks to his talent and determination, Scharf, who was born four months after his parents' marriage, the son of a German artist and nephew of a shopkeeper, became an important figure in British museology and society, a member of some of the most respected London clubs and societies, a friend of artists and aristocrats, and a frequent and cherished guest at numerous country houses.

As Secretary and Director of the National Portrait Gallery (1857-1895), Scharf not only secured a purpose built building to house the Collection (the current building in St Martin's Place), but established the methods by which it would function. The practices he developed with regard to the acquisition and documentation of portraits and portraiture remain at the heart of the Gallery's work today. He also contributed to the wider development of modern curatorship and authentication of portraits, not only through the work he carried out for the Gallery, but also via the research he undertook while

compiling catalogues of works in private collections and organizing exhibitions.

He was a sociable man, caring for members of his family and enjoying the company of his friends. His papers reveal that his biggest passion was to capture a moment in time: he noted down and sketched on an almost daily basis the positions of the sun and the shadows it cast, details of the weather, the appearance of buildings and people around him, menus, table seating arrangements, expenditure and all the minutiae of life.

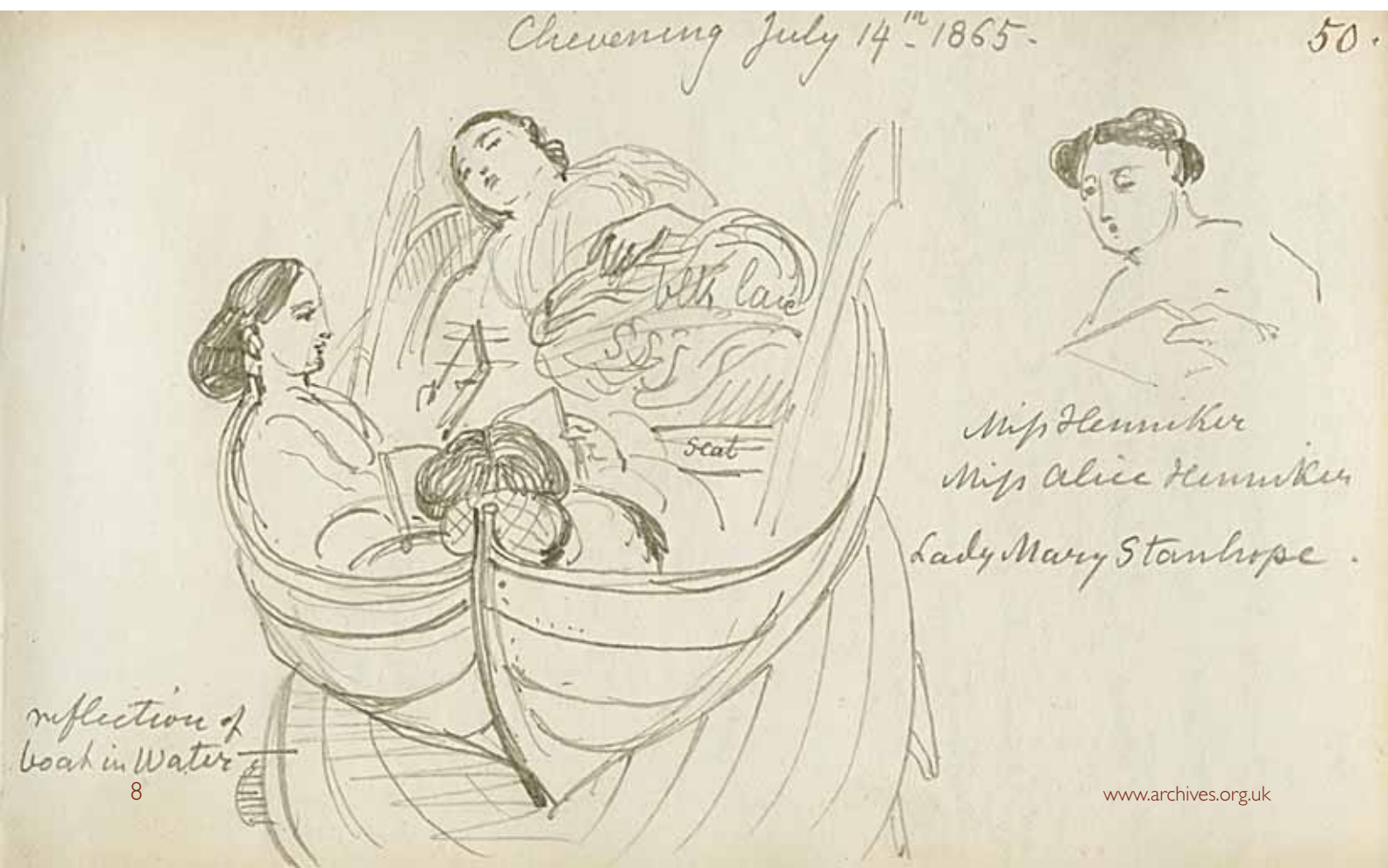
The finished catalogue reflects the various significant aspects of Scharf's life and work. It is divided into three main sections covering his work for the National Portrait Gallery, his work for external bodies (compiling catalogues of works in private collections and the preparation of exhibitions) and his private life.

Alongside his papers, one of Scharf's greatest legacies lies in the sketches, drawings and tracings he created. The Scharf archive includes some 225 volumes of sketchbooks and 532 tracings meticulously completed and annotated by him. In conjunction with numerous notebooks, lists of pictures and other

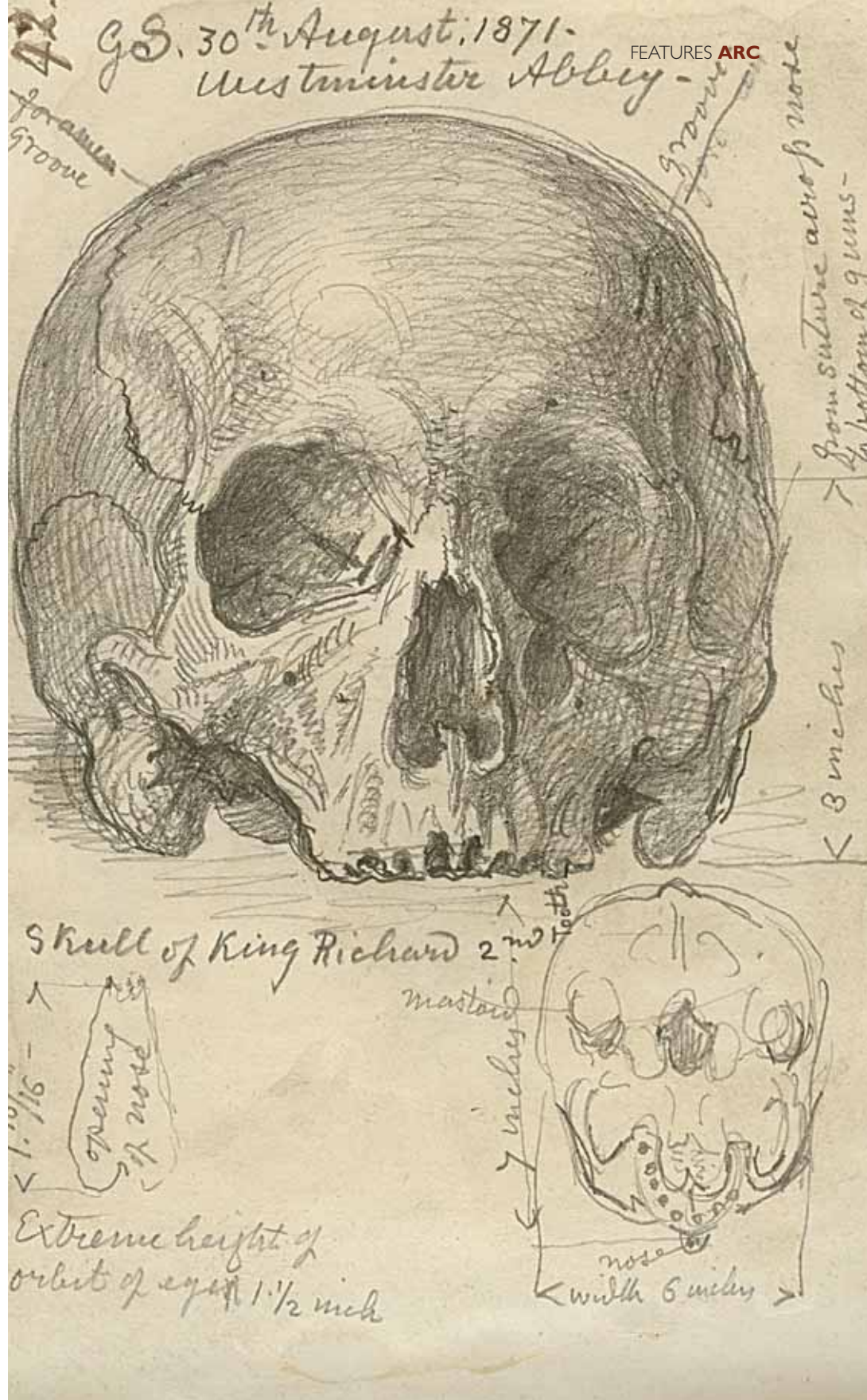


Sketch of Lady Mary Stanhope in a boat, 1865.
©National Portrait Gallery

Sir George Scharf, by Ernest Edwards. 1867.
©National Portrait Gallery



“the archive includes sketches of the skull so faithfully rendered that perhaps they could be used to reconstruct the king’s true appearance”



Sketch of the skull of Richard II, 1871.
©National Portrait Gallery

research material these constitute a vast resource for researchers of portraiture and Victorian art collections.

Scharf’s sketchbooks are also a remarkable source of information regarding the changing face of Victorian England and its inhabitants. Scharf was often invited to spend time with his aristocratic friends at their

country homes. Staying as a friend of the family, he was able to observe and capture life in these great residences in intimate detail. His papers capture grand families at leisure - playing cards, practicing in the gym or cuddling during a boat ride or a picnic.

Scharf’s in-depth, analytical approach to recordkeeping extended beyond art and

G. — S. — is my name
 A servant of the nation
 To stay here longer I confess
 The strongest inclination.

With pilgrim steps I scaled this tower
 All in the book to write
 And wish that I possessed the power
 Good stanzas to indite

From a moated court I came,
 To London tower I go,
 A better man for what I've seen;
 This I to Shirley owe.

Ettington 9th September 1882.



Poem and self-portrait sketch by Scharf, 1882. ©National Portrait Gallery

contemporary society. He frequently attended exhumations and witnessed the opening of the graves of Richard II, Edward VI, Henry VII, James I and Elizabeth of York. At the tomb of Richard II he made careful sketches of the skull and bones of the king, including detailed measurements. As a result the archive includes sketches of the skull so faithfully rendered that perhaps they could be used to reconstruct the king's true appearance.

Scharf lived a full life in extraordinary times. He established a fine career for himself and gained the friendship of some of society's leading lights, but

his records reveal that he was never a boastful man. If one could ask him what he thought of himself and his role in Victorian society it is likely that his answer would echo verses he set down next to a self caricature in one of his sketchbooks:

'G-S is my name
 a servant of the nation
 to stay here longer I confess
 the strongest inclination...'

Krzysztof Adamiec

National Portrait Gallery

A full-text searchable catalogue, including a selection of digital images, is available on the Gallery's website: www.archivecatalogue.npg.org.uk.

This is accompanied by a special web feature focusing on Scharf's life and work: www.npg.org.uk/archivejourneys



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Milk and Martha Proctor

Unlocking the creative potential of the archives at Lancashire Record Office.

In 2009 Lancashire Record Office (LRO) ran a successful creative writing project, which resulted in the publication of a two volume anthology *Milk and Martha Proctor*: Milk for coffee and Martha Proctor's settlement examination; the two things I had to remember for the inaugural meeting of the project.

As I stood on the station waiting for a train home, it became a kind of mantra to calm my nerves: 'Milk and Martha Proctor. Milk and Martha Proctor'. For nervous I was, given that I had no previous experience of creative writing (not since that poem I had published when I was ten) and because I was moving out of my comfort zone. Apart from the very successful Young Cultural Creators project *Streetlife*, nothing like this had been done before at Lancashire Record Office.

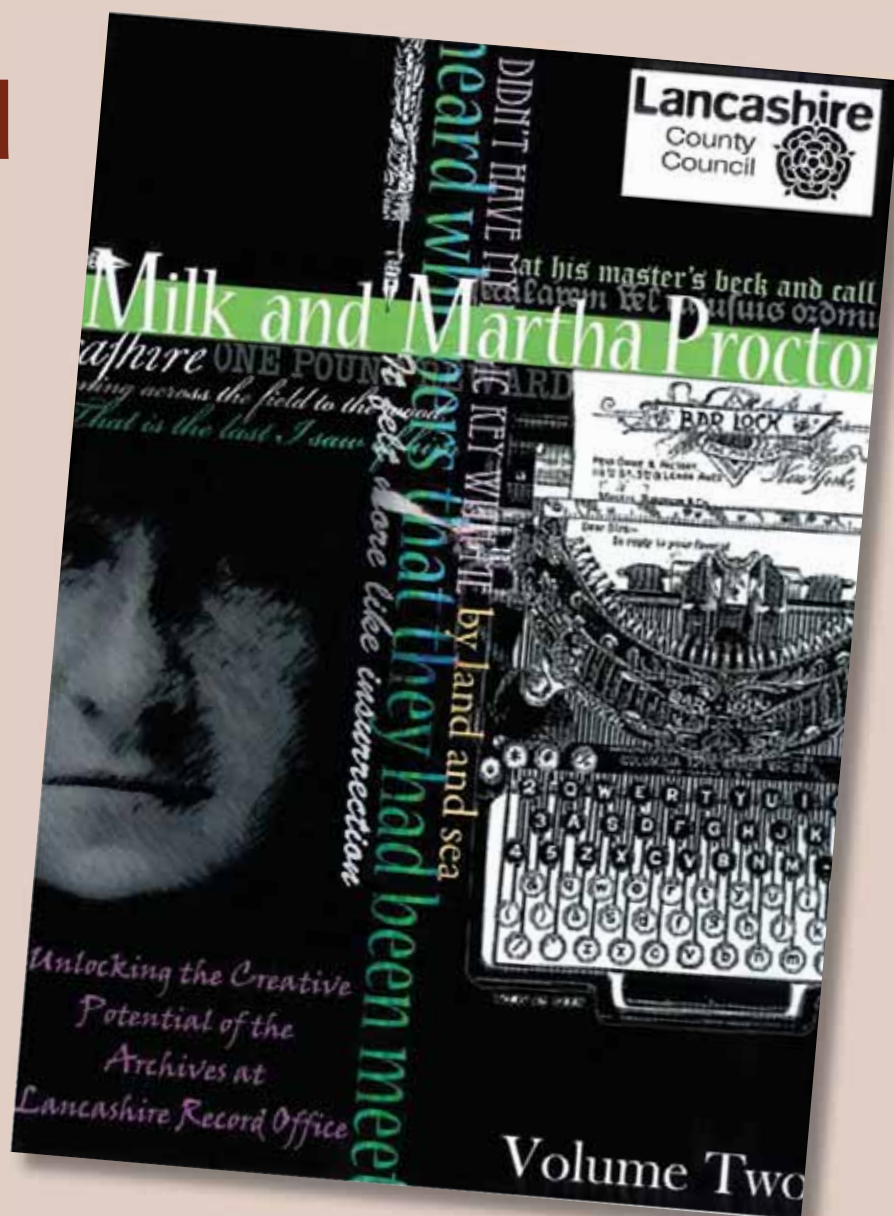
The aim of the LRO project was to inspire as well as encourage people to use and engage with the archives in a new and

innovative way by creating a piece of prose or poetry. For the most part people use the Record Office for academic purposes or family history, which in their own way tell stories but in a more factual format with historical narrative. A project like this we hoped would encourage people to look at the archives from a different

perspective. Participants could be as inventive and imaginative as they wanted as long as they used documents from the archives for inspiration.

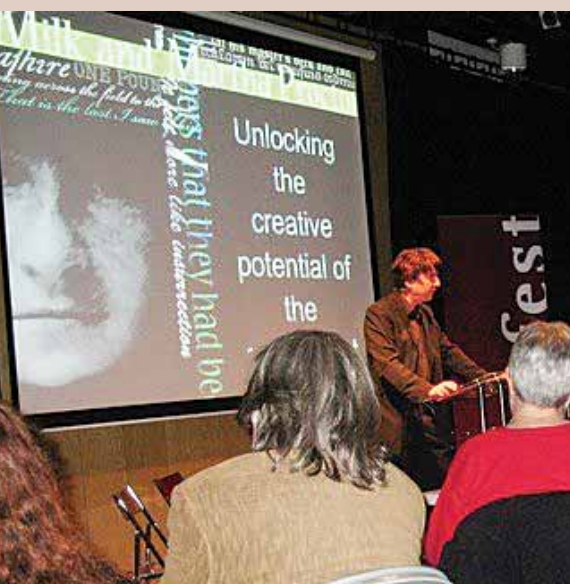
The first meeting was a success thanks largely to George Green of Lancaster University's Creative Writing Department who gave

“participants could be as inventive and imaginative as they wanted as long as they used documents from the archives for inspiration”





“it inspired one member of the group to take up a place on an MA course in creative writing”



Unlocking the creative potential of the archives. Courtesy of Lancashire Record Office.

an inspiring talk on writing historical fiction, but thanks also to the boundless enthusiasm of the people who attended. The majority of those taking part were new users and were all amazed by the collections we have and the records that have survived. They were all so enthusiastic and excited by the creative potential of the project that it reaffirmed my belief in the power of archives, our heritage, to inspire and enrich people.

As archivists we accession, catalogue and look after the documents in our care and often

come across stories just waiting to be told. Lancashire has so many inspirational documents that in some ways the problem became one of what to choose. Case books telling the stories of the lost and confused inmates of Lancaster Moor Asylum, coroners' records detailing the tragic deaths of Belle Porter and Eva Annie Wilcox, police 'wanted' posters seeking information about lost children, a visitors' book from a theatrical boarding house in Burnley, and the poignant story of Martha Proctor herself, an eight-year old orphan from Preston found wandering in 1724 are just some of the archives that offered inspiration.

For me personally the project was an enriching experience from which I have learnt a great deal not just about creative writing, but also about how people respond to the archives in our care. One thing was common among the majority of the work produced and that was a desire to give a voice to the various characters in the archives; to understand and empathise with them. Contributors were clearly

moved by many of the documents and by the project. In one case it inspired a member of the group to take up a place on a part time MA course in creative writing; another contributor had his poem published in the poetry magazine ORBIS and others read poems on BBC Radio Lancashire. The 'Grand Finale', however, was taking part in Lancaster's annual literature festival, *Litfest*, where many of the contributors had the chance to give readings of their work.

My initial nervous chanting behind me, I enjoyed the project immensely and found great pleasure in meeting all the people who took part. There is great potential for future projects and colleagues have since, after being inspired by the project's success, facilitated two other creative writing activities - in *Learning Revolution* projects in Preston and Blackpool.

Vicci McCann

Lancashire Record Office

Public Records (Scotland) Bill

The Public Records (Scotland) Bill was introduced to the Scottish Parliament on 7th October 2010. The Bill aims to make improvements in records management, thereby strengthening transparency and accountability throughout the public sector in Scotland.

Under the proposed legislation, named public authorities across Scotland, which include the Scottish Government, Scottish Parliament, local authorities, the Scottish Court Service, the NHS and others, will be required to produce and implement a records management plan to be approved by the Keeper of the Records of Scotland.

The Keeper will produce guidance on the form and content of plans, and will be given powers to scrutinise the implementation of these plans. Where authorities engage private or voluntary organisations to carry out functions on their behalf, the resulting records created by those organisations will be covered by the legislation.

The Bill also fulfils one of the main recommendations of the 2007 Historical Abuse Systemic Review (the Shaw Report, see <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/11/20104729/0>). The Shaw Report found that poor record keeping often created difficulties for former residents of residential schools and children's homes, when they attempted to trace their records for identity, family or medical reasons. The Report recommended that 'the government should commission a review of public records legislation which should lead to new legislation being drafted to meet records and information needs in Scotland. This should also make certain that no legislation impedes people's lawful access to records. This review's objectives should address the need for permanent preservation of significant records held by private, non-statutory agencies that provide publicly funded services to children.'

In 2008 Scottish Ministers asked the Keeper of the Records of Scotland to undertake a review of public records legislation and his report was published in October 2009⁽¹⁾. The Keeper's conclusion, based on the evidence, was that existing legislation is not fit

“existing legislation is seriously out of date, too narrow in scope and not relevant to today”

for purpose: it is seriously out of date, too narrow in scope and simply not relevant to today's conditions. Scottish Ministers accepted the Keeper's findings, and proposed a 'light touch' legislative response with carefully focused new legislation with a strong emphasis on self assessment. In order to minimise additional burdens on public bodies, Ministers also advocated the use of existing guidance and best practice to support implementation and the conduct of a public consultation to gauge the public mood for the proposals.

A public consultation carried out in 2010 showed broad support for the Government's proposals. Most stakeholders agreed that the proposals would be a positive step towards achieving lasting improvements in the management of records by public authorities. More than half of respondents considered lasting improvements could not be made without legislation.

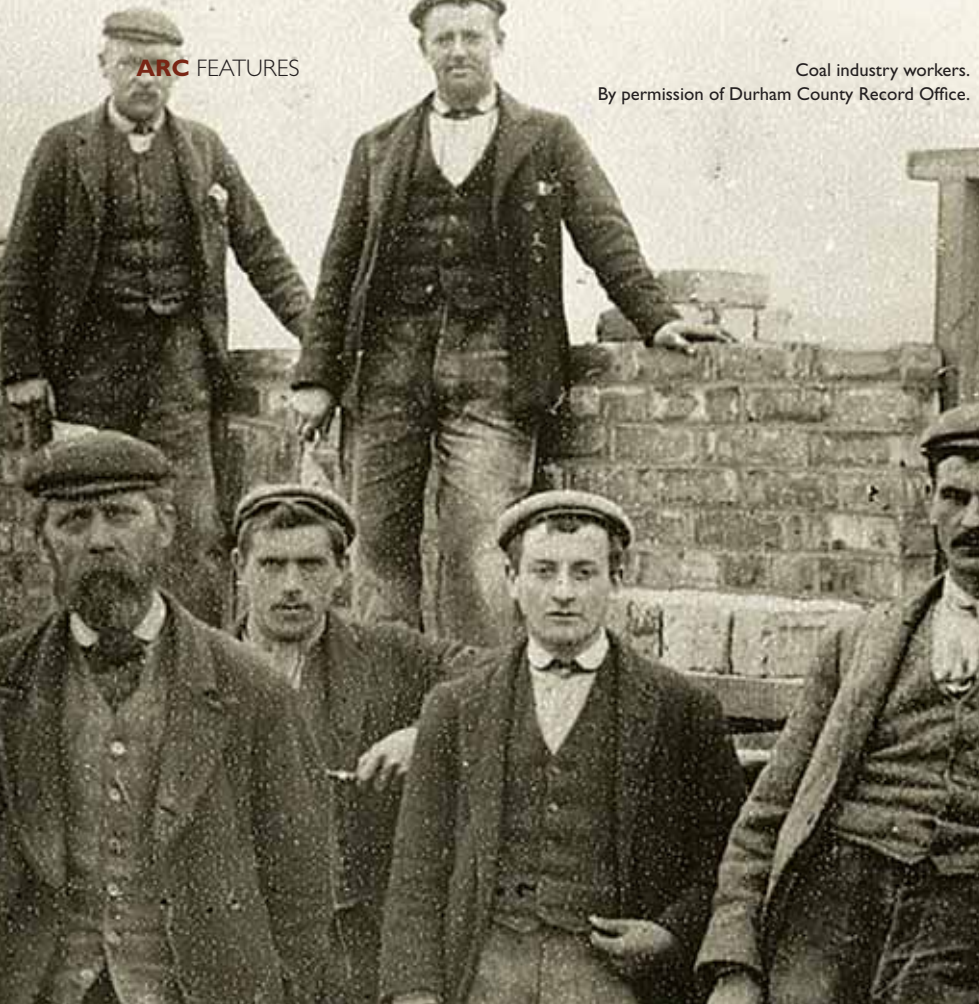
Copies of the Bill and the supporting documents can be found on the Scottish Parliament's website at <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/bills/56-PublicRecords/index.htm>. The Bill will be considered by the Parliament's Education, Lifelong Learning and Culture Committee, who aim to complete their Stage 1 evidence gathering and reporting by early February 2011.

A separate page on the NAS website (www.nas.gov.uk) has been developed to provide further information and updates.

1 <http://www.nas.gov.uk/documents/keeper'sreport.pdf>

.....
Jenny Hunt

Public Records Bill Team, National Archives of Scotland
.....



Mining Durham's Hidden Depths

Engaging volunteers helps Durham County Record Office make mining records accessible.

In March 2010, Durham County Record Office was awarded Archive Pace Setter status for an innovative informal adult learning project involving over 100 volunteers. The aim of the *'Mining Durham's Hidden Depths'* project was to exploit the potential of the extensive trade union archive of the Durham Miners' Association (DMA) for family and local historians.

Coal mining is integral to County Durham's heritage and generates numerous archive enquiries. Existing online resources have concentrated on mining fatalities. This project

was designed to make the records of miners at work in the industry more accessible by creating an online index using adult volunteers.

The project received a grant of £78,000 from the Government's Learning Revolution Transformation Fund, and ran for six months from October 2009. Two cataloguing archivists, a digitisation assistant and

“the exhibition's success at the annual Durham Miners' Gala prompted people to offer mining records for deposit”

an outreach worker delivered the project, with administrative support, and Record Office staff managed the project.

Project staff had three key tasks: to identify records for indexing, to digitise these, and to distribute indexing material to volunteers in a format suitable for flexible, informal learning. The need to identify indexing material gave an opportunity to catalogue the DMA records in more detail. This allowed staff to identify duplicate material, and to create a single unified collection. Access will be improved when a structured catalogue goes online at the end of the year.

The project was designed to enable adults from any background to learn more about archives and mining history. Some volunteers were able to develop transferable skills to help them into employment. Volunteers were recruited through promotional material in libraries and other venues, and articles in the local press and the County Council's magazine for residents. The project outreach worker spoke to prospective volunteers who were then invited to an introductory session either at their local library or at the Record Office. The latter included a tour of a strongroom, a conservation demonstration and the opportunity to look at original documents.

A major strength of the project has been the flexible approach to working. Many of the 106 volunteers were able to index at home using folders of copies and memory sticks.

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	6	2 0 0	3	Wardale	Wardale	Wm Stephenson	100
	7	2 0 0	3	Witton	Sacriston	Wm Robson	100
	8	1 3 4	3	Delight	Dyspon	Robt Wood	Sic R
	9	10 0	2	Notlow	Highwater	W. Dunn	
10	1 0 0	2		Do	Barmsley	Jackson	
	90	10 6 1/10					
	10	6 10 0	5	AucRamp	Spennymoor	Wm Moore	Relief
	3	3 10 0	4	Cornsey	Cornsey	Wm Hardy	
	4	9 8 0	6	Binchester	Spennymoor	Wm Robt	Sic
	19	18 0	13				

An example of indexing material: Post Office order book, 1896.
By permission of Durham County Record Office.

“the outreach worker provided some informal learning sessions at a care home”

Others worked in groups at their local library or community centre, or in the Record Office. When home workers met to collect new material, they exchanged contact details and formed their own self-help groups. One volunteer had material emailed to Scotland!

The material was a mix of printed and manuscript copies and there was the option to index on paper or in Excel. Many volunteers graduated from printed to manuscript or paper to computer as they became more confident; others moved onto sources with more difficult handwriting. A few volunteers worked from originals in the Record Office.

The outreach worker also provided some informal learning sessions at a care home. She used photographs and maps about mining to stimulate conversation and memories.

It was expected that many of the volunteers would have a

connection to the mining industry and that this would be a factor in becoming involved. Their passion and enthusiasm for the project has far exceeded expectations. One challenge of having captured so many people's interest has been keeping up with the numbers of volunteers. Another was ensuring there was enough material and variety to keep people interested and involved.

From material uncovered during cataloguing, an exhibition was produced about the project and Durham miners. This was displayed at a celebration event held to thank the volunteers and to launch the online index. The exhibition was also a success at the annual Durham Miners' Gala in July, prompting people to offer mining records for deposit. It will now tour county libraries.

The sustainability of the project was discussed at the celebration event. Many volunteers were eager to continue, and there are many more

documents suitable for indexing. The end of the funding, however, means there are no longer the resources to copy material. Whilst some volunteers are happy to come into the Record Office and index from originals, the majority prefer to continue working at home. Trial sessions where volunteers bring their own cameras so they can work from the digital images or print them out at home have been successful. This will allow the project to continue. To date, 84,315 names have been indexed, and 10,547 are searchable online.

A resurgence of interest is expected in the winter months; volunteers have said that it gives them something to do in the evening when there is nothing on television.

The online index can be found at:
www.durhamrecordoffice.org.uk

**Victoria Oxberry
and Genny Silvanus**

Durham County Record Office

Who Are We?

In a departure from our normal, well provenanced articles, an anonymous reflection on the current predicament facing the profession ...

Tiny archivists. Sat in our crumbling edifices, dipping biscuits while looking at our ever shrinking budget. If you listen quietly, you can hear an almost detectable whirring noise. That's Hilary Jenkinson, that is. Spinning. The archival profession finds itself with its back firmly against the wall facing an onslaught of threats, not least the looming, killer question: 'do we really need you?' The question really is: can we answer that with any conviction?

How did we get here? Well, there're lots of potential reasons. Lack of political and commercial nous, an eagerness to compromise and not rock the boat – heck, a sheer lack of *archivists* about the place – have all contributed to our current predicament. However, getting to the root of all this is a tricky problem, with no right answer.

To my mind, crucially, we've let ourselves be shifted from our 'natural' home of recordkeeping, legal authenticity, memory maintenance and facilitation, to be placed under 'Culture' and 'Heritage'. To put it bluntly, we don't belong there, do we? Throughout the majority of UK recordkeeping history, Archives have been closely associated with core corporate functions (Exchequer, Lord Chancellor, Remembrancer, Town Clerk and the like), and it's really only in the last two decades or so that we've moved under the Cultural umbrella.

“
the glut of Culture cash meant we sided with the wrong side
”

Archives aren't about the flash and shizzle, we're about the preservation of memory and precedent for the future; a slower, less shiny and yes, less sexy thing, but just as – if not more – important. To me, archives are the memory of an organisation, a Society, a culture. You can do without your leg or your ear or other bits – but your memory? That's hard to live without.

The glut of Culture cash with all the new buildings and shiny, online thingumibobs it afforded meant we sided with the wrong side, long term-wise. We're going to see a

huge contraction in Culture over the next five years, with the advent of a sort of homogenous 'culture professional' that can do librarianship, museums and if we're not careful, archives too. By not pushing our unique legal, recordkeeping and authenticity angle, we're always going to be the third wheel of culture: expected to do all the things that libraries and museums do but, sort of, *not as well*.

“
how many of us provide a fast-track information supply service to our corporate colleagues?
”

So: what do we tiny archivists do, hmm?

It's not easy, but there are small steps we can take. We need to illustrate in practical terms our usefulness as a corporate memory to our funders; and integrate ourselves with the corporate goals of our funding body. There are practical things we can do too - how many of us provide a fast-track information supply service to our corporate colleagues? All these small changes gradually change the perception of what we do and why we do it. You don't demolish a mountain in one go - you start by moving the pebbles.

“
we've let ourselves be shifted from our 'natural' home of recordkeeping
”

To sum up: we're not primarily about the exhibitions, the shows and the displays; nor are we just old things in a room. We're that corporate memory and knowledge, ready and on tap when needed. We're vital, important and a required part of any organisation, no matter what the size.

So. Fight the corner. Make the message known. We are who we are, and we do it brilliantly.

While ARC encourages attributed articles, in an effort to encourage members of the profession to vocalise their opinions, it is prepared in some instances to publish anonymised submissions.



A Gem uncovered at the National Railway Museum

The Enginorum notebook.
Courtesy of National Railway
Museum, Search Engine, Allison
Kay and Lynn Patrick

In autumn 2010 I volunteered in the Archives of the National Railway Museum. Whilst sorting through the piles of engineering drawings and endless lists, it would have been easy to forget about the people who originally compiled these extensive records. The notebook in front of me, however, was a sharp reminder of the social history contained in archives that may seem to be dedicated to the history of the machine.

The 'Enginorum' notebook which documents the goings-on in the Great Western Railway's Chief Engineer's Office between 1899-1936, was found during an appraisal and storage rationalisation project in the Museum's archive. In a time where the word 'volunteer' has such political connotations in David Cameron's Big Society, it is important to note that without the hard work of volunteers in conjunction with the leadership of professionals this book could not have been successfully preserved and made accessible to the public.

This notebook is about Victorian and Edwardian men, which suggests sentiments of morally strict individuals who are serious and dispassionate.

However, this book is saucy, heart warming and at points, laugh out loud funny. For example, the book is littered with photographs and instead of having upright and unsmiling subjects typical of Victorian portraits, the colleagues of the Chief Engineer's Office smile, laugh and even stick out their tongues.

When reading the notebook through, the rapport between these characters leaps off the page as the continued mention of their boss, Mr H.G. Vincent, shows. Mr Vincent, who complains that he has been nicknamed 'Willie' or the 'old'un', is treated with a teasing admiration, illustrated by an article written by one of the men in the tone of a wildlife documentary fondly describing Willie as increasingly quarrelsome, in the habit of taking knick knacks that don't belong to him and having very nice feet! Additionally in one of the photographs a sign is held up by the men reading 'we all love old Willie'.

Furthermore, this book offers a fascinating insight into the way these men viewed the world around them. The book contains some derogatory drawings and jokes referring to race, which a modern day reader may find shockingly offensive.

“the presence of an article written about how the winner of a Railway Essay competition was a woman, is very telling of contemporary views on gender”

Also, the presence of an article from the newspaper written about how the winner of a Railway Essay competition was a woman, is very telling of contemporary views on gender. Moreover the book's contributors, from around the office, take the opportunity to satirize current politics in cartoons and bogus letters addressed to the king.

This book perfectly illustrates how in archives we come to expect the unexpected. Whether we are volunteers or seasoned professionals, in whatever type of archive, every now and again along comes an item which surprises us, it is the prospect of finding and sharing such items which succeed in making archiving that little bit more exciting.

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Jennie Aspinall

National Railway Museum
.....

Welcome to the Records Management section of ARC!

As budgets shrink and belts are tightened, the Records Management Group has been busy ensuring we are prepared. The recent successful training event 'Records Management in Tough Times' looked at how we can demonstrate to our organisations why good records and information management is all the more vital when money is tight.

A recent webinar explored the rise of Sharepoint for records management and the Group hopes to follow this with further webinars throughout next year. Be sure to keep an eye on the Records Management Group's pages on the Association's website. Many of the articles in this section take up that theme of how to furnish us with the necessary skills for times ahead. We hope you find them interesting reading.

We would also like to announce the election of Vicki Wilkinson, previously Secretary and Treasurer, and Ann Jones, previously Events Officer, as Co-Chairs of the Records Management Group. Ann and Vicki were voted in at the AGM in November.

New Skills for Records Managers?

Changes in technology demand specific expertise of the records manager.

Records management used to be about classification, retrieval and retention of records; records managers needed to understand how to compile and apply records policies, file plans and retention schedules, and how to persuade users to apply records procedures to the documents that played a key role in their daily workflow.

This meant that records managers needed skills such as:

- Theoretical understanding of the records continuum/lifecycle
- Theoretical and practical understanding of information classification
- Organisational skills
- Attention to detail
- Communication skills
- Training and presentation skills
- Influencing skills.

Today, these core skills and attributes are still an important foundation for a records manager's skillset, but others have been added to these in recent years.

Between five and ten years ago, a recognition that users had been increasingly working with electronic information, saved in largely ad hoc ways (in shared drives, on C drives, in email inboxes, etc), led to the development and adoption of electronic document & records management systems (EDRMS). These systems were adopted, particularly by central government and local authorities, in an attempt to regain control and some semblance of order over this sprawling and chaotic collection of electronic files and documents – some of which were (probably) records.

The advent of these systems created a need for new skills in records managers:

- Business needs analysis
- IT system specification
- IT system assessment
- Tendering and purchasing
- IT system customisation and adaptation
- User IT training.

In the last three years a new wave has been sweeping the records management community – MS Sharepoint. Often adopted by the organisation almost by default, either instigated intentionally by IT or a business unit head, or simply bundled along with a new version of MS Office, this system ostensibly ‘does records management’. Sharepoint, however, isn’t just (or even primarily) a records management system, unlike the EDRM systems adopted before it; it is a workflow, document management, content management, portal management system as well. Unsurprisingly, its implementation, often quickly and with little planning or forethought, is proving to be a massive challenge for records managers.

A recent thread on the JISC-hosted records management mailing list on this very topic threw up a comment from Andy Morrall, Corporate Information Manager for Warwickshire County Council, which highlights some of these dilemmas:

‘At Warwickshire CC we have been evaluating and using SP2007 in various areas. Our Intranet has been using SP2007 for a while now. We ran an EDRM project in 2009 which included piloted using for back office to hold scanned documents which worked well, and also trialled a project with collaboration. I am currently evaluating SP2010 for the new features and records management capability...

My initial findings are that it has some good enhancements both using metadata, and with records management, with features like the content organizer. The fact MS have acknowledged people use folders to structure information is a step forward. I believe it will suffice for our needs although I’m sure there are things we will find that don’t work quite like we want them to. I see SP being split into more informal use with existing team fileplans, and more structured records for our document libraries, case files and back office use. However, to work well with MS Office, we believe we will also need to upgrade users to Office 2010.”

From: The UK Records Management mailing list
RECORDS- MANAGEMENT-UK@JISCMail.AC.UK
Sent: Aug 11 2010.

This highlights the need for records managers to work ever more closely in collaboration with colleagues in the IT department.

This and other interesting discussions and posts (for example James Lappin’s blog⁽¹⁾) have also made clear the advanced IT understanding and skills that are now being called for, simply in order for records managers to understand these new tools and their applicability and drawbacks for records management practice. Whole new vocabularies, including ‘routing’ and ‘content types’, ‘in place management’ and ‘term stores’ need to be grasped even to join in the conversation.

In order to have any influence over decisions to introduce systems such as Sharepoint, which are likely to have deep and broad implications for how records are managed in an organisation, records managers now also need to add the following to their skillset:

- Marketing skills
- Negotiation skills
- Networking skills.

Above all it is now important for senior records managers to have:


- An ability to find out and understand an organisation’s strategy, goals and objectives
- Clear thoughts on how records management processes and systems can help the organisation achieve those objectives
- A voice in discussions at the right level to influence the direction of work processes and associated IT implementations.

Technology has certainly brought its challenges for records managers, but it has also provided major opportunities for raising the profile and credibility of the records management profession, and consequently for increasing career prospects (and salary levels!) for people working in the field.

1 <http://thinkingrecords.co.uk/2010/07/28/does-sharepoint-2010-have-a-sustainable-and-scaleable-records-management-model/>

.....
Nicola Franklin

Head of Recruitment, Sue Hill Recruitment & Services Ltd
.....



It's not the systems – it's the people

Teaching records management in an electronic world

'Into the boardroom': MARM students (2009/10) with staff of the University of Liverpool's Medical Education unit. Courtesy of Margaret Procter.

My brief for this short article was to reflect on the way in which Masters' programmes have changed due to the introduction of new technologies for the creation, management, storage and communication of records. While I can only talk in detail about the programme at Liverpool, it's certainly the case that all curricula have changed significantly since the 1980s and continue to evolve year on year. However, this evolution is as much a response to the opportunities presented by the changing information environment as it is to changing technology – the 'out of the basement and into the boardroom' phenomenon (or, perhaps, more realistically, the nearer-than-we-used-to-be-to-the-boardroom phenomenon).

In this respect, it's worth bearing in mind what ARA expects of Archives and Records Management

programmes (as opposed to RM-only programmes): the main objective of the Association's accreditation criteria is that these programmes should enable a new graduate '... to design and implement effective policies and programmes, applying best-practice principles and standards, for the management of records in all formats and media throughout their lifecycle/continuum within an organisation.' Rightly, ARA does not suggest that students should have a working knowledge of any specific system or piece of software (etc), rather they should understand what such systems are *meant* to do (i.e. the organisational objectives they are designed to achieve) and the organisational implications of this not happening. Back in the mid-1980s, Liverpool's RM syllabus, taught by Michael Cook, included: surveying records classes and systems and retention scheduling; record centre management; appraisal; technological aspects

– micrographics and xerography. On a field trip to Pilkington plc students (including myself!) were asked to note how the staff regarded ‘the computer system’ and whether it had ‘any effect on staffing levels?’ Another element of the course was a presentation on Information Management – my (rather terse) lecture notes refer to ‘support of business objectives/costing/ security – physical and intellectual/accessibility/legal requirements/creating basis for automation .. need support of senior management’ and (underlined) ‘Selling the concept’. So what are seen today as key ideas were certainly being taught then – though today’s bibliographies are significantly longer. This is a significant indicator of the real nature of the change – the extent to which (E)RM has been standardised, codified and embedded within regulatory frameworks, and the need therefore, for students to get to grips with an apparently endless supply of guidance, best practice, toolkits and models.

The majority of these students have, still, arts and humanities backgrounds, with pre-course experience within historical archives services. They still tend to come to postgraduate study with preconceptions about ‘records management’; ‘systems’ are seen as the domain of the techie. A study of 2007/8 UCL and Liverpool students found that at the beginning of the academic year, not a single student expressed a positive preference for records management, as opposed to an ‘archives’ post, yet actual (Liverpool) employment statistics at the end of the year tell another story. Of the 18 UK students, five took RM posts (and the figure of 25/30% of students going into RM/ARM posts has been stable over the last five/six years). Of course, this may be down to the availability of posts, but it’s also something to do with the demystification of records management itself and the recognition of the direct link between good operational recordkeeping and the survival possibilities for digital archives in the future. These

“students were asked to note how the staff regarded ‘the computer system’ and whether it had ‘any effect on staffing levels’”

“the courses offer a demystification of records management and the recognition of the direct link between good operational recordkeeping and the survival possibilities for digital archives in the future”

elements are built into the current programme at Liverpool where records management (though we tend to use the broader term ‘recordkeeping’ recognising the need for holistic processes and systems) is presented in terms of organisational need. Why do organisations need well-managed records? How can a recordkeeping system be ‘sold’ in the light of competing operational, technical and financial constraints? What are the best ways to analyse organisations in order to target RM appropriately?

By the end of Week 3 students have made presentations to an executive board (of their fellow students) which will emphasise compliance, information security, risk management and competitive advantage as benefits of effective records management; by week 10 they will have done this for real (albeit to a friendly university department, but certainly to people who don’t know what ‘records management’ is). The project involves investigating the records and information management problems of a university department, writing a report and presenting it to the department’s staff. This is a valuable experience giving students first-hand evidence that RM isn’t about IT systems but about people and making their working lives easier. Some feedback from the 2009/10 cohort gives a sense of what at least some of the students got out of this ‘real life’ project: ‘Loved it!’, ‘Really confidence boosting’, ‘I learnt so much about RM in the real world’, ‘a real sense of achievement’. Putting students into a position where they can start to build on this experience, using their knowledge of best practice, to understand whatever systems are in place, is what the postgraduate programmes are all about.

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Margaret Procter

Director of Studies, MARM, University of Liverpool
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What is good records management?

The question poses a challenge to anyone in records management because it is sometimes easier to identify it by its absence. We can all point to bad records management practices when we see them. Where we face a challenge is to explain positive practice, except by its absence. At one level, this is because good records management is an ongoing process rather than a final state. For this reason, most records managers would find it difficult to say that a particular organisation is an exemplar in records management. A second reason is that records management is entwined with corporate management and that raises a fundamental question about records management's role within any organisation.

If good records management means it is fit for purpose within the organisation, how are we to understand its purpose? For example, good records management for an archivist or a records manager is not going to be the same as for a user or for senior managers, even though there may be an overlap. There will be common principles but the principles by themselves do not determine whether an organisation has good records management. If the system is not used in practice, then the theoretical principles are (almost) useless. Instead, we have to return to the issue of its purpose in managing the records of an organisation. Despite ISO15489, which most people outside the field have never heard of or considered, the understanding of what a record is and its role within an organisation is blurred. The problem is compounded by the capacity of computers and electronic systems that allow records to be created, stored, and searched (and deleted) without an organised, consistent, or cogent file plan or structure.

“the understanding of what a record is and its role within an organisation is blurred”

In effect, as well as practice, good records management is not a conscious activity within the daily lives of most staff. The average employee is probably aware of the difference between good and bad records management, in a practical sense, in that they experience the inefficiency of bad records management. In short, they spend excessive time looking for what they need or end up pulling together the same information twice. Yet, the issue for many moves away from better or good records management to the need for

“good records management is an ongoing process rather than a final state”

better search engines. For many, good records management becomes a technical problem that requires a technical solution.

For most employees, if they are aware of records management, in a theoretical sense, it reinforces a view that it is a specialism done by someone else. In this regard, good records management is seen as a problem of expertise solved through accreditation and applying rules and guidelines.

If good records management is also good corporate management, then we have to consider that relationship. Is records management only concerned with the aftermath of decisions, with a focus on the record, rather than the decision? The answer will reflect a divide between records management and corporate management. If the focus is more on records, a specialism, and less on management, a general activity within the organisation's corporate culture, then the divide will continue. Where good records management exists, it is part of an organisational culture. Aside from helping with corporate governance, it helps an organisation to discriminate between the ephemeral and the eternal.

In the end, we have to return to the organisation's structure and purpose to understand good records management. If records management is not part of the corporate culture, it can hardly be considered good even if the principles are accepted. Despite technological processes shifting organisations away from, but not entirely leaving the system of files and file folders, there is still the need for good records management. Records management sustains an organisation's structure for its past, present, and its future. If the records management within an organisation fulfils the organisation's purposes, then it can be considered good records management. However, until records management is seen as part of the corporate DNA, then it will continue to be better known by its absence rather than its presence.

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Lawrence W. Serewicz

Principal Information Management Officer, Durham
County Council
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Following on from Lawrence Serewicz's discussion of what makes good records management, Clare Cowling from Transport for London presents two opposing approaches.

Make RM part of everyday work again	Make RM invisible; it's a specialism
RM has become too specialised; people have forgotten that they have to manage their own information. They need to re-engage with the process.	RM always was specialised; in the days of paper people did not have to manage their own information. Governance structures need to accept that specialised RM is a still core requirement of the organisation requiring corporate planning and resourcing; it can then become invisible and everyone can get on with the day job.
How?	How?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Add to objectives ● Better training ● Culture change ● Management buy-in and training ● Focussed RM programme in which all staff participate ● RM recognised as a core function in which everyone is trained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Add to functional requirements ● Embed and automate in systems ● Train IT people in RM principles ● Leave management alone – it doesn't want to be bothered ● Firefight behind the scenes depending on what's fashionable at the time (information security, risk management, DPA, FOI, disaster recovery, system slow-down) ● RM's behind the scenes effectiveness will depend on where it sits (IT, Compliance, Governance, Knowledge Management, Archives)
If people re-engage they will manage their records better, work more efficiently and reduce risk	The time to engage users is past (if it ever existed); there's no time for individuals to manage information in today's world. Users will simply expect better search tools. The risk of poor RM is low in any case – it is unlikely the organisation will be caught out.
Compliance/reputational risk	Convenience/cost/acceptable risk
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Poor RM results in non-compliance ● Fines of up to £500,000 for DPA violations ● Reputational damage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of sanctions – acceptable risk ● Depends on the Information Commissioner's Office – will they impose? ● HM Revenue and Customs is, after all, still going strong!
RM adds value	RM is on the way out
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Saves money, improves efficiency, enhances compliance ● Records audits will identify information locations and owners, thus reducing information risk and enhance compliance ● Records managers (via EDRMS) preserve essential records by creating good management rules ● Records managers are needed to appraise legacy data to determine its value ● Records disposal schedules are needed to formalise disposal rules for active and inactive records based on function, help the business understand the value of its records and provide evidence of best practice in the event of litigation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No metrics are available to prove added value other than in destruction of paper – which doesn't need records managers to manage (outsourcing; Facilities departments run records stores pretty efficiently). IT now run things anyway, plus the cloud will provide cheap storage ● Cost and time of doing the work! Also audits will be redundant as soon as completed due to rapid organisational and personnel change. Search engines are a better investment ● EDRMS are on the way out (too expensive). It's all about information sharing now (SharePoint, social media, search engines) ● IT can just migrate the lot or delete it. What's the problem? ● What about the risk of having schedules but not applying them coherently? It's surely cheaper, quicker and less risky to use "archive" buckets with a few flat deletion rules – this will usually be managed by IT

So what is good records management?

RM is part of everyone's daily work	RM is a specialism with dedicated staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Saving the organisation from itself by keeping one step ahead ● Firefighting – someone has to do it! ● Business units create their own RM rules: otherwise there is chaos ● Forget the theory: it's all about staff and management recognising the need for the work of managing information to be part of business as usual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Saving the organisation from itself by keeping one step ahead ● Firefighting – someone has to do it! ● Creating corporate RM rules: otherwise there is chaos ● Forget the theory: it's all about selling ourselves. Learn the corporate jargon, get in with the IT crowd, be available to everyone and find some quick wins

Technology trends: keeping the curriculum current and contemporary

In 1996 when Northumbria University launched its MSc in records management, electronic document management systems (EDMS) were in use in some sectors, and groupware products such as Lotus Notes supported collaborative working. EDRMS were coming into radar to be followed by enterprise content management (ECM) systems. Blogs and wikis didn't exist, SharePoint hadn't been released and Twitter was yet to hatch. 15 years later is several lifetimes in technology terms and also in terms of a Masters programme. So, how do we keep the curriculum content current and contemporary in the context of technology trends and changing knowledge and competency frameworks? The answer at Northumbria is that we examine and apply developments in principles and practice, engage with professional debate and participate in and apply outcomes of research.

The underpinning *principles* of managing records, including the continuum and lifecycle models, the characteristics of 'good' records, appraisal and retention scheduling, classification and indexing, metadata and preservation, provide the theoretical framework, irrespective of the system or software. This is our starting point. We question their validity in the digital world and explore how they might be adopted, adapted or indeed re-thought.

Being a distance learning programme, the *practice* elements present challenges and also opportunities. It's not feasible to invite a system supplier to talk to our students, explain and demonstrate their product; nor is it straightforward to create a virtual lab that we can guarantee all students can access successfully from their remote location, due to 'desktop' variations, firewalls etc. But it is possible to point our students to freely available online demos, downloads and webinars and give them access to software. In summer 2010 we used the a.k.a.® software for an assignment. Staff at Synercon⁽¹⁾, the Australian based software developer,

provided excellent support – distance was not an issue! Feedback was very positive with students saying that using the software was a great advantage for them, enabling them to implement theory and better understand how records concepts work in practice, and offering them the opportunity to use something they would be expected to use as qualified professionals.

Engaging in professional debate about emerging technology is vital and we do it in several ways. We use our *Records Management Today* podcasts⁽²⁾, produced with James Lappin⁽³⁾ and Elizabeth Lomas. The very first one (March 2009) discussed SharePoint and since then several others have explored its information and records management features and issues with expert implementers. We refer to the blogs of Steve Bailey, James Lappin and others and debate some of the points they raise. Opinion pieces, viewpoint articles and conference presentations on systems / technology related issues and issues concerning our approach to managing records in the digital world are discussed⁽⁴⁾. These range from the 'keep everything' / delete debate to e-discovery and automated records management.

As a research-active School we embed our research into teaching. Examples of IT systems related research now embedded in the learning materials include the project that investigated the uptake of SharePoint in UK Higher Education Institutions⁽⁵⁾ and the AHRC funded AC+erm project on *Accelerating positive change in electronic records management*⁽⁶⁾. Outputs from

“engaging in professional debate about emerging technology is vital”

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the technology for delivery and learning has
developed in parallel with the technology
content of the course
”

the latter are used to assess, for example, different technology approaches for the student's organisation, to examine the people dimension of IT systems and to articulate a vision for the future. The work of our PhD students in the areas of 21st century communication and SharePoint, for example, will also be embedded. Embedding research in the programme not only keeps the content current but often acts as a catalyst for the students in choosing their own research topic for their dissertation. Recent topics have included collaborative Web 2.0 technologies, cloud computing, EDRMS implementations and email management.

Whilst IT systems pose significant challenges for our students as information and records professionals, technological developments have brought significant benefits to them as learners. Our early groups of students received paper based learning materials, and use of technology to support learning was limited. Today everything is delivered electronically. The Virtual Learning Environment provides access to learning materials anytime, anywhere, and supports asynchronous discussion forums and wikis; Skype is available for communication alongside email. The Web has opened up access to a huge range of e-resources not readily or rapidly accessible before. The technology for delivery and learning has developed in parallel with the technology content of the course.

Real-time, synchronous study is not what most of our distance learning students want; they have often chosen this mode of study because it gives maximum flexibility whilst being part of a virtual group. They all benefit from sharing their views on set discussion topics as well as their experience, as many are already using the latest technology in the workplace. Our approach to covering technology in the curriculum means not only are they exposed to software/systems they might not otherwise have been, they are also using it to engage in the learning.

'Change is the only constant'⁽⁷⁾. Our philosophy of examining principles, practice, professional debate and research enables us to proactively address the changing needs of our records management students as well as responding to technological developments. No doubt the methods we use to achieve this will continue to change as we embrace those new technologies. The critical point is that we don't focus on teaching our students how to use system(s) i.e. learning how to do – their knowledge and skills would be rapidly outdated. Instead we focus on developing them as independent learners and thinkers with enquiring minds and the ability to adopt and adapt in the constantly changing environment.

1 See www.synercon.com.au

2 See www.northumbria.ac.uk/records_management_today

3 See <http://rmfuturewatch.blogspot.com> and www.thinkingrecord.co.uk

4 See, for example, opinion pieces in the Records Management Journal www.emeraldinsight.com/rmj.htm

5 See www.northumbria.ac.uk/sharepoint_study

6 See AC+erm website www.northumbria.ac.uk/acerm and blog

<http://acerm.blogspot.com/>

7 Attributed to the Greek philosopher Heraclitus of Ephesus (540-480 BC)

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Julie McLeod

Northumbria University
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Winners of the 2010
Records Management
Society team award:
Staffordshire County
Council. Courtesy
of SCC.

Records Management Society team award 2010

Congratulations to Staffordshire County Council records management team!

The Records Management Society (RMS)⁽¹⁾ 2010 'Records Management Team of the Year' award was announced at the annual conference held in Manchester in April. The 2010 recipients were Staffordshire County Council.

The award is made for either a significant contribution to the profession in the year or for an overall contribution to the profession. RMS Chairman Matthew Stevenson commented in his introduction to the announcement of the 2010 award that this year it was being made in recognition of the recipient's contributions to the profession over many years, particularly the willingness of the Staffordshire team to share their work and experiences with other records managers.

Catherine Lantsbery, Corporate Information Management at Staffordshire County Council, said that the team were very proud to receive this award but it was accepted on behalf of many people who have been part of the team at Staffordshire over a number of years. Staffordshire has had a records management team since 1988 and continued to

provide services to the council and other public sector organisations throughout its twenty two years. The Records Management Team is part of the larger Information Governance Unit within Staffordshire and has a close working relationship with Freedom of Information, Data Protection and Information Security teams. The approach at Staffordshire is very much based on integrated information governance.

The County Council is a large organisation with over 30,000 staff serving a population of 1.25 million citizens and generates a huge amount of records in delivering its wide range of services to the public. When the service was first initiated in 1986 many of the issues were focussed on paper records and although the Council still runs a record centre the team focuses on many of the issues confronting

“the team continues to deliver innovative solutions such as their work on virtual folders”

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the Staffordshire team developed one of the first functional classification schemes in local government

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other organisations around electronic records. A relocation will shortly be taking place where we hope to provide more innovative ways of storing and using paper records, that make them truly accessible when needed by staff.

Staffordshire's records management has always been based on an openness and willingness to share its work with colleagues across the sector. This has led to many visits and fact-finding tours from organisations across the wider public sector. The interest has changed over the years covering many topics such as implementing corporate control over paper records, building a classification scheme, EDRMS and taking a process based approach to records management. Although the team is usually quick to say they don't necessarily have all the answers, they are always willing to share their experience in grappling with the problems. The Staffordshire team developed and published one of the first functional classification schemes in local government along with a comprehensive set of retention schedules freely available through the council's website. The team are currently working on moving the function approach forward by applying these principles to the retention schedules. Publication of the updated Functional Business Classification Scheme and mapped retention policies is anticipated in March 2011.

The team has been active in the deployment of one of the first major EDRMS systems in UK local government. The current deployment has included configuration work for a wide variety of local authority functions, from service specific areas to corporate functions such as finance, legal and HR. A central part of this is business process mapping which enables the records managers to fully understand the functions of the authority and apply the necessary solutions. The team continue to work with colleagues in the council delivering innovative

solutions such as their work on virtual folders, as well as developing comprehensive guidance and user manuals, and staff training. In particular they have developed a wide-ranging Records Management Manual to enable staff to take responsibility for and manage the records that they create.

Most recently, the team has been heavily involved with a major project to relocate the staff from several buildings into a new purpose built modern office complex. This is a nationally recognised scheme which has taken a complex approach to relocation and combined it with new ways of working. It has not only involved issues of storage and digitisation but supporting the adoption of pioneering work practices based on agile and flexible working. Encouraging staff to adopt good records management has been at the forefront from the outset from Initial Assessment Meetings and detailed records action plans. The project will be completed in autumn 2011.

Much of the records management work in Staffordshire is influenced by BS ISO 15489 the international records management standard which has formed the backbone of the strategy over the last ten years. Moving forward the team also will be looking at ways to develop best practice in line with the Code of Practice under Section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The team will continue to help front line staff to deliver services to the citizens of Staffordshire whilst maintaining legal compliance, seeking more innovative ways to manage records in an information focused environment.

1 Now the Information and Records Management Society

Philip Jones

Head of Information Governance, Staffordshire County Council

MoReq2010

Making the Standard Crystal Clear or Muddying the Water?

Just two years after the introduction of the mammoth MoReq2 (Model Requirements for the Management of Electronic Records version 2, launched April 2008) standard, the DLM Forum (Document Lifecycle Management Forum - a European community for people and organisations interested in document and records management) is in the final throes of public consultation for a new standard, under the banner of MoReq2010. There has been much debate within the industry about the reasons behind the creation of the new standard, and a fair amount of confusion amongst practitioners as to how this is meant to make their lives easier.

So first, what does the new MoReq2010 promise to bring to the table?

To the uninitiated eye, there has been little change on the surface of MoReq2010. The new standard aims to build on MoReq2 by modularising the accreditation options of the standard. Those of you familiar with the old standard will remember that the standard is split into optional modules and mandatory modules – in the MoReq2010 Collaborative Consultation we saw the basic the modules stay the same, but the way they are utilised by organisations, and used to accredit Electronic Records Management Systems is what has changed.

This modularisation of accreditation has been necessary to incorporate the second big goal of the MoReq2010 standard – its applicability to small, medium and large enterprises. MoReq2 was seen by many as a behemoth of standards, impossible for all but the largest (and wealthiest) organisations to achieve. MoReq2 was an inspirational standard, for many records managers useful as a baseline to understand how far you were from compliance rather than a tool for helping to select an ERMS.

MoReq2010 achieves this flexibility through using a sliding scale of accreditation on a module by module basis. So for example, there has been a proposal

for a scoring system to be used under the security and access controls module of MoReq2010. I use this example, as it is the one which has raised the most controversy amongst those who took part in the first collaborative consultation. So for example, systems can be rated on a five star scale for the level of compliance with the security requirements of MoReq2010.

Although on first examination, flexibility and modularisation sound like reasonable ideas, many practitioners feel that it is a step that will lead to confusion amongst records managers, which in turn could allow IT departments and software vendors to opt out of the hard decisions that records management projects and products should be making.

Rating a system's security protocols on a 5 star system will strike many of you as an odd thing to do – after all an ERMS must above all things be secure (I refer to you to the National Archives definition of a record if there is any doubt in your mind over that point). So if a system achieves 1 star, where does that stand on the scale of compliance? Standards are supposed to be used to instil confidence in a system, but I fear that it is possible that the extra layer of confusion that could result from this varied approach may lead to exactly the opposite situation.

What does this mean for ERMS/software suppliers?

Well, accreditation against MoReq has always been an interesting exercise – of course there is only one company in the world which ever managed accreditation (Fabasoft, a German company, in case you're interested), as the standard is very comprehensive and almost impossibly detailed. But what does this new modular, more flexible approach mean going forward? It will clearly be easier for companies to be able to gain a level of accreditation against the standard, and therefore be able to use the MoReq badge on their tools or systems. However, as

there are areas where multiple levels of compliance will be allowed, and each individual module scored separately, compliance could look a little complicated, for example:

Supplier A

Module 1 = 2 stars

Module 2 = 4 stars

Module 3 = 1 star

Module 4 = 2 stars

So looking at the above score, how does a records manager judge how the system measures up to the challenge?

So although more suppliers will be able to wear the MoReq2010 badge with pride, it will not be a straight forward badge that their customers can easily understand – records managers will have to become much more familiar with the standard, and be able to identify their organisation's requirements far earlier in the process than ever before.

As we enter these uncertain times, with organisations having even less money than previously to devote to records management, this flexibility will seem like an ideal way to address records management with lower grade tools, and less robust solutions. However, this time it is not the systems or suppliers pushing less robust solutions, it is a standards body that appears to be endorsing them.

Where does this leave the Records Management Community?

At the moment – confused! Having embraced the MoReq2 standard with enthusiasm, the community is now wondering about a couple of key topics that no one has thought to address, mainly a) what to do whilst the DLM Forum finishes work on MoReq2010, and b) how they are going to cope with the more complex grading system.

Hopefully the DLM Forum will help the community out, with a few more resources around the standard than they normally do with their bigger standards. However, I suspect that the RM Community and its supporters will have to fill that gap.

At the moment, it is hard to say what the impact of MoReq2010 will have when it finally arrives, but the creation process has left more than a few people feeling uncertain about what the future of RM standards could look like. With an initial consultation period that was shorter than many expected (MoReq in any version is a hefty document to review), which also took place during the summer period when many people were away from work, there has been much criticism from the records management community about the proposed standard and the consultation process in general.

However, as with all of these exercises, the standards body (in this case the DLM forum) can only truly understand and address the worries and concerns of the community if the community gets involved and speaks up – and it can't be just the normal faces either. So consider the situation for your own organisation. Can you see the new MoReq2010 approach being used well, or being used as a tool to justify an approach that will leave you more exposed under your legislative obligations than before? In either scenario – get involved and add your voice and your thoughts to the process!

For further details of the consultation process visit, the DLM website <http://www.dlmforum.eu/>; access to the consultation portal can be found via <http://contribute2moreq.eu/>

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Cery Hearsey

Consultant, Metataxis Ltd
.....

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