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# Queens Hotel, Leeds 28-30 August 2019



Archives & Records  
Association  
UK & Ireland

**CONFERENCE**

**2019**



## Welcome to ARC Magazine January 2019

Having entered the record-keeping profession through a museum route, I found editing this issue of ARC particularly enjoyable - even if it was interrupted by my google search for the museum of dog collars (see Antony Loveland's welcome to the issue on page 8).

When reading ARC there is always plenty to learn, not just about issues dominating the profession, or about current projects, but about the diverse and wonderful world in which we work. This issue highlights the work in various museums and, as Charlotte Berry points out, working with museum objects alongside more traditional records, is common practice.

Thank you to Antony Loveland for gathering content for the issue and everyone who submitted an article.

At ARC, we are always looking for articles that start a debate on the latest 'hot topics' in the professional or engage all our readers with a particular issue you are currently faced with. I would encourage anyone who is interested in submitting a piece for general consideration, to email [arceditors@archives.org.uk](mailto:arceditors@archives.org.uk)



**Ceri Sugg**  
ARC Editor

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Front cover: The Wallace Archive Collection. Library and archive items on display in the Sir Richard Wallace: the Collector exhibition (© the Wallace Collection)

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# opening lines

## Making the workforce more representative – can we learn from museums?



In 2014-2015, the ARA worked with the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) on a

Workforce Mapping Project on the wider archives, records, libraries and information sector. We contracted Edinburgh Napier University to do the research. Among other things, the study identified:

- A significant gender pay gap in our wider sector;
- Women dominating the workforce, but under-represented in senior management;
- Low ethnic diversity:
  - 97.7% of those working in 'archives' (and taking part in the survey) reported being white;
  - 97.8% of those working in 'records' reported being white.

Other surveys tell us that 97% of archive volunteers and 97% of visitors to archives are white. So, the figures are pretty consistent. In addition, independent (and, in the view of many, outstanding) research by Kirsty Fife and Hannah Henthorn - on workers who identify as marginalised in the archives sector - identified several key findings, including workers having experiences of isolation/otherness and feeling unsafe in their workplaces.

For my part, I'm keen to understand and learn what the museum and other sectors have done to try and make their workforces representative. In the last few decades, the museums sector has delivered various projects to try to address similar challenges and, eg, make their workforce more

representative of wider society. According to a 2010 Museums Association report, "...between 1993 to 2008, the proportion of minority-ethnic people working in UK museums has almost trebled, from 2.5% to 7%." However, museums colleagues acknowledge that progress has been slow and they still have a long, long way to go. For example, Museum Detox, a brilliant and dynamic network of black, Asian and minority ethnic museum workers, is working for radical change in museums.

The record keeping sector has been even slower to respond. Delegates at the ARA Conference in Glasgow last year also told us in no uncertain terms that they expect us to take action. The ARA Board very much agrees and has recently commissioned a consultant, Tola Dabiri, to undertake a project/literature review on potential ways of making the record keeping workforce more representative. Some of the questions include: what projects or initiatives have been delivered in other sectors? How successful were they? Why were they successful (and/or why not)?

We should have the results of this work in January 2019 and we hope it will help inform future ARA projects and initiatives. We are not sitting still in the meantime. In parallel, we are:

- Looking to develop some 'unconscious bias' training for ARA members.
- Introducing an equality impact assessment tool, which will be applied to all ARA projects on the business plan.
- Keen to become better at listening. John Chambers recently attended a meeting of Archives Download, a group of Black and Asian archive workers formed by Maureen Roberts from the London Metropolitan Archives, and a panellist at our Glasgow Conference.

- Anticipating working with The UK National Archives on the 'trailblazer group' that is looking at a post-graduate level 7 apprenticeship standard for record keepers.
- Supporting The UK National Archives' Archives Workforce Development Strategy – particularly objective 4, which focuses on creating a 'diverse and socially mobile workforce'.

I attended a roundtable event in Manchester last month on the Workforce Development Delivery Programme. Subjects included the apprenticeships, digital skills, the teaching of black history in schools, volunteers, what we can learn from other sectors and positive action. There was also a good discussion about how the programme and process can be made more participatory. For example, how do we move away from tokenism to meaningful and genuine participation?

It feels a bit top-down at the moment (and this article is also guilty on the same charge!). The archives sector (including the ARA) are, as yet, nowhere near making this truly participatory – as it must be if it hopes to deliver. But we are determined to maintain momentum out of the Glasgow Conference (#ARA2018) on all these matters. Any members with ideas on this or keen to get involved, please contact me or the CEO John Chambers directly.

Finally, if you missed the Glasgow conference then please check out Michelle Caswell's 'Identifying & Dismantling White Supremacy in Archives'. Here's a link: [http://gracenbrilmyer.com/dismantling\\_whiteSupremacy\\_archives3.pdf](http://gracenbrilmyer.com/dismantling_whiteSupremacy_archives3.pdf)

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### Kevin Bolton

ARA Board member and portfolio holder for diversity

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# Professional development news



January is a month that invokes fresh starts and resolutions. For many of us, that can also mean thinking about kick-starting our careers (or even changing jobs). According to the Guardian newspaper website, the first working Monday in January is the most popular day for UK workers to make a job application. I wouldn't be surprised if the same were true in Ireland, too.

Recruitment agencies are also particularly vocal at this time of the year, bombarding our inboxes, because their business relies on the movement of employees, and employers often start the process of filling vacancies towards the end of a calendar year. In practice, though, the desire to find a new job, or take on new responsibilities can happen at any time of the year.

However, not everyone's career moves forward; some careers get stuck, others move sideways or backwards. This can add to the sense of frustration some experience at times during their working lives. Whatever your career situation, the ARA is here to help you. Last year we launched our professional development competency framework, a list of 39 key competencies for anyone working or volunteering in archives, archive conservation and records management. But it is much more than just a framework: think of it as a set of national standards that apply to the practice of record-keeping in England, Ireland (north and south), Scotland and Wales.

The framework is also a powerful career development tool. It focuses on three core areas:

- **your role in the workplace;**
- **the activities that your role involves; and**
- **how you interact with others.**

Each of the 39 competencies is underpinned by five levels of expertise, from 'novice' through to 'expert' (levels 1-5). These levels describe very briefly the capability that you should be able to demonstrate at each level. Those relatively new to the profession are more likely to demonstrate experience at levels 1 and 2. Those with greater expertise – they might be in a senior management position or established professional niche – are more likely to demonstrate levels 3, 4 or 5.

Not only does the framework provide an excellent way to benchmark your own expertise, it also shows you what you may need to gain in order to progress your level of competency. For example, you spend a significant amount of your time each week at work. Why not set aside an hour and benchmark yourself against the competency framework? When doing this, think about your strengths, and competencies you'd like to improve. How you develop and record this expertise is up to you. Some employers may be able to offer opportunities; but if this is not an option available to you, then consider what opportunities that specific contracts or volunteering may be able to offer you. This is a very real and practical way for you to develop your competencies and – by extension - career in a way that best suits your own ambitions and circumstances.

## CPD Review

We have now launched the CPD Review, a process through which all Foundation and Registered members and Fellows will demonstrate their continuing professional development every five years. The programme website <https://archivesandrecords.smapply.io> provides the guidance you need to understand what is involved. Depending on when you achieved your particular ARA professional qualification, we will be contacting you individually over the coming months and beyond, inviting you to take part. You can also volunteer or come forward now to take part in a CPD Review: completion of at least one CPD Review is a criterion for qualifying as a Fellow of the ARA.

## Registered membership

**Congratulations to Zoe Fullard, archives cataloguer at Transport for London, winner of the 2018 New Professionals award.**

In a highly-competitive field, Zoe won her award for showing leadership and initiative in her digital records and preservation work at the Transport for London corporate archive, as well as taking on a voluntary role with ARA, devising and driving the ARA Conference social media activity. In the words of the Section for New Professionals:

*'Zoe's work has clear impact far beyond her own organisation and she has shown dedication to professional development both in her own career and in her support of other new professionals.'*

Zoe is also enrolled onto the ARA professional development programme, and is working towards Registered membership. In this article we find out how she is progressing.

## What attracted you to Registered membership?

*'New legislation, revision of standards, and technological advancements are changing the way records are created, stored, preserved and accessed – all of which impact the way we do our job,' explained Zoe. 'Developing my Registered membership CPD portfolio ensures that my industry knowledge and professional skills remain up to date. The programme will also enable me to critically reflect on traditional archive theory and practice and how these apply to digital environments. I want to continue to provide a relevant and meaningful service to users and share current knowledge and critical thought processes with colleagues and aspiring record-keepers.'*



Zoë Fullard, Transport for London.

**We advise candidates to undertake a self-assessment of their expertise using the competency framework. How useful did you find the self-assessment process in terms of identifying your established strengths and areas for improvement?**

*'Mapping myself against the framework helped me identify which eight competencies to develop and how to achieve the*

*desired level for Registered membership. In some cases, I realised that I already had the experience/expertise necessary to qualify as a Registered member, which made me feel like I had a solid starting point. As I continued going through the competencies and experience levels in closer detail, I brainstormed how I was achieving some of them through current responsibilities. That way I could begin to determine what evidence I could submit to demonstrate how my experience meets the criteria. The self-assessment process was also useful as it brought to my attention certain competencies that I would like more experience in. This made me more pro-active and aware of opportunities within my current job role and beyond.'*

*'Meetings with my mentor have been a beneficial part of the process,' added Zoe. 'These meetings provide a space to discuss progress and reflect on what I have learned. My mentor offers guidance, encouragement, expertise and different perspectives on topics we discuss. This makes me feel that I am on the right track towards the next step of my career and builds my confidence as a new professional. Mentor meetings also help drive me to make progress with my portfolio so that I can feed something new back each time.'*

### **What advice would you offer to those thinking of enrolling on the programme?**

'When I began the self-assessment process, I had initially picked eight competencies to develop, but these have changed over time. Learning is a dynamic process, and opportunities may arise that could develop your skill-set which you may not have considered at first. So be flexible and open to all development opportunities – be pro-active seeking them out, whether that's within your organisation or external to it.'

For further information on the ARA's professional development programme, please visit the programme website at <https://archivesandrecords.smapply.io/>

**Chris Sheridan**

ARA CPD Manager

## **ARA Conference #ARA2019 Leeds – 28-30 August - quick update**

The call for papers for #ARA2019 has now closed. Thanks to everyone who submitted a proposal. We will be assessing them in the next couple of weeks and will let you know if you have been successful around the week of 11 February. We will announce the programme, early-bird rates and much more around the week of 18 February.

A quick reminder of what's in store at #ARA2019. We will be at the Queens Hotel – a 1930s art deco railway hotel in the heart of the city. As with Glasgow, it's a short walk across the platform from trains arriving at Leeds station and there are buses from Leeds-Bradford airport for anyone coming by plane.

### **RECORDKEEPER 3.0**

Here are the basics on the programme. There will be strands encompassing archives and records, conservation, digital preservation and records management. And as we did in Glasgow, within the overall 'Recordkeeper 3.0' theme, we have developed a specific topic for each day, with each of these allowing the opportunity to discuss plenty of issues.

### **Our Careers**

What pathways are available for those who want to become recordkeepers and conservators and what impact does this have on diversity? Training and

apprenticeships. What skills do we need now and in the future? How will technology like artificial intelligence change the way that we do our jobs? And not just traditional skills: what about coding, legal, advocacy, entrepreneurial etc.?

### **Our Profession**

Our profession – what is the role of professional bodies? What does ARA do? How do we 'sell' our profession? Are there risks to de-professionalisation? Where do we need to support: emotional support? the ethical code under which we operate?

### **Our Workplace**

What is our role as individuals within organisations or as self-employed? How do we make the case for recordkeeping and conservation? How are we affected by budget and resource constraints. What about pay? The impact of short-term contracts, etc.

Please contact [conference@archives.org.uk](mailto:conference@archives.org.uk) if you require any special assistance at #ARA2019 or have any question about Conference or suggestions, such as recommendations for keynote speakers.

### **Mike Anson**

ARA Conference committee chair



# Collecting matters

Armed forces museums and archives

As we mark the centenary of the First World War armistice, which marked the end of a conflict that had such impact on Britain and Ireland, it seems appropriate to reflect on the work of armed forces museums.

These past few years, there has been a surge of interest in all things military. Within armed forces museums, a researcher can find a diverse range of records pertaining to individual personnel, routine service life and their participation in key historical events. For anyone interested in genealogy, military history, or the influence of the armed forces on social and cultural life at home or abroad, these records form a significant component of our national collection alongside documentation at national institutions.

Armed forces museums have diligently supported those wishing to research and learn more about the First World War and those who served. A number of projects to better preserve, identify and catalogue records, making them more accessible to the public, have been undertaken. Given the limited resources on the 'Home Front', support has been sought from various funding bodies.

The Army Museum Ogilby Trust (AMOT) successfully bid for LIBOR funding to undertake a major three-year digitisation project of around 100 significant British regiments and corps collections. Though focused on the First World War, any collections dating 1900-1929 are eligible, allowing for greater insight into life before and after this conflict.

Participating museums have been able to choose their significant collection, with allotted funds to prepare them. When completed, researchers will have access to an array of documentation for this period, reflecting the unique contribution made by individual regiments and corps. A valuable asset for the twin aims of commemoration: to remember and never to repeat.

For further details on the work of AMOT, please visit [www.armymuseums.org.uk](http://www.armymuseums.org.uk)

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**Nicholas Coney**

The National Archives (UK)

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

## Finding out more about museums and objects

### Training ideas and a possible new group?

Do you work with object collections? Or would you like to know more about them? Do you want to learn about managing objects? Or to find out more about how to plan and run exhibitions?

The spring 2018 edition of the ARA's journal, Archives and Records, which focused on archives and museums, generated an unprecedented response from proposed authors and was well over-subscribed.

Understanding museum collections is a very popular area of interest for many in the profession with responsibility for object collections, or managing curatorial staff. As many archive collections contain objects of some shape or form, learning more about what to do with artefacts is no bad thing for all of us.

### Future training

The ARA's Section for Specialist Repositories is considering whether to run a training session on museum collections in 2019. This workshop could include areas such as:

- Museum standards
- Object labelling and marking
- Cataloguing
- Collections care and sources of guidance for specific object types
- Planning exhibitions
- Ethics and disposal

If you have suggestions for areas you would particularly like to see covered, or would be interested in attending such a course, please let us know.

### A new group?

Another idea for the future is to set up an ARA Section for those working with object collections. This would share ideas and expertise amongst ourselves, and would provide a talking shop for practitioners of all kinds with varying levels of experience and know-how.

Perhaps you'd like to get involved with setting up this group, or would prefer to attend meetings once these are planned?

Please contact [charlotte.berry@magd.ox.ac.uk](mailto:charlotte.berry@magd.ox.ac.uk) to express interest in:

- a) Attending museum training for record-keepers and/or
- b) Setting up or attending a section for records and museums.

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### Charlotte Berry

Magdalen College Oxford

### Daniel Scott-Davies

Chair, Section for Specialist Repositories

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# Welcome to the Museum Archives special issue of ARC magazine

As Chair of the Museum Librarians and Archivists Group - MLAG (<https://mlagblog.org/>) let me welcome you to this special issue of *ARC magazine*. As a librarian, I was somewhat surprised when approached to help with putting together this issue. Nevertheless, it has been a real privilege, and I have been impressed by the readiness of colleagues to contribute content.

According to the Museums Association (MA), there are approximately 2,500 museums in the United Kingdom alone. Over 1,800 of them are accredited by the MA and have designated museum status. It is a surprisingly diverse sector - they can range from large national institutions, through to industrial monuments and areas of natural beauty. They can also deal with some rather idiosyncratic subjects. Interested in dog collars? There's a museum for that.

## So, what is the Museum Librarians and Archivists Group?

Well, many museums possess archival or library collections and, in some cases, both. MLAG brings together professionals from across the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland who find themselves working in such environments. We meet four times per year (three times per year in London and once elsewhere) to discuss issues of common interest, host invited speakers, and arrange events. We also have a consortium agreement with JISC (the former Joint Information Systems Committee), which means that, provided members meet the eligibility criteria, they can take advantage of discounted access to a portfolio of

electronic resources, such as JSTOR (short for Journal Storage).

For more information on joining, please contact the Secretary, Mark Glancy ([M.Glancy@nms.ac.uk](mailto:M.Glancy@nms.ac.uk)).

Plug over, and now back to the special issue!

The articles in this issue shine a light on a cross-section of museums, from the internationally recognisable (Imperial War Museum and the Tate) to the possibly less well known (the Museum of the Royal Navy).

I think there are two themes that emerge strongly from the contributions. Firstly, museums, as we know, are collections of objects but, the concept of what constitutes an 'archive' and an 'object' is challenged in the museum sector like no other. I can attest to this from my relatively limited exposure to such conversations at the British Museum. It also means that museum archivists, for example, can find themselves responsible for some truly weird and wonderful things.

Secondly, the passion, commitment and creativity of the authors really shines through. All of them are working under resource constraints of one kind or another, and many of them are dealing with enormous backlogs. Yet they persist, they continue to unearth gems of all kinds and, crucially in my view, continue to add value to their organisation because surely, understanding your collection is key to understanding your organisation and helping others to understand it as well.

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**Antony Loveland**

The British Library

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# Working with object collections

From fossils to costumes – Charlotte Berry presents a beginner's guide to working with museum collections.

Many archive collections will contain objects of different types, so it is quite common for information professionals to need to know how to tackle a variety of material. If you find yourself managing a large discrete object collection, you may find yourself needing to find out how to get a handle on the vast range of objects and the different preservation needs. This article will cover some of the basic aspects of managing museum collections. It includes lots of the information that I wish I had known when I first worked with object collections as part of a large business archive that included fossils, industrial machinery and costume. Given my personal experience, I focus mostly on the situation in England.

## An introduction to the museum sector

The museum sector is much bigger than the record-keeping sector, and in many ways is very different. Object collections can be in private hands, managed through small specialist trusts, or in town and village museums. Many museum types will rely on volunteers and may not employ professional staff of any kind. As a result, some may also struggle to provide research access to objects held in storage.



In contrast, the larger national or regional museums will house enormous collections and often employ numerous specialists. The county museum is still a familiar institution, but one that has suffered from recent funding cuts, so the professional staff may be very small and full-time specialists may not be available for all types of collections. The best funded parts of the museum sector are the 200+ regional and national museums that receive subsidy through Arts Council England (ACE) and their inclusion in the ACE National Portfolio for 2018-2022. These museums will typically have a larger staff and greater resources, and are a source of best practice and excellence for the sector.

Additional national funding may also be available for museum collections awarded 'Designated' status via ACE. Currently 1,300 museums in England have successfully applied for Accredited Museum status (formerly called Registered Museums). This opens up additional pots of funding via ACE and its National Lottery Project Grants. Un-accredited museums, while equally diverse and significant, are often privately financed, so often have to operate on a smaller-scale.

### Professional development in museums

Museum professionals come from a variety of different backgrounds, some with relevant specialist academic knowledge, for example, fine art or geology curators. Increasingly, employers desire a postgraduate museum qualification. There are numerous course providers out there, with the focus and scope of the individual courses varying, and full or part-time and distance learning options available. For further information, the Museums Association publishes an annual list.

Professionals can also opt to do the AMA (Associateship of the Museums Association), a well-regarded,



Pair of pink damask buskins belonging to Bishop Waynflete, founder of Magdalen College (1398-1486), c.1480 (By kind permission of the President and Fellows of Magdalen College Oxford)



Oddities from the collection! Petrified formal wig of President Routh (1781-1854), fossilised at Matlock, c.1855 (By kind permission of the President and Fellows of Magdalen College Oxford)

“There are many commonalities for the basic principles of managing object and paper collections, but also some key differences.”

professional qualification, and equivalent to the ARA's Registered membership. It is open to all (regardless of academic qualifications), but this option is expensive and therefore often funded through employers.

### Where to find friendly museum professionals

Your local county museum can be the first obvious port of call, and you will find that most museum staff are very willing to assist with queries or requests for help. In addition, most English counties will run an active county museum group, and these can be the best way of finding local curators with relevant skill sets. ACE currently funds nine regional museum development providers: <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/supporting-collections-and-cultural-property/museum-development-programme>. These can vary hugely in their reach and level of activity, but many run a range of (often free) training courses for managing museum collections. Some training may be restricted to museums applying for accreditation, but it is worth investigating what is available within your county or region. Many regions also have a Museums Federation, which you can join. These are similar to the old Regional Archive Councils in their emphasis: <http://www.shcg.org.uk/related-organisations>

The MA is the primary national organisation, and its website provides various listings and advice. Many curators also belong to independent subject specialist networks, relating to their own areas of focus, such as social history, geology, dress and textile, and so on. Some of these networks are free to join and are small in scale; others are much larger and demand an annual subscription, but offer conferences and publications in return. These networks are an excellent way to tap into specialist knowledge, particularly if you need very specific guidance.

### Collections management for objects

The key museum standard is SPECTRUM, which is required for all accredited museums: <https://collectionstrust.org.uk/spectrum/>. This is a very comprehensive standard covering all aspects of collection management and is the best place to start if managing a large object collection from scratch, or comparing how current practice measures

up against best practice (<https://collectionstrust.org.uk/spectrum-resources/>). It is worth noting that the terminology is different for museum cataloguing, so 'object entry', for example, means archival 'accessioning', and that 'accessioning' in museums means specifically securing legal ownership of an item or collection!

There are many commonalities for the basic principles of managing object and paper collections, but also some key differences. Museum collections are usually catalogued as freestanding items (not in a collection or hierarchy), and may be split up and stored by type of object, which may have specific cataloguing standards or requirements.

If you are managing a large specialist object collection and are interested in collections' care, then the National Trust's *Manual of Housekeeping* is the best available published source for essential information on looking after a huge range of collection types. Guides that are more detailed are also available from the Collections Trust: <https://collectionstrust.org.uk/spectrum-resources/conservation-and-collections-care/> (including marking and labelling museum objects; human remains; textile, geology, archaeology and biology collections etc.). For specialist object conservation there is the Conservation register via <http://www.conservationregister.com/> or the ICON (Institute of Conservation) website: <https://icon.org.uk/>

### Disposals

The museum sector approaches disposals and de-accessioning in a very controlled way. It can be very difficult to get rid of an object once it has entered the permanent accessioned collection. Ethics are a huge part of any curator's role and are often debated in the sector. The MA gives detailed guidance in this area: <https://www.museumsassociation.org/collections/disposal>. Accredited museums can usually only dispose of items through advertising in the Museums Association's monthly journal. The MA's comprehensive *Code of Ethics* and the *Disposal Toolkit* give further guidance in this area.

### Exhibitions and loans

If you are planning an exhibition and need some tips on writing captions for museum objects, the Victoria and Albert Museum's 10-Point Guide is a perfect starting place: <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/v/v-and-a-gallery-text-guidelines/>. For loan items, then you'll need to use the UK Registrars' Group Facilities Report, which is the standard documentation used in the museum sector to assess the suitability and security of proposed exhibition spaces: <https://www.ukregistrarsgroup.org/resources/ukrg-docs/>.



“The MA website has a new section on archives in museums”

Loan agreements and loan in/out forms are also commonly used, and sample templates are available via the Collections Trust website. If you need further help in planning loans, then the MA's guidance on Smarter Loans will be very useful: <https://www.museumassociation.org/collections/smarter-loans>

### Where from here?

If you work in other parts of Great Britain, then you may need to look for further advice at Museums Galleries Scotland <https://www.museumsgalleries.scotland.org.uk/> or MALD (Museums, Archives and Libraries Division, Welsh Government) <https://gov.wales/topics/culture-tourism-sport/museums-archives-libraries/?lang=en>. Both bodies are responsible for MA, funding, training and other sector support to varying degrees.

Try to keep an eye on the Museums Association website, which can also be a good way to keep abreast of trends in the museum sector. Like the ARA, the MA offers salary guidelines, a Professional Development Programme, runs campaigns, has recently launched a range of members-only JISCmail listserves and stages a large annual conference. As well as news, policy, ethics and comment on the website, there is even a new section on archives in museums, so do take a look: <https://www.museumassociation.org/museum-practice/archives>

The ARA is considering running museum training for archivists and possibly setting up a new section. Check out the advert on page 7 in this issue and get in touch if you are interested. Otherwise, good luck working within the wonderful world of museum collections!

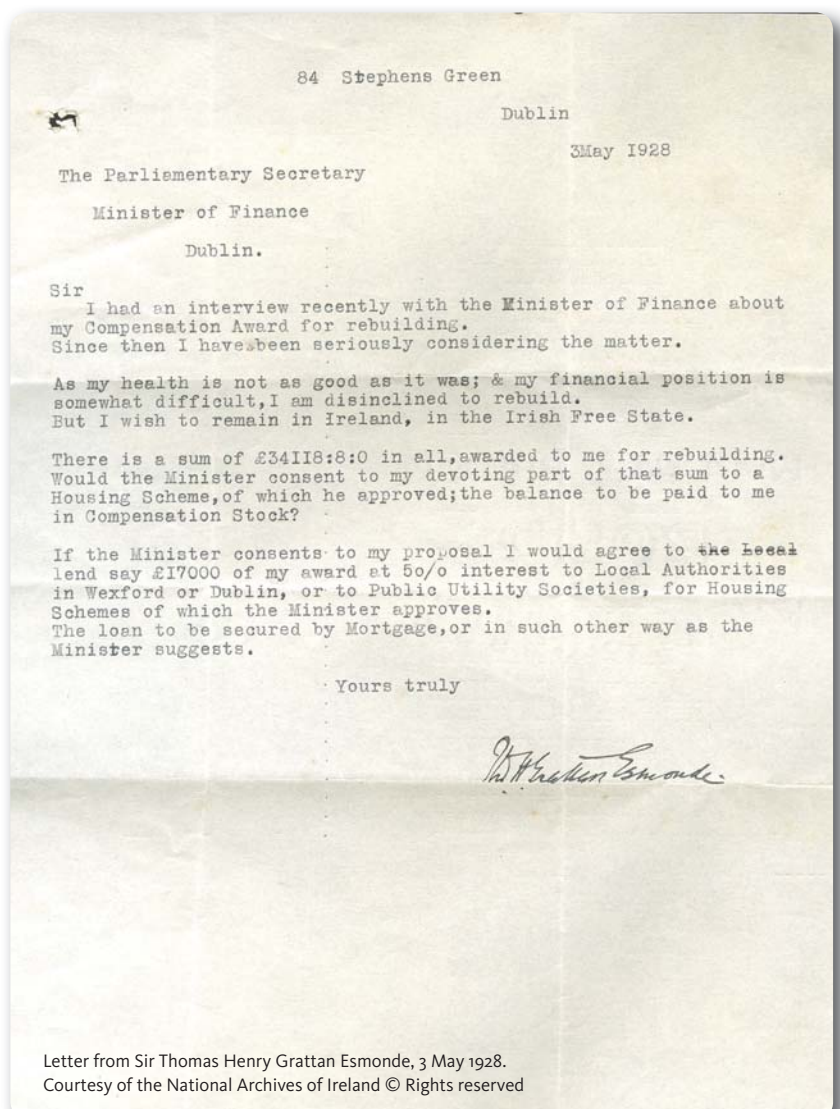
### Charlotte Berry

Magdalen College Oxford

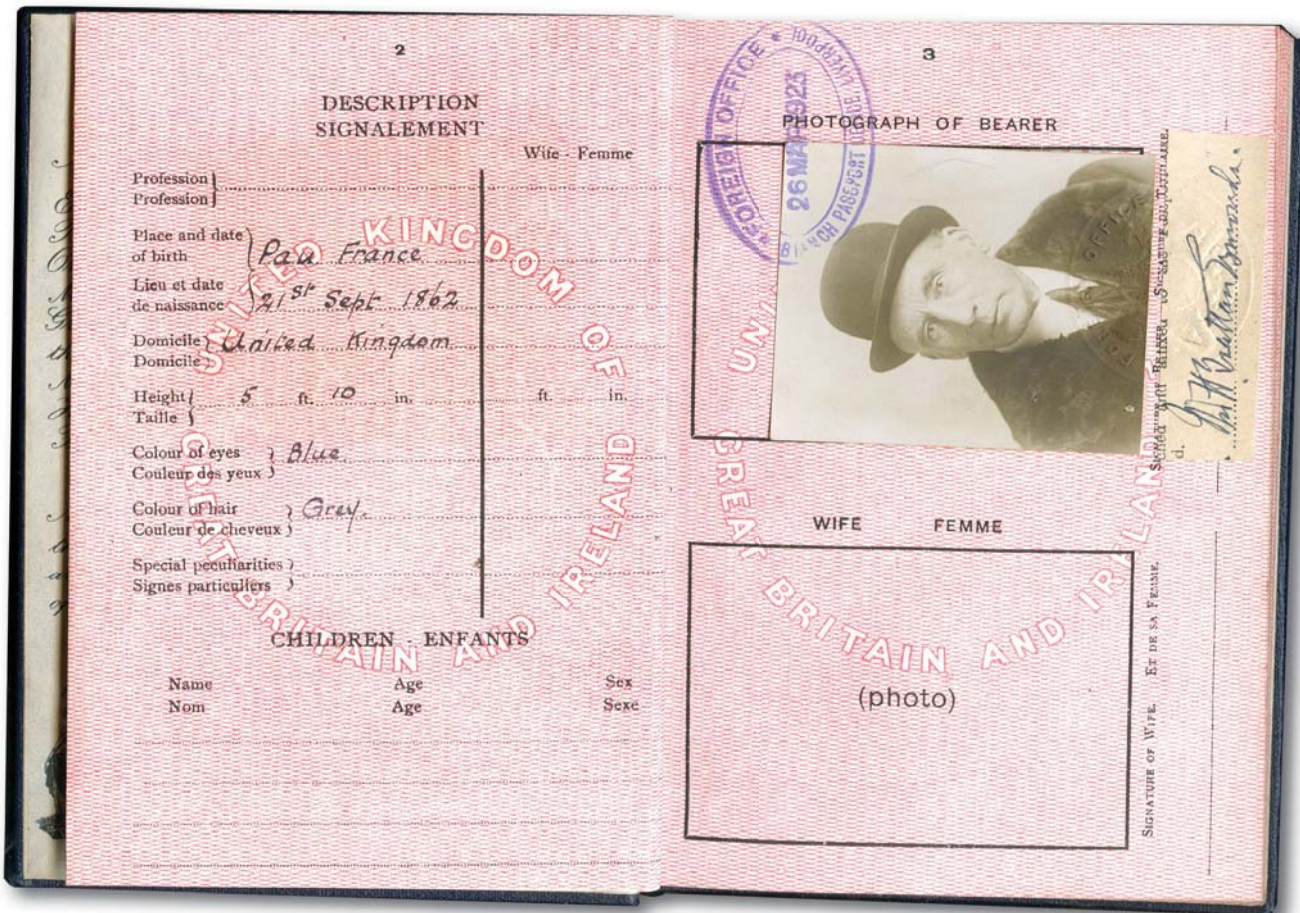
# National Museum of Ireland archives service and collections

Defining a 'paper based object': Emer Ni Cheallaigh talks through the problems faced by the National Museum of Ireland

The National Museum of Ireland (NMI) manages Ireland's national collection of portable heritage objects. The museum, which dates back to 1877, became a fully autonomous non-commercial semi-state body in 2005. NMI falls under the responsibility of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, which has overall policy responsibility for the preservation of the nation's cultural heritage. The National Museum consists of five main public service buildings in Dublin and Mayo,



Letter from Sir Thomas Henry Grattan Esmonde, 3 May 1928.  
Courtesy of the National Archives of Ireland © Rights reserved



The passport of Sir Thomas Henry Grattan Esmonde. Courtesy of the National Archives of Ireland © Rights reserved

and three satellite stores in counties Offaly, Roscommon and Dublin. The contents of the satellite stores are currently being transferred to our Collections Resource Centre in Dublin.

NMI is bound by a legislative framework, which includes the National Monuments, National Cultural Institution and Heritage Fund Acts.

As a semi-state body, NMI is bound by the terms of the National Archives Act to preserve 'departmental files' and to make them available for 'public inspection'. The museum was designated as a place of deposit in 1990, granting NMI the privilege of retaining institutional archives on site, on the condition that NMI abide by the terms of the Act. In 2008, the archives and records service in the museum was formally established.

Museum archive collections can be complex in nature and the archive of the National Museum of Ireland is no different. The multi-disciplinary nature of staff and museum business has generated a variety of archival records that include:

- Museum accession registers
- Original correspondence

- Curatorial research files
- Conservation records
- Exhibition and acquisition files
- Excavation records
- Licences to excavate and to alter and export archaeological objects
- Operations records
- Plans and elevations

These archival sub-fonds meet the criteria of 'departmental file' under the Act and their treatment, is clear. NMI is required to appropriately house and care for this material, catalogue the material in line with ISAD(G) and make it available to the public.

The museum archive also houses a small number of collections, the treatment of which can be considered less prescriptive, in that we are only responsible for this collection if we acquire and accession them. This includes collections such as:

- Private photographic collections
- Private paper collections of individuals or organisations that are connected with NMI.



## “Would a national discussion or a sectoral discussion on the paper object versus archive would be useful?”

Finally there are NMI collections and items known as ‘paper object collections’, a term which was unfamiliar to me until I began working in the museum sector. Paper objects exist in most museum collections. In the NMI, we have yet to define a paper object or to clarify the boundaries between paper object items or collections and private paper collections.

When it comes to the assessment of a paper object, and in the context of formal archival training, any unpublished, paper-based item of enduring value meets the definition of an archive. While they do not define a paper object, the Museum Archive Section of the Society of American Archivists outlines the following categories of material:

- Organisational records
- Collections records
- Acquired materials

One of the most challenging aspects for the museum is the treatment of items/collections from the category of ‘acquired materials’. In practice, the lack of clarity around this material has resulted in a variety of treatments of the collection and items of this nature, such as the private papers collection of Sir Thomas Henry Grattan Esmonde, 11th Baronet (c.1880-1935).

A curatorial colleague located a portion of the Grattan Esmonde family papers in a travel chest and transferred it to the archive. We then accessioned this portion into the collection and catalogued it. The collection itself contains legal documents and correspondence, financial records, unfinished manuscripts, newspaper extracts, passports, personal letters, political documents, unpublished portrait illustrations, photographs, postcards, diaries and notebooks. Some notable items in the collection include two notebooks belonging to John D’Alton, a well-known historian and genealogist in Ireland during the 1800s. The collection consists of six boxes containing 51 items.

The Grattan Esmonde family were major contributors to NMI’s object collection with 321 associated objects accessioned into the permanent collection. This included a

“The archive versus paper object may matter less to our end users”

large collection of silver that according to the register entry was acquired by the Commissioners of Public Works in 1943, following the burning of the Grattan Esmonde family home in 1923 (Ballynastragh House, Co. Wexford) during the Civil War (DM:1948.4.1-83). The Decorative Arts and History Division of NMI, located at Collins Barracks, Dublin manage and care for the Grattan Esmonde object collection. The division also accessioned the acquisition files relating to these objects into the archival sub-fonds. The family papers, on the other hand, form part of the private papers collection. It is also worth noting that a collection of family papers of Sir Thomas Henry Grattan Esmonde was acquired by the National Archives of Ireland, and the National Library of Ireland hold a diary and some correspondence of Sir Thomas Henry Grattan Esmonde.

Perhaps, a national discussion or a sectoral discussion on the paper object versus archive material would be useful and could lead to a more consistent, defined approach to collections of this nature across our cultural institutions? It may also allow for a more objective analysis of what constitutes a paper object, which at times appears to have been determined based on the area of interest of a particular staff member, rather than any clear definitions.

It is also worth considering the trend towards information sharing, open access and online delivery of collections: the archive-versus-paper-object may matter less to our end users. Platforms such as the Irish Archives Resource (IAR) and the Archives Hub web portal provide context to and links between collections. Should efforts be directed towards initiatives such as this, where both the National Archives of Ireland and NMI have published catalogue records for the Grattan Esmonde archives, thus uniting part of the collection in some way?

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**Emer Ni Cheallaigh**

National Museum of Ireland

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<sup>1</sup> Whyte, Deborah (ed), *Museum Archives: An Introduction* (Chicago, 2004), 236-237.

<sup>2</sup> Dooley, Terence A.M., "The Burning of Ballynastragh" in Murphy, Hilary (ed.), *Journal of the Wexford Historical Society Volume XIX*(Wexford: Wexford Historical Society, 2002-3)

<sup>3</sup> Esmonde Family Papers, the National Archives of Ireland, Ref: o625/981

<sup>4</sup> National Library of Ireland, MS 3908

# The National Museum of the Royal Navy

The National Museum of the Royal Navy (NMRN) was created from several constituent museums in 2009:

- The Royal Naval Museum
- The Royal Marines Museum
- The Royal Navy Submarine Museum
- The Fleet Air Museum in Yeovilton
- Explosion Museum of Naval Firepower

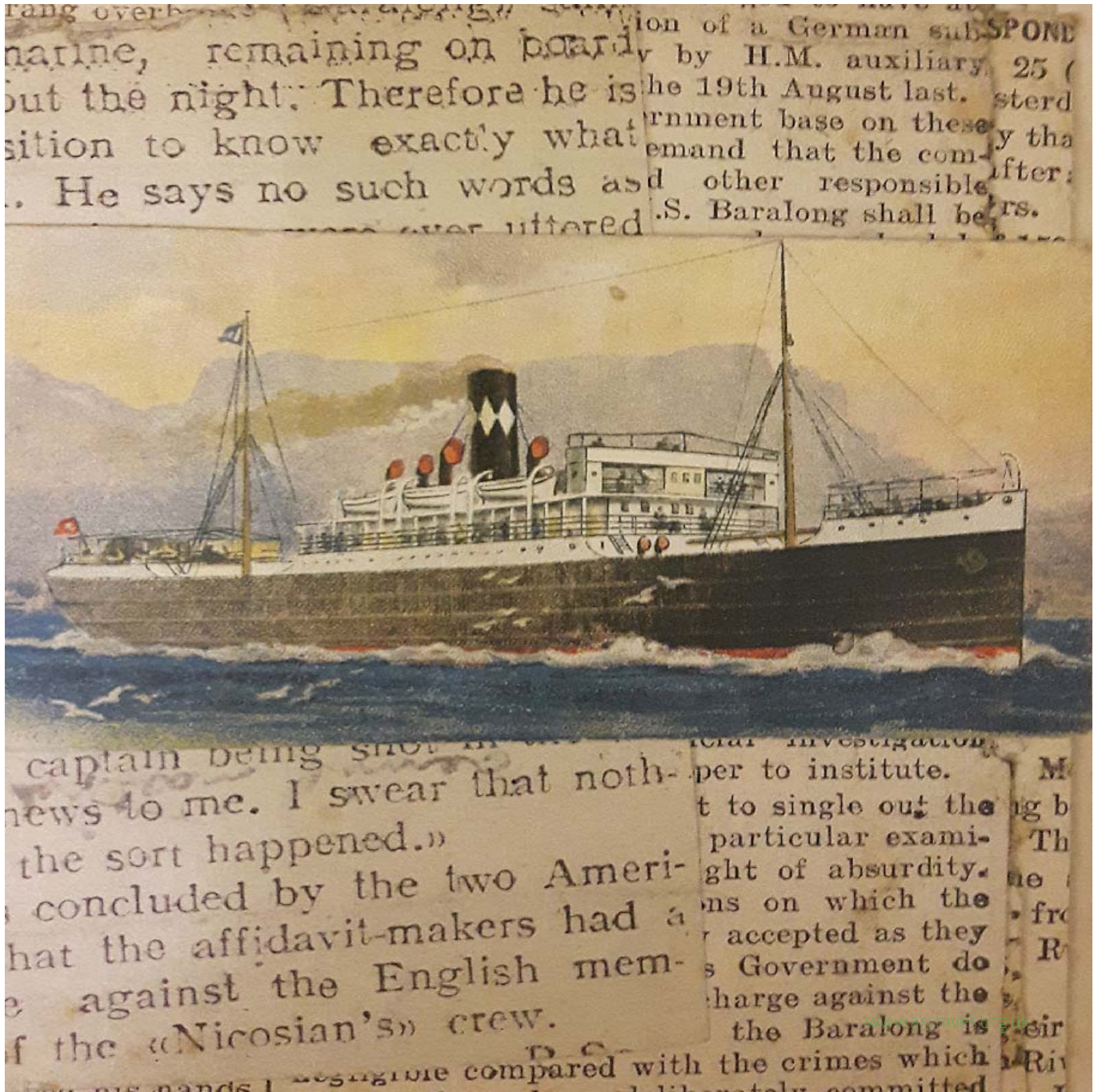
In 2017, HMS Warrior (1860), an independent trust, joined the NMRN. Our physical sites receive over a million

visitors a year; around three million people visit our website each year and we generate 2.5 million interactions on Twitter. The National Museum is now in a process of integrating and reviewing all the collections from its original constituents in order to bring a holistic approach.

## The archives

The archives, in particular, contain unpublished documents from key branches of the Royal Navy, which unlock the histories of thousands of men and women. They hold many personal collections, including journals, midshipman

Mystery Ship, Q Ship HMS Baralong. This is from a diary that describes the many changes of name and nationality used to deceive the enemy during the First World War (Courtesy of the National Museum of the Royal Navy)





logs, diaries, letters and personal documents, ranging from the American War of Independence in 1776 to Afghanistan in 2003. They also reflect developments in ship technologies and innovation. Some subjects are more challenging or sensitive, including content from our ordnance material, or casualty records. Being responsible for the 35th largest navy by tonnage, a proportion of the collection relates directly to our internationally-significant historic ships collection. This includes HMS Victory, HMS Warrior (1860), HMS M.33 (1915), HMS Trincomalee in Hartlepool (1818), HMS Caroline in Belfast (a First World War C class light cruiser) and RML 497, a Second World War motor launch.

### The challenges

With such an extensive collection, the museum also faces a number of challenges:

- **Scale:** The collections and archives contain around two million individual documents and 45,000 published books and articles. The archives link to the photographic collections, which are extensive, including over 2,000,000 images of various types, from early Victorian daguerreotypes and ambrotypes, to recent digital prints. The collection is well rounded, depicting all aspects of naval life and is comprised from personal donations and collections of official naval documentation. There are a further 6,500 artworks, some of which we are currently researching further.
- **Limited documentation and unidentified items:** A number of items became disassociated from the original donation record during their time in their respective museums. It is important that we trace as much object history



One of 174 letters sent by Chief Stoker Walter Grainger to his fiancé, and later wife, Edith Townsend; they principally cover the years 1895-1899 and William's three year commission as Chief Stoker on the sloop HMS Daphne on the China Station (Courtesy of the National Museum of the Royal Navy)

and identification before we move or further use the collections.

We have dedicated volunteers assisting us and we have created a working partnership the University of

Portsmouth, offering placements to law students to audit our object histories for legal ownership.

- **Software differences and unified catalogue:** This is one of the

areas where the museum has made the most progress, as we now have a shared catalogue across all sites and collections. Some records are more detailed and others require substantial checking to try to match them to some of our unidentified material.

- **Classification:** The differences and similarities in classifying material for location and retrieval are better documented. We have seven sequences of accession year/number items and one subject-based system for archives, which is being moved to acquisition number order. To reduce issues of mixing different accession/years, these have been prefixed to avoid confusion. We also have four sequences of library shelving marks, including Library of Congress, Dewey and Kalamazoo, and two different versions of Kalamazoo in our photograph collections. The location field gives a fixed location for staff members who are less familiar with the specialist classifications.

### Accessing the Collections

We receive around 3,500 requests for collection and research information a year. Currently our catalogue and collections are not online. However, a beta is being worked on at present, which may be available by the time this article is published. Due to the number of sites and the integration process, we are also altering the way we offer research appointments. We are still keen to assist where possible and where our collections are available, but we still require visitors to pre-book appointments.

For more information, contact us on [library@nmrn.org.uk](mailto:library@nmrn.org.uk)

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### Heather Johnson

The National Museum of the Royal Navy

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# Learning in the gallery

Lisa Cole explores the newly catalogued artist educator records at the Tate Modern

**I**n 2018 I had the opportunity to catalogue the Tate Modern artist educator records (TG 27/1), a collection of learning materials created between 2000 and 2010. This collection is a welcome addition to Tate's public records holdings, as in recent years we have experienced an increasing demand from researchers for access to records relating to the museum's learning programmes.

The collection primarily consists of the learning activities, designed for use in workshops with schools, families, young people and community groups. A selection of supporting image resources and session plans also exist, along with a small collection of photographs of workshops and resources.

One of the special and unique aspects of this collection is the 'collaborative' way in which it was made. Each artist educator developed a series of workshops designed around the opening of collection displays and Turbine Hall commissions, which they tested throughout the first year of Tate Modern. From testing and devising these workshops, the key principle was sharing and creating resources together. Plans were shared, reused and modified to match the needs of different learning groups. Over time, the artist educators brought activities together within a system and classified according to specific areas of the collection displays (for example the 'History Memory Society' or 'Nude Action Body' suites).

The educators categorised the different types of activities broadly as 'find a link', 'handling', and 'making and doing', so that they can be adapted for use with different age groups. Many of the activities consist of a simple set of guidelines or prompts, along with accompanying words or images.

'Find a link' activities helped learners to find a way in to engaging with an artwork. The Soviet Room posters activity (TG 27/1/8/2) is a good example of this. We offer learners a selection of laminated words and asked them to find a poster that best matched their word and explain why (in their view). We then took this a step further: do some words not match? Why? This activity also included a creative element with learners encouraged to communicate an element of a poster through drawing.

We found image-based activities particularly effective as warm up exercises: the Rachel Whiteread activity (TG 27/1/4/10) used images of





TG 27/1/4/3 Mark Dion  
‘Tate Thames Dig’  
sorting activity (Image  
supplied by Lisa Cole)

“ Artist educator records provide a valuable insight into the working methods of the artist educators during the first ten years of learning at Tate Modern. ”

the artist’s works alongside contextual images of household objects and spaces, to encourage learners to get thinking about objects and space.

‘Sorting’ image activities such as, the Mark Dion ‘Tate Thames Dig’ activity (TG 27/1/4/3), provided an icebreaker and were an excellent way of helping children engage, by categorising, comparing and discussing images.

‘Handling’ activities focused on multi-sensory and tactile learning. The Mark Rothko handling activity (TG 27/1/6/2) is an excellent example and clearly demonstrates the artist educators’ learner-centred approach. The educators gave fabrics and materials of varying colour, texture and weight to learners, who then had to make a connection with one of the Rothko paintings - there could be any basis for the connection, such as colour, tactile qualities, feelings and associations.

The team also developed individual resource boxes that could be used across activities. These boxes contained a wide variety of sourced objects and materials that could be used to accompany activities and help stimulate connection with, and responses to, artworks. This was particularly important

for engaging very young children in family workshops, and with special educational needs learners. We have not retained the resource boxes. But we did document them in a series of photographs, and you can see them being used in family and community group workshops.

The artist educators considered the activities as a fluid and evolving resource rather than a finished product, and this can be evidenced in some of the sample session plans in the collection. These plans provide a valuable insight to the working methods of the artist educators during the first ten years of learning at Tate Modern.

The importance of this collection can be considered in terms of the increasing demand for access to records that document gallery learning. Additionally, it is possibly one of the only collections of its kind in the UK that documents the practice of artist educators.

I very much enjoyed working on such a unique collection and hope that it will continue to engage and inspire the gallery educators of the future.

**Lisa Cole**

Tate





Photograph of taxidermists at work (Photograph copyright National Museums Scotland)

# The Natural History archive at National Museums Scotland

The Natural History archive at National Museums Scotland forms part of the institutional archive, which records the history of the museum. The library team is currently working on a project to list this collection and improve its storage conditions, in order to make it more accessible, whilst preserving the collection.

Archive collections at National Museums Scotland are held by the library as well as by the curatorial departments of the museum. In some instances, these archive collections are handed over to the library to store, catalogue and make available to researchers, and the Natural History archive is a case in point.

The collection includes papers and correspondence of previous keepers of the department, lists and photographs of specimens, field notebooks and a wealth of information about previous galleries and exhibitions. There are also items that give a fascinating insight into how the department has evolved over the years, including photographs of taxidermists at work, and a checklist of specimens evacuated from the museum during the Second World War. Much of this material could be of interest to researchers of museum history and related subjects, so we are keen to make the collection more accessible.



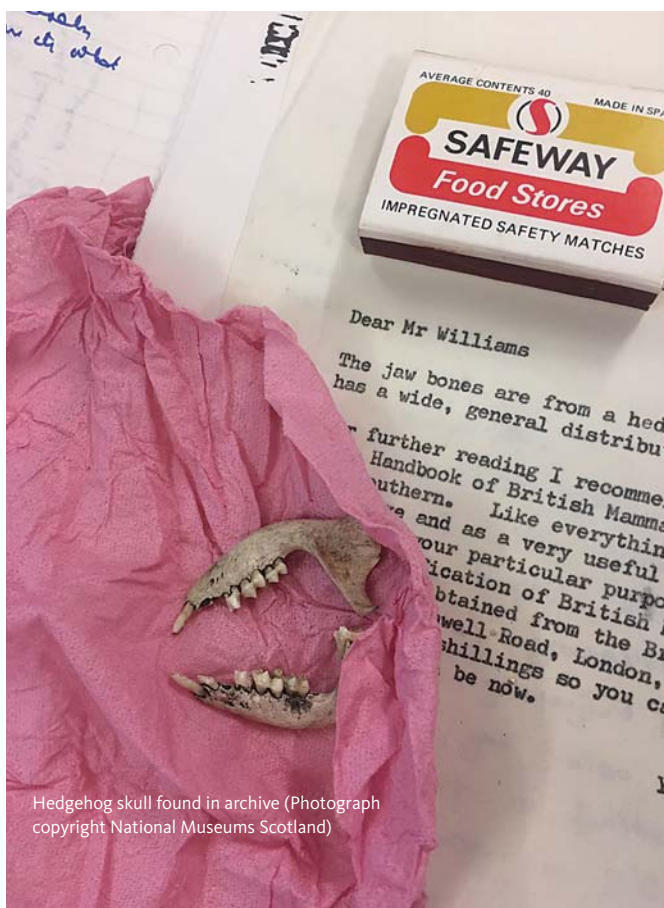
The material originally arrived in the library in over 150 box files and several larger items, such as card index cabinets. With such a large amount of material to work through, and limited resources, we needed to decide which sections of the collection to work on first. An obvious starting point were the records of the Royal Museum of the University of Edinburgh, the previous home of some of the objects in the Natural Sciences collection at National Museums Scotland. This part of the archive collection is most frequently consulted, and is amongst the oldest of the records, pre-dating the history of National Museums Scotland by several decades.

The University Museum records include daily and weekly report books, which provide gems of information about the running of a nineteenth century museum. Some well-known names appear in the records, including the artist John James Audubon, who is reported to have caused so much damage to specimens he borrowed, the museum had to suspend access to them. These report books have now been rehoused and are in a more stable condition for their use by researchers.

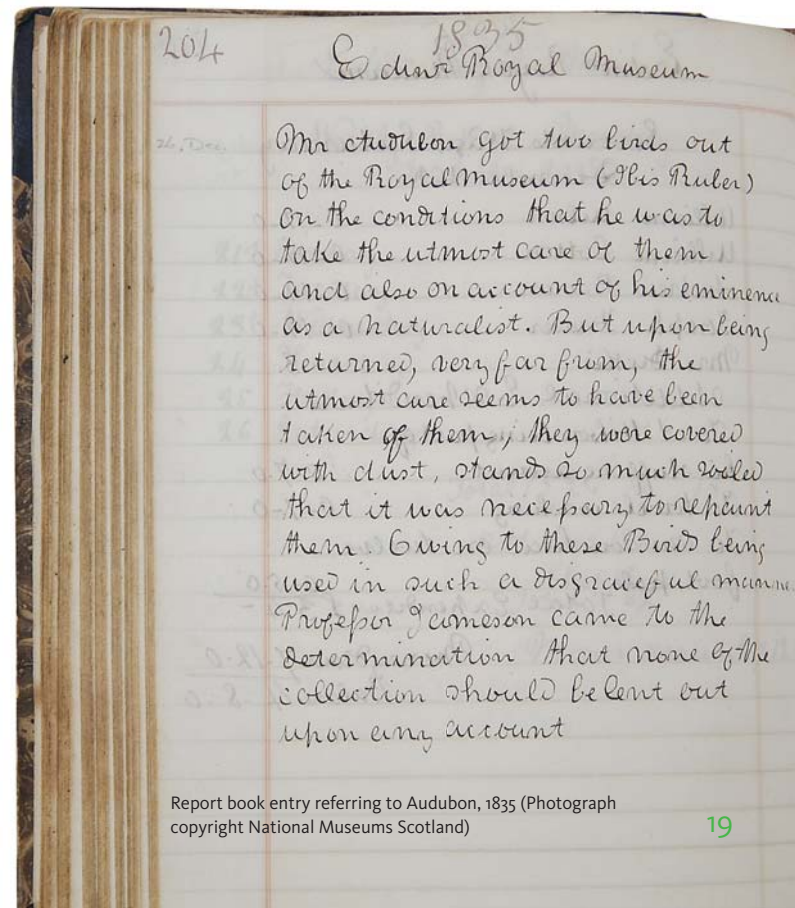
The remainder of the Natural History archive is now in the process of being listed and moved into archive boxes. Rehousing the material has thrown up a couple of surprises along the way, including finding a hedgehog skull tucked away in a matchbox and a rodent skin hiding in a card index! However, this has not put us off, and so far we have 52 boxes of rehoused material.



Condition of archive on arrival (Photograph copyright National Museums Scotland)



Hedgehog skull found in archive (Photograph copyright National Museums Scotland)



Report book entry referring to Audubon, 1835 (Photograph copyright National Museums Scotland)



“We found a hedgehog skull tucked away in a matchbox and a rodent skin hiding in a card index!”

The collection also presented a challenge in terms of how best to go about cataloguing it in order to make it a useful resource. The papers arrived in the library with a listing, but the collection had been re-ordered and rationalised since the listing was completed, so we decided to list the archive again, using the original inventory as a starting point. As with our existing archive lists, we are producing this new list as a Word document – making it convertible into a pdf – and making it available online so that the public can search it easily.

The process of listing the material is enabling us to form links with other parts of the institutional archive. In some cases, this has enabled us to dispose of duplicate material to save space. It is also increasing our knowledge of the history of the museum and its staff, which helps us to answer enquiries.

We hope that the work on this archive collection will make it more accessible to researchers, whilst also preserving it for the future.

**Georgia Rogers**

National Museums Scotland

# The Wallace Collection archive

Morwenna Roche reports on the Wallace Collection, 200 years after the birth of its founder, Richard Wallace.

The Wallace Collection is a national museum in Hertford House in London, which displays works of art, arms and armour collected by the first four marquesses of Hertford and Sir Richard Wallace, the presumed son of the 4th marquess. The art collection was bequeathed to the nation in 1897 by Lady Wallace, Sir Richard Wallace’s widow and the museum opened to the public on 25 June 1900.

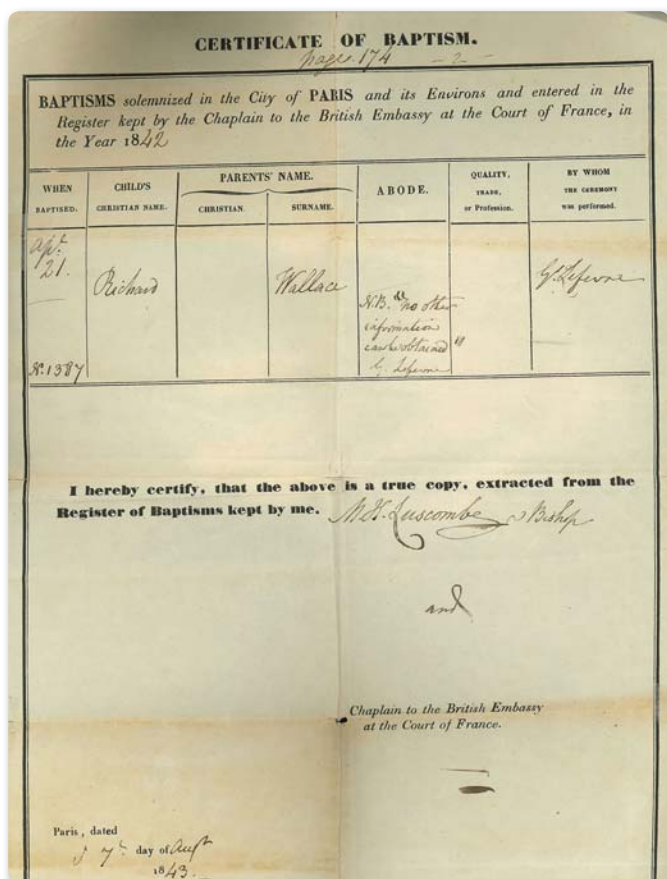
The Wallace Collection archive divides into two main areas. The first concerns our own records. The second concerns discrete archive collections relating to our subject specialist areas of French eighteenth-century art, princely arms and armour and the history of collecting. This later group relates to items in the main art collection in the house. However, there has only been an archivist in post since 2013, so a fair amount of our material is still uncatalogued!

The Wallace is unlike other museums in that it does not have extensive information on the family founders. It has acquired such information that it does have since the museum



The Wallace Collection, Hertford House, London  
(© the Wallace Collection)



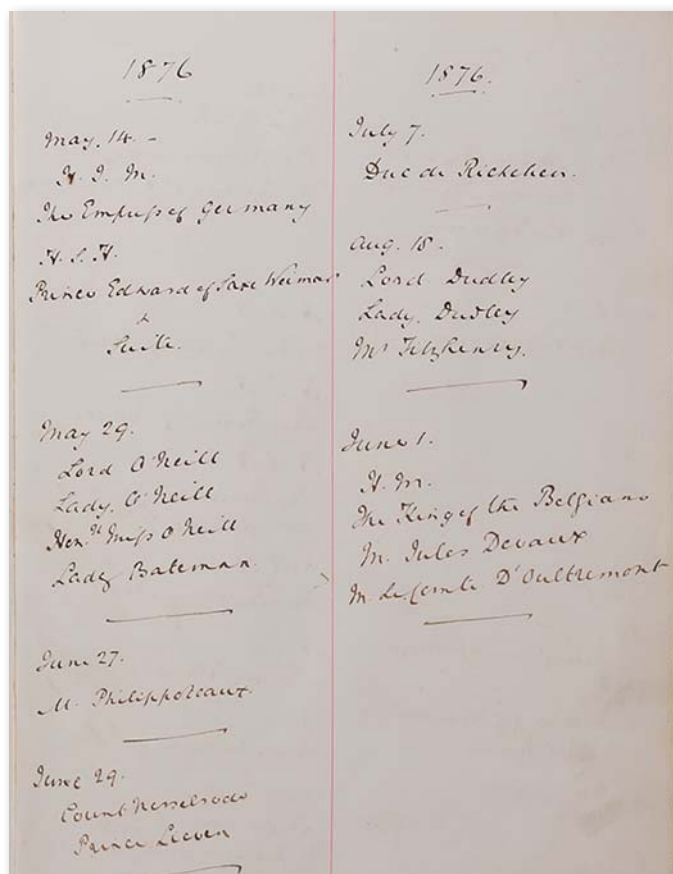


Certified copy of the certificate of Baptism for Richard Wallace, 7 August 1843, HWF/RW/1/1 (© the Wallace Collection)

opened. So we were able to put at least some founders' material out on display in the recently refurbished exhibition space in the museum, as 2018 marked the 200th anniversary of the birth of Richard Wallace. These archive items detail various aspects of Wallace's life and help to give a greater understanding of his life as an art collector.

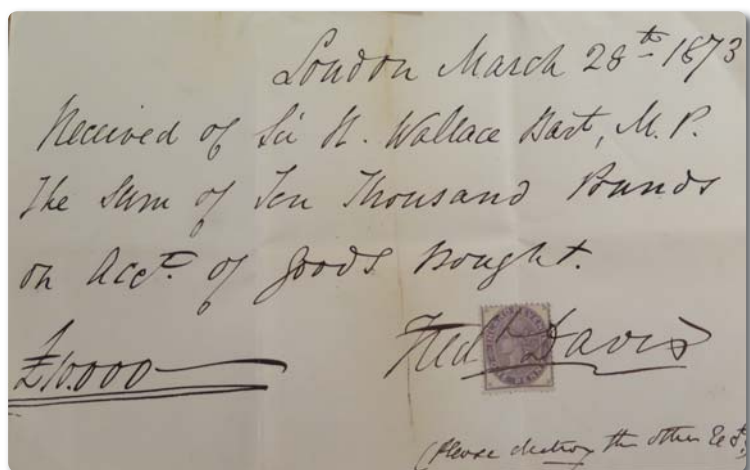
### So who was Richard Wallace?

Richard Wallace was actually born Richard Jackson in July 1818, the son of Agnes Jackson and most likely the illegitimate son of Richard Seymour-Conway, the



First page of the Hertford House Visitors Book (© the Wallace Collection)

4th Marquess of Hertford. Neither the 4th marquess nor Wallace himself ever acknowledged the paternity question. But in the absence of conclusive information, the logical conclusion remains that the 4th marquess was indeed Wallace's father. In 1825, Wallace's mother took him to Paris to visit Lord Hertford, and shortly after that, he lived in an apartment with his grandmother Maria ('Mie-Mie') Fagnani, 3rd marchioness, and her younger son Lord Henry Seymour, becoming close to both. He had himself baptised as Richard Wallace in April 1842, as Wallace was the family name of his mother. We do not know why he



Receipt for goods bought for £10,000, 28 March 1873, HWF/RW/z/7 (© the Wallace Collection)

decided to do so at this time, but was perhaps due to the birth of his own son or the death of the 3rd Marquess of Hertford around the same time.

Wallace went on to work as the 4th marquess's secretary and acted as his agent at auctions, buying many pieces of art and developing his own taste. The 4th marquess died in 1870 and, in a codicil to his will, he left Wallace all of his unentailed property: the art collections in London and Paris, an apartment in the rue Laffitte, the château of Bagatelle, 105 Piccadilly in London and a large estate in Northern Ireland. This made Wallace rather wealthy, as you can see from the above receipt for goods bought for £10,000 in 28 March 1873. At the time, this amount of money could buy 666 horses, 1872 cows or 4,975 quarters of wheat, and a skilled tradesman would have to work 50,000 days or 136 years to earn an equivalent sum.

### The Wallace Collection

The Wallaces moved into Hertford House in 1875, and visitors could come and see his collection, signing a visitors' book displayed in the Great Gallery. From this, we know a great variety of notable people visited during Sir Richard and Lady Wallace's lifetimes, such as Benjamin Disraeli, Auguste Rodin, Isabella Stewart Gardner, Thomas Hardy, Princess Victoria (later Empress Germany), and Elizabeth Garrett Anderson. This book, as well as featuring in the exhibition, will be digitised this year, making it more accessible to visitors.

2018 also marked the year that the Wallace Collection archive was accredited! This was a substantial piece of work, but also very useful and productive in showing the best way forward for the archive. Future plans include taking part in more events at the museum and to hopefully tackle the cataloguing backlog to make the archive collections more available to researchers.

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### Morwenna Roche

The Wallace Collection

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# Operation Tardis

In 2016, The Imperial War Museum (IWM) collections embarked on a huge storage and relocation project, documenting and moving hundreds of collections from London to offsite storage at IWM Duxford. The project - Operation Tardis - was in support of the wider IWM London Transformation programme and included the eventual transfer of all our paper collections to an improved, purpose built storage facility at IWM Duxford.

Like most museums across the sector, the Imperial War Museum is looking towards the future, thinking about how collections can be effectively stored for long-term preservation. The first phase of the paper-based collections project was the relocation of documents from IWM London to Duxford, to create space for the creation of new workshops for the IWM exhibitions team. This area contained not just deposited collections, but also central museum archive storage and 45,000 uncatalogued acquisition files relating to the documents and sound collections.

In the museum archive department we are a small team of four, who manage the museum's current and archival administrative records, and are responsible for dealing with data protection and Freedom of Information issues. From the outset, we recognised that the acquisition files were just as important as the collections they related to, and that they would also need to be catalogued and stored. Our involvement in the project also coincided with an accreditation report from the National Archives (UK), which recommended that the museum transfer all collections acquisition files over 20 years old to archival storage.

Preparation began last year, when the museum archivist developed a cataloguing programme with the systems team and designed a standard record template on the museum's collections management system, Adlib. Catalogue records



followed ISAD(G) guidelines and conveyed relevant donor and copyright information that staff can now access. As there were only two archive assistants cataloguing the files on a daily basis, it was important to keep track of how much progress we were making, to ensure we hit the target of having everything ready for transfer by the deadline. Towards the middle of the year, we refined our cataloguing approach further, ensuring we gave enough time to box the files at the end. Acquisition files were, and still are, in constant use so it was important that we documented any missing files before boxes were sent to Duxford. After a solid ten months of hard work, the 45,000 acquisition files were catalogued in Adlib, located using a new barcoding approach, and boxed for transfer.

Although the collections files are now stored offsite and are not as readily available to staff as they were before, cataloguing them has meant that information can be accessed remotely and the right files ordered as required. It was often challenging to create detailed descriptions for each file, owing to the quantity, however we wanted to ensure that files could be retrieved easily. We also linked the records directly with the related collections' catalogue entries and tackled any conservation issues that arose.

Although our main objective was the wider decant project, which will see numerous storage areas and offices completely cleared, ensuring long-term preservation and accessibility of these files was even more important. We also hope to offer a digitisation-on-demand service in the future so digitised files can be attached to their catalogue record and viewed without recalling the physical file.

The project gave us a whistle stop tour of the collections held at the IWM and highlighted the importance



The original hanging files in the Department of Documents that used to house the thousands of acquisition files (Image courtesy of Imperial War Museums)

of our work. We noticed that a small number of files contained documents relating to the collections and even some were the collections themselves! Interesting items that we came across included: a magazine from a prisoner of war camp in Sulmona, a letter from Gallipoli dated 1915, a photograph of a winning RAF football team, a National Registration Identity Card, an illustrated children's story by a soldier and numerous other First and Second World War letters. For each of these items we made a note on their record.

The process of cataloguing supporting documentation for our acquired collections is ongoing and the museum archive has significantly expanded as a result. We recently began work on cataloguing the related documentation from the art department, including original accession registers dating from 1917, and have now moved to work with the photographic archive. Staff at the IWM can now order files from us and consult them in our research room. As these files have now been catalogued and can be searched by staff on the Adlib system, the number of research room bookings has doubled. Although our acquisition records are not published online, other documentation is set to be in the near



Files packaged in archive boxes and ready for transfer after cataloguing and labelling (Image courtesy of Megan Joyce)

future, including original unedited Second World War captions from the photograph archive.

Having an archive dedicated to documenting and caring for an organisation's history and its development is invaluable. The museum's collections were established as a record for future generations and, by safeguarding the proof of their history, ownership and intellectual property rights, the museum archive has contributed to ensuring they can be accessed and used by all for years to come.

The Museum Archive team who worked on this project were:

Sarah Henning (Museum Archivist)  
Gill Smith (Corporate Information Officer)  
B Weir (Archives Assistant)  
Megan Joyce (Archives Assistant)

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**Megan Joyce**  
Imperial War Museum

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# The UK Leather Archive: documenting gay leather sexuality

Bishopsgate Institute's Special Collections and Archives have been collecting archival materials relating to social movements and lived experience since 1894.

Over the last decade a commitment to increasing representation in the archives has become integral to all aspects of our work. This has led us to adopt a flexible approach to the creation of archive collections and seen us accession a plethora of diverse and unique materials alongside traditional documents.

In 2011 we reviewed our collecting policy and explicitly updated it to include materials relating to LGBTQ+ history, culture and politics from the Victorian period to the modern day. In September 2016 we acquired the archive of the Midland Link Motor Sports Club (MSC), leading to the establishment of the UK Leather Archive at Bishopsgate Institute. This archive has become uniquely dedicated to documenting the history of the gay leather and fetish community in Britain.

The collections that make up the UK Leather Archive document an under-recorded and under-explored aspect of gay rights campaigning and the lives of LGBTQ+ people. We were used to managing eclectic collections, but the Midland Link MSC archive presented new challenges for the staff. The volume of sensitive, explicit and personal material contained in the collection presented a new and



FUKC pennant. Copyright: Bishopsgate Institute.



MSC bournemouth leather jacket  
Copyright: Bishopsgate Institute





UK Leather Archive Badges. Copyright: Bishopsgate Institute.

particular challenge for the team, especially when coupled with the variety of formats the materials came in.

### Community and solidarity

To address these challenges appropriately, we decided the first priority was to understand the context in which the materials were created. Midland Link MSC was founded in 1974 and centred predominantly on the city of Birmingham and areas of the English midlands. It catered for homosexual men over the age of 18 who had an interest in leather, uniforms, rubber, denim and fetish wear. The 'Motor Sports Club' title reflected members' interest in motor sports, but also served to cloak the sexual interests and activities of members, necessary so shortly after the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1967 and the ongoing, widespread discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community. The Club offered social opportunities, outings and brotherhood for its members, with regular events and comradeship with other leather clubs from all over the world. This wider solidarity became especially important during the 'Operation Spanner' case in Manchester in 1987 in which a group of homosexual men were convicted of assault occasioning actual bodily harm for their involvement in consensual sado-masochism over a ten-year period.

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



T-shirt rack. Copyright: Bishopsgate Institute.

### Practical challenges and innovations

The Midland Link MSC collection includes a range of material concerning its members and events. As much of this contained both personal and sensitive information, it was crucial that we applied necessary personal data access restrictions, particularly with reference to membership lists and addresses. Similarly, following discussions with



colleagues, we felt it important to include advisory notes (e.g. Note: Contains explicit content) when cataloguing material with imagery and content that might offend or shock. We wanted the catalogue to communicate clearly to researchers so that they could judge whether to access certain categories of records.

Another challenging element of processing the Midland Link MSC collection was the range and variety of objects and documents. These included T-shirts, badges and teddy bear figurines, as well as trophies, condoms, and lubricants. These latter items, especially, presented a challenge to the traditional cataloguing process. How should we describe them within the parameters of General International Standard Archival Description, ISAD(G)? How should we attach the unique reference code? Should we catalogue a box of lubricant packages to 'item' level or was it sufficient to catalogue small objects like this at 'file' level, as we do with folders of correspondence?

After considering the likely future use of this material by the research community, the unique and visual nature of each item, and the potential for lending items for exhibitions and displays, we decided to develop a consistent template for cataloguing them. This meant that we could make the descriptive metadata concise, uniform and useful, as well as ensuring that the catalogue adhered to accepted standards.

We encountered a further challenge when cataloguing this collection on the question

Archive Opening. Copyright: Bishopsgate.



Archive Opening. Copyright: Bishopsgate Institute.



of how best to store items to ensure their ongoing preservation; for example, how best to store the large collection of T-shirts and clothing within the confines of our archive strong room? Following consultation with colleagues, including conservation specialists, we decided upon a simple but effective solution: a clothing

rail and an archive-standard protective cover. This afforded protection to the objects as well as being convenient for transporting the entire collection to our reading room when requested by a researcher. We have continued to apply this method of storing clothing items when cataloguing other collections within the UK Leather Archive. In addition to





Archive Opening. Copyright: Bishopgate Institute.

ensuring ongoing preservation, this helps researchers to consult and visualise the full range of clothing items stored on the rail, which span the different collections within the wider archive.

#### **Expansion and awareness**

The catalogue of the Midland Link MSC archive is now available via our online

catalogue. The material has already proved popular with academic researchers, community historians and media professionals. It's also featured in, and been the inspiration for, many of the Institute's LGBTQ+ events. The UK Leather Archive itself continues to grow in both size and popularity, with additions from connected groups

including MSC London/London Leathermen, The Sixty Nine Club (the oldest club in Europe, founded in 1965), East Anglia Bikers and MSC Scotland.

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#### **Grace Biggins**

Bishopgate Institute, London

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# University of Cambridge Museums (UCM) archive collections network

From Shackleton's diaries to botanic maps: the University of Cambridge Museums and four and a half billion years of history

**U**niversity of Cambridge Museums (UCM) is a consortium of the eight university museums and the Cambridge University Botanic Garden, which works in partnership with other Cambridge University collections, as well as with museums regionally, nationally and internationally. The museums are an excellent resource for researchers, students, staff and members of the public. They represent the country's highest concentration of internationally important collections, and collectively span four and a half billion years!

There are a number of treasures in UCM archives:

- The personal papers of Jim Ede (1895-1990), museum curator and art collector (Kettle's Yard)
- Excavation notebooks and site plans from sites such as Jericho (Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology)
- The Fijian journals of Baron Anatole von Hugel (1854-1928), archaeologist and anthropologist (Museum of Classical Archaeology)



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
**MUSEUMS**  
& BOTANIC GARDEN



UCM archive collections network colleagues, University of Cambridge Botanic Gardens, September 2016 (Image courtesy of the University of Cambridge)



Laura (Polar) and Sandra (Sedgwick) at the History Day, Institute of Historical Research (IHR), October 2017 (Image courtesy of the University of Cambridge)



- Correspondence and documentation of J.W Clarke (1833-1910), scientist, archaeologist and historian of Cambridge (Museum of Zoology)
- Thomas Hardy's autograph manuscript of *Jude the Obscure* (The Fitzwilliam Museum)
- Excursion scrapbooks of the Sedgwick Club from 1880s, the oldest student geological club in the world (The Sedgwick Museum)
- Diaries of Antarctic explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton (1874-1922) (The Thomas Manning Polar Archive, Polar Museum)
- Botanic garden maps and plans (Botanic Garden)

Consultation groups and networks across UCM bring together staff with similar roles and enable sharing of best practice, the promotion of partnership working and opportunities for networking. In 2013, colleagues established an 'archive collections' network, which meets at least twice a year. The group includes archivists, collections managers, curators and museum assistants with a responsibility for, or interest in, their respective museum's archive collection(s).

Each of the museums and the Botanic Garden are managed and funded differently. They are naturally therefore at very different stages in their 'archive journey'. This ranges from looking into funding opportunities to recruit professional staff, to listing and re-boxing records, and managing the building of a new store.

### The UCM 'archive journey', to date! Highlights from each collection

#### Kettles Yard

<http://www.kettlesyard.co.uk/collection/archive/>

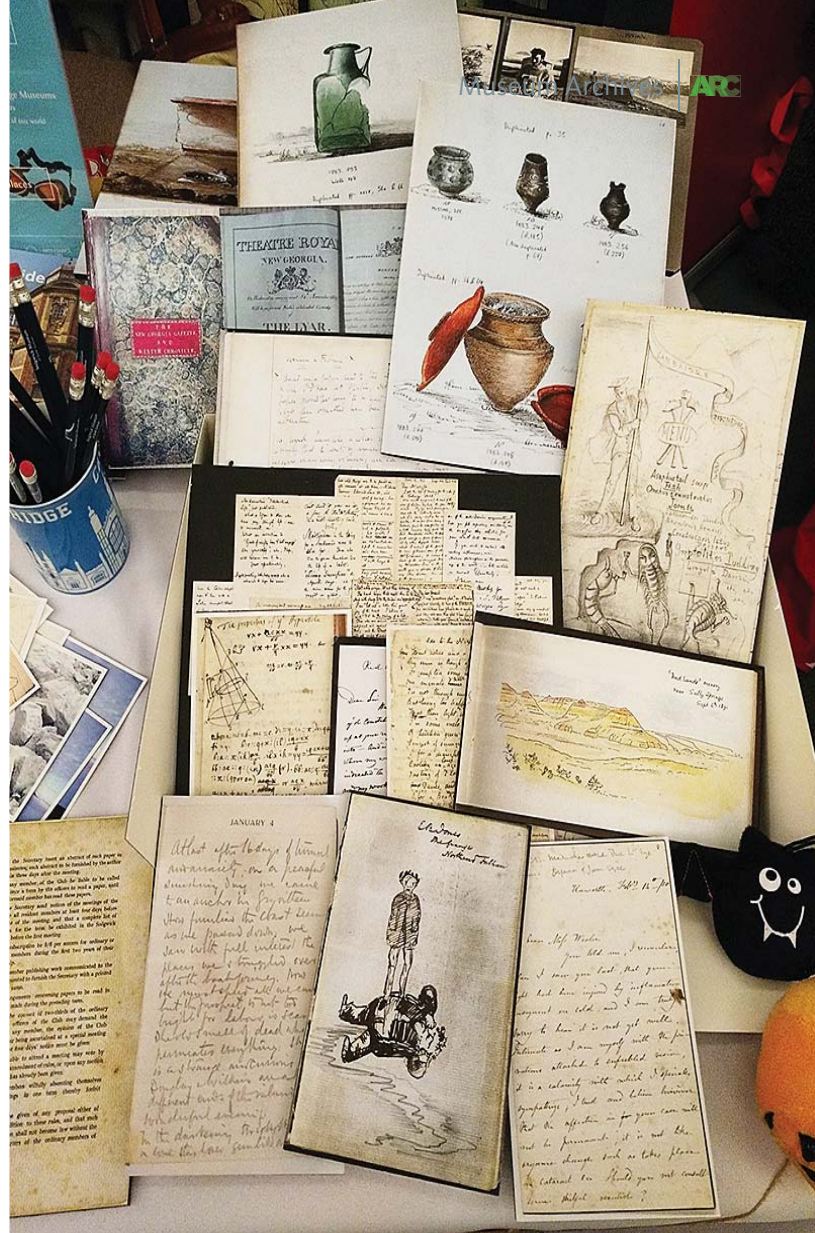
- In 2013 the first archivist was appointed, a part-time post funded by the Isaac Newton Trust, a charity that promotes learning, research and education at the University of Cambridge.
- The archivist has been producing a digital catalogue of the collections, which will be added to the Archives Hub.
- The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and Arts Council England (ACE) were major supporters of the recent building project at Kettles Yard (2016-2018) - and there is now a new purpose-built research space and archive store.

#### Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA)

<http://maa.cam.ac.uk/>

- Volunteers have repackaged records into conservation grade boxes and have undertaken simple listing, with some descriptions available online.

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



UCM Archive facsimiles 'rummage box' at the History Day in 2017 (Image courtesy of the University of Cambridge)

- MAA has been applying for funds to employ a professional archivist to catalogue the collections, which will expand the knowledge of artefacts on public display and those in storage.

#### Museum of Classical Archaeology

<https://www.classics.cam.ac.uk/museum>

- Thanks to the support of the museum's committee, 2015 marked the creation of the 'Bean Archive', a fully searchable catalogue of images and documents relating to George E Bean (1903-1977) a well-known topographer and epigraphist of classical Turkey.
- The director of the museum has overseen projects in the Faculty of Classics to catalogue and preserve the Mycenae Excavation and Publication Archive, which documents British excavations at the UNESCO World Heritage site of Mycenae, Greece, between 1920 and 1969. Cataloguing is ongoing, and descriptions are available on the Archives Hub. A new archive store, situated in the faculty library, was completed in 2017.

### Museum of Zoology

<https://www.museum.zoo.cam.ac.uk/>

- HLF supported plans for a complete renovation of the museum in 2013, including the construction of new stores. The Museum reopened in June 2018.

### The Fitzwilliam Museum

#### (Department of Manuscripts and Printed Books)

<https://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/aboutus/msspb>

- The museum has identified, recorded, and digitised all the architectural plans and drawings for the building. These are available online.
- Funding has been secured from the museum patrons (Marlay Group) for scoping out the papers of the writer William Hayley (1745-1820). The museum is preparing a bid for large-scale cataloguing and digitisation projects.
- A display of 'Lives and Letters' for 'Explore your Archive' 2017 featured autograph manuscripts by John Keats, Charlotte Brontë, and Thomas Hardy alongside material by John Clare and Maria Edgeworth.
- The autograph manuscript of Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* has been fully digitised, and it is accessible to the public on the museum website.

### The Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences

<http://www.sedgwickmuseum.org/index.php?page=archives>

- Funding from the Museums, Libraries and Archives (MLA) Council enabled the employment of the museum's first professional archivist in 2010, to list and repackage records. Funding from the Isaac Newton Trust in 2013 enabled further work on the Cambridge Svalbard Exploration Collection archive.
- A permanent archivist post was established May 2014, thanks to the generous benefaction of Dr Colin Forbes, a former curator.
- Collection level descriptions (and some catalogues) are now on the Archives Hub.
- Temporary archive exhibitions opened in the gallery in 2012 ('Understanding the Earth', see ARC No. 271, March 2012), and 2015 ('For Club and Country' see ARC No.311, July 2015).
- Funding from the Isaac Newton Trust went towards purchasing 'Mobile' storage racking in 2014. This doubled the capacity of the archive store.
- The Arts Council England (ACE) PRISM Fund provided money to purchase bespoke negative enclosures to repackage 16,000 negatives in the Cambridge Svalbard Exploration Collection archive.
- A new collections store is currently being built to house the museum's growing collections, and will include an environmentally controlled archive store.

### The Polar Museum (Thomas H Manning Polar Archive)

<https://www.spri.cam.ac.uk/archives/>

- In 2009-2010 The Polar Museum and the archive were completely refurbished for the commemorations of Scott setting out for the South Pole in 1910. This included state of the art, temperature-controlled and humidity-controlled storage systems and the provision of additional shelving.
- In 2014, Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) supported 'By Endurance We Conquer: the Shackleton Project'. This united the archive, museum, library and picture library in a targeted purchasing strategy designed to develop our collection of material relating to Sir Ernest Shackleton. It allowed staff to acquire material across the research collections and highlighted cross collection/staff working.
- The archive (and the picture library) became an accredited archive service in July 2017.

### Whipple Museum of the History of Science

NB: the museum is closed until early 2019 due to building works.

- The archive is mostly institutional, with some trade literature, too, which the museum is hoping to move into a dedicated store in due course.

### Botanic Gardens (Cory Library)

<http://www.botanic.cam.ac.uk/Botanic/Page.aspx?ix=2814>

NB: the library is closed to external visitors until summer 2019.

- We initiated a volunteer project in 2016 to sort and list the archive material, much of which was boxed in the attic of Cory Lodge for many years.
- The archive has been utilised most recently in the Gardens redevelopment of its systematic beds, which are still used for teaching taxonomy, the science of plant classification.

Despite the differences amongst the museums in terms of collections, procedures, management, staff and funding, there is a great deal of determination to share experiences and knowledge, and to offer support to one another wherever possible. We are hoping this increases and the coming years, as UCM goes from strength to strength.

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### Sandra Freshney and UCM colleagues

Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences

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# Queens Hotel, Leeds 28-30 August 2019



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