

DOCUMENTING THE WORKSHOP OF THE WORLD: BLACK COUNTRY BUSINESS RECORDS

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Business collections form one of the richest, yet most under-utilised sources of primary material held by local authority archive services. The local record office is traditionally seen as the preserve of the genealogist and certainly, in terms of visitor statistics, family historians make up the main numbers through the door. What this means is that business records suffer from low levels of usage given their limited usefulness for family history researchers. On the other hand, those actively seeking to use business records often find their research hindered by imprecise lists or uncatalogued material inaccessible in strongrooms. Through partnership working, the Black Country archive services have embarked on an innovative project to improve access to, and encourage the use of, its archive collections, and in particular its holdings of company records. This article looks briefly at the problems facing local authority-run archives, and explains how the Black Country is overcoming a number of these inherent issues in a bid to 'Document the Workshop of the World'.

Business records and the local authority sector

The single most important problem facing local authority archive services is the cataloguing backlog which renders a substantial and growing proportion of resources inaccessible. Local authority archive offices are traditionally the custodians of local government records but they also accept donations of other material of historical interest relating to the surrounding area including company records. Conflicting demands mean that new accessions and existing deposits often remain unlisted in storage for some time - often years - awaiting professional attention.

In recent years, the archive community has taken stock of its position, and implemented strategies to ensure the continued care of, and access to, British archives. In 2000, the National Council on Archives published the document *British archives: the way forward*² which spelt out developmental priorities for UK archives in the new millennium. Four areas were identified: access for all; comprehensive availability; preservation; and conservation and innovation. This framework highlighted the need for resources to be channelled towards

safeguarding archives to guarantee their future preservation, and to improving access and raising the profile of archival resources to ensure their widest possible recognition and utilisation.

The West Midlands Regional Archive Council published its Archives Strategy in 2001³ which reiterated these priorities at a regional level. In particular, the document underlined the need for improved physical and intellectual access to archives in the region. ‘Access is poor in the West Midlands’ stated the report, ‘reflecting large quantities of uncatalogued or poorly catalogued archives.’⁴ In response, the Black Country archive services laid out a number of objectives aimed at improving the quality of archive provision in the region.

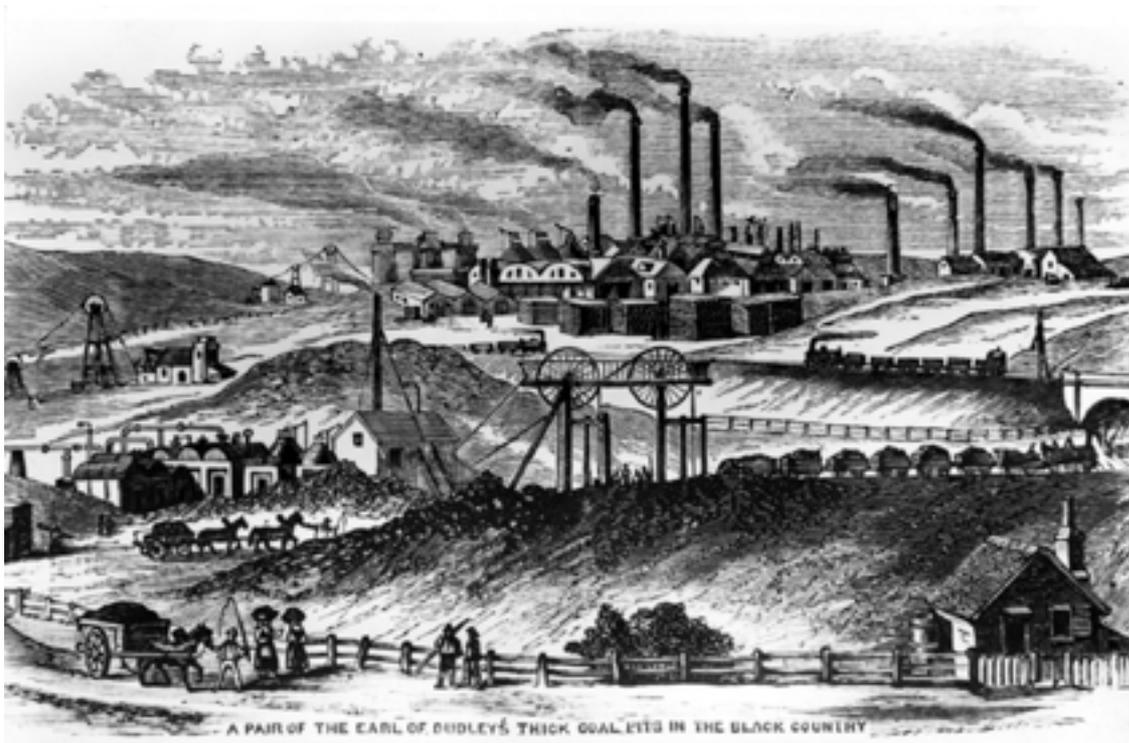
The Black Country archive services

The Black Country is the industrial area situated to the west of Birmingham. Its name derives from nineteenth century descriptions of the industrial landscape, dominated by smoking chimneystacks, the most noted comment being that of Elihu Burritt that the area was ‘black by day and red by night’.⁵ The boundaries of the area are not clearly defined, but it is traditionally argued that the Black Country lies across those points where the region’s ‘thick coal’ seam comes to the surface. Today, the area is made up of the metropolitan boroughs of Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall, and the city of Wolverhampton. Each local authority has its own record office which is responsible for acquiring, preserving and making available the historical records of its district. These include: Dudley Archives and Local History Service, Sandwell Community History and Archive Service, Walsall Local History Centre and Wolverhampton Archives and Local Studies.

Impetus for collaborative working between the four offices stemmed from the ‘Best Value’⁶ review of the Black Country archive services in 2001 which highlighted a number of common challenges faced by each service, particularly in the area of accommodation. The offices considered a joint approach to service delivery administered from a single repository. An overriding desire to preserve local identities meant this idea attracted little support, but it did open up discussion between the four offices on ways of improving the quality of archive provision in the Black Country.⁷ In light of the problems being faced nationally by public sector archives, reflected to a great extent at the West Midlands regional level, the Black Country identified a number of objectives aimed at improving the quality of service offered by their record offices. Of particular importance were: the need for improvements in information and communications technology (ICT); renewed ways of dealing with uncatalogued collections; continued promotion of access to local services; moves towards

more consistent practices across the region for users of archive services; and improved social inclusion, particularly in areas of urban deprivation and as regards personal disability.

One of the strengths of the Black Country archives is its holdings of business collections. The history of the Black Country is reflected in the rise of its industries from the late eighteenth century, and the subsequent industrialisation and urbanisation that took place in the nineteenth century. British manufactured goods dominated world trade during the nineteenth century earning Britain the title 'Workshop of the World'. The Black Country was a key player in Britain's industrial development and products manufactured locally were shipped across the empire and round the globe. The collections housed locally describe how the region developed during the nineteenth century, and why the area of South Staffordshire and North Worcestershire situated to the west of Birmingham came to be known as the Black Country. Moreover, the importance of the collections is recognised nationally and their value to the business historian - and more broadly the scholar of British economic history - cannot be underestimated, given the integral role the Black Country played in Britain's industrial transformation.



*A pair of the Earl of Dudley's thick coal pits in the Black Country, nineteenth century
(Courtesy of Dudley Archives and Local History Service)*

With this in mind, the Black Country archive services made a commitment to work together to achieve their agreed objectives, and resolved to open up access to their substantial holdings of business records along with their unrivalled photographic collections. Council officials backed the idea of joint working in principle, promising financial support if external funding could be secured.

Inadequate resource provision has long been the obstacle to real development in the archive sector and as the Historical Manuscripts Commission reported in its survey of archive cataloguing problems in 2002

there is a great mountain of uncatalogued material of genuine historical significance awaiting attention... in many cases the cataloguing backlog is already too large for the repository ever to conquer it on its own present resources... [and] only a major injection of internal or external funds into a concentrated cataloguing programme is likely to solve or significantly reduce the problem.⁸

The concentration of resources into local authority archives has depended largely on the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) leading the way as an external source of funding. The HLF was established in 1994 to distribute funds from the National Lottery to projects relating to the local, regional and national heritage of the United Kingdom. The Archive Lottery Service was subsequently set up in 1997 under the aegis of the National Council on Archives to assist the archive sector in benefiting from the new funding opportunities opened up by the creation of the National Lottery.⁹ It was through this route that the Black Country archive services were able to acquire external funds. In 2004, a coordinated bid from the four authorities successfully secured a HLF grant of £442,000. The funding was matched by the Black Country Consortium which contributed £75,000 – a substantial financial commitment for the medium-sized services. The outcome was the ‘Documenting the Workshop of the World’ project, a three-year initiative designed to promote access to business and industrial records through cataloguing, digitisation and outreach.

‘Documenting the Workshop of the World’

The aims of the project can be summarised within the context of the Black Country’s wider objectives for archive development and promotion. First and foremost users will benefit from increased access to material through a programme of cataloguing and digitisation. A range of business records will be catalogued to provide detailed guides to hitherto unsorted

collections. These catalogues will be made available online to allow researchers of all abilities to investigate and understand the region's industrial heritage. The project will also undertake the digitisation of historical images. Together, the cataloguing and digitisation will form the basis of a joint Black Country website which will bring together the catalogues of the four archive services. This will allow users to perform seamless searches across several databases from one point of entry. To consolidate this work, the project will unlock the educational value of the archives through the development of an outreach programme aimed at encouraging local and national participation in the project and more broadly the region's heritage.

Key to improving access to archive collections will be the three-year cataloguing programme aimed at reducing the backlogs all four services face. Two Project Archivists have been employed to sort, and create detailed catalogues of, some of the services' most important business collections. Over 50 collections have been identified for cataloguing, encompassing an array of local industries from iron and steel manufacture to the creation of fine stained glass.

Electronic catalogues are being created using DS Calm for Archives - a software package which was already being used by each archive service within the Black Country prior to the project's commencement. A large number of local authority archive services use DS Calm for collections management. Cataloguing conforms to the usual national and international guidelines, notably ISAD(G), ISAAR, National Name Authority Files (NNAF) and Encoded Archival Description (EAD). By working to these standards the project will allow for the interoperability of information, most notably with the national Access to Archives (A2A) project.

Running alongside the cataloguing work is a programme of digitisation. Two Archive and Local Studies Assistants have been employed to scan and catalogue 10,000 photographs chronicling the Black Country's economic and social development from the mid-late nineteenth century to the present day. The digitisation of photographs is being undertaken for a number of reasons. Firstly, the creation of electronic resources will act as a protective measure since the original photographs can be stored away after scanning in a place most suited to their long-term preservation, rather than in the most accessible location. Secondly, by creating digital copies, the services' photographic collections can be displayed on the Internet to users around the world.

The digitisation of photographic material is being undertaken according to guidelines issued by the Higher Education Digitisation Service (HEDS) and the Technical Advisory Service for

Images (TASI).¹⁰ The work is being undertaken in-house by project staff to ensure control is exercised over technical standards. Master images are being saved as TIFF files – a commonly used file format suited to the storage of high quality archive images. The aim is to digitise to the highest available standard to avoid the need for re-digitisation in the future. Initially the files are saved onto a computer hard disk at each repository. Back-up copies are also saved to CD-ROM and DVD and stored off-site for security. Lower resolution JPEG files are stored within the DS Calm software and, like the master files, are backed-up and saved off-site. The JPEG images will eventually be displayed on the Internet.

Once an image has been digitised, it is catalogued in DS Calm. Two types of metadata are assigned to the images – descriptive and technical metadata. ‘Metadata’ is the set of attributes used to describe a resource; the term is usually used in relation to digital material. Common agreement among the four services on the adoption and use of appropriate metadata was reached at the start of the project to ensure each system worked seamlessly together. Good quality descriptive metadata is imperative for end users since accurate searching and retrieval is dependent upon this information. A minimum number of descriptive metadata elements have been specified for image cataloguing based on the ‘Dublin Core’¹¹ description format:

Resource identifier [unique reference number]

Title [name given to the image]

Subject and keywords [topic of content selected from controlled vocabulary]

Description [free text account of content]

Resource type [image]

Coverage – spatial [location]

Coverage – temporal [date]

Creator [photographer]

Rights management [copyright]

The second level of metadata relates to the digital image files. In order to identify, preserve and re-use these files, accurate data about their creation and content needs to be kept for the future. A minimum number of technical metadata elements were established at the start of the project including:

Operator [name]

Date created [scanned]
Format – medium [TIFF/JPEG]
Format – extent [dimensions]
Capture device [scanner]
Software [Photoshop 7]
Compression ratio [not applied]
Compression type [none]
Capture mode [8 bit grayscale (std) or 24 bit color (std)]
Capture resolution [300dpi]
Colour management [not applied]
Capture setting [custom]
Orientation [landscape/portrait]
Colour Correction [off]
Cropping [none]
Rotation [none]
Contrast [not applied]
Brightness [not applied]
Metadata record created by [name]
Metadata record created on [date]
Metadata record amended by [name]
Metadata record amended on [date]

The digitisation process does not allow for the manipulation of images after scanning. The aim is to create a master copy that is a true representation of the original, subject to the conditions necessarily imposed on digital image capture. If a user subsequently requests a customised image (for example, a black and white print in sepia) a surrogate image is created from the digital master for the purposes of modification.

One of the most important elements of image metadata relates to rights management. As TASI guidelines warn: ‘today’s technology presents serious challenges to copyright compliance since it is easy to copy, manipulate or re-publish digital images owing to the nature of digital information.’¹² It is vital that intellectual property rights are recognised and protected. In almost all cases, copyright ownership belongs to the image creator, not to the holder of the physical item; in short, not to the archive services. A key consideration, therefore, is ensuring copyright issues are addressed. A strategy was put in place at the start

of the project to obtain copyright clearance for works being digitised and to protect the intellectual property rights relating to the photos held in each of the collections. Images are only digitised when permission has been obtained from the copyright holders. A record is kept of all copyright holders staff have tried to trace. Before transfer onto the Internet, all digital images are watermarked with a copyright notice to prevent the unauthorised copying of material. In this way, copyright ownership is addressed and the intellectual property rights assigned to the digital assets are protected.

The project builds on the idea of creating a regional electronic infrastructure for archives. In the West Midlands, archive services have made great strides in developing ICT through regional and national partnerships. However, as the West Midlands Regional Archive Council pointed out in their review of local services ‘the expectations of our users often run ahead of our ability to deliver these services and it is apparent that potential users may have difficulty in finding electronic sources for archives’.¹³ To address this problem and make more information available online, a virtual ‘union catalogue’ is being developed which will allow users to ‘cross-search’ the catalogues of the four archive services simultaneously. Virtual union catalogues work through a single web interface which gives users access to multiple databases as if they were just one single catalogue. The advantage from the user’s point of view is that ‘access to information becomes a seamless operation and not one which is impeded by the existence of a multiplicity of information sources’.¹⁴ The advantage for each archive service, on the other hand, is that they retain control over their own datasets rather than merging them into a large unified catalogue.

What this means for the Black Country archives is the development of a searchable website which will bring together the region’s four DS Calm databases. The website will act a single search portal through which users can search and retrieve results from multiple databases at once. The website is being developed using DScovey software supplied by DS Ltd. The software facilitates cross-searching across a number of disparate databases. Initially, the archive and local studies catalogues (including the cataloguing and digitisation work completed by the project) will be uploaded onto the website. However, the aim is to add other databases to the website in the future.

The benefits of creating a union catalogue are numerous. However, the capabilities of the software are only as good as the quality of data input. One of the main issues with cross-searching a number of different databases is the potential for inconsistent or incomplete search results. Although archive cataloguing conforms to national guidelines and rules, indexing policies tend to vary from office to office. This problem was highlighted by M J

Dovey in his study of the application of union catalogues to groups of libraries. In his opinion ‘the main issue with searching semantically heterogeneous databases... is obtaining good recall and precision’.¹⁵ In other words, a lack of standardisation in data entry across databases will yield only vague search results. As he rightly points out ‘technology can give us good results but not as good as those achieved from being consistent in indexing and cataloguing practice’.¹⁶ While this is true, it is recognised that each of the Black Country archive services governs their own cataloguing conventions and some inconsistencies will necessarily arise. However, agreed standards have been set out for digitisation, name authorities and subject terms. For example, each office has adopted the UK Archival Thesaurus (UKAT) to promote greater consistency in subject indexing. The development of shared practice, coupled with the implementation of nationally recommended standards will go some way to maximising the potential of the website and, more broadly, lay the foundation for a more consistent standard of customer service generally across the region for users of the archive services.

The aims of the project, therefore, are clear. Through a programme of cataloguing, digitisation and outreach, the Black Country archive services are seeking to promote the region’s documentary and photographic record of the industrial revolution and, in doing so, create a portal through which the Black Country’s archive and local studies holdings as a whole might be accessed. The project commenced in February 2005 and already the benefits of a systematic programme of cataloguing and digitisation are being felt both at a local and national level. What follows is an overview of the types of business collections held by the Black Country archive services and, more specifically, the records now sorted, listed and available for consultation as a result of the ‘Documenting the Workshop of the World’ project.

An industrial legacy

According to the American Consul to Birmingham writing in the 1860s ‘the Black Country...cannot be matched, for vast and varied production, by any other space of equal radius on the surface of the globe’.¹⁷ Advances in manufacturing technology and transportation during the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century allowed the region to exploit its rich mineral base of coal and ironstone. This gave rise to the growth of heavy industry for which the Black Country is best known. Driven by the rich seam of thick coal underlying the region, the metal trades – in particular, iron manufacture - formed the backbone of the region’s economic development during the nineteenth century. The main centres for pig-iron production in the Black Country by 1860 were Bilston and Dudley which,

between them, had over 80 blast-furnaces; Tipton, Wolverhampton and Walsall were also important iron-producing centres, but on a smaller scale. As a contemporary observer noted 'From Stourbridge in the south-west to Walsall and Bloxwich in the north, from Kingswinford in the west to West Bromwich, Smethwick and Oldbury on the eastern border, the skies were lit up at night by the flames of multitudinous furnaces'.¹⁸

By the mid-nineteenth century, the mining, quarrying and iron industries were the largest employers in Birmingham and the Black Country giving an indication of their relative importance. Indeed, the growth in the iron industry and the availability of locally-produced wrought-iron gave rise to specialisation in heavy finished goods. However, the Black Country encompassed a proliferation of trades with thousands of people engaged in the manufacture of a variety of products including: locks and keys; saddlery, harnesses and whips; nuts, bolts, screws and rivets; hollow-ware; chains; japanned ware; and iron tubes to name but a few. Today, the Black Country remains an important centre for manufacturing with 17 per cent of the region's businesses still engaged in this industry compared to 8 per cent for the UK as a whole. Similarly, 27 per cent of the workforce is employed in manufacturing compared with 15 per cent in the UK overall.¹⁹ The collections of business records and photographs housed locally reflect this diversity of industrial enterprise. Two collections that have been on deposit for a number of years awaiting cataloguing are the records of Cannon Industries Ltd of Coseley, manufacturers of domestic hollow-ware, gas appliances and chemical plant equipment; and Henry G Richardson & Sons Ltd, flint-glass manufacturers of Wordsley.

The manufacture of domestic hollow-ware was a localised industry that grew alongside the iron industry. Wolverhampton, West Bromwich and Bilston all specialised in the manufacture of cast-iron pots, saucepans and cooking utensils. One of the companies that formed during the early nineteenth century, and still exists today, is the famous Cannon brand. Cannon specialised in the manufacture of domestic appliances and remains a market leader today in the field of hobs and cookers. The records of Cannon Industries Ltd have been sorted, catalogued and made available to the public as part of the project.²⁰

Cannon was originally established in 1826 under the name of Edward and Stephen Sheldon for the manufacture of cast iron pots and pans. The company's foundry was situated at Deepfields, Coseley. The mainstay of the firm's business during its early years was cast iron domestic hollow-ware or 'Sheldon's pots and pans' as they were commonly known. In May 1884 the company changed its name to the Cannon Hollow-Ware Co. Ltd. The new title reflected the company brand name which had become synonymous with the company. By this time, the Cannon brand of hollow-ware was known and in use world wide. The

Deepfields foundry became particularly noted for their Cannon brand colonial castings, cast iron goods supplied to the British Colonies. One of the largest pots produced by the foundry was a huge three legged pot of 140 gallons capacity. This was mostly used for palm oil boiling in the West African markets.



*Advertisement for Cannon cookers, c1910
(Courtesy of Dudley Archives and Local History Service).*

In 1900 the company changed its name again to The Cannon Iron Foundries Ltd to indicate more accurately the nature of its business. Apart from hollow-ware, the company's activities had been extended to include sanitary ware, chemical ware and grindstones, gas cooking and heating stoves. They also developed an enamelled finish known as 'Porceliron'. The process itself remained a closely guarded secret but it made their wares universally popular. The first Cannon gas cooker was produced in 1895. The Cannon gas stove department rapidly expanded thereafter to meet the demand for these new products. The department grew so large that a new works had to be opened at Deepfields in 1906. One of the most popular and earliest cookers in the Cannon range was the 'Hercules' which was lined with Porceliron. It was demonstrated in 1898 that a Hercules gas range could provide the cooking needs of a household for about half the cost of a coal range. By 1913 Cannon was manufacturing hot

water apparatus including bathroom geysers, water circulators and gas heated steam radiators. From the 1950s onwards, Cannon became one of the leading manufacturers of domestic appliances such as cookers and gas heaters. Cannon Industries Ltd became a subsidiary of Cannon (Holdings) Ltd which was taken over by the General Electrical Apparatus Company (GEC) in 1964.²¹

The material relating to Cannon Industries Ltd forms a large and detailed collection. The records date from 1787 to c.1980 and include corporate and accounting records, sales and production material, patent and trade mark papers, staff files, estate records and a variety of press cuttings, photographs and correspondence. Over a period of four months, 60 boxes of records have been sorted, cleaned, re-packaged and catalogued. The collection is now accompanied by a detailed 195-page catalogue which is available for public consultation.

The art of glassmaking also finds its roots in the Black Country. The towns of Smethwick and Stourbridge are both renowned for the manufacture of glass. The history of the glass industry in Smethwick is largely that of Chance Brothers. They developed the production of coloured glass from the late 1830s. By the mid-nineteenth century, the glassworks of Chance Brothers & Co., Spon Lane, was described as the 'largest crown and sheet glass works in England',²² responsible for supplying most of the glass for the Crystal Palace which was erected in London in 1851 for the Great Exhibition. Stourbridge, on the other hand, has been a major glass making centre since the seventeenth century, when glassmakers from Lorraine in France moved to the area, attracted by the plentiful supplies of coal for fuel and fireclay for making furnaces and melting pots. The Stourbridge glass industry thrived during the Victorian period with local firms producing a spectacular array of cameo-glass, coloured glass and crystal on a par with the best in the world. Benjamin Richardson of Wordsley Flint Glassworks was known as the 'Father of the Glass Industry' and was one of the most innovative glassmakers in the world. The records of Wordsley glassmaking firm, Henry G. Richardson & Sons Ltd date from 1725 to 1986 and have been fully catalogued and made available to the public as part of this project.²³

The origins of the Flint Glassworks are unclear, but records suggest that the glasshouse dated back as far as 1725. The Wordsley glassworks was owned in the 1770s by John Hill for the manufacture of white and flint glass. During the early years of the nineteenth century, the works switched to steel manufacture, but returned to glassmaking in 1827 under George Wainwright who appointed Benjamin Richardson as manager. In 1829, the firm of Webb and Richardson was formed by Benjamin Richardson, his brother William Haden Richardson and local glassmaker, Thomas Webb. By 1832 the company became the first in England to use

pressing machines for shaping and decorating flint glass. Records show that this investment paid off, making the Wordsley glassworks the biggest of the 16 glassworks in the Dudley and Stourbridge area.

In 1836, Thomas Webb left the company to form Thomas Webb & Sons. The Richardsons continued to manufacture glass under the family name. Benjamin Richardson's brightly coloured glassware and innovative production methods left an enduring legacy on the glass industry. However, it was a challenge he set for his workers that would be his most remembered contribution. He offered £1,000 to the first of his employees who could authentically reproduce the world famous Portland Vase (dating from 25BC) which was broken at the British Museum in 1845. The goal was achieved in 1876 by Richardson's nephew Philip Pargeter and his cousin John Northwood who, by this time, were both working at Northwood's glassworks in Kingswinford. Their replica revived the art of cameo-glass making which had been lost for nearly 1,800 years. The vase remained with the Pargeter family until the 1970s when it was sold for £30,000 at Sotheby's auction house.

The Richardson records date from 1725 and consist of administrative records, correspondence, financial records, business and family papers, photographs, drawings and, most notably, hundreds of original hand-drawn and painted patterns and designs. The records reveal the complex history of the famous glassworks which can be seen, more broadly, as a microcosm of the burgeoning glass industry in Britain during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The records of Cannon Industries Ltd and Henry G. Richardson & Sons Ltd are reflective of the types of business collections held by the Black Country archive services and the diversity of industries they cover. Other substantial collections that have been catalogued as part of the project include: Thomas Webb & Sons Ltd, glassmakers, Amblecote; John Bradley & Co. Ltd, ironfounders, Stourbridge; Stewarts & Lloyds Ltd, tube makers, Halesowen; Guest, Keen and Nettlefolds Ltd, manufacturers of screws and fasteners, Smethwick; H. Case & Son Ltd, chain makers, Cradley Heath; and Accles and Pollock, tube manufacturers, Oldbury. A number of other sets of records have been identified for cataloguing, ranging from the huge collection of Bilston Steelworks papers at Wolverhampton Archives and Local Studies, to more unusual collections such as the West Midlands Punjabi Savings Credit Union Ltd held at Walsall Local History Centre. Already, researchers are visiting the services and using the newly-catalogued material which is testament to the importance of the project.

Looking to the future

Documenting the Workshop of the World is a three-year initiative. By the end of the project, a range of unique documentary and photographic material, mapping the Black Country's industrial transformation, will be available online for public consultation. The project will put in place minimum standards for future digitisation and cataloguing which will reinforce the idea of shared practice across the four services.

The four authorities are committed to the continued hosting and development of the joint Black Country website beyond the life of the project. Given that the software is designed to eliminate technological barriers between different systems, the potential exists for adding more non-DS databases in the future. The possibilities for collaborative working between archives, museums and libraries are obvious. Other local authorities across England have successfully collaborated on similar cross-domain projects. Norfolk Online Access to Heritage (NOAH), East of England Sense of Place (EESOP) and West Sussex Past Gateway are all examples of successful collaborative projects which have created information hubs based on the principle of union catalogues. A single gateway for the Black Country heritage sector, encompassing archives, museums and libraries is not an unrealistic possibility. In this way, the Documenting the Workshop of the World project is laying the groundwork for a more collaborative approach to information provision in the future by cutting across both local authority boundaries and cultural domains.

Notes

¹ Thanks to David Bishop (City Archivist, Wolverhampton Archives) and Peter Evans (Archives and Local Studies Manager, Sheffield Archives) for commenting on an earlier draft of this article. The project team is: Cheryl Bailey (Project Manager); Liz Newman and Lorna Williams (Archivists); and Tim Staten (Archive and Local Studies Assistant). Project updates are available at www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/archives

² The document is available to view at: http://www.ncaonline.org.uk/about_nca/achievements the website for the National Council on Archives.

³ West Midlands Regional Archive Council, *Future directions: West Midlands archive strategy 2001-2003* (2001)

⁴ 65% of catalogues were 'very poor' compared to 34% nationally. See PRO, *Our shared past: an archival Domesday for England* (1998)

⁵ Elihu Burritt, *Walks in the Black Country and its green border-land* (1868)

⁶ 'Best Value' was a Government initiative aimed at modernising and improving the way public services are provided.

⁷ For more information on the recent history of cooperation and partnership working among the archive services of the Black Country, see Peter Evans, 'Black Country archives and local studies – working together', *The Local Studies Librarian*, pp.6-7 (Summer 2005)

⁸ Christopher Kitching, *Survey of archive cataloguing problems (England and Wales)*, Historical Manuscripts Commission (2002)

⁹ 'An introduction to the Archive Lottery Service', *Record Keeping*, pp.12-14 (Spring 2005)

¹⁰ For a comprehensive guide to digital imaging, see: www.tasi.ac.uk the website for the Technical Advisory Service for Images. The service is hosted by the Institute for Learning and Research Technology, University

of Bristol. See also: <http://heds.herts.ac.uk> the website of the Higher Education Digitisation Service, based at the University of Hertfordshire.

- ¹¹ The Dublin Core is a set of metadata elements designed to aid the search for electronic resources. The framework defines fifteen metadata elements that might be used for resource description.
- ¹² See: <http://www.tasi.ac.uk/advice/managing/copyrights.html> for more information on managing copyright.
- ¹³ West Midlands Regional Archive Council, *Future directions: West Midlands archive strategy 2001-2003* (2001)
- ¹⁴ See 'Government Policy on Archives: Action Plan' at www.pro.gov.uk/archives/actionplan/policy.htm
- ¹⁵ Matthew J.Dovey, 'So you want to build a union catalogue?', *Ariadne*, Issue 23 (March 2000)
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁷ Elihu Burritt, *Walks in the Black Country and its green border-land* (1868)
- ¹⁸ R.Hunt, *Mineral statistics of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland*, pp.89-90 (series of reports 1855-1860)
- ¹⁹ Black Country Consortium, *Report on the economy and skills in the Black Country* (2005). See: www.blackcountryconsortium.co.uk for more information on the work of this sub-regional partnership.
- ²⁰ The records of Cannon Industries Ltd (reference: D8) were catalogued in 2005 by Liz Newman, Project Archivist, at Dudley Archives and Local History Service.
- ²¹ Additional information on Cannon Industries Ltd taken from: *The Cannon Foundry, Coseley – The First 100 Years (1826-1926)*, Black Country Society Studies in Industrial Archaeology No.5 (1987)
- ²² William White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Staffordshire* (1851)
- ²³ The records of Henry G. Richardson & Sons Ltd (reference: D7) were catalogued in 2005 by Liz Newman, Project Archivist, with assistance from Roger Dodsworth, Keeper of Glass, Broadfield House Glass Museum, at Dudley Archives and Local History Service.

IONIAN BANK LIMITED: RETROCONVERSION AND DIGITISATION PROJECT

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Introduction

The launch of the online catalogue to the Archive of the Ionian Bank in September 2005 signalled the culmination of a two year project of listing, digitisation, preservation and promotion. Funded by Alpha Bank, Greece¹ and based in the Archives Division of the London School of Economics (LSE) Library² the project began in September 2003 with the recruitment of a project archivist.

The aim of the project was to improve access to the Archive through:

- the publication of an on-line finding aid supporting searching via free text and authority files for individuals, organisations and places;
- the creation of digital versions of the Court of Directors' minute books (1839-1917), accessible via the archives catalogue and the project web pages;
- the completion of a preservation survey covering the entire Archive and the re-housing of items as appropriate;
- the development of a publicity programme to bring the Archive to the attention of economic and business historians.

The project was completed in September 2005 and a launch was held the following December. This paper will discuss the management of the different elements of the project as outlined above.

Ionian Bank Limited

The Ionian Bank Limited was founded in London in 1839 to finance trade between the Ionian Islands, at that time a British protectorate, and Britain.³ In 1839 the Bank took offices at Aldermanbury in the City of London. London would function as the Bank's head office throughout its history, although the Bank changed its location within the City several times over the years. The London office was the base of the Court of Directors, responsible for the strategies and policies underpinning the Bank's work. Any recommendations put forward by the committees administering the overseas branches had to be approved by the Court before

implementation. In addition the Court had the right to revise the powers and duties of these regional committees.

The Bank's prospectus was issued in London on 17 January 1839, and the Bank opened for business on 2 March 1840 at Corfu, which became the Bank's main overseas office. On 18 May a branch was opened at Zákynthos (Zante), and a second branch on 10 August at Kefallinía (Cephalonia), with agencies at Athens and Pátraí (Patras) opening in 1845. The Bank was granted a British Charter in January 1844, and it was ranked third, after the Bank of England, in the list of existing English banks created by Royal Charter.

After the 1864 Treaty of London restored the Ionian Islands to Greece, the Bank began to extend its operations to other regions of Greece. In 1873 the Corfu branch was superseded as the Bank's main Greek office by Athens. Most communications between the Greek, and later the Cypriot and Egyptian branches, and London were channelled through the Athens office, a role reflected in the correspondence files, memoranda and telegrams concerning the Greek branches in the Archive. By 1903 the Athens office was often referred to as the 'Head Office in Greece.'

A series of councils and committees was established to administer the Greek branches and their recommendations were forwarded to the Court of Directors in London for approval. The first of these bodies was the Athens Council, which operated between 1877-1902. The Council was formed in response to 'the state of war and other complications in the East', probably a reference to the series of wars which took place between Greece and the Ottoman Empire during the nineteenth century. Initially members were asked to relinquish their place on the council if they embarked upon a political career in the Greek Government, but this resolution was revised in 1892. The Athens Council was renamed the Directors in Greece in 1902, when its members became full members of the Court of Directors, as a Board Committee. The Board Committee was wound up in 1916. Its role was taken over by the Athens Advisory Committee which is first mentioned in the Court of Directors' minute books in June 1915. The Committee met weekly to discuss banking, staff and organisational matters concerning the Greek branches. Its powers and duties were subject to revision in consultation with the Court of Directors.

In 1905 the Bank's Chairman, Falconer Larkworthy, visited Egypt and recommended to the Court of Directors that the Bank open a branch in Alexandria. The Alexandria branch opened in 1907 and a manager based in Alexandria, sometimes supported by a sub-manager, ran the Bank's Egyptian business. By 1913 the Bank had created the post of General Manager for Egypt to deal with the expansion of the Egyptian business, but this post disappeared by the

end of 1925. Business in Egypt focussed on the cotton trade, and from 1909 the Bank began to finance the cultivation and movement of cotton via its agents. From 1910 to 1915, 11 agencies were founded. Unlike the agencies established in Greece and Cyprus, these Egyptian counterparts never obtained branch status. In 1918 a further agency was opened at Cairo, only to be closed in 1922. The Bank returned to Cairo in 1951 opening a branch that remained active until 1956, when the Egyptian government sequestrated the Egyptian business of the Ionian Bank.

Following the establishment of branches in Greece and Egypt, the Bank turned its attention to Cyprus. A branch opened at Nicosia in 1926 and the post of 'Manager of the Bank in Cyprus' was created. This post was based in Nicosia and had overall responsibility for the Bank's business activities in Cyprus, which centred on wool and tobacco. A number of branch files concern the shipment of wool from Cyprus to the UK for manufacture. In 1927 agencies were opened at Lárnax (Larnaca), Lemesós (Limmasol) and Famagusta. The Court of Directors decided that all outlets in Cyprus apart from the Nicosia branch should be referred to as 'agencies' operating under the supervision of sub-managers. A fourth agency was established at Paphos in 1928. In due course the agencies obtained branch status, although Nicosia remained the Bank's headquarters in Cyprus. The Cyprus business interests were sold to the Chartered Bank in 1957.

In 1939 the Ionian Bank had embarked on the purchase of more than two-thirds of the capital of the Popular Bank, one of its competitors in Greece. By 1949 the Ionian Bank had increased its ownership to over four-fifths. In 1953 the Court of Directors decided to absorb the Popular Bank by assuming its assets and liabilities. Consequently the Ionian Bank took over responsibility for the Popular Bank's subsidiary companies, including the Anglo-Greek Financial Company Limited. In common with other parts of the Ionian Bank's operations, the Popular Bank had an Advisory Committee that made recommendations concerning policy. After the takeover, upper management and Directors from the Ionian Bank sat on this committee, as well as sitting on the Boards of Directors of the Popular Bank's subsidiary companies.

After the sequestration of the Egyptian business in 1956, the sale of the Greek business to the Commercial Bank of Greece and the Cyprus business to the Chartered Bank in 1957, the Ionian Bank functioned as a small merchant bank based in London. However, the Bank was not able to survive the economic recession of the 1970s and with its holdings falling from £31.6 million to £16.6 million between 1974 and 1975, the Ionian Bank ceased trading in

1977. The Greek business, bought by the Commercial Bank of Greece, but trading as the Ionian Bank, merged with Alpha Credit Bank to form Alpha Bank in 2000.

The Archive was deposited at the LSE in 1980 via the Business Archives Council. John Orbell, formerly the archivist of ING-Barings, discovered and rescued the Archive during his work on the first edition of *A guide to the historical records of British banking*.⁴ Hearing that the Ionian Bank was in some difficulties and about to leave its offices, he visited the head office and found 'a safe stuffed full of wonderful archives'. Initially unable to find a home for the archives John Orbell personally rescued the papers hoping subsequently to find an appropriate home. This material was later re-united at LSE with further files and ledgers housed at St Antony's College, Oxford, following its use by a researcher at the college.⁵

Funding and project management

The Ionian Bank project was funded by Alpha Bank, Greece, as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility programme. Alpha Bank has an active Historical Department charged with preserving the Bank's archives and encouraging research into its history. Following Alpha Bank's merger with the Ionian Bank, the Historical Department was charged with the care and promotion of the Ionian Bank's Archive. Following a visit to London by the Bank's advisor, Professor Kostas Kostis of the University of Athens, a project proposal was presented to Alpha Bank for a cataloguing, digitisation and conservation programme with a maximum budget of £100,559. The project plan was approved and a contract was signed between the Library and Alpha Bank. The project funding was to be paid in three instalments, the last to be made on the successful completion of the project. The budget covered four main areas: staffing (the main cost for the cataloguing element of the project), preservation, digitisation and publicity. The contract also specified a list of deliverables expected from the project.

The project was managed on a daily basis by a full-time archivist responsible for a range of tasks across the project including the retro-conversion of the catalogue, the management of the digitisation and conservation programmes and devising and implementing the publicity plan. The head archivist of the Archives Division at LSE oversaw budget management. As a notable proportion of the correspondence files were in Greek, a part-time member of staff was recruited to provide language support in consultation with the project archivist.

A Steering Group of economic historians was established and membership included Professor Kostas Kostis, Professor Philip Cottrell of Leicester University and Dr Terry Gourvish of the Business History Unit at LSE. The Steering Group met four times during the

project to monitor progress on all aspects of the work and to offer advice and assistance. The members were particularly important in providing information on the historic background to the collection and advising on appropriate publicity and promotion.

Cataloguing

The Archive covers the period c1835-1979, and includes material relating to the Bank's foundation and constitution dating from 1837 to 1956. It also features company reports and accounts, 1839-1974, and minute books and corporate records, notably the minutes of the Court of Directors and succeeding bodies, 1839-1975. There is also significant material concerning the Bank's offices, branches and agencies in Greece, Egypt, Cyprus and Istanbul (Constantinople), 1922-1958, including correspondence with the Bank's offices in London and Athens, balance sheets and other financial records, branch managers' yearly reports, and inspections reports.

The Archive's peripatetic existence prior to its deposit at LSE meant that much of the original order and arrangement had been lost, leaving the project archivist with the task of producing an effective arrangement for the Archive. Wherever possible, the remnants of the original numbering systems were recorded and in all cases where the file covers included file titles created by Ionian Bank employees these were retained and recorded on the archives database.

Prior to the launch of the project, only the 'central' records, created by the Bank's central administration in London, had any level of archival description - 371 records from a total of 1,330 in the Archive. The first objective of the project was to describe and index the remaining 959 records and sort them into appropriate series using the archives database. In addition, the original entries for the central records were minimal and required some explanatory expansion and full indexing. For example, Ionian Bank employees used the term 'red sheets' to describe lists of clients who held unpaid and overdue bills. Without a fuller description the relevance of the records might not be clear to all researchers. The editing of the 'central' records also included producing expanded descriptions of the Court of Directors' minute books. These volumes were selected for digitisation, and the Steering Group decided they required detailed descriptions to accompany the relevant images.

The files were arranged into 31 series several of which were further sub-divided. The largest series comprise files concerning business activities in Greece, and Egyptian business interests. Other interesting series document the Ionian Bank's efforts to establish business links in the USA, in particular with banks in New York, during the 1920s. During this time

the Bank employed a representative who worked from offices in New York to raise the American business profile of the Bank, a post that created many correspondence files making up the 'USA' series of the catalogue. In addition there are further series focussing on the Cyprus branches, and the short-lived Istanbul branch, which operated between 1922 and 1928.

The description process necessitated language support to translate a number of Greek correspondence files. There were two forms of the modern Greek language in use during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, demotic or vernacular Greek, used in daily life, and *katharevousa*, used for official and formal purposes. In 1976 demotic Greek became the official national language and by the end of the twentieth century *katharevousa* had become obsolete. The Greek files in the Ionian Bank Archive were mainly written using *katharevousa*, and it was essential to recruit a suitable candidate who was conversant with this version of the language. In order to assess candidates' capabilities they were asked to provide a summary in English of a sample file from the archive. This proved useful in demonstrating both the candidates' translating skills and their ability to produce a concise file summary. The project was able to recruit a Greek LSE postgraduate with some experience of using archival material at the National Archives at Kew. Draft descriptions were subsequently produced and then checked for names and places by the project archivist before being added to the archives database.

A further language issue arose in the spelling of Greek place names in the file descriptions, where these have variant spellings in English. For instance, Mitilíni, where the Bank had a branch for many years, has been referred to in various sources as 'Mitylene', 'Mytylene' and also 'Kastro'. In the interests of consistency it was resolved to use the version of the place name appearing in the Getty Thesaurus of Geographic Names as the preferred term,⁶ following this with the Ionian Bank's version of the name in brackets. Consequently, in accordance with the Getty Thesaurus the catalogue uses 'Mitilíni' as its primary term, but also notes the usage of 'Mitylene' in the Ionian Bank correspondence files in brackets for the purposes of clarification, for example: 'Report concerning the performance of the Mitilíni (Mitylene) Branch'. The listing process began in September 2003 and was completed by early April 2005, signalling the fulfilment of one of the project's core objectives. The complete finding aid held descriptions for each of the 1,330 files. All had been fully indexed for people, organisations and places, allowing researchers to undertake highly detailed queries across the archive.

Digitisation of the Court of Directors' minute books

The digitisation of the Court of Directors' minute books was central to the project, giving researchers direct on-line access to one of the most heavily used parts of the Archive, which was also physically fragile. £22,000 was assigned for the digitisation and initially the project aimed to digitise all 28 volumes in the series. The Court of Directors, based in London, was responsible for the formulation, revision and approval of Bank policy. The minutes document the establishment and business of various committees. They also record the appointments, deaths and resignations of directors and managers, decisions to establish new branches and agencies, and changes in the administrative structure of the Bank.

As the Library at LSE does not have in-house facilities for scanning bound volumes, the minute books were to be digitised by an external bureau, a procedure undertaken for previous projects including the Charles Booth Online Archive.⁷ The project staff and Steering Group decided that an external digitising bureau would have the professional expertise and appropriate equipment to produce high quality images from within bound volumes within a strict time scale. The digitisation process began by establishing the key requirements and the scale of the project, translating these into a formal specification. The project was keen to ensure that two images were created: a high quality, compressed image, capable of on-screen reading, for the researcher, along with a high quality archival version. The project therefore asked suppliers to provide a 600 dpi TIFF file, for long-term archival preservation, and a 300 dpi JPEG file for on-line publication. All scanning was to be done in colour. The scans were to be delivered on DVD along with accompanying metadata relating to their creation. An important consideration was that any bureau should be able to ensure that the security and physical condition of the volumes would not be compromised.

To ensure best value, bureaux were invited to formally tender for the work, a process managed with the support of the LSE's Purchasing Manager. The Purchasing Manager incorporated the original specification, details of the evaluation and reward process, and tendering requirements into a formal tender document. This document was sent to four potential suppliers, who were invited to respond before a specified deadline. Three of these responded with formal estimates, and it became clear at this stage that digitising the complete series of minute books was beyond the scope of the project budget. A decision was therefore taken, with the agreement of the funders, to digitise the first 12 volumes, spanning the years 1839 to 1917.

The successful bureau⁸ was selected following a series of site visits to assess security measures and view the equipment available for the digitisation work. Sample pages from one

volume were digitised to assess quality and to establish benchmarks. A service level agreement was drawn up and signed by the selected supplier to ensure that the required specification would be adhered to. The volumes were despatched two at a time, with the project archivist maintaining a database recording the issue and return of each volume. Each volume was despatched with written instructions and an inventory. Bookmarks were inserted in the volumes to indicate blank openings and inserts, and to mark initial and final openings requiring digitisation. In accordance with the service level agreement, the supplier e-mailed a progress report on a monthly basis to the project archivist.

When the digitised images were delivered, the project archivist checked each image file to ensure quality and consistency. This checking process proved vital in maintaining quality control, ensuring that the bureau could be notified of any discrepancies and complete corrections prior to payment. The main area of concern was ensuring that none of the openings containing text were accidentally missed out during digitisation. 2,160 images were checked in the course of this process, with the images from each volume representing five to six hours' work. The digitisation began in October 2004 and was completed by the end of June 2005.

The next stage was to consider the best method of publishing the images on-line. This process was undertaken in partnership with the Library's IT Support team who provided technical support for the project. The original JPEG images were copied from DVD on to a local PC, to prevent corruption of the original files. To ensure the integrity of the files and ease of use, PDF files were used to deliver the images to users. A PDF file was created from the copied images using Adobe Acrobat 6.0 Professional. This was a time-consuming process taking one to two hours per PDF file. The PDF file was then compressed using Acrobat 5.0, and stored on a local PC before being uploaded to a server. The size of the volumes and the images meant that the PDF file for each volume was split into two to speed up delivery times to users. A web page was designed to host the links to the PDF files held giving concise contextual information concerning the Court of Directors' minute book series, details of the format and size of the files and warning users of the time needed to download the files. The PDF pages can be accessed through the project's web pages and also via the online archive catalogue, which includes a facility for linking directly to a web page using the URL. This allows researchers to access the files in a variety of ways.

The service level agreement signed by the digitisation firm specified that an Excel spreadsheet should be produced which contained metadata to facilitate the long-term preservation of the original images. This included information concerning the type of scanner

and software used, scanning resolution, image size and type, and compression ratios. As far as physical storage is concerned, the DVDs are kept in the main archive storage area in archival quality boxes. However, the Library is currently investigating the development and use of an institutional digital repository and it is hoped that this will provide appropriate long-term storage for digital materials of this type.

Conservation

The preservation survey was conducted over the course of October and November 2004. The Archive contains a variety of physical formats, including photographs. The majority of items had been placed in low-acid boxes, buffered in acid free folders, prior to the launch of the project in September 2003. The Archive occupies 41.5 linear metres of mobile shelving in the archives' storage area completed in 2003 following the Library's complete refurbishment. The storage area was designed to comply with BS5454 standards, and is adjacent to the reading room, facilitating a quick and efficient fetching service. The environmental conditions are recorded on the Library's building management system and print outs are sent to the archivist on a regular basis. In addition, the storage area is monitored manually by archive staff on a daily basis, and the temperature and relative humidity records are stored on an Excel database. Access to the storage area is restricted to archives staff, and researchers are supervised at all times in the reading room.

The objective of the preservation survey was to assess the physical condition of the Archive and make recommendations on rehousing and storage. The findings of the survey were recorded in an Access database that was updated as the project archivist worked through the Archive. The survey indicated that the main area of concern was the outsize bound volumes. The leather bindings of many of the ledgers and share registers were disintegrating and producing 'red rot'. As a result custom-made boxes were purchased for each of the volumes to prevent the covers rubbing against other items and causing further damage. The Court of Directors' minute book series were also re-housed in 'Smart Boxes' from Conservation By Design Limited,⁹ as the minute books were particularly fragile, but formed a key part of the Bank's historic record. 'Smart Boxes'¹⁰ are individually produced using a Kasemake computer-controlled box-making machine. The box type chosen features a drop-spine, allowing for the safe handling of fragile books. The boxes also have double walls on three sides of the base and for additional strength they are assembled with brass wire staples (no staples are exposed on the inside of the closed box).

Publicity

As the cataloguing, digitising and conservation aspects of the project came to completion, a publicity plan was drawn up. Our aim was to announce the availability of the catalogue and digital materials and raise awareness of the Archive among economic and business historians, encouraging researchers to visit the Archive in person or virtually on the web. The publicity plan was refined after consultation with the LSE Library Communications Manager, and the publicity programme was rolled out over the course of summer 2005.

The Steering Group was able to provide good advice about appropriate conferences and journals to target with information, and notices were sent out to a range of publications. These included the *Business Archives Council newsletter*, *European Association of Banking History*, *Business History* and the *Financial History Review*.

The Archives Division produced a series of double-sided A4 briefing papers on particular archives or subject areas, based on a simple WORD template created by the LSE Design Unit.¹¹ An Ionian Bank briefing paper was produced in both English and Greek giving an overview of the Archive and details of how to access the collections. The Steering Group identified four business history-related conferences during 2005 to which copies of a leaflet could be sent for distribution amongst the delegates: the Economic History Annual Conference¹² held at Leicester University during 8-10 April; the annual meeting of the Business History Conference¹³ held in Minneapolis during 19-21 May; the European Association for Banking History Conference¹⁴ held in Vienna during 20-21 May; and the conference of the Association of Business Historians¹⁵ held at Glasgow during 27-28 May. An English and a Greek version were emailed out to all Greek members of the LSE Alumni Association in December 2005.

A number of LSE in-house publications were also used to publicize the project and Archive to students and staff with an interest in economics or Greek history. Since 1978 the LSE has had a Business History Unit (BHU)¹⁶ that aims to promote work in all aspects of business history. LSE's *News and Views* is issued weekly via email to staff and students, while *Briefing* is e-mailed to staff every fortnight. These publications would reach staff and students associated with the BHU, among others, who would be potentially interested in using the Ionian Bank Archive.

A small portable exhibition, consisting of two exhibition cases and one exhibition board was designed. The exhibition has been installed in the Library lobby on two occasions, and can be used in a variety of locations as it makes use of high quality copies of the archive materials. The first case describes the work of the project and the second the history of the Bank using

items from the Archive, including two rare group portraits of the staff of the Athens Office taken during the 1940s.

The 2005 publicity plan culminated in December 2005 with a publicity launch sponsored by Alpha Bank. The Bank invited a party of Greek financial journalists to visit the LSE archives for a promotional visit. The journalists had an opportunity to view the portable exhibition on the Ionian Bank Archive before listening to two presentations. The first by Professor Kostis outlined the history of the Ionian Bank and the importance of its archives and history to Alpha Bank. This was followed by a short presentation by the Archivist, Sue Donnelly, outlining the project and its benefits to researchers. This was followed by a tour of the archives storage area and an opportunity to view a selection of original volumes, including the early share registers.

Conclusion

With the support of Alpha Bank the Ionian Bank Project has created an on-line resource for business and historical research, accessible across the globe. The Ionian Bank's Archive has moved from being an underused resource to one whose usage doubled between the academic years of 2003-4 and 2004-5, an increase which is continuing through the current academic year. It is an invaluable resource for researchers investigating the economics and history of the Eastern Mediterranean throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Throughout the project the Archives Division was able to exploit the skills of a wide range of staff, from IT support to the Library Communications Manager to ensure that the Ionian Bank's Archive is now widely accessible. The project is also a good example of the excellent results which can be obtained when public and private bodies, and historians and archivists, work together to achieve a common aim.

Notes

¹ <http://www.alpha.gr>

² <http://www.lse.ac.uk/library/archives>

³ There are several secondary sources which can be used to gain an insight into the Ionian bank's history, including: Philip L.Cottrell, 'Founding a multinational financial enterprise: Ionian Bank, 1833-1849', in Kostas P.Kostis (ed), *The creators and the creation of banking enterprises in Europe from the 18th to the 20th centuries* (Athens, Alpha Bank, 2002). Also *Ionian Bank Limited - a history* (London, 1953)

⁴ L.S.Pressnell and John Orbell with the assistance of Rosemary Ashbee, *A guide to the historical records of British banking* (Aldershot, Gower, c1985)

⁵ For a fuller account of John Orbell's rescue of the archives see *Business Archives Council Newsletter*, 131, Summer 2003

⁶ http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/vocabularies/tgn/

⁷ <http://booth.lse.ac.uk/>

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- ⁸ The bureau we used was Max Communications Ltd <http://www.maxcommunications.co.uk>. Other bureaux which were suggested were Higher Education Digitisation Service (HEDS) <http://heds.herts.ac.uk> and Datafind <http://www.datafind.co.uk>
- ⁹ <http://www.conservation-by-design.co.uk>
- ¹⁰ Produced by Conservation by Design <http://www.conservation-by-design.co.uk/acidfree/acidfree72.html>
- ¹¹ <http://www.lse.ac.uk/archives/designUnit>
- ¹² <http://www.ehs.org.uk>
- ¹³ <http://www.h-net.org/~business/bhcweb>
- ¹⁴ <http://www.bankinghistory.de>
- ¹⁵ <http://www.busman.qmul.ac.uk/abh>
- ¹⁶ <http://www.lse.ac.uk/archives/BHU>

THE SHIBUSAWA SHASHI PROJECT AND SHARING INFORMATION ON BUSINESS ARCHIVES IN JAPAN¹

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Introduction

With the dawn of the new millennium, the circumstances surrounding information have undergone massive changes. Japan is no exception to these changes that undoubtedly have an impact on every aspect of business. This article aims to introduce a project—the Shibusawa Shashi Project (hereafter abbreviated as SSP)—that has recently commenced at the Resource Centre for the History of Entrepreneurship in the Shibusawa Memorial Museum in the context of sharing information on business archives in Japan.

The details of the SSP will be discussed in section three of this article; however, for the sake of convenience, we present a brief explanation of the project in advance. The SSP has two components: one concerns the indexing of the already published *shashi* and the other deals with the compilation of the directory of business archives in Japan. *Shashi* is a general term for company history in Japanese, but it usually refers to published volumes of company history. Terms such as *kaishashi* or *nenshi* can be used interchangeably with *shashi*. While the terms *shashi* and *kaishashi* are exclusively used for company history, the term *nenshi* implies a broader concept than *shashi* or *kaishashi* since it not only implies the published history of business enterprises but also that of other organizations such as schools, municipalities, religious bodies, etc. According to Katsuko Murahashi—a *shashi* expert—as of 2002, over 13,000 titles on *shashi* have been published since the end of the 19th century and today, over 100 are published every year.³ Murahashi defines *shashi* as the publication in which a company provides an account of its own history based on its own archives and assumes responsibility for it.⁴ At this point, we would like to emphasize that in some respects, business archives in Japan have developed concurrently with the compilation of *shashi*. It can be said that the compilation of *shashi* has played a crucial role in enhancing the activities of and in developing business archives in Japan. From this perspective, *shashi* can be considered as a gateway to business archives in Japan.

Hideyuki Aoyama has already discussed business archives and records management in Japan in terms of the archival profession.⁵ This paper begins with an overview of the developments in the archival community and business archives in Japan since Aoyama's article in 1994. Then, we proceed to review the networks that support sharing information on business archives in Japan with a special reference to *shashi*. In the final part of this paper, we discuss the SSP in greater detail and place it in the context of recent developments in the sharing of information on archives in Japan.

Recent development in the archival community and business archives in Japan

Legal framework

The government established the National Archives of Japan in July 1971 as a repository organization for government documents and other important books and materials inherited from previous governments since the 17th century, thereby encouraging public access to them. Further, it encouraged holding exhibitions and conducting research on these historical materials. However, for over 15 years, there was no general law to regulate the archives. The enactment of the Public Archives Law in 1987 and the National Archives Law in 1999 were widely received as instrumental to the promotion of the concept and system of archival preservation in Japanese society. An act that amended a part of the National Archives Law came into effect in 2001, thereby making the National Archives an independent administrative institution and providing a legal basis to the archives.⁶

Archives are influenced by the legal right of information access to government and other documents relevant to public bodies. There has been another change in the legal position pertaining to administrative accountability based on documents and records - the enactment of two laws: The Law Concerning Access to Information Held by Administrative Organs (Law No. 42 of 1999) and the Law Concerning Access to Information Held by Incorporated Administrative Agencies, Etc. (Law No. 140 of 2001). They brought about changes in government departments with regard to their records. Before these laws were enacted, an average of 17,000 volumes of records were transferred annually from government departments to the National Archives; since then, 674 volumes were transferred in the fiscal year 2001, approximately 7,000 in 2002, and 6,000 in 2003.⁷ Some contend that these laws have a negative effect on the transfer of the departmental records to the National Archives. However, an appropriate evaluation of the consequences of the laws may require long-term observation.

Archival science

The Japan Society for Archival Science (JSAS) was established in April 2004. This society aims to enhance the study of archival science, whose main activities involve research on the management, history, structure, and dissemination of archives and that on the education and training related to archives.⁸ This newly established organization is more research oriented than other national archival organizations such as the Japan Society of Archives Institutions (JSAI) established in 1976, or the Records Management Society of Japan (RMSJ) established in 1989. JSAS is the first academic society for the study of archives in Japan.

International exchange

Another development with regard to the archival community can be observed in the frequent and wide-ranging international exchange with the archival communities of the neighbouring countries. The Business Archives Association (BAA)'s regular exchange programme with the Chinese Archives Society is the most distinguished example. We will revisit this topic later in this article.

Further, the ties between the archival community of Japan and that of the Republic of Korea have been strengthening in recent years. The Department of Archival Studies at the National Institute of Japanese Literature (DAS-NIJL) is a centre for archival studies in Japan; it has been engaging in regular scholarly exchanges with Korean academics since 2002.⁹ Some Korean archivists from the National Archives and Records Service (NARS) are conducting their research at the Department. The enactment of the Public Records Management Act in Korea in 1999 and the subsequent development both in practice and in the study of archives in this country have attracted and stimulated a large number of archival professionals in Japan.¹⁰

Inter-organisational activities

Two national institutions have launched inter-organizational enterprises. One is the Japan Centre for Asian Historical Records (JACAR), which was established by the Cabinet in November 2001 as an institution attached to the National Archives of Japan. The JACAR has provided one-stop access through the Internet to the pre-1945 governmental records that are separately held in the National Archives of Japan, the Diplomatic Record Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Library of the National Institute for Defence Studies of the National Defence Agency. The JACAR's mission is to provide people all over the world with access to materials on the modern history of relations between Japan and various other

countries, primarily the neighbouring Asian countries. The project is expected to lead to a fruitful dialogue on the ‘historical perspectives’ of Japan vis-à-vis those of its neighbouring countries. As of January 2005, users can access 7,400,000 pieces of image data and a catalogue database of 530,000 items.¹¹

The other institution taking initiatives in this field is the DAS-NIJL. The Department has built a database referred to as the Shiryokan National Database of Archival and Documentary Resources (SINDBAD), which contains a catalogue database of 85,000 items possessed by the depository institutions of historical manuscripts in Japan. Users can search record groups using the indexes of provenance, place, periods, catalogue name, and catalogue number.¹²

Another project that is currently in progress at the DAS-NIJL is concerned with building a database of an archival information network. The database is called the Historical Material Information Database. This aims to share the information possessed by individual record collecting institutions. This project is being jointly developed by the DAS-NIJL and other participating institutions. The database contains a description of archival listings held by the member institutions. The description of archival materials is regulated in accordance with ISAD(G).¹³ These two projects undertaken by the DAS-NIJL are parallel to the National Register of Archives of the United Kingdom in the sense that they intend to share national archival information; however, they do not include a substantial amount of archival information on modern business enterprises.

Individual business archives

We still cannot say that the term ‘archives’ has become as common in Japanese vocabulary as terms such as ‘library’ and ‘museum’. However, in recent years, the general public appears to be gradually accepting the idea. Earlier, companies generally did not use words such as ‘archives’ and ‘records office’ for the section in charge of compilation of *shashi* or preservation of historical documents. Today however, some corporate sections designate themselves as *akaibu(zu)* (which equates to the English archive(s)) in Japanese or even ascribe English names to their archives. Examples of using the term ‘archives’ are Corporate History Archives Office in Canon Inc., Corporate Archives Office in Kao Corporation, Archives in Bank of Japan (BOJ), Toyota Archives in Toyota Motor Corporation, and Yokogawa Archives in Yokogawa Electric Corporation. Some other companies have sections with names such as Records Office (Asahi Breweries, Ltd) and Office of Corporate History (Morinaga & Co., Ltd and Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd).

The following are three recent examples of trends in naming the archival sections of

Japanese companies. First, in the case of Canon Inc., the Editorial Office of Corporate History was established in 1984 for the publication of Canon's 50-year-old history. After the publication of its *shashi* in 1987, the office was engaged in the compilation of a Chronology recording corporate activities and new products, and this has subsequently been published several times, thereby encouraging the preservation of historical records for utilization in areas such as public relations and other purposes. In 2003, this section was renamed the Corporate History Archives Office - its present name - with an expansion of its responsibilities. At present, its tasks include the arrangement, description, digitization and preservation of historical records, as well as reference services and outreach.¹⁴

Second, the archives of Bank of Japan (BOJ), the central bank of Japan, were established in 1999. Originally, the Institute for Monetary and Economic Studies, which was founded in October 1982 as an internal organization of the BOJ, was furnished with an archival repository that provides public access to historical documents.¹⁵ At the time of the reorganization of the BOJ in 1999, arrangements pertaining to records management were reviewed, and the facility that regularly receives documents and records produced within the parent organization was named as Archives of the BOJ.¹⁶ The Law Concerning Access to Information Held by Incorporated Administrative Agencies, Etc. enacted in 2001 has been directly applied to the Archives, thereby providing a legal basis to the Archives activities of preservation and disclosure of the administrative documents of the BOJ.¹⁷

Third, Kyoko Makishima, a corporate archivist, explained the birth of the Archives of Yokogawa Electric Corporation in April 2003 as follows. Since 1989, the corporation envisioned the establishment of a corporate museum and the publication of its recent company history in order to commemorate the completion of 80 years in 1995.¹⁸ As the management and staff in charge of this project proceeded to work on this vision, they began to pay greater attention to the introduction of archives. Thus, the original plan to establish a museum and to publish its *shashi* developed into the launch of the Yokogawa Archives in 2003.¹⁹

As observed above, the dissemination of the idea of archives has been witnessed in Japan during the past years. Technological development has made it possible to overcome the challenges with regard to sharing information or networking among archival institutions.

Shashi and business archives

Shashi and special libraries

As many people have pointed out, the compilation of *shashi* was the forerunner in

spreading awareness related to business archives in Japan. In this regard, librarians, who have been receiving and cataloguing the published volumes of *shashi*, are professionals who have had an important role in managing *shashi*. The department or section that is in charge of the compilation of *shashi* is often created on an *ad hoc* basis, and historical records and documents are usually kept in the custody of bodies such as libraries, information centres, public relations, and general affairs. Therefore, corporate librarians have had opportunities to participate in the compilation of *shashi*. This is the reason why library networks have been actively training librarians for records management and preservation of historical documents.

The Japan Special Libraries Association (JSLA) is a network that connects special libraries within companies and organizations.²⁰ Special libraries are libraries that include a collection of specialized publications relating to the business sector of their parent organizations. In 1956, the JSLA-Kansai, one of the regional chapters of the JSLA, began holding seminars on *shashi* on a regular basis for the benefit of companies and their staff who planned to compile their own *shashi*.²¹ Other chapters of the JSLA such as the JSLA-Chubu and the JSLA-Kanto followed suit by organizing similar seminars.

The JSLA-Kanto has several subcommittees, and the *shashi* group was formed within the economic subcommittee in June 1976. This group has been very active in compiling the *shashi* bibliography. Their most distinguished work is perhaps the editing and publishing of the *Shashi keizai dantaishi sogo mokuroku* (A union catalogue of company histories and economic organizations) in June 1977.²² The JSLA-Kanto *shashi* group has been involved in this project from the outset; the group edits and opens the bibliographies of *shashi* to the public, and these bibliographies have been published on a half-yearly basis since November 1977.²³ The original book was supplemented as well as revised twice in 1986 and 1996 with the purpose of updating the data.²⁴

The JSLA-Kanto *shashi* group conducted a questionnaire survey on business archives for the first time in 1980.²⁵ Of the 320 JSLA member organizations, 120 responded to the survey. The survey revealed that 97 respondents had compiled or planned to compile *shashi*, and that librarians in such organizations made efforts towards the conservation of corporate archives. Further, the survey revealed that few of these organizations had specialized sections or staff for such conservation.

The promotion of *shashi* through exhibitions was another factor that encouraged business archives from the 1960s onwards. The Library of Keidanren (the Japan Federation of Economic Organizations, now known as Nippon Keidanren, the Japan Business Federation) held *shashi* exhibitions in 1967, 1973, 1978, 1980, 1982, 1984 and 1986. A considerably

large number of volumes of *shashi* and other related publications, such as histories of business associations and biographies of entrepreneurs, were placed on public display. Apart from other categories of publication, the volumes of *shashi* alone that were exhibited were 437, 966, 470, 479, 494, 570 and 561 respectively. Exhibition catalogues were also published on each occasion.²⁶ As seen in the above examples, the special libraries and librarians associated with the above-mentioned *shashi* group have played important roles both as users and producers of *shashi*.

Scholars as shashi authors

Corporate librarians are not the only staff members involved in the formation of *shashi*. While the company itself publishes *shashi*, the writers are not always corporate staff. Scholars of history have had the opportunities to join the teams engaged in *shashi* compilation.²⁷ *Kao sekken yonjunenshi* (The 40-year-old history of Kao Soap), the first *shashi* of Kao Sekken (now Kao Corporation) published in 1940 and considered to be one of the classics of *shashi* publications, was written by Ryosei Kobayashi and Shiso Hattori - scholars who are well known for their leading roles in the debate on Japanese capitalism in pre-war Japan.²⁸ These are just examples; a sizeable number of scholars of history, particularly business history, have joined teams engaged in editing *shashi*.

In this regard, the Japan Business History Institute (JBHI), established in 1965, is a unique foundation since it is expected to facilitate the compilation of *shashi*. Its scholarly activities are performed in the following manner: the collection of business-related books and records, enhancement of scholarship in business history, production of *shashi* on a contract basis, the promotion of *shashi* and its publication.²⁹ The JBHI has co-sponsored exhibitions subsequent to the *shashi* exhibitions in 1978; the JBHI has also started honouring several accomplished *shashi* publications with testimonials of commendation on a two-year basis in order to improve the qualities of *shashi*.³⁰ Scholars who do not have any connection with the JBHI are also given opportunities to contribute to the writing of *shashi*.

A business archivist in Japan

At this point, it must be clarified who business archivists in Japan are and what their functions include. It is evident that business archives - in the sense of the 'materials created or received by a person, family or organization, public or private, in the conduct of their affairs and preserved because of the enduring value held in the information they contain or as evidence of the functions and responsibilities of their creator'³¹ - certainly exist in Japan.

Nevertheless, few companies have systematic rules stipulating the transfer of records from an office to a section that plays the role of company archive.

In most cases, there are no readily available archives, and the *shashi* staffs have to begin the collection of material as soon as the company decides on the compilation of *shashi*. Therefore, the main tasks of Japanese business archivists with respect to *shashi* are acquisition, appraisal, selection, and arrangement of company records.³² In some cases, they are also engaged in description, reference services, access, preservation, protection, outreach, advocacy, and promotion. In general, however, the *shashi* editorial sections or libraries and other bodies that are responsible for the custody of archival materials do not have any specific responsibilities to actively manage archives in a company.

Personnel in charge of business archives are not always professionally qualified or trained in archival science since there is no standardized qualification or certification system. In some cases, as noted above, certified librarians or curators function as archivists; in other cases, corporate personnel who have the requisite background with a specialization in history play the roles of archivists. Otherwise, staff members who are not trained in archives, records management, library or museum work or history simply have to work as archivists. The last type of staff appointment is a widely held custom in Japanese companies; the newly appointed person makes an effort to fit the role of archivist, for which the company is supposed to provide on-the-job training.³³ For such people, the preparation for the compilation of *shashi* is possibly the most important task; however, in most companies, the latest version of *shashi* was published, 20 or 30, and in some cases, 50 years ago. The newly appointed staff member faces the problem of lack of information, knowledge, and experience. It is no surprise that they are baffled by the task. This is another factor that necessitates sharing experiences on *shashi* and trans-corporate information exchange.

Achievements of the Business Archives Association

The Business Archives Association (BAA), established in 1981, has been the only specialized network of business archives in Japan. The original idea was conceived by the members of the JSLA-Kanto *shashi* group and some other groups, and came into being with the co-operation of scholars in business history and some figures in corporate management. In comparison with the Business Archives Council in the UK, the BAA is not a registered charity or a foundation but a voluntary association with its own constitution. The members are from various sections of companies and other organizations that are interested in *shashi*, business archives, and records management. The BAA has its office in the Japan Business

History Institute, which has been assisting the BAA in financial and other respects.³⁴

The following were the activities of the BAA in their first 20 years from November 1981 to March 2002.³⁵ First, the BAA published 99 issues of its newsletter and 6 issues of the bulletin named *Kigyō to Shiryo* (The Journal of Business Archives). Second, it held 33 seminars on *shashi*, 3 on corporate museums, and 4 on business archives and related topics. Third, the BAA had 114 regular study meetings and 9 joint study meetings with the Japan Society of Archives Institutions. Fourth, it organized 16 domestic study tours on industrial heritage and 2 overseas study tours on industrial museums, archives, and other aspects. Fifth, it held study groups on some specialized topics in 8 series. In addition, the BAA dispatched a delegation to study Chinese archives on 5 occasions and received the Chinese counterpart from the China Archives Association on 10 occasions.³⁶ As shown above, the BAA provides opportunities to exchange and share information on business archives, corporate museums, and particularly on *shashi*.

The number of corporate and institutional memberships steadily increased during the first 10 years and gradually decreased thereafter (see Table 1). This reflects the downturn of the Japanese economy in the 1990s. The latest figure in this membership category is 86.³⁷

Table 1: BAA corporate and institutional membership³⁸

1981	55	1992	136
1982	79	1993	135
1983	86	1994	127
1984	92	1995	124
1985	100	1996	126
1986	100	1997	116
1987	106	1998	107
1988	112	1999	118
1989	121	2000	117
1990	135	2001	110
1991	136	2002	101

A report on the production of *shashi* delivered at the *shashi* seminar in December 2005 has revealed that during the compilation of *shashi*, companies tend to build databases of their historical records using spreadsheet programs and other software.³⁹ Further, it has shown that

corporate management and editorial staffs are gaining interest in exploring ways to make use of the collected records. This is probably one of the reasons why companies are gradually establishing sections designated as archives and records offices.

Shibusawa Shashi Project: origins and prospects

*Museum, Research Department, and the Resource Centre: the three divisions of the Shibusawa Memorial Foundation*⁴⁰

The primary objective of the Shibusawa Shashi Project is to improve access to information on *shashi* and business archives in Japan. The Resource Centre for the History of Entrepreneurship is working on this project for the benefit of the public. The Resource Centre was established in 2003 and is the youngest division of the Shibusawa Memorial Foundation, whose other working bodies include the Shibusawa Memorial Museum and the Research Department. The Centre is housed within the Shibusawa Memorial Museum and is co-operating with the Museum, which is a member of the BAA as well as the JSLA-Kanto chapter since the Museum holds not only the documents and artefacts but also the collection of books related to Ei'ichi Shibusawa.

The Resource Centre's concern with regard to sharing information on *shashi* and business archives is due to the work and life of Ei'ichi Shibusawa, which the Shibusawa Foundation attempts to honour.

Ei'ichi Shibusawa and the birth of the modern corporation

Today, Ei'ichi Shibusawa (1840–1931) is considered to be the founding father of the modern Japanese economy, for his contribution in nurturing and supporting the significant institutions of modern economy, namely joint stock companies.

Born to a wealthy farmer in the late Edo period, educated in the Confucian tradition, and reared in the sentiment of *Sonno-joi* (revere the Emperor and expel the barbarians), Ei'ichi Shibusawa entered the service of Hitotsubashi Yoshinobu (then in line for the position of shogun). In 1867, as a member of the Tokugawa Delegation, he visited the Universal Exposition at Paris, France as well as some other European countries. He was impressed with the industrial and economic development in Europe. While he was visiting Europe, Japan experienced a great change in its constitution, namely, the Meiji Restoration (1867–1868). In 1869, Ei'ichi founded the first joint stock company in Japan on the basis of the knowledge he had gained as a member of the Delegation to Europe. Then, he served for a few years as the official in charge of the Tax Bureau and the Reform Committee of the Meiji Government. He

resigned from the government in order to create a private sector and was very active in founding and managing private companies.⁴¹ The number of enterprises in which he was involved as a founder or a supporter exceeds 500. He is not only the supporter and founder of individual companies but also the facilitator of the modern economic system. He was devoted to the management of *zaikai*, which is a loose organization or a network of the management of individual enterprises and groups of companies.⁴² *Zaikai* plays a substantial role in the organization of various interests in business society and in acting as an intermediary between business and policy makers. Furthermore, Ei'ichi is well known for his service as a philanthropist - he was involved in approximately 600 projects related to education, social welfare, international relations, and so on.

Facilitating studies on Ei'ichi Shibusawa is one of the missions of the Shibusawa Memorial Foundation, and in order to achieve this, locating the corporate archives related to Ei'ichi's life and works is a very basic requirement. This will eventually be valuable for general researchers who are engaged in the study of Japan's modern history, society, and economy.

Keizo Shibusawa's vision for a museum of Japanese business history

The project to commemorate the life and works of Ei'ichi Shibusawa was first launched by his grandson and heir, Keizo Shibusawa (1896–1963). Keizo began his career as a banker and later worked as the Governor of the Bank of Japan (March 1944–October 1945), after which he served as the Minister of Finance (October 1945–May 1946). He led the compilation and publication of 68 volumes of reference material pertaining to the life and works of his grandfather, which is unparalleled in the history of publication on a single personality in Japan. Although Keizo is primarily known for his service in banking and finance, he is also one of the leading figures of folklore studies in Japan and built or helped to build several collections for research. Further, he applied classifications to these collections and compiled indexes; thus, he is credited with the creation of information resources for research. He was not only a student but also a patron of research, and he built networks of researchers. In 1937, Keizo proposed the idea of building the Museum of Japanese Business History (MJBH) in commemoration of Ei'ichi Shibusawa and began acquisitions for museum collections.⁴³ However, the MJBH project was suspended because of the outbreak of war in the Pacific, and Keizo's vision remained unrealized for many years. Following Keizo's idea, the Resource Centre aims to create resources for research on the history of Japanese business.

Indexing shashi

The Shibusawa Shashi Project is composed of two sub-projects: one pertains to the *shashi* index database and the other concerns the compilation of a directory of business archives.

With regard to the *shashi* index, the project aims to build a database based on the index which provides access to information contained in *shashi*. It has been repeatedly emphasized in other publications that although *shashi* is the gateway not only to business history but also to the history of Japanese economy and society, researchers, in general, have not made use of them thus far. This lack of use is attributed to the nature of *shashi* as a publication; in other words, it is 'grey literature'. Since *shashi* is an in-house publication, the target readers are usually limited to employees and people who are associated with the company. Editorial responsibility often rests with a company's editorial board, and the publisher is almost always the company itself. The bibliographic information provided in *shashi* is often inconsistent, and the distribution of *shashi* is very limited and dependent on private channels. One example of the inconsistent bibliographic information in *shashi* is that the titles printed on the title page, on the colophon, and on the cover are not always identical. This is simply because *shashi* is a publication that is edited by non-specialized editors and published by non-professional publishers. Therefore, our *shashi* index project attempts to create authority files containing standardized bibliographic information on *shashi* and listing company names. The latter is required to cope with mergers, consolidations, closings, or change of names. With regard to the contents of *shashi*, we believe that prospective users require some kind of index for their research. For this, we are organizing the existing information available from the already published table of contents, index, appendix, and the chronological table appearing in *shashi*.

Compilation of a directory of the business archives in Japan

The second sub-project - the compilation of a directory of business archives - aims at making information on business archives available and accessible to a greater extent. Our team deems some examples such as the *Directory of corporate archives* and the *Directory of corporate archives in the United States and Canada*, published by the BAC in London and by the Business Archives Section of Society of American Archivists respectively, as fine reference models. As noted above, the DAS-NIJL project for building a database of national archival information lacks information pertaining to institutions and archives in the business sector. The Resource Centre's business archives directory project will hopefully bridge the gap of lack of information in the projects the DAS-NIJL has been tackling.

The Centre has recently begun obtaining information for our directory through a questionnaire and through interviews with corporate archivists, curators, and/or persons in charge of the compilation of *shashi*. As this is probably the first attempt of this sort in Japan, our task is to achieve the co-operation of not only business personnel but also of archival communities such as the BAA.

In addition, there are Japanese company records that are available outside Japan. One well-known example is the business records captured during World War II that later became part of the collection of the National Archives of Australia. The Centre's directory project plans to incorporate this kind of information into our archives directory database as well.

Conclusion

As seen above, the development of business archives in Japan has been stimulated to a great extent by the publication of *shashi*. Although the number of companies that has an archival office is small, management and *shashi* staff are becoming aware of the necessity and usefulness of archives. We have also pointed out the link between the compilation of *shashi* and the establishment of corporate archives.

New information and communication technologies have affected business archives and *shashi* production. In particular, the corporate records for *shashi* are easily arranged using computers and can be a basis for the establishment of archives in companies. Moreover, computerized information technologies have greatly advanced access to recorded information and promoted co-operation between archives. JACAR and DAS-NIJL are the leading institutions in this respect. The Shibusawa Shashi Project will compensate for what the preceding projects did not encompass.

The Resource Centre ultimately aims to act as a clearing-house for information on business archives in Japan in co-operation with the Business Archives Association and individual business archives. In addition, through the *shashi* index and other projects, it will hopefully become a cultural resource centre that performs the varied functions of a museum, a library, and an archive in co-operation with the Shibusawa Memorial Museum.

Notes

¹ The author would like to thank Izumi Koide, Director of the Resource Centre for the History of Entrepreneurship, Shibusawa Memorial Foundation, for reading the manuscript and providing helpful comments. Thanks are also due to Akinobu Ohtani, member of the Executive Committee of the Business Archives Association (BAA), and Katsuko Murahashi, *shashi* expert, for providing information on the *shashi* exhibitions. However, the author assumes sole responsibility for this article and the views expressed herein.

² In this article, personal names are transcribed in the order of forename and surname, except for some historical figures that were active mainly in pre-modern Japan. In the case of the organizations mentioned in this paper, we provide the list of abbreviations and their romanised Japanese names below. In the case of titles of books and articles, we transcribe the romanised Japanese titles first, and then provide the tentative English translation within parentheses except in the case of books and articles that already have English titles. The URLs that appear in this note were last accessed on 27 March 2006.

- BAA (Business Archives Association) *Kigyo Shiryo Kyogikai*
- DAS-NIJL (Department of Archives Studies, National Institute of Japanese Literature) *Kokubungaku Kenkyu Shiryokan Akaibuzu Kenkyuke*
- JACAR (Japan Centre for Asian Historical Records) *Ajia Rekishi Shiryo Senta*
- JBHI (Japan Business History Institute) *Nihon Keieishi Kenkyujo*
- JSAI (Japan Society of Archives Institutions) *Zenkoku Rekishi Shiryo Hozon Riyo Kikan Renraku Kyogikai* or *Zenshiryokyo*
- JSAS (Japan Society for Archival Science) *Nihon Akaibuzu Gakkai*
- JSLA (Japan Special Libraries Association) *Senmon Toshokan Kyogikai* or *Sentokyo*
- RMSJ (Records Management Society of Japan) *Kiroku Kanri Gakkai*

³ Katsuko Murahashi, *Shashi no kenkyu* [*A study of company histories*], p.i (Diamond, Inc., Tokyo, 2002); *Zoho kaiteiban kaishashi sogo mokuroku* [*A supplemented and revised union catalogue of histories of companies and economic organizations*], p.817 (JBHI, Tokyo, 1996)

⁴ Murahashi, *Shashi no kenkyu* [*A study of company histories*], pp.2-3

⁵ Hideyuki Aoyama, 'The business archives and records management profession in Japan', *Business Archives, Principles and Practice*, No 67, pp.73-82 (May 1994)

⁶ http://www.archives.go.jp/index_e.html

⁷ Tai'ichi Wakayama, 'Kobunshoto no tekisetsuna kanri hozon oyobi riyo no tameno taisei seibi nitsuite' [On the preparation of the system for the relevant management, preservation and utilization of the public archives and other records], *JSAI Newsletter*, No 72, p.19 (March 2005)

⁸ <http://www.jsas.info/> (in Japanese)

⁹ Masahito Ando, 'Joint research in the field of archival science and its significance', *SOKENDAI Journal* [*The Journal of the Graduate University for the Advanced Studies*], No 7, pp.20-21 (May 2005) (in Japanese)

¹⁰ Yukio Hiyama pointed out that, at present, records management and the disclosure of historical documents in Japan is lagging behind. An international symposium on this theme held on 11-12 December 2004 was notably organized by the DAS-NIJL. Yukio Hiyama, 'Nikkan kingendai rekishi shiryō no kyōyōka eno mosaku' [Searching for the common uses of the modern historical records of Japan and Korea], *Newsletter of DAS-NIJL*, No 2, pp.5-6 (March 2005) (in Japanese)

¹¹ http://www.jacar.go.jp/asia_en/index_en.html. Shohei Muta, 'Towards an establishment of the historical facts by sharing records: Experiments at the Centre for Asian Historical Records (JACAR)', *Kiroku to Shiryo* [*Records and Archives*], No 13, pp.41-45 (March 2003) (in Japanese)

¹² http://world.nijl.ac.jp/~siryō/cgi-bin/sindbad/sindbad_top.cgi (in Japanese)

¹³ http://history.nijl.ac.jp/db/akyōyū/akyōyū_top.htm (in Japanese)

¹⁴ Source: Kenji Okumura, Manager of Corporate History Archives Office, Canon Inc.

¹⁵ <http://www.imes.boj.or.jp/english/index.html>

¹⁶ Kenji Shigyo, 'Nihonginko akaibu no hōsoku ni tsuite' [On the establishment of the archives of the Bank of Japan], *Kiroku to Shiryo* [*Records and Archives*], No 10, pp.78-80 (February 2000) (in Japanese)

¹⁷ http://www.e-jhk.com/event_and_archives/NO03.pdf (in Japanese)

¹⁸ Yokogawa Electric Company published its *shashi* in 1965 to commemorate its 50-year history.

¹⁹ Kyoko Makishima, 'Background of the establishment of Archives of Yokogawa', *Kiroku to Shiryo* [*Records and Archives*], No 14, JSAI, pp.73-76 (March 2004) (in Japanese)

²⁰ <http://www.jsla.or.jp/eng/index.html>

²¹ BAA (eds.), *Kigyo Shiryo Kyogikai 20 nenshi* [*Business Archives Association history 1981-2001*], p.5 (BAA, Tokyo, 2004). Hereafter, this book will be abbreviated as *BAA1981-2001* (in Japanese).

²² The publisher is the JSLA-Kanto.

²³ The JSLA-Kanto, *Kaishashi keizai dantaishi sogo mokuroku tsuiroku* [*Supplement to the union catalogue of histories of companies and economic organizations*] (in Japanese)

²⁴ Published by the JBHI.

²⁵ *BAA1981-2001*, pp.8-9

²⁶ Katsuko Murahashi, 'Shashi wo meguru arekore 2' [*Shashi episodes 2*], *Joho Kanri* [*Journal of Information Processing and Management*], 35, 3, pp.240-241 (June 1992) (in Japanese)

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- ²⁷ Professional writers and journalists also have opportunities to join the *shashi* teams.
- ²⁸ Kao published its *shashi* in 1940, 1960, 1971, 1980, and 1993, commemorating its history of 50, 70, 80, 90, and 100 years respectively.
- ²⁹ <http://www.jbhi.or.jp/index.html> (in Japanese)
- ³⁰ *BAA1981-2001*, p.7. Keizai Koho Senta (Japan Institute for Social and Economic Affairs) officially supported the 1982 exhibition and co-sponsored the 1986 exhibition. Murahashi, *op.cit.*, pp.240-41
- ³¹ See Terms: A, in Richard Pearce-Moses, *A glossary of archival and records terminology*, at <http://www.archivists.org/glossary/index.asp>
- ³² Academy of Certified Archivists, *The 2003 role delineation statement revision*, at <http://www.certifiedarchivists.org/html/RoleDelineation.html>
- ³³ As Aoyama noted, the staff who work in the editorial team of *shashi* are mostly white-collar workers. Aoyama, *op.cit.*, p.76. This type of staff relocation appears to have a direct relationship with the so-called Japanese management style, particularly life-long employment.
- ³⁴ *BAA1981-2001*, p.17
- ³⁵ *BAA1981-2001*, pp.177-178
- ³⁶ The China Archives Association was formed in 1981 and the Chinese national archival law was enacted in 1987. *BAA1981-2001*, p.83
- ³⁷ <http://www.baa.gr.jp/files/06.html> (in Japanese)
- ³⁸ *BAA1981-2001*, p.192
- ³⁹ Mitsuhiro Okamoto, Editorial Director Toppan Printing Co., Ltd, at the 45th Kaishashi Seminar on 13 December 2005, sponsored by the BAA.
- ⁴⁰ <http://www.shibusawa.or.jp/english/index.html>
- ⁴¹ *The autobiography of Shibusawa Eiichi*, translated with the introduction and notes by Teruko Craig, (University of Tokyo Press, Tokyo, 1994)
- ⁴² Masataka Matsuura, *Analysing the relationship between business and politics in pre-war Japan: some thoughts on the zaikai*, p25-32, LSE STICERD Discussion Paper, No JS/00/381, Suntory and Toyota International Centres for Economics and Related Disciplines, London School of Economics and Political Science (February 2000)
- ⁴³ Wakako Kusumoto, 'Lives in history, history in lives: Shibusawa Keizo and his vision of 'Jitsugyo-shi Museum'', paper presented at the 11th International Conference of the European Association for Japanese Studies (EAJS) at Vienna, 1 September 2005. Available at <http://www.shibusawa.or.jp/english/center/pdf/Keizo.pdf>

A NEW DIRECTION FOR AN OLD LADY¹:
AN OVERVIEW OF THE BANK OF ENGLAND ARCHIVE,
ITS WORK AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

SARAH MILLARD, JENNY ULPH and HAYLEY WILDING

The Bank of England Archive

The Bank of England is an independent public body, responsible for maintaining monetary and financial stability in the United Kingdom, so it is quite different from other, more commercial, businesses. As a result, the Bank of England Archive is somewhat unusual among business archives. Unlike most businesses, the Bank of England is subject to public scrutiny under recently introduced Freedom of Information (FoI) legislation. However, as a bank first and foremost, the nature of its work is similar to that of other banks, and the records in its archive consequently similar to others in the sector. This article aims to provide a general introduction to the Archive and some of the challenges it faces, together with an overview of its collections and position in the newly formed Information Management Department within the Bank.

A brief history of the Bank of England

The Bank of England holds a unique position at the centre of the country's finances with its two core purposes of maintaining monetary and financial stability. Although its best known responsibilities are the issue of bank notes and the monthly setting of interest rates, it also manages the UK's foreign exchange and gold reserves. Its long and complex history is well documented in a series of published histories covering both the development of its policy and domestic administration.²

Established by Act of Parliament and granted a Royal Charter sealed on 27 July 1694, the Bank of England opened a few days later in Grocers' Hall, London as the first public bank in England and Wales. In 1708 it gained the monopoly of joint-stock banking which it held until 1826, when legislation enabled the formation of other joint stock banks. The Bank of England's foundation marked the beginning of funded national debt in this country and, during the eighteenth century, the Bank developed its main function of acting as banker to the Government and to the banking system. This included management of the national debt as

well as responsibility for banknote issue in England and Wales, although the Bank did not gain a monopoly on note issue until 1921.

The Bank moved to Threadneedle Street in London in 1734 having occupied Grocers' Hall for nearly 40 years. New offices were built on the site of the former home of Sir John Houblon, the Bank's first Governor. Over the next century the Bank expanded and the building was gradually extended until it was rebuilt by Sir John Soane in the early nineteenth century, covering the current three-acre site. By the early twentieth century, as the work of the Bank increased, Soane's building no longer provided sufficient space for the expanding workforce. As a result it was demolished, apart from its distinctive curtain wall, and rebuilt by Sir Herbert Baker between 1925 and 1939. The Bank today occupies ten storeys, three below ground and seven above.

The Bank operated as a private concern until it was nationalised in 1946. In 1997, it was given operational responsibility for monetary policy and acquired the statutory responsibility for setting interest rates. Its supervisory role was passed to the Financial Services Authority. It remains the Government's banker but relinquished its role as its registrar in December 2004, when the management of Government and other stocks was transferred outside the Bank. The previous year, the Bank's note printing function was also outsourced, to De La Rue, although printing continues at the Bank's printing works near Debden.

The image shows a page from an early staff list of the Bank of England, dated 1721. The document is titled "List of the Accountants of the Bank of England" and is written in an old, cursive script. It lists the names of accountants and their salaries, organized into sections for "Accountants" and "Employed". The text is written in an old, cursive script.

Accountants	
1. John Boscawen	£100
2. William Boscawen	£100
3. William Boscawen	£100
4. William Boscawen	£100
5. William Boscawen	£100
6. William Boscawen	£100
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One of the earliest surviving staff lists of the Bank of England, 1721
© Copyright Bank of England Archive

The development of the Bank of England Archive

The Bank of England has one of the longest-established business archives in use in the United Kingdom.³ An Archive Committee was established as early as 1938 and the creation of a Central Archive was suggested at an internal meeting in December 1956. It was felt that records of historical significance were distributed in too many places around the Bank; this had been a particular problem for Sir John Clapham in the late 1930s and early 1940s when researching his history of the Bank. It was therefore proposed that the records should come under central control once frequent use by the departments had ceased. The Bank created an Archive Section which began work in 1960 listing and assembling records.

The further development of the Bank of England Archive began in 1972 with the appointment of its first professional archivist. During the 1970s and 1980s the Archive was brought together and fully catalogued for the first time. The Bank's archive policy was agreed by its Archive Committee in 1983 and a detailed Manual of Guidance, for the use of internal staff, was published in 1992. The policy remains essentially relevant and is now made available to staff on the Bank's intranet along with the full archive catalogue. The first Guide to the Archive was published in 1998 and revised in 2001 when it was made available on the Bank's website. At the time of writing the Guide is being updated and it is hoped it will be available by May 2006.

The original, rather rigid, classification scheme was devised in 1978 based on the different departments in the Bank at that time.⁴ This system was reviewed in 2000, by which time regular and wide-ranging changes in the Bank's functions and internal organisation had made assigning ownership to these departments impossible. The new scheme, based on accession numbers, has proved much more flexible and provenance can still be assigned to each record or group of records as appropriate. The Bank's Archive was one of the earliest users of computer technology in cataloguing and is currently using CALM Version 6, together with the accompanying 'dserve' software to provide an online searchable catalogue for visiting researchers and staff.⁵

For many years the bulk of the Archive was held at the Bank's Record Office in Roehampton, South London, but in 1997 was moved into commercial storage, until it was brought together for the first time in strongrooms at the Bank's head office in Threadneedle Street in 2001. Having the Archive so conveniently placed has had enormous benefits in terms of the quality of service we are able to offer all our users. The Archive now contains over 71,000 individual items, occupying 3.5 km. space.

Access to the Bank's Archive by external researchers is encouraged and until recently they have been our main users. Running the public research service is something we regard as important and this view has always been supported by the Bank. Since 1983 the policy has been to allow access to the bulk of the Bank's records over 30 years old. The Bank has never been subject to the Public Records Act but voluntarily adopted a similar access policy and still uses a 30 year period as an internal benchmark to determine whether business areas need to be consulted prior to the proactive release of more recent routine material.⁶ Of course, this does not prevent requests for information being made from records less than 30 years old.

With heavy use, involvement in an increasing range of internal projects and with limited resources, participation in external outreach activities is sometimes difficult for the Archive, although all staff play an active role in the wider profession. The Archive has also supported Archives Awareness, a national initiative to raise awareness of archive holdings, by mounting a series of displays to publicise its services internally. The Bank has a separate Education and Museum Group which plays a major part in the Bank's commitment to promoting the awareness and understanding of its activities and core purposes. The Bank's collections of artefacts, banknotes, photographs and prints and the main art collection are all the responsibility of the Museum, which attracts thousands of visitors every year. As well as its permanent displays the Museum has regular exhibitions and activities covering a wide range of subjects relating to the Bank, its history and work, to which the Archive contributes. The Museum, while not holding the official records of the Bank, does have a small collection of archive material which complements the main archive holdings. Visitors can arrange to see archive material from the Museum's collection in the Archive searchroom by appointment.

Unexpected collections

The Bank's Archive holds a broad range of material of interest to researchers in a number of fields. The records in the Archive cover every aspect of the Bank's work from its foundation and, although of prime importance to economic historians, are also of potential interest to social and business historians, architectural specialists, biographers and genealogists. In addition to long ledger series of customer accounts and government stock holders, our holdings also include branch records, architectural plans and drawings, staff records, diaries and working papers of members of staff. A Guide to the Archive providing an overview of the main series of records, as well as brief administrative histories of major departments, is available on the Bank's website.⁷ In addition to the general business records researchers

might expect to find in the Bank of England's Archive, there are a number of more unusual or unexpected collections which some may be surprised to find amongst our records:

Customer and Government accounts, 1694-1899

Although the Bank of England's role as the Government's banker and central bank are well known, the fact that it also offered banking facilities to private individuals from its foundation until the early twentieth century is less well-known. The Drawing Office account ledgers in the Archive (numbering nearly 6,000) provide an unusually complete and unbroken record of all customer accounts held at the Bank from 1694 to 1899. As well as providing a wide range of information regarding an individual's personal finances, transactions in and out of an account can shed light on previously unknown relatives, associates and contacts, such as patronage of a particular artist or craftsman. Famous customers of the Bank include the composer Handel, who held an account from 1732-1758, as well as major landowners and noblemen. Relating to the Bank's management of the Government's finances, the Archive also includes a volume of original letters to the Bank from William Pitt (1759-1806), Prime Minister, relating to various aspects of Government finance and loans between 1785 and 1805. This collection provides an important insight into Bank-Government relations during this period.

Regional branch records

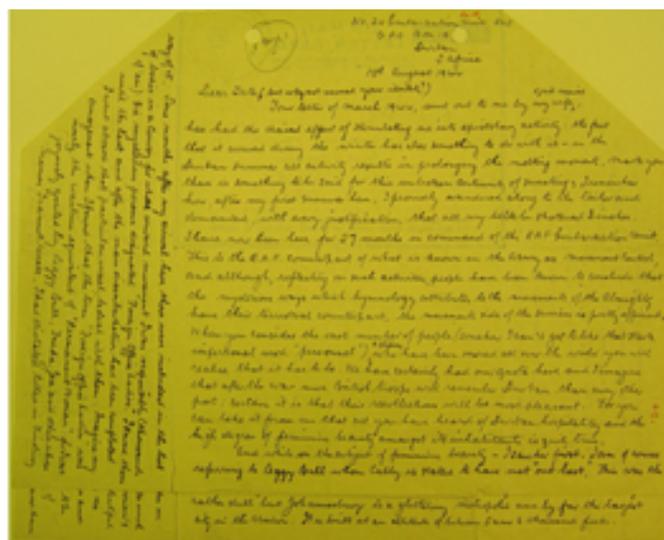
It is also not widely known that the Bank of England, like many other high street banks and their constituents, had branches in some of the country's major towns and cities. The Branch Banks Office, established on 12 January 1826, concluded that the establishment of Bank of England branches in carefully chosen commercial and manufacturing towns 'would increase the circulation of Bank Notes, give the Bank much more complete control over the whole paper circulation and protect the Bank against the competition of large banking companies'. The Bank's first branch was opened in Gloucester on 19 July 1826 and eight had been set up by the end of 1827. The branches were: Gloucester (1826-1828); Manchester (1826-1997); Swansea (1826-1859); Birmingham (1827-1997); Liverpool (1827-1986); Bristol (1827-1997); Leeds (1827-present); Exeter (1827-1834); Newcastle-upon-Tyne (1828-1997); Hull (1829-1839); Norwich (1829-1852); Plymouth (1834-1949); Portsmouth (1834-1914); Leicester (1844-1872); London Western (Waterloo Place) (1855-1930); London Law Courts (1881-1975); Southampton (1940-1986) and the Bradford Agency (agency of the Leeds branch) (1899-1915). By the 1990s the nature of the Bank's work had changed and it was

decided to cease banking and banknote operations at the remaining branches and introduce a network of regional agencies which would act in a more advisory capacity. In 1997, the remaining five branches were closed, with the exception of Leeds, which stayed open as the Bank's North of England Cash Centre.

Records relating to branches include banking ledgers and correspondence to and from head office discussing customers, local issues and developments in local trade and industry. These records are therefore of potential interest to many researchers, including economic and local historians, as they give an insight into local business and the economy in these various towns and cities.

Personal papers of Humphrey Morice

Although the Archive does not hold collections of private papers of any Bank staff, there is one exception: a collection of private papers of Humphrey Morice, Director of the Bank from 1716, Deputy Governor from 1725–27 and Governor from 1727–29. Morice was also a major figure in the London slave trade during the first half of the eighteenth century. He defrauded the Bank of over £29,000 during his time in office and, as a result, some of his personal papers relating to his outside business interests were seized by the Bank after his death. The papers include slave journals detailing the activities of his various slave ships between 1721 and 1730; a letter book (1703–6) and personal and business letters. These records are an important resource for the study of the slave trade activities of a prominent slave merchant in London in the 1700s.



One of the many 'Dick Tate' letters sent to the Bank by their former colleagues serving in HM Forces during the Second World War © Copyright Bank of England Archive

Wartime letters from staff serving in the Forces, 1940-1947

While the Archive holds a large number of official records relating to the Bank's staff, such as salary ledgers, it also holds some rather more unusual staff records. One example is an album of correspondence between the Chief Accountant's Office staff evacuated to Whitchurch and their office colleagues serving with HM Forces. Letters were written under the *nom de plume* of 'Dick Tate' and composed by members of the office in turn. The volume also includes postcards and letters written by staff serving in the Forces. The fact that staff on active service away from the Bank found the time to write often astonishingly detailed and lengthy letters to their former colleagues is perhaps an indication of their affection for the Old Lady. There is also a variety of records relating to the Bank's various staff clubs and societies. These include articles and photographs in the staff publication *The Old Lady* which started in 1921, as well as recruitment brochures dating from the 1950s to 1990s. Staff records such as these can provide a rare and interesting insight for researchers on the social activities of employees, not found elsewhere in the Bank's records.

Freshfields prison correspondence, 1781-1844

The Archive holds records created by the Bank in the course of its work and does not generally hold records of other institutions. However, the Archive does hold a collection of papers which were created and received by the city law firm Freshfields in the course of their work for the Bank. The papers cover a wide range of subjects including material on banknote paper robberies (1861–62) and bankruptcies (1824–1905). One of the most fascinating groups of papers is a collection of prison correspondence dating from 1781–1844, comprising letters mainly written by persons accused or convicted of forgery offences, who were seeking clemency or financial help from the Bank. The letters reveal 'a little known and extraordinary relationship between the powerful Bank of England and hundreds of London men and women it had successfully prosecuted for circulating forged bank notes at the beginning of the nineteenth century.'⁸ The collection has been widely used by many external researchers.



Account of the trial of Henry Fautleroy, who was hanged in 1824 for forgery, from a book of press cuttings on the case compiled by Bank's solicitors

© Bank of England Archive

Overseas files

Some of the most heavily used records in the archive are those of the Overseas and Foreign Department, established in June 1932, although the diversity of international financial and political information these files often contain is less widely known. In its early years the Department tended to focus on more general international issues such as advice to Government but in 1935 the work of the Department was redefined, with emphasis on studying central banking developments abroad and providing information of all kinds about foreign countries. Assistance was given to countries wishing to establish central banks of their own or to develop their existing ones. During the war, the Department's responsibilities included liaison with central banks in exile, relations with Allied Governments and problems arising from the occupation of Axis or neutral territories by the Allies. International work greatly increased towards the end of the war with planning for post-war reconstruction, the establishment of the Bretton Woods organisations and international monetary agreements. The Department also dealt with the sterling balances problem and helped in the establishment of other central banks, particularly as more British colonies became independent. The Archive holds over 6,000 Overseas Division records which include a large number of country files. The series is of particular importance as the records of many of the countries covered have, for one reason or another, not survived elsewhere.

Usage of the Archive – trends and the impact of Freedom of Information

When FoI legislation was fully implemented on 1 January 2005, the Bank of England was one of the many public authorities subject to the new Act. In this, its Archive is probably somewhat unusual within the business archives sector, and certainly unique compared with other banking archives in the UK. The Bank has certain exclusions under FoI, placing information relating to the Bank's monetary policy, its role as lender of last resort, and its private banking functions outside the scope of the Act. In many ways this makes dealing with information requests more difficult, as each piece of information has to be assessed in relation to these exclusions and then, if judged to be within the scope of the Act, assessed in relation to any other sensitivities or exemptions which may apply. It goes without saying that 2005 has been a steep learning curve for the archivists. The Archive dealt with 13.2% of all the Bank's routine FoI requests and was involved in a similar proportion of centrally-referred, more complex requests, bringing the archivists into contact with senior officials and staff in different departments across the Bank. This has helped to raise the profile of the Archive and its staff.

Although the archivists had to become fully conversant with the requirements of the new legislation in order to handle information requests appropriately, and complicated enquiries undoubtedly took up a greater amount of staff time, it is difficult to say whether FoI has had a significant impact on external use of the Archive. Since the Bank first permitted external researchers to use the Archive, it has been heavily used. In the five years prior to the introduction of FoI, annual researcher visits averaged just under 370 per year. In 2005, the Archive hosted 440 external researcher visits, an increase of 6% on the previous year. Although it would seem reasonable to assume that this increase was due in part to the introduction of FoI, there is no evidence to support this assumption. Where information requests relate to information in open records, enquirers are invited to visit the Archive to look through these records in person. In practice, many of the FoI requests received have related to files which are not yet open for public consultation, and so have not contributed significantly to rising visitor numbers. The increase can perhaps be attributed instead to word of mouth or more researchers being granted long term research funding, as many of our visiting researchers from overseas stay for several weeks or more at a time. The number of external enquiries received since January 2005 has grown slightly compared with the same period last year but this is probably more due to the fact that the Archive has taken over sole responsibility for genealogical enquiries, previously shared with the Museum. For example, these family history enquiries, requesting information on former staff members or customers,

accounted for 21% of external enquiries and 13% of all enquiries received in the 10 months to October 2005.

Although use of the Archive has always been consistently high since statistics were first recorded over 20 years ago, it is only comparatively recently that its usefulness and importance as an information resource and business tool for internal members of staff has been recognised. This may have been due in part to the relatively recent formation of the Archive itself, and the need to bring together and catalogue thousands of volumes and files spread around the Bank. The initial focus was understandably on the earliest records which were of least relevance to the modern-day work of the Bank. However, with the introduction of FoI and the recent improvements in records management, Archive files are once again being used internally in information searches and to aid the reviewing process.

The impact of FoI and other changes can be seen in the increase in internal enquiries by more than 16% (January–October 2005 compared with the same period in 2004). More strikingly, the number of files retrieved by members of Bank staff has increased by almost 150%. Increased internal use may also be due in part to a concerted drive by the archivists to raise staff awareness of the online catalogue. The archive catalogue has been available to all staff via the intranet for several years but, until recently, was used very little, with departmental records staff preferring to ask the archive staff for advice on relevant files. As a result, the Archive embarked on a training and publicity campaign. The catalogue was advertised via articles on the intranet, demonstrations were given at the Records Management Forum attended by departmental records staff and face-to-face training sessions were run around the Bank for anyone who was interested. This has no doubt increased use of the catalogue, awareness of the Archive and of the different kinds of information we hold. However, with FoI and heavier internal use more detailed descriptions have become essential. Several conversions from previous databases and the lack of detailed conventions in the past have led to inconsistencies and, although we now catalogue in much more detail, much of the catalogue still needs improvement. This is a project that we will be taking forward over the next few years and which will improve facilities available for internal and external users.

In addition to a marked increase in internal and external use, the appointment of a Bank historian, Professor Forrest Capie, and two researchers to write the next edition of the official Bank history has also contributed to an increase in demand and use of our records. The fact that the Bank clearly values its history and historical records can only strengthen the position of its Archive.

Information management at the Bank of England

The Bank has a long tradition of record keeping and recognises the key role that information, in all forms, plays in achieving its core purposes. With the development of technology and the desire to introduce an over-arching strategy the Bank created an Information Management section in October 2003. The Archive, Records Centre and Information Centre moved from Secretary's Department to Information Systems and Technology Division (ISTD) to form the basis of the new team under the new Information Manager. A new information strategy for the Bank was agreed in March 2004 to bring some much needed cohesion to all parts of the Bank's information infrastructure.

Information Management currently has 19 permanent staff, recruiting additional temporary staff or consultants for specific projects as necessary. The permanent staff are divided into five teams, each with different skills and responsibilities:

- **The Archive** has three professional staff. Its function is to select, preserve and make available the archives of the Bank to internal and external users.
- **Bank Knowledge** has three permanent staff, including a knowledge manager and qualified records manager. Its main responsibility is to establish and operate systems, and to develop and review processes and programmes to ensure the Bank's own information resources are managed to the highest professional standards. Major current projects include the introduction of improved records management functionality to the electronic document management (EDM) system already in place.
- **The Information Centre**, previously the Bank's Library, has seven full-time professional staff with library and IT skills. The Centre offers information services to all Bank staff, including a comprehensive enquiry service, book purchases and loans, journal and newspaper circulation, online searches, internet access and a translations service. Many of the services it manages are now delivered directly to staff via their desktops.
- **The Information Management Systems** team has four permanent staff, and looks after all aspects of the supporting Information Management systems within the Bank, including the EDM system. Their recent focus has been the development and implementation of a content management system across the Bank to improve the quality, consistency and efficient management of content on the intranet. The team is also working on an enterprise search facility to search for information across the intranet and the EDM system.

- **The User Liaison Team** is a small team of two people responsible for ensuring that the skills and behaviours of the Bank's staff are developed to fully exploit the services and facilities available to them in the areas of information creation, sharing and management.

Although the Information Management team is very new and the practical implementation of the new strategy is in its early stages, significant progress has been made. Key factors in the achievements so far have been endorsement and input of senior staff at the highest levels and the use of a Bank-wide structure of working groups which involve records practitioners within business areas.

EDM, the electronic archive and other developments

The Bank currently operates an electronic document management (EDM) system and now creates and stores the majority of its documents in electronic form. The new system supports and encourages the sharing of documents throughout the Bank and reduces the amount of paper used. To enable the Bank to do this, the Information Management team have developed EDM standards and best practice guidelines which include a classification scheme and the development of folder structures. The archivists are now working closely with the wider Information Management team to identify and implement the changes necessary to develop a secure electronic archive. This will ensure that records of lasting value are stored in a safe, structured and fully searchable database. Access to electronic records by external researchers is a key issue, although not an immediate one, which requires careful consideration. The Bank's electronic records must be available to internal and external users whilst preventing access to sensitive or confidential records.

Another electronic development has been the recent conversion of the Archive's small but important collection of cassette tapes into digital format to ensure their long-term preservation. We have created MP3 copies of the tapes and are in the process of 'cleaning' the recordings to improve the clarity of the sound. Hard copies have been made and are stored in a strongroom but finding a suitable secure, long-term location for the digital copies has proved more difficult. The Bank's EDM system has been designed to store documents only and is not considered suitable for other media because of their size and problems of access, as the system does not currently allow simultaneous use by more than one person to this type of file. The files are currently held on the Bank's main computer network which, although secure and regularly backed up, is only a short term measure. Our requirements for specialised storage have raised a number of questions about the EDM system and its future development. The Bank is now looking into how the system can be modified to store a wider

range of material in different formats. The archivists, with IT and EDM staff, are now developing a separate archive database for multimedia storage which will be accessible to staff and eventually to external researchers.

In November 2004 a decision was taken to stop photocopying archive material and to introduce self-service digital photography. Before implementation, the archivists researched the use of digital photography in other archives. The copyright implications were also investigated and an application form for taking photographs was designed which includes a set of clear rules and a copyright declaration. The project was complicated by the fact that, for security reasons, photography is not allowed in the Bank and special dispensation had to be obtained. As photography was only permitted by the Bank provided that it was under supervision, a designated area was set up in the Archive office. Initially we did not restrict the amount of time users spent on photography and some spent up to three hours taking images, which proved to be very disruptive to Archive staff, so users are now allocated a specific timed slot each day. Sound and flash are not permitted to minimise disruption and potential damage to records.

On the whole the service has been very successful and the quality of the pictures generally good. Users are expected to be familiar with their own equipment and require very little assistance from staff. Images taken are often sharper than photocopies and can be loaded directly onto researchers' PCs. The Archive owns a digital camera which is used when answering enquiries, and for displays and publications. Since digital photography was introduced material from over 400 individual records has been photographed. The major benefits for the Archive and the Bank have been a substantial saving in staff time and in the conservation of its holdings, as photocopying was causing considerable damage to the records.

The way forward – digitisation in the paperless office?

The introduction of EDM at the Bank and, more recently, digital photography in the Archive, have prompted questions regarding the value and feasibility of large-scale digitisation of archive records to add to the existing EDM system. However, thanks to an abundance of on-site vaults we are lucky enough not to have the space or storage pressures that would make a large-scale digitisation project a necessity. Similarly, adding digital copies of our records to the EDM system would actually provide negligible benefits to the Bank itself. Simply making electronic copies of files would not improve the retrievability of information contained in them, unless considerable time and effort was spent adding vital metadata. However, even if

this were done, as records currently only pass to the Archive when they are 25 years old or more, digitising and adding older archive records to the Bank's EDM system would contribute considerably to issues relating to the storage space and management of the system whilst not providing any significant tangible benefits to the Bank.

In practice it has proved difficult to identify significant numbers of records that would benefit from or justify the expense and effort of a large-scale digitisation project. A survey carried out in 2005 showed that there is no single series of records which is requested on a regular basis and which would therefore justify the cost, in terms of staff time and resources, of a large digitisation project. In fact, of the 2,692 files requested,⁹ only 139 were requested more than once by different researchers. This is a very satisfying result for the Archive, as the survey showed that usage of the Archive is spread across the whole collection and that selection of records for long-term preservation and historical use has, in that sense, been successful. However, it does raise the question of whether large-scale digitisation of paper records in the Archive would actually justify the resources spent if individual files might still only be looked at once a year or less.

That is not to say that individual series of records within the Archive would not benefit from a smaller digitisation project. Certainly the advantages of digitisation – preservation, online access, cheaper storage and easing space constraints to name but a few – are well-known, and a limited digitisation project to enhance access to an under-used or physically fragile collection would have unquestionable benefits. The Information Management team has secured the funding for a limited digitisation project to start within the next few years and the Archive has begun to look for suitable candidates for such a project. Although minutes of the Court of Directors have already been microfilmed up to the twentieth century, the corresponding court papers dating from 1716, which often contain more detailed and personal information, have not. These files containing loose and often fragile pages are becoming an increasingly popular source but will be at risk of future damage if demand increases. Digitisation in such a case would help preserve the originals and could also improve and promote access. Similarly the Freshfields prison correspondence collection, mentioned above, could also be a candidate for future digitisation and would increase access to an important collection by both social historians and family historians.

The Archive is also in the process of redesigning and expanding its pages on the Bank's external website. At present, the web pages concentrate on the services provided by the Archive. However, we would like to expand our site over the next few years to include information sheets on both common and less widely known records. Digital copies of some

of our records as examples could help us to explain more clearly what we hold and the kinds of information researchers might expect to find in particular records. However, because of the broad spread of usage of our records, it is not envisaged that making some records available electronically on our website would either meet all our researchers' needs or reduce the need to visit in person. In the future, it may be possible to make the archive catalogue available via the website, depending on the successful completion of the editing project. In addition to helping prospective researchers identify relevant material in advance of their visit, it will bring details of our more unusual collections to the attention of a wider audience.

Conclusion: looking to the future

While maintaining the full range of services that the Archive now offers to the Bank's Business Areas and its many outside users, it faces a number of challenges. As part of the Information Management team the Archive now benefits from the expertise of a wide range of skilled professionals from a number of different disciplines. This is important as most of the Bank's day-to-day work is now done in electronic form. As well as receiving help in its work, the Archive staff contribute to wider team projects such as the development of the records management process and improvements to the EDM system to incorporate records management functionality.

As already mentioned, future projects include: the improvement of the archive catalogue; the possible selective digitisation of major paper series; the conversion of all material in vulnerable formats into digital form and setting up secure multimedia storage. We are constantly examining the efficiency and effectiveness of what we do to ensure that relatively limited resources can be targeted to maximum effect.

FoI and the Bank's decision to employ a qualified records manager have been two key factors in the improvement of information management in the Bank, with obvious benefits for the Archive. The Bank's website and its intranet offer us valuable opportunities particularly in maintaining and raising awareness of the work of the Archive, the services that we can offer all our users and the importance of good record keeping. We also have a role in ensuring that current levels of awareness of the importance of information management are maintained. The challenge for the future is to ensure the continuing high quality of the Bank's archive holdings, both paper and electronic, by active participation in all aspects of the record keeping process.

The Bank of England Archive is located in the Bank's Threadneedle Street building in London. Visits are by appointment only. For more information contact the Archive on 0207 6015096 or by email at archive@bankofengland.co.uk.

Notes

- ¹ The Bank of England has been informally known as the 'Old Lady of Threadneedle Street' for several hundred years. The earliest known instance of this nickname in print is James Gillray's cartoon published in 1797, entitled 'Political Ravishment' or 'The Old Lady of Threadneedle Street in Danger', depicting the Bank as an elderly lady being taken advantage of by the Prime Minister, William Pitt the Younger.
- ² See J.Clapham, *The Bank of England 1694-1914* (CUP, 1944); R.S.Sayers, *The Bank of England 1891-1944* (CUP, 1976); J.S.Fforde, *The Bank of England and public policy 1941-1958* (CUP 1992); W.M.Acres, *The Bank of England from within 1694-1900* (OUP, 1931); E.Hennessy, *A domestic history of the Bank of England 1930-1960* (CUP, 1992).
- ³ An Order by the Governor in 1934 authorised the Secretary to allow access to records over 100 years old by members of the public.
- ⁴ The departments used in the original classification scheme were: Accountant's Department (Archive ref. AC); Administration Department (ADM); Audit Department (AU); Cashier's Department (C); Establishment Department (E); Exchange Control Department (EC); Economic Intelligence Department (EID); Governor's and Secretary's Department (G); Overseas Department (OV); and Printing Works (PW). The online Guide to the Archive (see endnote 7) gives a more comprehensive overview, including other smaller collections, former Museum holdings (M) and records of the Bank's solicitors, Freshfields (F).
- ⁵ The electronic catalogue is currently only available in-house via the Bank's intranet.
- ⁶ Before the introduction of FoI, the Bank also used the 30 year rule as a basis for agreeing individual release agreements with many of its central bank and other major customers, so it is important that these closure periods are observed in future to protect customer confidentiality.
- ⁷ The Guide was being updated at the time of writing but it is hoped that it should be ready in time for the publication of this journal and available via the Archive's pages at <http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/archive>
- ⁸ Deidre Palk, "'Fit objects of mercy": gender, the Bank of England and currency criminals, 1804-1833,' *Women's Writing*, 11, 2, p.237 (2004)
- ⁹ Statistics compiled on 12 December, based on all records produced from 1 January 2005.

THE ARCHIVES OF BUSINESS AND THE BUSINESS OF ARCHIVES

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The fall issue of volume 66 of the *American Archivist* in 2003 used as its cover illustration a parody of an advertisement for Sun Maid Raisins, with the caption ‘Sun Mad Raisins, unnaturally grown with insecticides, miticides, herbicides, fungicides’. This illustration, as ‘About the cover’ on the inside page explained, accompanied an article by Susan Tschabrun, ‘Off the wall and into a drawer: managing a research collection of political posters’. The poster was created by Ester Hernandez, the child of a Californian farm worker, ‘to express her outrage at the dangers farm workers in the central San Joaquin Valley of California faced growing grapes for the raisin industry’.¹ The leading artist of the Chicano civil rights movement, Hernandez has expressed her outrage eloquently: ‘Basically, we were seen as being ignorant, as being lazy, as being stupid, as being dirty. And that's why we were farm workers. And that's why we were poor. . . .’² The poster is well-known and she uses it on her own home page to illustrate her oeuvre.³ This makes the furious reaction of the US business archives community to its use all the more surprising. The fall issue of the next volume of the *American Archivist* contained a letter from eight prominent business archivists complaining about ‘the negative depiction of a corporation’, suggesting that it presented ‘an unnecessary legal risk for the Society’, and ‘most importantly, the published cover sends all of the wrong messages to managers who already view the preservation of historical records as tangential to contemporary business practice’.⁴ They coined the pointed phrase ‘The Raisins of Wrath’ to describe its effect.⁵ Mark Greene, the director of the American Heritage Centre at the University of Wyoming, joined the protest, accusing the editor of the journal of placing ‘sensationalism and circulation above all other priorities’.⁶ In the spring/summer 2005 issue, Richard Cox of the University of Pittsburgh responded to these criticisms by posing a number of questions:

Is the mission of a corporate archives only to make the organization look good or to serve a public relations purpose? What about the values of records and their management for purposes such as legal compliance, evidence of activities, and

accountability? If a company found such negative documents and artefacts in their possession as the political poster used on the journal cover, would it destroy or bury the objects?

He argued that ‘it would be useful to have some scholarly and professional writing exploring the purpose of corporate archives and the activities of other institutions collecting the records of corporations, adding to a topic in the literature that is a bit threadbare’. He added as a rider: ‘What intrigues me is how the individual functioning as an archivist or records manager can work in the corporate environment in any realistic way, adhering to any sense of professional ethics or mission’.⁷

Interestingly the text book, *The records of American business*, published by the Society of American Archivists in 1997, admittedly before the WorldCom and Enron scandals shook corporate America, makes only one reference to ethics and none to accountability, compliance or governance.⁸ A decade later, these issues cannot be avoided. Richard Cox’s questions and rider take us to the very heart of the archival function, challenging not just archivists of business to consider what it is they profess to do. The concept of archives as evidence of activities and therefore accountability may seem straightforward, but on reflection may be anything but. Accountability in our contemporary ‘audit culture’ is an overworked term which, as Richard Mulgan puts it, ‘crops up everywhere performing all manner of analytical tasks and carrying most of the major burdens of democratic “governance”’.⁹ It has been borrowed from the corporate world by politicians to argue for, amongst other things, greater transparency and therefore accountability across the public sector without any serious consideration of whether corporate accountability equates with that of the public sector. The foundation of modern enterprise is the limitation of liability, and accountability in one sense must be viewed in this context. It is open to debate as to whether the public expects government to enjoy similar protection for its actions. This is a theme that the moral philosopher Onora O’Neill explored in her 2002 Reith lectures. In her third lecture, ‘Called to account’, she argued that the new culture of accountability paradoxically bred mistrust, particularly in the public sector where it is most pervasive.¹⁰ The anthropologist, Marilyn Strathern, draws a clear distinction between ‘accountability, rendering an account to those to whom one is accountable, manifest in the self-evident efficacy of audit, and responsibility, which is discharged to those in one’s care, whether students or colleagues or the wider public’.¹¹ This distinction is evident in public perceptions of Britain’s involvement in the war in Iraq where Mr Blair claims to have passed the accountability test, but many

question whether he acted responsibly, or in the case of the acquittal of former UK Government Minister Stephen Byers in the RailTrack case where his behaviour and that of UK Chancellor Gordon Brown were thought to be 'irresponsible'. The *Financial Times* commented: 'The abiding memory is of the contempt ministers and their officials displayed for investors, the regulator and the company itself. RailTrack was a "basket case", shareholders were "grannies losing their blouses". Imagine the response from New Labour if someone had described unemployed miners in a similar tone.'¹² After Henry Blodget's infamous 'piece of shit' email, when Blodget was alleged to have expressed negative views about companies at the same time as aiding and abetting his employer, Merrill Lynch, in issuing favourable reports on the same firms, such language would not only be unethical in the financial services sector, it would lead at best to a reprimand from regulators and at worst to a hefty fine.¹³

While these examples present compelling arguments for the public sector to behave as responsibly as the private sector, paradoxically the constraints on liability enjoyed by the private sector that allow it to function suggest that 'responsibility' in one does not equate with 'responsibility' in the other. In the interest of national security all the records relating to the decision to declare war on Iraq will not be released for several decades, and those relating to the events that led to the liquidation of RailTrack would not have been released, on the grounds of commercial confidence, but for the legal proceedings.

There are good reasons to doubt the adequacy of the record in the Government of the United Kingdom, as witnessed by the evidence of Jonathan Powell, the Prime Minister's Chief of Staff, before the Hutton inquiry on 18 August 2003. In responding to a question about minutes of meetings, he replied:

Yes, I thought I might be asked that question because it may seem odd to people from outside, so I looked through the diary for the two weeks of the period we are talking about and the usual pattern is about three written records for 17 meetings a day is sort of the average you get to because there is no purpose served by minutes unless they are either recording people visiting from outside, the president of Nigeria, or something like that, or if they are action points that need to be taken forward, something on school funding for example.¹⁴

The expectation, however, is that the record will be stored fiducially by The National Archives so that the actions of the Labour government can be judged in what Tony Blair

fondly calls the ‘court of history’. Ivan Murambiwa, the director of the National Archives of Zimbabwe, bravely defended this essential archival function:

Government records provide support for ongoing business and for internal and public accountability and archivists say they form an “irreplaceable part of our collective memory and cultural heritage.” Record keeping in Zimbabwe, they say, has declined to a point where lack of good records is seriously hampering the conduct of government.¹⁵

However imperfect the process, this accountability is an essential safeguard of democracy and those who deny the concept of a ‘court of history’, such as the *Guardian* correspondent David McKie, do us a disservice.¹⁶ In the ever encroaching compliance environment in which the private sector operates, it is doubtful if any board of directors would be comfortable with such long term contingent liabilities. In any event the private sector cannot shelter behind ‘security interests’, as the UK Scott inquiry on the sale of arms to Iraq showed. The inevitable corollary of compliance in the private sector is the rigorous destruction of records in accordance with schedules signed off as part of the audit and risk management process. Some records will be preserved in ‘perpetuity’, as it were, to protect brands and contracts and, possibly, at the strategic level.

If the public ‘archive’ fulfils an essential juridical role within a democratic society as the fiduciary guardian of the record of government by which it cannot only be held to account, but also be judged to have acted responsibly, can an archive of a business in any sense be considered to have a similar function? This is what Cox is hinting at in his rider. Such a contention is hard to sustain as it immediately places the ‘archive’, and, perhaps, even the records management function, in the domain of external audit and scrutiny. In some jurisdictions such as Australia and South Africa, this appears to be accepted. The South African Promotion of Access to Information Act extends to the private sector, and in Australia much of the records continuum thinking is predicated on such principles.¹⁷ The Commonwealth Auditor General of Australia famously commented on the ‘Sports Rorts Affair’, ‘poor recordkeeping attracts corruption like flies to a carcass’.¹⁸ This is true, but record keeping in the private sector must surely be an internal process under the control of the board of directors, a component of good governance and risk management as a raft of regulations confirm, such as the US Sarbanes-Oxley Act and the Basel II Accord. It is for auditors and regulators to assess the quality of internal controls, and to report any

shortcomings to shareholders. The archives of enterprise must be covered by such mechanisms, whatever Cox may think to the contrary. The archive cannot hold time-expired material that might pose a long term risk or contingent liability whatever the ethical considerations, such as was the case with the Brown & Williamson records that led to the legal discovery of those of its parent company, British American Tobacco, and cost the company the breathtaking sum of \$246 billion.¹⁹

This does not mean that the archive of a business does not share some of the fiduciary attributes of an archive in a wider context. A glance at the organizations represented by those who signed the letter to the *American Archivist* confirms this impression: Coca-Cola, Ford Motor Company, Cargill, Cigna, Kraft Foods, Scotiabank Group, IBM and Proctor and Gamble. No doubt the archive of Coca-Cola provides a secure repository for the critical documents and artefacts needed to protect the brand, quite apart from the added value of the millions of dollars it generates in merchandising-licensing.²⁰ Dolores Hanna, sometime senior trademark counsel at Kraft General Foods, encouraged the establishment of an archive ‘to keep records and to be able to check and verify’.²¹ Ed Rider at Proctor and Gamble is heavily engaged in brand protection and history, commenting on many of the company’s products, ranging from washing powder to disposable diapers.

One of the early researchers told me that among the first things they did was go out to a toy store and buy one of those Betsy Wetsy-type dolls, where you put water in the mouth and it comes out the other end . . . They brought it back to the lab, hooked up its legs on a treadmill to make it walk, and tested diapers on it. The end result was Pampers, which were launched in Peoria, in 1961.²²

The archive at Scotiabank has a more familiar ring, ‘facilitating the storage and retrieval of yearly bank records including correspondence, meeting minutes, financial statements, annual reports, records of amalgamated banks and companies and departmental and branch records’, providing ‘a valuable research tool to a number of Scotiabankers and the community’ – note the order; we will return to that.²³ These are all archives in a ‘fiduciary’ sense: aligned to the strategic objectives of their business, and distinct from the records management function. There are caveats, as corporate lawyers, in Dolores Hanna’s words, wish to ‘destroy more than to save; that is the trend because of the requirements of discovery and the demand for production of documents.’²⁴ This is what worries Richard Cox: ‘What is the archivist to do

when asked to destroy certain records or to keep them under wraps, or when he or she discovers illegal or questionable activity on part of their employers?’²⁵

This question cannot simply be addressed to archivists or records managers, but to all employees and to the board, which is ultimately responsible for ensuring good governance. It is also as relevant to the public sector, particularly in a neo-liberal or neo-conservative environment, as the Heiner case in Australia made only too clear. In 1990 the Queensland Government ordered the destruction of the records of an investigation, still in progress, by Noel Heiner, into allegations of abuse at a young offenders institute. The permission of the state archivist was sought and given, leading to a decade of soul searching by the Australian archival profession.²⁶ What on earth did those employees of ENRON and Arthur Andersen imagine they were doing when they were caught shredding documents? Their actions were akin to the attempts by Stasi officials during the final days of the DDR in 1989 ‘to shred the files of their documents, both using paper shredders and tearing them by hand when the shredders collapsed under the load.’²⁷ In their case the community stepped in to halt the destruction and preserve the archive so that those responsible for the torture and killings could be brought to justice. There are other, perhaps less obvious, similarities. Both ENRON and the Stasi represent extreme examples of what we might call a culture of ‘co-ercive accountability’. The anthropologists Cris Shore and Susan Wright, warned well before the suicide of the weapon’s expert, Dr David Kelly, that the ‘audit process’ ‘encourages a form of reflexivity’, but ‘the reflexive subject is caught within tightly fixed parameters that appear to render opposition futile’.²⁸

The seeds of such a trap can be found in the injunction of one of the signatories of the letter to the *American Archivist*, Elizabeth Adkins, director of Global Information Management at Ford Motor Company: ‘Please be aware that all Company information belongs to the Company, not to you.’ This covers ‘any information that you acquire or record in performing your job duties. It includes such documents as written memoranda, handwritten notes, computer files, voice mail and e-mail notes’. Any violation is subject ‘to disciplinary action which may include termination of contract.’²⁹ Such regulations are common across the private and public sector, and tend to confirm Shore and Wright’s conclusion that there is little Richard Cox’s archivist can do except resign and tell the truth when confronted with an ethical predicament. This is by no means an easy course of action. Dr Jeffrey Wigand, former vice president for research and development for Brown & Williamson and the tobacco-industry whistle-blower, summed up his dilemma in an interview in June of this year, ‘You feel a very deep, inner conflict between your loyalties, your loyalty to your

family, and supporting and protecting your family, the supposed loyalty that you're supposed to have through the corporation that's actually paying you to support your family.³⁰ This must be doubly difficult if you work for the state, like David Kelly or Ivan Murambiwa.

The way in which our contemporary audit culture works may result only in the creation of records that, as Richard Cox puts it, make the creators 'look good', irrespective of the appraisal decisions of archivists. In the past, audit was the final component of financial management and involved the scrutiny of accounts that form the largest part of any business archive. These records were created primarily for management purposes. Although tightening of the rules of disclosure led to the creation of records specifically to meet audit requirements, this was at the margins whereas now audit has come to dominate record keeping. Daniel Miller, who coined the term audit society, pointedly commented:

The paradox is that, while consumption is the pivot upon which these developments in history spin, the concern is not the cost and benefits of actual consumers, but of what we might call virtual consumers, which are generated by management theories and models . . . [And] the rise of auditing in Britain [is thus] symptomatic not of capitalism, but of a new form of abstraction that is emerging, a form more abstract than the capitalism of firms dealing in commodities.³¹

Marilyn Strathern explored this critical audit culture where, as she puts it, the 'ought' becomes 'is' and things do indeed work backwards, where 'the form in which the outcome is to be described is known in advance'.³² The philosopher Jacques Derrida warned of such entanglement when he wrote 'the technical structure of the archiving archive also determines the structure of the archivable content even its very coming into existence and in its relationship to the future'.³³ This effect can be observed in both the public and private sector, for example, in New Labour's approach to the management of public services or in Shell's overstatement of its oil reserves.³⁴ It is not difficult to see why Onora O'Neill believes such a use of audit breeds mistrust, and it raises fundamental questions about Cox's concern for 'the values of records and their management for purposes such as legal compliance, evidence of activities, and accountability.' The audit culture will of course produce records that satisfy these criteria, but they will hardly be sufficient for any other purpose than that for which they were created. In the long term, because of the twin effects of risks of contingent liability and the regulatory environment, little of the detail that users of archives exploit in their research will survive. All that will be left is Miller's abstraction.

The 'Sun Mad' poster in this context is a metaphor for the record that is either expunged or never captured in the audit culture. It would be unreasonable to expect a private archive to hold such evidence that might threaten shareholder value. The members of the board could be held personally to account for such oversight. Users of archives expect to find such evidence in other repositories, like the collection of political posters in the Paulina June & George Pollak Library at the California State University, Fullerton, where a copy of the 'Sun Mad' poster is held. This will continue to be the case for material produced outside an organisation that contains legitimate comment or criticism. It could be argued that Ester Hernandez's parody is not just contentious but libellous, exposing the collecting repository to risk as the signatories of the letter to the *American Archivist* asserted. What is of more concern is the consequence of the mantra that 'all Company information belongs to the Company, not to you.' Inevitably this will tend to silence all the voices that the organisation does not want to be heard, and only the brave or foolhardy will be willing to deposit any 'trace' elsewhere. Even if the record was held closed, it could be legally discovered if it could be proved that it was in some sense the property of the company. Like all the other issues Cox raises in relation to corporate archives, they resonate across the archival landscape. Public authorities are no less exempt from seeking to contain liability or to put it in Derrida's language, 'to forget'. In a bitter attack on the aftermath of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which he questions as an 'exercise in forgetting', Verne Harris, the director of the South African History Archive, commented:

A final layer of forgetting is to be discerned in the state's response to the numerous recommendations made by the TRC in its report. . . Very little has been done to provide reparations to identified victims of gross human rights violation. There seems to be no will to pursue the prosecution of perpetrators, who ignored the TRC's amnesty process or who failed to secure amnesty. The recent Presidential pardoning of persons who were denied amnesty by the TRC constitutes amongst other things, a grave forgetting of the amnesty process as a critical mechanism in South Africa's transition to democracy. And, despite some brave attempts by the National Archives, the TRC's wide-ranging recommendations on state recordkeeping have been by and large ignored.³⁵

There could be no more chilling reminder than this of the consequences, when company is replaced by government, in 'all Company information belongs to the Company, not to you.'

Cox recognises this transition when he writes: ‘Records can be, by their very nature, inherently controversial. They document good and bad actions, the activities of evil and exemplary people and organizations, the decisions by corrupt and stellar government officials, and the activities of strong and weak university administrators and faculty members.’³⁶

Such an admission must surely extend his rider to cover much archival activity that is not directly protected by the ‘rule of law’, something that I have argued, in relation to the revelations of the Hutton report, is an essential safeguard of our democratic rights, and draws a clear line between functions of records management and archives.³⁷ However, this begs the big question of what precisely archival ‘ethics and mission’ are, and if they differ in different contexts? It is my contention that The National Archives cannot be held responsible for the obvious shortcomings in government record keeping in the United Kingdom revealed by the Hutton Inquiry and the RailTrack case. That is a matter for the head of the civil service - the Secretary of the Cabinet. In much the same way the United States National Archives and Records Administration, despite its title, is not to blame for the fact, constant reminders notwithstanding, that none of the 30 million emails from the Clinton White House were ever filed. TNA and NARA have grounds for complaint about the adequacy of the record that is transferred to their care for safekeeping, and should have the ability to seek protection from the courts both for their concerns and appraisal decisions. Chris Hurley rightly criticises the lack of fiduciary independence of most archive authorities in western democracies, which, he argues ‘are neither fit nor capable of acting independently as agents of democratic accountability in the manner of courts, accountants, auditors, and ombudsmen’.³⁸ If this is so, then it makes them akin to archives in any other organisation, even if we expect government to be less constrained by considerations of ‘risk’ than the private sector. In other words, we expect more to be recorded and preserved for the long term irrespective of any contingent liability even within our tightening regulatory frameworks. Arguably, archives where there is no public sector interest (and this is increasingly a grey area) cannot enjoy such independence, but, just as in the public sector, the parameters of record keeping cannot be set by archivists or even records managers. Nevertheless, to have integrity, the archives must have fiduciary attributes so that archivists can testify to the provenance of the records or information under their control, and that they are what they purport to be. If they have ethical doubts, these can be no worse than in the public sector. On the moral scale there is little to choose between the documents relating to the harmful effects of tobacco smoking, working

with asbestos, child abuse, and the declaration of war. The only difference, perhaps, is that only the latter will not result in compensation to the victims.

Writing in 1995, Cox described the archival mission as the ‘identification, preservation, and use of archival records on behalf of the institutions it serves and society.’³⁹ As Luciana Duranti observed in her presidential address to the Society of American Archivists in 1999, this is reassuring, even if Cox did add ‘archivists have often seemed unable to change their mission, layering one old mission and traditional function or activity after another even as the larger organizational context of their operations has changed.’ None of this, as Duranti admitted tongue in cheek, gets us very far. In her view ‘the unique mission or role of the archivist is the preservation of the authentic recorded memory of society because of its destination to permanent public use. To fulfil this role—the old literature says—it is essential that the archivist be able to represent the world of the user to the administration and the world of administration to the user, to act as a mediator between creators and researchers, to be “all to all archives.”’ At the end of her address she did admit that ‘individual archivists are called to different responsibilities according to the context in which they work.’⁴⁰ The SAA’s own definition of the mission of business archives makes no reference to the public, although the very existence of an archive would make the contents legally discoverable:

The corporate archivist selects and preserves the key documents that reconstruct a company's history, products or services, and development. The result is a unique corporate asset - information and documentation that can be used for important legal, marketing, communications and financial decisions. A business archives can give managers perspective and the ability to make decisions today confident that they understand the historical context.⁴¹

The Corporate Archives Forum in the United States opined opaquely at its first meeting in 1998 that business archives had a ‘mission without mandate’. The subject was not revisited until the 2004 meeting, when all the signatories of the letter to the *American Archivist* were present. Tellingly, legal, compliance and risk functions were placed at the top of the mission agenda, adding later that Sarbanes Oxley provided an opportunity for archivists to ‘play a key role in compliance’.⁴² Even if public access is omitted, this is a long way from Duranti’s definition and may go some way to explain Cox’s concerns. In the United Kingdom the Royal Bank of Scotland in its statement ‘Why the Royal Bank holds archives’ places external use before internal, while the HSBC archives only adds as a footnote that some archives may

not be inspected because of reasons of confidentiality.⁴³ The John Lewis Partnership Archive ‘was set up in 1963 to preserve these items and to make them available to researchers both from within and outside the Partnership.’⁴⁴ This is familiar turf and three cheers for that.

The danger of the familiar is that it breeds contempt and we do well to defend our European archival tradition. Although it is tempting to view the letter complaining about the ‘Sun Mad’ poster as North American silliness, when viewed from a legal, compliance and risk perspective it is understandable, if paranoid. It is easy to see how a close alignment of records management and archives in both the private and public sector could take us down this route. There are those who argue that this is an inevitable consequence of the digital environment, which I have deliberately not mentioned as it distracts from Richard Cox’s core concern. Let me end this paper with the discussion of another contentious image, this time of a boat sinking in early October 2001 in the Indian Ocean. The *Olong* was carrying boat people and was used to illustrate the infamous ‘Children overboard’ story. Its multiple interpretations divided Australian society in much the same way as the Sun Mad poster disturbed the contents of the SAA teacup. There are parallels. Sue McKemmish brilliantly deconstructs this image and its uses in ‘Traces’, the opening chapter of *Archives: Record Keeping in Society*, despite, or perhaps because, the Howard government that was responsible for misleading the Australian public is still in power. She ends with this claim: ‘From this perspective, the role of recordkeeping professionals becomes an active one of participation in record and archive making processes, inscribing their own traces on a record that is always in a state of becoming.’⁴⁵ We may agree or disagree with all or part of this statement, what we need to do is to debate it in the context of the metaphors of the two very different images that opened and closed this article. What is disappointing about the archival profession in the United Kingdom is how little we engage with questions, such as those posed by Richard Cox, that take us to the heart of ‘the Archives of Business and the Business of Archives’.

Notes

¹ *The American Archivist*, 66, 1, 2003, cover and fly-leaf

² <http://www.saintmarys.edu/~events/Calendar/MoreauGalleries/artists2000-2001/Chicana2000/hernandez.html> (October 2005)

³ See for example <http://www.esterhernandez.com/> (April 2006)

⁴ *The American Archivist*, 67, 2, pp.152-3 (2004)

⁵ See programme of the SAA conference 2006, available at <http://www.archivists.org/conference/dc2006/dc2006prog-Session.asp?event=1755> (April 2006)

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.153-4

⁷ *The American Archivist*, 68, 1, pp.8-11 (2005)

⁸ James M.O’Toole (ed.), *The records of American business* (Chicago, 1997)

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- ⁹ Richard Mulgan, “‘Accountability’ : an ever-expanding concept?”, *Public Administration*, 78, 3, pp.555-73 (2000)
- ¹⁰ Available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/reith2002/lecture3.shtml> (October 2005)
- ¹¹ Marilyn Strathern, ‘Abstraction and decontextualisation: an anthropological comment or: e for ethnography’, 2000, pre-publication draft available at <http://virtualsociety.sbs.ox.ac.uk/GRpapers/strathern.htm> (October 2005)
- ¹² See for example *Financial Times*, 15 October 2005
- ¹³ Securities and Exchange Commission, litigation release no. 18115, April 2003, available at <http://www.sec.gov/litigation/litreleases/lr18115.htm> (March 2005)
- ¹⁴ Hutton Inquiry Web Site at <http://www.the-hutton-inquiry.org.uk/content/> Hearing Transcripts, Monday 18 August 2003, morning, para. 95 (October 2005)
- ¹⁵ Available at http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/jun3_2004.html#link16
- ¹⁶ David McKie, ‘Making up history’, *The Guardian*, 27 October 2005
- ¹⁷ See for example <http://www.sims.monash.edu.au/research/rcrg/>
- ¹⁸ James Mckinnon, ‘The “Sports Rorts” affair: a case study in recordkeeping, accountability and media reporting’, *New Zealand Archivist*, v, 4, pp.1-5 (1994)
- ¹⁹ See for example Gordon Fairclough, ‘Brown & Williamson campaign targets younger adult smokers’, *Wall Street Journal*, 3 July 2000, available at http://www.expressindia.com/fe/daily/20000703_/fst01021.html (October 2005)
- ²⁰ Philip F.Mooney, ‘Archival mythology and corporate reality: a potential powder keg’, in O’Toole, *The records of American business*, p.59
- ²¹ Edward G.Jefferson, Dolores Hanna & Michael Miles, ‘View from inside: corporate executives and the records of American business’, in O’Toole, *The records of American business*, p.69
- ²² ‘The disposable diaper and the meaning of progress’, *New Yorker*, 26 November 2001, available at http://www.gladwell.com/2001/2001_11_26_a_diaper.htm (November 2005)
- ²³ ‘About Scotiabank Archive’, available at http://www.scotiabank.com/cda/content/0,1608,CID856_LIDen.00.html (November 2005)
- ²⁴ Jefferson, Hanna & Miles, *op.cit.*, p.72
- ²⁵ *The American Archivist*, 68, 1, p.10 (2005)
- ²⁶ Sue McKemmish, Michael Pigott, Barbara Reed & Frank Upward, *Archives: recordkeeping in society*, p.245 (Wagga Wagga, 2005)
- ²⁷ ‘Stasi’, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stasi#Recovery_of_Stasi_archives
- ²⁸ Cris Shore & Susan Wright, ‘Coercive accountability’, in Marilyn Strathern (ed.), *Audit cultures – anthropological studies in accountability, ethics and the academy*, p.78 (London, 2000)
- ²⁹ *Ford Standards of Corporate Conduct*, 5 and 19, available at www.ford.com/.../corporateConductStandards.pdf (November 2005)
- ³⁰ ‘Inside the mind of a whistle-blower, Tobacco whistle-blower Jeffrey Wigand on the risks and rewards of telling the truth’, 2 June 2005, available at <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/8077025/> (November 2005)
- ³¹ Daniel Miller, ‘A theory of virtualism’, in D.Miller & J.Carrier (eds.), *Virtualism: a new political economy*, pp.204-5 (Oxford, 1998)
- ³² Marilyn Strathern, ‘Abstraction and decontextualisation: an anthropological comment or: e for ethnography’, 2000, available at <http://virtualsociety.sbs.ox.ac.uk/GRpapers/strathern.htm> (March 2005)
- ³³ Jacques Derrida, *Archive fever a Freudian impression*, p.16, translated by Eric Prenowitz, (Chicago, 1996)
- ³⁴ See for example Beth Gardiner ‘Shell report exposes lies on oil reserves’, *Associated Press*, 19 April 2004, available at <http://www.commondreams.org/headlines04/0419-08.htm> (November 2005)
- ³⁵ Verne Harris, ‘Truth and Reconciliation Commission, an exercise in forgetting’, 21 September 2002, available at http://www.wits.ac.za/saha/publications/FOIP_5_1_Harris.pdf (November 2005)
- ³⁶ *The American Archivist*, 68, 1, p.11 (2005)
- ³⁷ Michael Moss ‘The Hutton Inquiry, the President of Nigeria and what the butler hoped to see,’ *English Historical Review*, 120, pp.577-592 (2005)
- ³⁸ Chris Hurley, ‘Recordkeeping and accountability’, in McKemmish et al. (eds.), *Archives*, pp.247-8 (2005)
- ³⁹ Richard Cox, ‘Archives and archivists in the twenty-first century: what will we become?’, *Archival Issues*, 20, 2, p.98 (1995)
- ⁴⁰ Luciana Duranti, ‘Meeting the challenge of contemporary records: does it require a role change for the archivist?’, Presidential address SAA, available at <http://www.archivists.org/governance/presidential/duranti-2.asp#endnotes> (November 2005), and Cox, ‘Archives and archivists in the twenty-first century’, p.106
- ⁴¹ ‘Business archives in North America invest in your future: understand your past’, available at http://www.archivists.org/saagroups/bas/Intro_bus_arch.asp (November 2005)
- ⁴² The CAF website can be found at http://www.hunterinformation.com/caf_2004.htm (November 2005)

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- ⁴³ See http://www.rbs.com/about03.asp?id=ABOUT_US/OUR_HERITAGE/OUR_ARCHIVES/INTRODUCING_OUR_ARCHIVES/WHY_THE_ROYAL_BANK_HOLDS_ARCHIVES (November 2005)
- ⁴⁴ See <http://www.johnlewispartnership.co.uk/TemplatePage.aspx?PageType=SCT&PageID=42> (November 2005)
- ⁴⁵ Sue McKemmish, 'Traces', McKemmish et al, (eds.), *Archives*, pp.1-20 (2005)