



STOP PRESS!

The bicentenary of the Press Gallery is being celebrated in an exhibition.

The Fourth Estate: The Press Gallery & 200 Years of Parliamentary Reporting

The key elements of the exhibition will include the history, the great names associated with the Press Gallery (Dickens, Coleridge, etc), its organisation, the technology employed (from memorising speeches when note-taking was forbidden, to shorthand, computers and the introduction of television), the struggle of women to be admitted into the club, and the Press Gallery at war.

The centre piece of the exhibition will be the diary of Charles Abbot (one of the 19th century's reforming Speakers) which is on loan from The National Archives. The entry for 24th May 1803, in Speaker Abbot's own hand, commemorates the founding of the Press Gallery.

The exhibition will be running from May 12-16 in the Upper Waiting Hall, House of Commons.

The Ball is Rolling - Archive Awareness Month – September 2003

Although more and more people are using archives, many people have little or no idea of how archives could touch their lives. The NCA is spearheading a campaign to raise the profile of archives - a first stage of which will be a month-long promotion of celebratory events in September 2003. Archives, large and small, national and regional, public and private, will be opening their doors all over the UK to promote the treasures that lie within.



'Love and Hate'

The national theme for this, the first Archive Awareness Month, will be 'Love and Hate' - A strong theme that can capture the imagination of the media and so a wider public. It can be illustrated through a plethora of archival material:- Personal letters, diaries, court papers on marriage and divorce, wills and probate papers will all be a mine of stories.

Katie Norgrove, Policy and Development Officer at the National Council on Archives, says, "We wanted to choose a theme that would be about universal emotions. It will allow events to concentrate on the human stories that archives tell"- passions for each other, as well as for places, activities, political causes and events".

The national PR campaign is being coordinated by the NCA with support from The National Archives in the shape of Fiona Cameron – the new Marketing & Publicity Coordinator for Archive Awareness Month. She says, 'Stories of ordinary (and extraordinary) people can beautifully illustrate the theme of 'Love and Hate', and the relevance of archives to local culture as well as to national history. This national campaign is an exciting opportunity to promote the relevance of archives for today's society and future generations'.

Gaining Momentum

A successful meeting was held at the British Library on 28th April attended by 54 archivists from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Ideas were exchanged, events around the 'Love & Hate' theme are building up, and the campaign is really gaining momentum.

The Oxfordshire Record Office is well on its way towards an exciting campaign. They are planning a grand open day where they are proposing to cook gruel - according to workhouse/asylum diet sheets from the records - and offer it to the brave members of the public. Will they love it or hate it?! The Record Office is currently looking for a local celebrity chef to come and cook it for them! They have also delved into the records for some interesting stories such as the 'Thame Wife Sale'. A man sold his wife to another at the market – yes, it really happened.

The London campaign will be based on the theme 'London – Love It Or Hate It?' This gives great scope for both emotions: the architecture, ceremonies and royalty, traffic, the Mayor, transport, multi-culturalism, planning issues, pollution, M25, shopping, tourists...

The House of Lords Record Office is currently looking for records that reflect the love-hate relationship with Parliament.

You can also access the contributor's section of the Archive Awareness Month website to see what events are being planned, or to register your own ideas at www.aamsept2003.com. Contact: *Fiona Cameron, Marketing and Publicity Coordinator Archive Awareness Month on 020 8392 5376 or by email Fiona.Cameron@nationalarchives.gov.uk*
The public face of the website will go live in July.

The Archives Task Force - What's Happening?

Commissioned by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the Archives Task Force is Resource: The Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries major archives project for 2002/2003 throwing a spotlight on archives and their uses. The Archives Task Force will report to the DCMS in autumn 2003.

The third meeting of the Task Force was held on 25th March at Gloucestershire Record Office and the venue provided a useful opportunity for Archive Task Force members to see an archive service in operation and meet with users, staff and stakeholders. The Task Force considered papers on the following topics:

- Investing in the future: training and development;
- Building on success: developing centres of expertise;
- Specialist Archives: hinterland and seedbed.

Papers presented to the meeting and minutes of previous meetings are available on the Resource website. To view these pages please see www.resource.gov.uk and follow the links to "Archives Task Force" from the "action" drop-down menu.

At this meeting Task Force members considered the 'Emerging Viewpoints' in the wider context of the vision that the report is hoping to achieve for archives and their users. This proposes that:

- users, their requirements, and the evidence of them, are of paramount importance;
- archives should reach out to and become more relevant to more people;

The vision is based on a step change in the purpose and nature of archives, combining the traditional role of preservation and access with new ideas of public access, and ways of working. To test the 'step change' proposed by the Task Force, Resource is busy listening to the view of all those with an interest in archives through a series of consultation meetings. Contact: *Emma Halsall, Resource on 020 7273 1421 or email emma.halsall@resource.gov.uk*



Behind the scenes at the National Archives, by Jonathan Goldberg, copyright Resource.

Funding Behind the Scenes Work - The National Manuscripts Conservation Trust

The National Manuscripts Conservation Trust (NMCT) provides funding for preservation and conservation projects involving manuscript material that is open to archives, libraries and another publicly funded bodies such as local authorities, universities or specialist repositories. Funding can cover the cost of the repair, binding and other preservation measures including reprography, of manuscript material.

Grants range from £1,000 to £30,000 and the Trust encourages successful applicants to use NMCT grants as part of their matching funding for bids to other funding bodies like the Heritage Lottery Fund.



Church Commission Durham Bishopric Estates
Deposit: parchment roll B/7/71. Courtesy of University of Durham

To give a flavour of the NMCT's work, nine grants were awarded in 2002, including £25,300 to Durham University Library to conserve the Durham Receiver Generals' accounts (see picture), £1,000 to Worcestershire Record Office to conserve two of the county's Tithe maps, £7,500 to the Court of the Lord Lyon to conserve the 'Forman' Armorial, and £15,000 to the British Architectural Library to conserve the Godfrey Samuel Collection and RIBA Council letters.

NMCT awards are administered by the Co-operation and Partnership Programme of the British Library. For further information see <http://www.bl.uk/concord/nmct-guidelines.html>. Contact: The Secretary, NMCT on 020 7412 7052 or email nmct@bl.uk

The Archival Hinterland or Seedbed – Archives outside the public sector

By definition archives can be found in any sort of organisation. Although publicly funded local authority and university collections form the backbone of the body of archives in the UK, beyond this there lies a hinterland of smaller archives. They are extremely varied in nature and governance, and they are huge in number, greatly outweighing in number, if not in volume of material held, the pattern of local authority and university repositories. They typically might be sited within a business, a charity, a hospital, a historic house, a scientific institution, an educational establishment, or even a convent! They share little in common other than the fact that they are in receipt of no regular public funding. The "missing link" report by the Society of Archivists (see <http://www.archives.org.uk/publications/MissingLink.asp>) made clear the problems facing these types of archives, but here, rather than solely dwell on the downside, we hope to share with you some of the great successes that these archives can achieve in opening up their collections to a public, where they are under no compunction to do so.

Historical Manuscripts Commission Functions Continue Within The National Archives



On 2 April this year the Historical Manuscripts Commission and the Public Record Office came together to form The National Archives. Within the new organisation, HMC will maintain all its functions of gathering and disseminating information on the nature and whereabouts of archives that are relevant to the UK's history, in particular through the National Register of Archives, the Manorial Documents Register and the electronic gateway ARCHON. Its advisory services to owners, custodians and users of archives will also be maintained and its liaison with the

Regional Archive Councils and the emerging single regional agencies for museums, libraries and archives will be strengthened. The merger will provide the opportunity to develop, with colleagues from The National Archives: PRO, more comprehensive national information about archives, to build up a new and wide ranging advisory service which will extend to issues of records management and electronic records, and to harmonise standards for the approval and accreditation of record repositories in England and Wales. *Contact: Chris Kitching, The National Archives (Historical Manuscripts Commission) on 020 7242 1198*

Looking for a Loving Home - 'Orphaned' records

In many respects the UK is well served by its informal 'network' of public and private archive repositories, but from time to time problems arise when a new home has to be found – often at very short notice – for archival material that can no longer be retained by its original owners.

Where the archives are of strongly local interest they can most appropriately be accommodated in the relevant local authority record office. Alternatively, the interest may be more specialised or thematic, in which case they might fit well with the collection policy of one of the established university and specialist repositories. But what can be done when the most obviously appropriate repository has insufficient storage space there to receive them? And what happens when the interest is primarily national or even international? There is a distinct risk of archives falling through the holes in the net and becoming 'orphaned' or split up, if indeed they survive at all in these circumstances.

The term 'orphaned' records has been applied to what are in fact very disparate archives, not all of them 'parent-less' but all at risk of being scattered or destroyed. They include the archives of:

- defunct businesses and those subject to takeover, down-sizing, re-structuring or absorption into multi-national concerns;
- organisations still in being but having no records manager or archivist or storage facilities;

- bodies whose scope is international, national or regional, where there is no clear-cut geographical or thematic focus pointing to any one repository as the obvious home for the records, or where bulk is an obstacle to finding a home.

In 2001 a preliminary meeting was held under the auspices of the National Council on Archives (NCA) to discuss how such archives might receive better protection. The issue was again recently raised at a joint meeting of the Historical Manuscripts Commissioners and the Advisory Council on Public Records in February this year, and will be taken forward by The National Archives in consultation with the NCA. Does the best hope for long-term success in this difficult area lie in more promotional work being done by The National Archives and partner bodies to persuade businesses (and others) that there is a public interest in their archives, over and above any immediate corporate or business interest, and encouraging them:

- to employ appropriate records management or archives professionals;
- to give or deposit their records; or
- to take the route already pursued by some of handing their archives over to a Trust (donations to which under the present tax regime ought to be eligible for Gift Aid and/or higher-rate tax relief)?

Other forms of tax incentive could perhaps be explored at the right time.

This will not address every need nor solve all the problems of bulk and cost. In an ideal world (and as in a number of other European countries such as France) government or industry would perhaps fund national or regional centres for business and other archives. But developments in the UK have been much less centralised, so other options, including perhaps regional solutions, may have to be explored. *Contact: Chris Kitching, The National Archives (Historical Manuscripts Commission) on 020 7242 1198*

Thanks to the Treasury - Acceptance Of Manuscripts And Archives In Lieu Of Tax

In January this year the government announced that it had accepted in lieu of tax

three important collections of private papers: the corrected typescripts of the novelist Sir Anthony Powell (1905-2000), the professional archive of the architect Sir Leslie Martin (1908-2000) and the Middle East travel journals from the 1830s of Robert Curzon (1810-1873), 14th Baron Zouche, the famous collector of manuscripts. As in the past, the Historical Manuscripts Commission (now part of The National Archives) will recommend to the Arts Minister where these collections should be allocated for permanent custody in the national interest. The AIL scheme as a whole is administered by Resource on behalf of the government.

It is now 30 years since archives and manuscripts joined works of art among the categories of material eligible for acceptance in lieu of tax. The scheme has been of fundamental importance in securing pre-eminently important material for the nation. For libraries and record offices the huge advantage is that they pay nothing to acquire the material (although of course they may incur substantial on-costs in care, conservation and cataloguing). Instead, the costs are ultimately met by the Treasury, in tax forgone. The range—both by date and type— as well as the quality of the material accepted has been striking. There is space here only to give the flavour of an impressive list, but it includes:

- ◆ individual manuscript treasures such as the Sherborne missal
- ◆ great family archives of both national and local significance which often include papers of famous statesmen and other public figures (Blenheim papers, Hawkins papers, Newcastle papers...)
- ◆ papers of prominent politicians and naval and military figures (Amery, Croft, Derby, Fisher, Wellington...)
- ◆ examples of the creative output of nationally important musicians, artists and writers (Benjamin Britten, Sir Arthur Bryant, Lord (Kenneth) Clark, Robert Southwell...).

Sir Leslie Martin is the first architect whose papers have been accepted.

As far as archives and manuscripts are concerned—the pattern will be different for

other categories of allocated material—very few offers have so far come forward from parts of the UK outside England. The National Libraries of Wales and Scotland have each received two allocations, but no cases have yet arisen from Northern Ireland. Beneficiaries of the scheme in England have included the British Library (with 7 allocations to date) and three national museums and galleries; the Bodleian Library, Oxford (6) and eight other universities or colleges; 17 local authority record offices and two specialist archives. *Contact: Chris Kitching, The National Archives (Historical Manuscripts Commission) on 020 7242 1198*

Papers of the Shuttleworth Family - Brokering a Literary Friendship

As part of the settlement of the estate of Lady Anne Elizabeth Kay-Shuttleworth, the state accepted papers of the Shuttleworth Family early in 1999 and directed that three groups of these papers be permanently housed at the Lancashire Record Office. Among the papers are one letter from Charlotte Brontë and nine letters from Mrs Elizabeth Gaskell, all to Lady Janet Kay-Shuttleworth, with whom both authors were acquainted.

Charlotte Brontë and Elizabeth Gaskell first met in 1850. The meeting between the two authors was made possible by the Kay-Shuttleworths, who provided a rented house near Lake Windermere. A friendship grew up between the two women, with Charlotte Brontë visiting Mrs Gaskell at Manchester in 1851 and 1853. Mrs Gaskell returned the visit at Haworth in the autumn of 1853 and, with her husband, was a guest at Miss Brontë's wedding to Mr Nicholls the following summer. Earlier in 1853, Mrs Gaskell had published her second novel, *Ruth*, the public reaction to which is touched upon in one of the letters accepted in lieu. In order to avoid comparisons, Charlotte Brontë deferred for a few weeks the publication of what was to be her final novel (*Villette*). Following Miss Brontë's death in 1855, Mrs Gaskell was asked by Miss Brontë's father to write a biography of her literary friend (*Life of Charlotte Brontë*).



Autograph letter signed by Charlotte Brontë to Lady Kay-Shuttleworth, at Haworth, which speaks of, amongst other things, the effects of a solitary life on a person's character, 1850. Accepted in lieu of Inheritance Tax, 1999. Courtesy of Lancashire Record Office.



Autograph letter signed by Elizabeth Gaskell to Lady Kay-Shuttleworth including her thoughts on the life of a single woman, family duties and responsibilities and the religious motivations for abandoning family for other duties. Accepted in lieu of Inheritance Tax, 1999. Courtesy of Lancashire Record Office.

Keys to Unlocking the Door of Archival Meaning - More resources needed to tackle cataloguing backlogs

One of the most basic functions of any archive service is to compile catalogues of its holdings, in order to set out for researchers what they can expect to find in any given accumulation of archives. Catalogues are the keys that unlock the contents of the documents, for teachers and learners alike. And yet, significant quantities of archives in the public repositories of the UK have lain unlisted for 20, 30 or in extreme cases even as many as 60 years, according to the results of a recent survey by the Historical Manuscripts Commission.

Before turning to these problems, let's strike a more positive note! Today's archive services are making heroic efforts to keep pace with cataloguing the influx of new accessions, and even to tackle some of the archives left unlisted by previous generations. Without these essential finding-aids already to hand

there would have been no building blocks for the highly acclaimed Access to Archives (A2A) programme which is currently computerising catalogues from each of the regions of England and making them available on the web.

But this achievement must not blind us to the formidable scale of the cataloguing backlogs that are accruing in every part of the UK, and in every region of England. Why?

Substantially for two reasons: first because archives are bulky and continue to accumulate year on year; and secondly because cataloguing, although indispensable if the archives are to be fully accessible, is also a very time-consuming and labour-intensive professional activity. Archives unlike library books, do not come ready furnished with an author and title or standard cataloguing data already provided. They require study to understand and explain both the context and the content.

It is sad but true that many of our archive services are simply too sparsely staffed to be able to devote sufficient time and attention to cataloguing, especially in the face of other competing demands from, say, public services, records management, or the attainment of the highest standards for preservation and care of the records.

The HMC survey covers 6 English regions and Wales. It set out to assess cataloguing backlogs but also for the first time to gain at least an insight into the heritage quality of the uncatalogued material (see Online Publications on the Commission's website (www.hmc.gov.uk)) They show for example that deposited records of private origin are the most common victims of cataloguing backlogs. Large collections of business records such as those of solicitors, architects and estate agents were commonly identified as uncatalogued. Even the records of industries central to the economy and history of their region are affected: steel-making in Sheffield and Teesside, pottery in Staffordshire and Stoke, ship-building in Tyne and Wear, engineering and metal manufacture in Birmingham, fishing in Grimsby, as well as the records of railways, water companies, cycle and motor manufacturers, and many others. But the

problem also extends in places to deposited Public Records (such as those of Quarter and Petty Sessions, the National Coal Board or hospitals), to significant portions of the records of historic towns such as Exeter, Hereford, Newcastle, Plymouth, St Albans and Worcester, to those of many county councils and predecessor bodies, and to the archives of our universities and colleges. There could be significant implications here for Freedom of Information. No catalogue: no access.

The message is plain, if unpalatable: more resources need to be allocated to cataloguing if our archives (on whose acquisition and custody so much public money has been and is being spent) are to be properly put at the citizen's disposal. The funding bodies of public archive repositories of course bear the primary responsibility with respect to their own holdings, and as the survey makes clear there are a number of practical steps that can be taken in-house to refocus priorities or to learn from other people's successes. But the scale of the problem is so large that additional help is going to be needed at regional and national level from other grant-awarding bodies and perhaps directly from the government, despite the generous support that the Heritage Lottery Fund has provided since 1995 for cataloguing projects. This is a significant challenge for the archive community in the years to come, but given strong public support we believe the problem can be cracked and our archives opened up for public study. *Contact: Chris Kitching, The National Archives (Historical Manuscripts Commission) on 020 7242 1198*

Sitting Between the Scientist and the Archivist: The National Cataloguing Unit for the Archives of Contemporary Scientists

April 2003 was the thirtieth anniversary of the Unit's work in preserving and making accessible the archives of distinguished contemporary scientists and engineers. Unique in British archives, the Unit is not an archive repository but a highly cost-effective processing centre. As specialists in scientific archives the Unit acts as an intermediary between the scientist or scientist's family who owns the archives and hands them to the Unit

for cataloguing, and the archive repository that will look after them permanently and provide access to researchers and those who wish to consult them.

In its first thirty years the Unit has catalogued 237 archives of British scientists for 49 repositories throughout the United Kingdom, principally university archives and libraries and national scientific institutions and learned societies such as the Royal Society, National History Museum and Science Museum London. In this way it has made an indispensable contribution to the history of science and the recent history of Britain.

Amongst the scientists are 22 Nobel Laureates from J.J. Thomson (Physics 1906) to Abdus Salam (Physics 1979) including Britain's only woman science Laureate Dorothy Hodgkin (Chemistry 1964); and 163 Fellows of the Royal Society and Royal Academy of Engineering. There are pioneering figures in antibiotics, including Ernst Chain the 1945 Medicine Laureate; computer science, for example Alan Turing; molecular biology, including John Kendrew who shared the 1962 Chemistry Nobel Prize with Cambridge colleague Max Perutz; and nature conservation, Peter Scott. There are Churchill's wartime advisers Lord Cherwell and R.V. Jones and refugee scientists from Nazi Germany such as physicists Otto Frisch and Rudolf Peierls who will be forever associated with atomic bomb developments. Scientists who make major contributions to national life outside their science are represented by the zoologist Lord Swann as Chairman of the BBC and the chemist Lord Dainton as Chairman of the British Library. Women scientists are a current priority and the important archive of Kathleen Lonsdale, one of the first two women to be elected to the Royal Society in 1945, was catalogued last year.

The Unit has developed its own website as an important information source for those interested in the history of science at <http://www.bath.ac.uk/ncuacs/>. Thanks to the Unit, science archives are fully represented in national developments, contributing almost all its catalogues, some 14,000 pages in total, to Access to Archives (A2A see <http://www.a2a.pro.gov.uk.>). A Heritage Lottery

Fund supported project 'Cosmic Rays and the Solid State' will enable the cataloguing of the archives of six Bristol physicists and make a further significant contribution to the developing online national network.

Entirely externally funded, The Unit is at the University of Bath housed in the University Library, and its work is sponsored by the Royal Society and supported for varying periods by grants from scientific societies, charitable trusts and foundations and special project funding. *Contact: Peter Harper Director, NCUACS on 01225 385241 or email lispbh@bath.ac.uk*



Cecil Powell's cosmic rays research team launching a balloon from the Royal Fort, Bristol University, probably 1940s. Powell was awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics for his cosmic rays research and balloons were at the heart of this work. Courtesy of NCUACS



Kathleen Lonsdale who was one of the first two women scientists to be elected to the Fellowship of the Royal Society in 1945. Courtesy of NCUACS

Private Papers Given over to Public Enjoyment - The Roald Dahl Centre, Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire

The unique archive of Roald Dahl (1916 – 1990) will be at the heart of this ambitious new Centre bringing together the archive, museum and literary worlds.

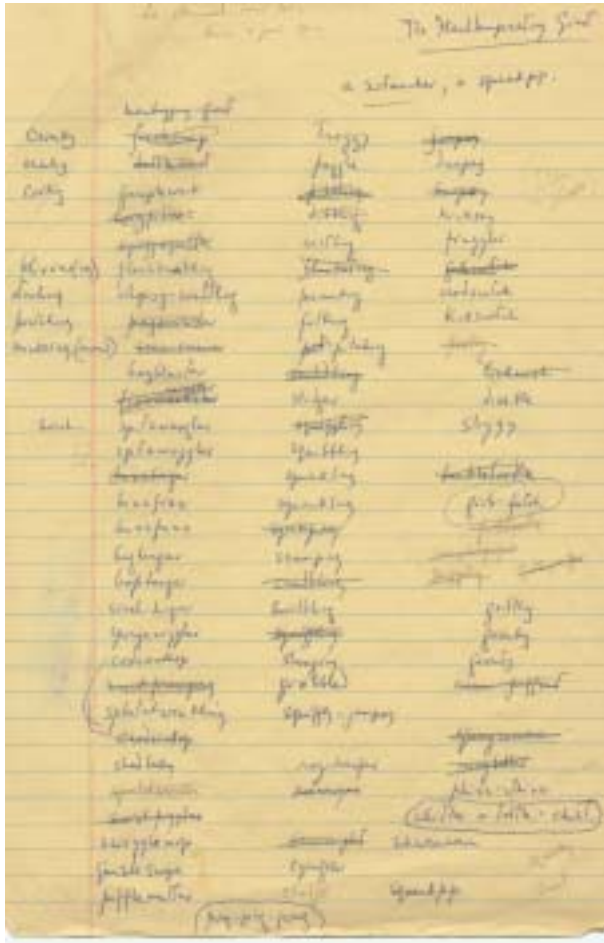
The Centre will inspire a love of stories and stimulate creative writing. It will be an enjoyable place for all ages with an obvious appeal to children and families since Roald Dahl is best known for his children's writing. Visitors will learn about the author's remarkable life, from his birth to Norwegian parents in Wales, through his time as a RAF pilot in the Second World War to the 36 years he lived and wrote in Great Missenden. The village was an important part of his life and already many people visit to see where this great writer is buried.

During his lifetime Roald Dahl kept drafts of practically everything he wrote and these, together with family photographs, school reports, letters and other items, make up the Roald Dahl Archive. The 700 bundles of private material were given by the Dahl family to a registered charity set up specifically to care for and interpret the collection. The Dahl family and particularly his widow, Felicity, have been involved with this project from the start. For them it is a way of fulfilling the legacy left by Roald Dahl, since the Centre's aims, of encouraging children to read and write creatively, are ones Roald Dahl cared passionately about.

The archive is well on its way to being catalogued and digitised. The archive will become part of the interpretation and visitors will be able to explore a digital version on computers in the galleries. A changing selection of original material will be on show, for example Roald Dahl's school reports, his 'ideas book' and a variety of the first manuscripts of his stories. A digital version of the archive will be available via the Internet. The paper archive will be kept in a purpose built store and researchers will be able to consult original material on site.

The Roald Dahl Centre is already developing an education programme with a strong commitment to lifelong learning. Once the Centre opens schools sessions support the reader development creative writing. Contemporary writing will be nurtured through a writer in residence scheme. There will be courses and workshops for a wide range of the community.

It will cost £3.7 million to renovate the buildings and open the centre to the public. £3 million has already been secured, including a major donation of the Dahl family and substantial amounts from the publishing community. Additional funds are still needed. The Roald Dahl Centre will open in late 2004. Contact Sue Davies, Manager/Curator on 01494 890973 or by email sue@roalddahl.com.



Roald Dahl's vocabulary list for the Big Friendly Giant (courtesy of the Roald Dahl Centre)

Business Archive finds a way to share its past - Unilever and The United Africa Company Project

The United Africa Company, (UAC) a subsidiary of Unilever, was a merchant trading company operating originally in West Africa. European merchants had been trading on the West African coast since the late eighteenth century, and over time many of the smaller companies merged to form larger ones until two of the largest companies, the

Niger Company and the African and Eastern Trade Corporation, merged to produce the United Africa Company in 1929. At the same time the newly formed Unilever (the owner of the Niger Company, which Lord Leverhulme had acquired in 1920) quickly established complete control of the new company.

After the Second World War the West African colonies achieved independence and sought to develop their own industries. In response the UAC transformed itself into a supplier of an extremely diverse range of sophisticated consumer goods, such as cars, fridges, clothes and cosmetics, shifting from retail to wholesale and to local manufacture rather than import, widening its sphere of activity across East and North Africa and the Middle East in the process.

The records of the UAC form an invaluable resource for the study of the British Empire, the West African countries, and the economic and social history of the region. There is, therefore, a great deal of interest in this collection but it has not been possible for Unilever Corporate Archives to treat the records of a defunct subsidiary such as UAC as a core business collection.

Following a pilot study under the direction of Dr Rory Miller of the University of Liverpool, funding for a five-year project to catalogue and conserve the UAC material has now been provided by the Leverhulme Trust, with matching funding provided by Unilever. An archivist was appointed in August 2002 and the outcome of the project will be a comprehensive on-line catalogue that will enable greater access to this valuable collection. Contact: Jeanette Strickland, Corporate Archivist, Unilever plc on 020 7822 6642 or by email jeanette.strickland@unilever.com



Hawe Street, Freetown, Sierra Leone in 1905, taken as one of the UAC companies, Pickering and Berthoud appears on the left. Courtesy of Unilever, plc



Inside a branch of Kingsway Stores (a UAC business) in Kano, Nigeria, undated, but c1961. Courtesy of Unilever, plc

When the Archivist went to the Children's Ward School: an experiment in outreach and learning

Children enduring long spells in the Royal Free Hospital have been using their time productively by learning history through the hospital archives, which form part of the NHS Trust. The Children's Ward School joined

forces with the Hospital Archivist to design history lessons around the hospital's collection of documents, photographs, registers and uniforms. Having the chance to explore primary sources brought history to life for the children and helped them regain the confidence they had lost by missing out on mainstream education.

Fresh take on the past

Most of the children attending the school were suffering chronic conditions that led to regular stays in hospital. Some felt disaffected with mainstream education and even fearful of it, a culminating effect of long-term sickness and repeated absences from school; the RFH Children's Ward School had become the only place they felt able to thrive educationally.

From the school's perspective, the project addressed the needs of pupils who were unable to follow a rigid curriculum by introducing innovative ways of learning, such as gathering evidence from original documents. From the Archives Centre's point of view, it played a key role in broadening access to its resources, and promoting them to groups who were under-represented in its reader figures.

Historians turn detective

The project had to start by addressing the limitations of the children whose disrupted education meant some had special needs. The lessons included a small amount of formal teaching interspersed with 'detective tasks', opportunities for the children to gain hands-on experience of working with documents and artefacts. Though the activities had been carefully planned, they were designed to give the children the impression that they had made a historical discovery.

Benefits abound

The project was judged to have achieved a great deal for the individuals involved: not only did it meet a need for interesting and interactive ways of learning, it helped them acquire transferable skills they could go on to use in their mainstream schools.

For its part, the Archives Centre has established itself as a proactive force as a

result of this and other outreach activities, including a history-of-medicine module for medical students. *Contact: Nicky Sugar, now College Archivist, Royal Holloway University of London on 01784 443814 or by email nsugar@rhul.ac.uk*

Connected Earth : A Partnership Approach from Business

Over many years, BT and its predecessors, amassed a huge collection of telecommunications artefacts. Some of these were on show at the BT Museum at Blackfriars. However, the museum did not prove to be the answer to sharing the collection with as wide an audience as possible and it closed in 1997. The answer to finding a responsible and sustainable solution to secure the future of the collection and providing the widest possible access was **Connected Earth** – a £6 million investment in BT’s heritage, launched in 2002. In just one year, BT has, under Connected Earth, created a network of eight partner museums, invested in four new galleries with four more in the pipeline, launched an award-winning museum on the internet, and distributed 40,000 artefacts.

In place of a physical building, which at its busiest attracted only 26,000 visitors a year, BT has set up an award winning virtual museum on the internet, accessible to anyone at any time across the globe (<http://www.connected-earth.com>). It contains literally thousands of images with accompanying information, arranged in themes or “journeys” which together tell the story of telecommunications. This is a truly multi-media experience with film clips, oral history interviews, games and educational projects linked to UK curricula.

Ongoing responsibility for BT’s heritage activity and contribution to Connected Earth has been passed to BT Group Archives. The archive itself will continue to be managed from within BT as a major component of the company’s Corporate Memory, and has already begun the major task of integrating the former BT Museum’s documentary collections.

Connected Earth has been, and continues to be, a unique collaboration between the corporate, public and independent heritage sectors. The Connected Earth concept stands as a model for the responsible management and future preservation of a corporate heritage collections within a secure, sustainable framework. *Contact: David Hay, Head of Group Archives, BT on 020 7242 1967.*



Julie Ailish is the Logistics Manager for Connected Earth in charge of the collection, organisation and re-distribution of 40,000 objects - some very big! Courtesy of BT

An image from the BT Connected Earth Website at www.connected-earth.com. Courtesy of BT



From the Horse's Mouth - Working in a Private Archive

We asked an unsuspecting individual working with archives outside the public sector to give us their personal views of their life at work.



Gavin McGuffie, Archivist, Guardian Newsroom

Photo by Jonathan Goldberg, copyright Resource

Why did you choose to become an archivist? The start to that journey is actually a footpath or rather a county network of footpaths. In the summer holidays at the end of an unspectacular first year at university I got a job at West Sussex County Council in the 'Rights of Way' department. Each footpath or bridleway in the county had a file to which material had been added over the years, much material going back to the 1950s. My job was to go through the files weeding non-essential material into a nearby bin-liner. It's probably during that time that I first began to think about how records were accumulated and the different values associated with different types of record. As my university career continued I became more interested in the references I found in foot or endnotes in the texts I was reading. This made me aware of the sources academics used when writing books. These thoughts combined to make me look into the possibilities of work in archives.

If you had not become an archivist what do you think you would have done instead? I got my first archive-related job in Autumn 1994 - quite a while after graduating in 1991. Over the intervening years I had spent some time unemployed. I had then gone to teach English as a foreign language in a smallish town in Greek Macedonia. It was during that period that I made my first attempts to get into archives - applying for

jobs and courses but not really getting anywhere so I returned to England in summer 1994. If I hadn't become an archivist I'm not quite sure what I'd have ended up doing. Perhaps I'd have gone back to teaching....really not sure. I think the CASCADE machine I consulted in my 3rd year at Nottingham University suggested archives, curatorship, or landscape gardening, so I might have pursued one of the others, perhaps not with any great success.

What attracted you to your current job?

I've been a Guardian reader from my early teens and have always identified with it most out of the daily papers; whether for its politics or its film reviews, it's been a familiar part of my life for a long while. The job advert came along at a good time. I was happy half way through a 2-year contract at the School of African and Oriental Studies but obviously was aware that the contract would come to an end and that I'd have to start looking for another job again (this was my third post-qualification fixed-term contract) - but I wasn't really looking at the time. The advert was suitably vague - but mentioned modern papers and photographs, both areas I had experience of. So it was really just a case of nothing ventured.... What attracted me? The fact that it was the Guardian, the fact that it was a step up, the fact that it was a new venture in which I could be involved in shaping policy from the start.

Any gems in your collection? A difficult one - particularly as we've got a fast growing collection and very little is catalogued (as yet). One definite favourite is an album of photos mainly taken by the Guardian's first staff photographer Walter Doughty for the Guardian's centenary in 1921. This contains practically every member of staff from CP Scott (the editor) and the directors to the cleaners and porters. I particularly like the things you notice on second and third inspections - the fact that many of the printers and other staff are carrying WWI injuries, the fact that some of the post-room staff must have left school before 16. As for a non-photographic set of papers I'd have to go for Observer literary editor Terry Kilmartin's files. These contain correspondence from many of the eminent post-war literary figures. One letter I came across recently is from

Christopher Isherwood on the paper of the Chelsea Hotel in New York. He mentions travelling over the Atlantic by liner and staying at the hotel with Dylan Thomas. Within weeks Thomas would be found dead in his hotel room.

What's the most bizarre request you have had? Not really archive enquires as such – we tend to get a lot of enquiries from members of the public for newspaper articles. Amongst the most amusing have been a woman looking for an obituary of the American PR man Jim Moran who undertook outrageous publicity stunts like literally changing horses in mid-stream; acting out proverbs to advertise products. The enquirer suggested I search our database for 'needle in a haystack'. Another amusing one is from a woman after the make of a particularly nice set of 'orange lace knickers' she'd seen in a fashion spread. They were apparently a central part of an imminent 'hot date'. Needless to say despite my enquiry for an update on their success or otherwise of said date I received no reply. For proper archive enquiries it's still pretty early days.

What do you enjoy about your job? The variety of types and subject of material housed in the Newsroom. The fact that we have letters, photos (negatives, contact sheets, prints, albums), cartoons, other illustrations, and as for themes - literary, political, humour - reflects the wide variety of material in a newspaper. I also enjoy the variety in my job - being able to take decisions about the infrastructure as well as cataloguing archives (practically all I've previously done in jobs). This job also enables me to do more 'outreach' work than I've ever done – working on exhibitions, speaking to visiting groups, etc.

What is the biggest challenge in your job? Managing expectations. Both within the organisation - many people are not aware of what archive work involves - expecting miracles overnight. And without – dealing with the backlog of material that has accumulated over the years when the Guardian or Observer didn't have archivists.

How do you think the archive is viewed by your organisation? I think we (particularly the whole building called the 'archive and visitor centre' as opposed to the archive itself) have a reasonably high profile. Most people are interested in the public face - the exhibitions and other events that occur here.

But I think the archive is also deeply misunderstood. Many think we look after access to old copies of the newspapers themselves, despite the fact that there is an internal research and information department who do this. Even those who understand that we do more than this don't really appreciate the issues involved in managing records - they dump unsorted material on us, think anything old is an archive, etc. It will take a long time to educate the organisation and I am realistic about the obstacles in the way. At the moment the focus is on cataloguing the archive material we have accumulated in the last couple of years rather than pro-active records management - THIS WILL HAPPEN but at the moment that's still on a 'helping if asked' basis.

What do you think archives can offer to 21st century Britain? Obvious, but archives offer a key link with the past and in a far more direct way than a history book - reading contemporary accounts of events in the actual hand of the person with their annotations, crossings out, etc. puts organisations of all kinds into a proper historical context. The company might have been re-branded and appear the most up-to-the-minute thing in its advertising but did you know it started out of a room above a bakery by Manchester Piccadilly Station..? (just a hypothetical example, not the Guardian – that started on Market Street)

Who would you choose to star in a multi-million pound advertising campaign for archives and why? In the fine tradition of 70s series 'Hart to Hart' where a pair of millionaires spent their abundant free time investigating and solving crimes, I'd get husband and wife team Catherine Zeta-Jones and Michael Douglas to investigate their varied family trees. Catherine searching through parish registers in South Wales repositories, Michael's Odyssey taking him first to upstate New York where father Kirk

was born and then back to Russia, which the Danielovitch family left in search of the American Dream.

After their recent Hello! court case they should also be familiar with British legislation concerning Data Protection. This should make them particularly aware of the dilemmas facing archivists in making information available in a professional and sensitive way and why some material is sometimes kept closed. *Contact Gavin McGuffie on 020 7886 6804 or by email gavin.mcguffie@guardian.co.uk*

