

arc magazine

July &
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ARA 2023 CONFERENCE

BELFAST
30th August to
1st September 2023



Welcome

arc magazine

July & August 2023 edition



Welcome to the July / August issue of *ARC Magazine*. I've been one of the team of Joint Editors for the last four years and it has been a wonderful way to get to know more people across the three professions, but I'm now handing over the reins to a new Joint Editor which means this will be my last issue. I want to say a big thank you to Deborah Mason, Maria Castrillo and Catherine Scotcher for supporting me in the Joint Editor role over the years, and to all of the wonderful contributors who've shared their knowledge and enthusiasm for our sector.

This issue has some fascinating features starting with a piece from Dr Joshua Blamire and Rob Elkington about the important role heritage can play for young people, including creating a sense of belonging and a cohesive community. Meic Pierce Owen reflects on record-keeping lessons learnt from child abuse inquiries and the important guidance being developed for records of adopted and care-experienced people. Amy Cawood looks at how the Public Records (Scotland) Act (PRSA) and Records Management Plan can be used as a tool for service improvement. The final feature is on building and developing a career in the ever-competitive field of record-keeping and includes some

practical advice on how to stand out from the crowd - did you know ARA offers a free CV review service for members?

Elsewhere in this issue I speak to Isabel Churcher about her new partnership role at The UK National Archives and how we can all foster partnerships in our work. The Community News section has a very royal theme with a beautifully bound book of condolence for the late Queen and the sixth century Gospels used in the coronation. We've got reports of the ARA AGM and volunteering awards and Industry News items covering current issues in archives, records management and conservation - I hope you enjoy reading it all.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this issue. If you have an idea for a feature or would like to share some news, please get in touch: arceditors@archives.org.uk.

Annabel

Annabel Valentine
ARC Magazine Joint Editor





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Cover Image. Beer (Simonds Brewery archive DX322/P4/9) © Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading

Opening lines

Victoria Stevens, Library and Archive Conservator at the University of Reading, reflects on her first year in the role, and the different opportunities and challenges that employment and self-employment bring.



In June 2022 I was appointed as the first ever Library and Archive Conservator for the University of Reading's Museums and Special Collections Services, based at the Museum of English Rural Life (the MERL). My return to employment was far less terrifying



Victoria Stevens ACR in the Museum of English Rural Life's Wagon Walk
© Madeleine Stevens

than my March 2017 leap into the unknown - and, as it turned out, incredibly varied, vibrant and exciting - whirlwind of full time self-employment. That experience had given me the world, literally, and was everything I ever wanted from my career: lots of travel and consistently incredible conservation projects; allowing me to go to places and work with collections that were completely fulfilling and people who were inspiring; making my own decisions; and providing the sector, rich and poor, with support and advice in the way I wanted to work. It also allowed me to use my skills voluntarily, building relationships, contacts and parallel engagement opportunities that proved to be transformative for my working interests. So, after completing two very high profile projects which were undoubtedly the pinnacle of my self-employed career, I knew that when the opportunity arose to work in a collection I was familiar with in my own home town, the time was right to make another change. My wandering conservator days were coming to an end, it was time to focus on heritage closer to home.

Biscuits, bulbs, beer...and books

The collections at the MERL are incredibly varied. As well as the written heritage items that are part of the main display in the museum galleries, the archives include extensive records of rural industries, farms and farm machinery and agricultural suppliers such as Reading's own Sutton's Seeds. To complement this, the Special

“
My new role
at the MERL has
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”

Collections materials are particularly strong on publishing and printing, including the Samuel Beckett collection and the Ladybird archive; national business and estate papers such as the Huntley and Palmer archive (another famous local firm); and also an extensive collection of rare book and manuscript items, and significant works of art on paper. Without doubt an incredibly exciting collection to help care for and practically work on.

The first year has focused on assessment, and on becoming familiar with how the collection needs to be accessed and used. Working with colleagues in the archives, I have started the mammoth task of a baseline condition assessment of the most high-priority collections. In the ‘Top 10’ are the Wellington Estate papers and the photographic negative collections, closely followed by discrete collections in the publishers’ archives. There has also been a strong focus on getting to grips with the storage environment: the collection is housed in a combination of purpose built repositories and retrofitted historical buildings, and understanding the seasonal changes in the indoor environment has been useful for future storage planning. It has also been interesting getting used to responding to display schedules, including undergraduate student projects, and making sure the collection is presented in its best possible condition for research and exhibition.

Community connections through conservation

I have had some fantastic opportunities to develop my outreach and engagement work, something I was passionate about in my self-employed business. I have contributed to the museum studies undergraduate teaching

Reading’s Three Bs: Biscuits (Huntley and Palmers archive HP 217), Bulbs (Sutton’s Seeds archive D60/9155) and Beer (Simonds Brewery archive DX322/P4/9) © Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading





Participants at the Kintsugi Conservation sessions. © Laura Bennetto, Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading programme and also developed and delivered the recent *Conservation for Wellbeing: Kintsugi Conservation programme* with Compass Recovery College, a Reading-based mental health and wellbeing charity. I will be delivering more information about this initiative at the ARA conference in August. There was also the very popular BookFest to tie in with World Book Day, where young visitors made their own paper, ink and books throughout the day.

Working with volunteers and interns has also been a focus. A volunteer team has been helping me remove centuries of dirt from collections, and I have a weekly session with a supported work experience placement student through Ways into Work, a Berkshire-based organisation providing opportunities for training and employment for people with additional needs.

Self-employment versus employment?

Self-employment as a conservator definitely has advantages: it builds resilience and confidence, and there is huge personal satisfaction to be gained from being responsible for your entire work output and career progression. My professional network, such as the incredible members of the Preservation and Conservation Section committee, became my colleagues, and were such a great support. It also paid very well! The price for this freedom and control can be quite severe: long hours, shouldering responsibilities alone and endless paperwork. It was a star that burned very brightly and one that will always sparkle in my mind. Yet my new role at the MERL has been just as exciting, unpredictable and varied as my self-employment ever was, all without travelling several thousands of miles a year and with the major advantage of an incredibly supportive and inspirational cohort of colleagues to collaboratively care for these wonderful collections. I look forward to sharing some of the individual conservation projects on the ARA blog with you in due course.



Daisy, my brilliant work experience placement student making a book cradle.
© Victoria Stevens

From the Board



Ross Higgins, ARA Board member, reflects on the work being done on the island of Ireland to rebuild lost records and deal with past traumas.

My name is Ross Higgins and I'm currently the Director of Information Services and Records in the Adoption Authority of Ireland. I joined the Board in 2022, having previously worked in the archives of the European Central Bank and the Central Bank of Ireland.

I'm a graduate of the archives and records management programme in University College Dublin (UCD). On 8th June I was back in the UCD School of History as it celebrated 50 years of archival education - marking the introduction of the Higher Diploma in Archival Studies in 1973, which was the first course of its kind on the island of Ireland. This was a great moment for colleagues to reminisce, take stock and look at how far the profession has developed.

The Irish archivist profession in the 20th century has had to rebuild, literally, after the burning of the Public Record Office of Ireland in 1922 and metaphorically, from the loss of professional knowledge with the associated dissipation of staff. The Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland project, which was reported on in our January/February edition of ARC (No 390) after it won the ARA Ellis Prize, has worked brilliantly to digitally recreate the Irish state archives destroyed during the Irish Civil War. (The Virtual Record Treasury Project will be the topic of one of our keynote speakers, Dr. Peter Crooks, at the ARA Conference 2023 in Belfast this autumn - running from 30th August to 1st September, if you haven't already booked your place!) The creation of the Higher Diploma, and later Master's of Arts degree in archives and records management, was another step on the road to the rebuilding of not just the physical record, but also the archival profession.

Working in my current role, I'm acutely conscious that in recent decades Ireland has struggled to come to terms with a troubling legacy of abuse and injustices uncovered in a number of different institutions, organisations and contexts. Trauma is documented in both open and closed archives gathered under the aegis of statutory public inquiries, tribunals, commissions and other government reports, both in the north and south of the island of Ireland.

In supporting survivors of trauma, archivists and records management professionals can face serious challenges of secondary trauma or compassion fatigue. There is a refreshed focus and new research happening around the issue of secondary trauma for record-keepers working in an archival setting, both globally and locally. A good example of this has been the publication in February, by our colleagues in the International Council on Archives, of the survey report entitled 'Understanding the international landscape of trauma and archives' which received responses from 100 countries.

Research like this has been supplemented by workshops run by the Australian Society of Archivists on 'Trauma Informed Archival Practice' in May, which members of the ARA Ireland Region have taken part in. On a more local level, in June the Royal Irish Academy hosted a public symposium entitled 'Trauma-informed Policy and Research in Ireland: A critical conversation' bringing together academics, archivists, politicians and most importantly survivors of abuse. Archival collections and their role in this conversation were central to these deliberations.

These types of conversations are having a tangible effect, with the Irish state approving

the creation of a National Centre for Research and Remembrance last year. The National Centre, to be located on the site of a former Magdalen Laundry in Sean MacDermott Street, Dublin city centre, will stand as a National Memorial to honour all those who were resident in Mother and Baby Homes, Industrial Schools, Reformatories and Magdalen Laundries. Vitally, a new research centre and archive repository managed by the National Archives of Ireland will be part of this site of national conscience.

In my time on the ARA Board one of the things I regard as key is building on the previous good

work done by the Association in this area, for example the publication of the Emotional Support Guide series (check under the 'Health & Wellbeing' heading in the resources section of the [ARA website](#)). This work is part of the ARA strategic plan (i.e. to support our members), a moral duty, and one of the challenges for our professions' next fifty years.



“
In supporting survivors of trauma, archivists and records management professionals can face serious challenges of secondary trauma or compassion fatigue.
”

ARA's 2023 Annual General Meeting 16th June 2023

Each year ARA needs to hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) in order to comply with company and charity law, and to continue with its business and plan effectively.

In order to allow members a better opportunity to ask questions and be involved, we once again held the AGM online. The meeting on the 16th June was attended by 21 people and after voting approval of the previous AGM minutes, the following resolutions, that had been previously voted on by members, were agreed:

Resolution 1

To receive the Annual Report of the Board of the Archives and Records Association (UK and Ireland) for the year ended 30th September 2022.
For 109, against 1, abstain 3.

Resolution 2

To receive the Annual Accounts and Balance Sheet of the Archives and Records Association (UK and Ireland) for the year ended 30th September 2022.
For 105, against 2, abstain 9.

Resolution 3

To appoint the firm of Albert Goodman LLP as the auditors for the financial year ending 30th September 2023
For 105, against 2, abstain 9.

The meeting acknowledged the election of Ross Higgins, Killian Downing, Louisa Blight, Adrian Gregson, Bill Stocking and Richard Wade as Directors under Article 21 of the Articles of Association. It also acknowledged the election of Ruth MacLeod as Vice Chair under Article 21 of the Articles of Association.

The current board now comprises:

Chair	Andrew Nicoll
Vice Chair	Ruth MacLeod
Honorary Treasurer	Stephen Scarth
Honorary Secretary	David Powell
Board Members	Julie Bon, Louisa Blight, Killian Downing, Adrian Gregson, Ross Higgins, Bill Stocking, Elizabeth Thompson-MacRae and Richard Wade.

Andrew Nicoll thanked outgoing board member, Jenny Moran, for all her hard work and the significant contribution she has made to the Association and to the good governance of ARA.

RHS Digital Dig project named as winner of ARA Archive Volunteering Award 2023

In Volunteers' Week 2023 we announced that the Digital Dig project by the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) had won the national ARA Archive Volunteering Award 2023.

The ARA Archive Volunteering Award is given each year to projects which demonstrate how archives have supported volunteers in the previous 12 months. The awards are supported by the Archives and Records Association (who also administer the awards), The UK National Archives, the National Records of Scotland, the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland and the Welsh Government.

Digital Dig, the winning project, is supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) and delivered by the RHS in partnership with the Museum of English Rural Life, Reading (MERL) and The Urswick School, Hackney. Funded by NLHF it was originally intended to run for one year from April 2022 but has now been extended to November 2023 so that the RHS can run an additional Digital Ambassador project, digitise further nursery catalogues and continue the transcription and geotagging volunteer offer.

The Digital Dig project was set up to help uncover and document hidden horticultural history through three distinct volunteer projects. It centres on a rare and unique collection of more than 28,000 plant nursery catalogues representing over 2,000 individual nurseries, dating back to 1612. This collection is a fascinating environmental and social history archive, tracking the changing face of gardening infrastructure over time. The Digital Dig volunteers have all created digital resources that will make this previously fairly inaccessible collection widely available to users online.

The project has three volunteering strands which each looked to attract differing target audiences:

- **Transcribers** - this attracted volunteers with an interest in horticulture that wanted to engage with RHS collections, develop digital skills and volunteer remotely.
- **Geotaggers** - specifically targeted to students and volunteers interested in remote micro-volunteering opportunities. This work appealed to those that had an interest in gardening, wanted experience of heritage work for career development, or who wanted to know more about the RHS collections.

For both of these roles the RHS wanted to reach volunteers that weren't in the usual catchment area for volunteering at the RHS sites. They also wanted to offer flexibility around when volunteers wanted to complete the tasks assigned to them.

- **Digital Ambassadors** - this involved two youth groups in areas that related to the nursery catalogue collection: The

Museums Partnership Reading youth panel, Reading and students at The Urswick School, Hackney. The RHS specifically wanted to work with young people on a digital engagement project and capture their views and insights about the collections.

The project aimed to open up flexible, remote volunteering opportunities to people that might not normally volunteer for the RHS either due to physical location, time commitments or lack of connection to the work of the RHS. They specifically hoped to target a younger audience to engage with the collections and wanted to explore opportunities to give them a voice via social media and digital engagement.

The Archive Volunteering Award judging panel felt that this project was very well conceived and carried out. They were particularly impressed by the positive impact on the volunteers as evidenced by the thorough evaluation. The project also demonstrated the value of flexible, remote volunteering to increase the number, geographic catchment and age range of volunteers. There was a clear impact on the service through increased awareness, new audiences and creative engagement, as well as significant transcription and geotagging of the particular collection that was at the centre of the project. It was good to see that the evaluation had led to clear lessons learned and that there were already plans to embed remote volunteering in the organisation. The panel felt that this project provided a good model for other organisations looking at digital volunteering and seeking opportunities to diversify their volunteer base. The use of low-cost online tools that were available to anyone with an internet connection meant that the project really delivered in terms of the funding and the content made accessible.

Karen Clarke of the RHS says:
"We are thrilled to receive the ARA Archive Volunteering Award 2023. The enthusiasm and commitment of the Digital Dig volunteers has



The Museums Partnership Reading youth panel visiting RHS Wisley © RHS



Digital Dig online volunteers © RHS

gone far beyond our expectations and we are so grateful for their incredible contribution. The resulting work is testament to the number of hours that the volunteers have spent transcribing and geotagging the nursery catalogues. The films produced by the Digital Ambassadors are also a wonderful showcase of how the project captured the imaginations of the young people involved.

"It has been a real pleasure getting to know many of the volunteers both near and far, we certainly didn't expect the project to have such a widespread international reach. We wanted the Digital Dig volunteers to feel part of something even though they were working remotely and this award celebrates each and every volunteer that gave their time to make the project a success. We would also like to thank the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Digital Ambassador partners that made this project possible."

Further information on the project can be found at: <https://www.rhs.org.uk/education-learning/libraries-at-rhs/news-projects/digital-dig>

The judging panel also Highly Commended two other entries: Queer Norfolk and Life with the Lionesses: Twenty-Five Years of Women's International Rugby League (later more generally known as the Women in Rugby League Project) by Heritage Quay in Huddersfield

They also made a special commendation for the two volunteers at Queer Norfolk: Adam Baker and Beau Brannick for their amazing contribution to the project.

Find out more about the Volunteer Awards on the ARA Website [here](#).

TRAINING

Professional Development News

Chris Sheridan gives an update on the progress of ARA's competency framework review.

ARA began a review of the competency framework in December 2022. The purpose of the review was to ensure that the framework remained fit for purpose, reflecting key areas of competence for the record-keeping profession.

Launched in 2017, the framework initially supported members' continuing professional development and set the application criteria for ARA professional registration. Since then its relevance to professional standards has grown. ARA is finding additional ways to connect the framework to post-graduate education, apprenticeships and ARA's annual events and training programme. We know employers use it as part of staff development and appraisal processes. It can also inform discussions on transferable skills and equivalent experience; frameworks can bring greater transparency to the skills and knowledge needed to attract, retain and develop professionals from more diverse backgrounds. We know that the framework has an international reach, supporting the development of professional record keepers in countries not supported by an organisation like ARA that champions professional development and standards.

The first stage of the review was to begin a consultation with the sector across the UK and Republic of Ireland. We invited ARA members, non-members, stakeholders, government bodies such as The UK National Archives and other large employers. We also contacted organisations from allied professions including CILIP, the Library and Information Association, the Information and Records Management Society, the Museums Association, the Scottish Council on Archives, the Digital Preservation Coalition and the Institute of Conservation.

Consultations on competency frameworks are not straightforward and can become unnecessarily complicated. Initially we sought views on the overall framework and structure and on individual competencies and levels.

Job descriptions and person specifications

Alongside the consultation we reviewed over 100 archivist, archive conservator and records manager jobs advertised

during 2021 and 2022. This ensured our review reflected trends in the current job market. We looked at positions for those at the early stages of their career and at professional roles, both traditional and digital. We also reviewed senior and management roles and looked at information governance and management roles. Job descriptions and person specifications offer insights into the areas of competence that employers are looking for from candidates. The most common was communication, with 97% of jobs specifying this skill. Next was planning and organisation skills, included in 59% of specifications. 45% of specifications included digital skills, followed by staff and volunteer management (40%) and customer service skills (35%). Problem solving, project management, outreach and relevant software experience also appeared in a quarter of specifications.

Focus Groups

The next stage of the review involved three online focus groups: an archivist group, an archive conservators group and a records manager group. Their task was to deconstruct the competency framework and rebuild it only using competencies relevant to their professional discipline. The result was three draft frameworks: one for archivists, one for archive conservators and one for records managers. We will now begin work to identify where the archivist, archive conservator and records manager frameworks intersect. We will also consider how the frameworks relate to other frameworks that exist within the sector.

The final stage will be to test the draft revised competency framework through a short consultation with members and stakeholders. My personal thanks for all those who have engaged with the review so far. Your input has made a real contribution to the professional development of the record-keeping sector. For more information contact chris.sheridan@archives.org.uk

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Why engaging young people in heritage is key to levelling up

Dr Joshua Blamire and **Rob Elkington** of the University of Wolverhampton discuss their work exploring young people's engagements with heritage.



In recent years there have been clear signs of increasing interest in heritage among young people across informal and extracurricular settings such as social media and in the street. Meanwhile, recent investments in the heritage sector - such as the [National Lottery Heritage Fund's Kick the Dust](#) programme - have sought to better engage diverse groups of young people with 'heritage' as well as to make the sector more inclusive and accessible for young people.

Despite this, existing evidence is thin in regard to the precise outcomes that an engagement with heritage can produce for young people, the communities in which they live and society as a whole. In 2021, [Historic England](#) commissioned [Arts Connect](#) and the [Institute for Community Research and Development](#) - both at the University of Wolverhampton - to investigate and report on these issues.

Our research was given additional urgency by the UK Government's Levelling Up White Paper and demands for publicly funded bodies to respond to this renewed focus on place, particularly those that are described in policy discourse as being 'left behind'. In this context, better articulating the role and value of heritage in generating positive social, economic and health outcomes is vital if it is to inform future activities, influence public policy and better make the case for public investment into the heritage sector.

After producing a literature review we examined seven young people's heritage projects across England using qualitative research methods (see table on p. 16). This involved conducting project-specific bespoke workshops and semi-structured interviews with young people and adult project coordinators, as well as observing some activities and speaking informally to young

people through what we call 'ethnographic participant observation' (for instance, we attended a museum visit, a boat trip and a three-day heritage crafts residential course).

The projects include [Stand Out](#) - an LGBTQ+ based heritage project run by a team of young producers aged 13-25 living in Burnley; the [Bright Sparks/Wild Sparks](#) who explore heritage crafts; and [Connecting with Yemeni Elders' Heritage](#) which saw National Museums Liverpool working with a range of community partners to research and co-curate culturally relevant material for their dementia app. While distinct, each project utilised heritage in diverse ways to address social exclusion, foster social cohesion, enhance health and wellbeing, and improve the lives of young people. We also met participants from a range of other projects at a [Young People's Research Showcase](#) event, such as [British Ceramics Biennial](#), (Stoke on Trent) and [Heritage Lincolnshire](#).

We offer four key findings:

(1) Young people's participation in heritage contributes to a range of personal development outcomes (such as increased knowledge and interpersonal skills). The seven projects examined are brimming with possibilities for young people's development, although this is simply the tip of the iceberg for heritage potential.

(2) Heritage engagement offers unique opportunities by which to foster identity and belonging; giving young people the chance to re-interpret and re-present the places in which they live. This aligns with current Levelling Up policy ambitions to cultivate a sense of community, local pride and belonging in deprived places. Take for instance the words of a young participant living

Right: In recent years there have been clear signs of increasing interest in heritage among young people across informal and extracurricular settings. © Shutterstock





Young Participants at the Young People’s Showcase, Birmingham, October 2022 © Arts Connect, 2022

Table 1: Heritage Case Studies

Heritage Group	Location
Adventurers History Club	East London
Connecting with Yemeni Elders’ Heritage	Liverpool
Hope Streets (Curious Minds)	Manchester/North West
Ignite Yorkshire (IVE)	Leeds
Nacro Education Centre Boston	Lincolnshire
Stand Out (Blaze Arts)	Burnley
Wild Sparks	North Yorkshire

in Stoke-on-Trent:

“I do feel very proud to be from this area. So I used to have a quite a strong Stoke accent that’s seemed to vanish because I was quite conscious of it when I was a bit younger. I was like ‘oh, I don’t want people to think I’m from, you know, a common place’ [laughs], but that’s really stupid and now I’m sad that I don’t have that because I say I’m from Stoke and people are like ‘oh, really?’, and I’m kind of sad about that. I’m very proud of my heritage and I like seeing the positive changes that are going on around this area.”

“I think part of it is that I just... I’m a bit of a home bird, I do like sort of living around this area and I’ve got my family here, [so] part of it is that and then I think part of it is just because... I grew up with all this history and

heritage around me that I can’t really imagine going to somewhere. It sounds like really old fashioned to say but I can’t imagine going somewhere that’s not industrial [laughs] because I’ve always like lived and worked in this area that the sort of old industry is very much part of all of the history. I’ve learnt about it, and not having that would be a bit strange, and I think that’s why I’d like to sort of stay.”

Heritage allows young people to view places in new ways, explore new forms of identity and belonging, and to establish new networks of friends and collaborators.

(3) Participating in heritage programmes can help those involved to confront barriers that lead to social exclusion, and can also make telling contributions towards building strong, cohesive communities.

(4) Heritage can promote social mobility, and may also provide a model through which young people are equipped to stay in so-called ‘left behind’ places, to stake a claim to them, and contribute towards their revival.

Our recommendations to practitioners, funders and policymakers are that:

(A) Young people should be invited to explore aspects of their own heritage and/or that which they themselves consider to be important. They should also be engaged in the coproduction of activities from the outset and

empowered to define their own visions for heritage (with the guidance of heritage experts).

(B) The most transformative work focuses not only upon youth outcomes but also diverse groups of people as well as families, neighbourhoods, communities, schools, and other stakeholders. In particular, approaches which embrace both the intercultural and intergenerational aspects of heritage activities are particularly powerful and should be favoured in future project design. Such work also demonstrates effective value for money.

(C) Proposed activities should demonstrate meaningful commitments to partnership-working, evidencing how programmes will work with non-heritage organisations within education, libraries, housing, transport and healthcare sectors. This is vital in order to share learning, to build community capacity and ensure that the broader societal benefits of the programme are maximised. One emerging policy arena which might effectively harness this potential is social prescribing.

What role do archivists have to play?

As well as being heritage organisations that can host this type of engagement activity, archives may also have a particular and special part to play in this narrative.

Despite the relatively significant resources that have been invested in young people over the years, it is perhaps surprising that no central point for holding data about these activities exists. Our fourth recommendation is therefore that (D) grant proposals should commit to better capturing the outcomes of such work. It ought to be a prerequisite of funding to evaluate activities in accordance with consistent patterns of measuring and reporting in order that this learning is not lost. In the interests of transparency, this should be combined with the establishment of a publicly and remotely accessible national central archive which collates details of programmes' activities and outcomes. Such a policy would improve decision-making and accountability, better grow the evidence base, and support further research into new areas. For instance, it is still unclear as to how long any outcomes might persist, and what impacts and legacies of youth engagement continue into the longer-term. On this point, archivists have a considerable role to play in addition to their unique contribution as stewards and curators of heritage assets.

You can access the full report and a wider range of material arising from the project including blogs, videos and further resources [here](#).

“ Heritage allows young people to view places in new ways, explore new forms of identity and belonging, and to establish new networks of friends and collaborators. ”



If you'd like to learn more, please contact the authors:
Dr Joshua Blamire (Research Associate, Institute for Community Research and Development)
j.blamire@wlv.ac.uk

Rob Elkington (Director, Arts Connect)
rob.elkington@wlv.ac.uk

A moment to seize: the purpose and role of children's social care records in the wake of the child abuse inquiries

In this article **Meic Pierce Owen**, Corporate Records Manager for Fife Council looks at some of the key record-keeping themes coming out of the various child abuse inquiries.



Landscape

Over the past near decade, there have been a number of major Public Inquiries into Child Abuse across the British Isles - in England and Wales, in Northern Ireland, in Scotland and on Jersey. These literally gargantuan undertakings in data gathering and analysis are now variously complete or they continue. This short article looks at some of the key record-keeping themes coming out of these Inquiries and asks whether we need a radical overhaul of how we approach the core record in this area - the childcare client file itself.

To start, a little background. Inquiries into failings in childcare are sadly nothing new. From the Baby P and Victoria Climbié Inquiries of the early millennium to the 2014 Jay Report, they are all too tragically a recurring facet of the times in which we live. These Inquiries have led to important changes in practice (for example, looking to ensure that agencies that work together use 1-5 number scales of priority in the same ascending or descending order when communicating) whilst the Shaw Report of 2007 (which looked at failings in residential childcare in Scotland, rather than abuse per se) led directly to the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 - one of the leading pieces of public sector records management legislation in the world.

Operating within this landscape, the various Inquiries have already made at least one fundamental recommendation. From 2017-18, the Northern Ireland Inquiry has flagged the need for records retention to be sufficient to both evidence what we did and, critically, why we did it. The consequences of this

insight are incredibly far reaching, not only for health and social care, but for all records.

The Inquiries have also started to spawn a number of reviews into children's social care practice and, as part of this, record-keeping. In Scotland (where I am based), this has seen a major review into practice. The Social Work Scotland Historic Abuse Practice Network (SWS HAPN) has been active for a number of years now and has drawn together practitioners working in all aspects of public sector childcare. In terms of its work on records, its online sessions have included a truly breath-taking morning sat at the feet of the Monash University Team which is active in this space. SWS HAPN is soon to issue its 'gold standard' report on practice. It is my understanding that a report on record-keeping will follow. In addition, there is now a Scottish Government sponsored review of the NHS Scotland Records Management Code of Practice.

In this landscape, the ARA Group - the Archivists of Scottish Local Authorities Working Group (ASLAWG) - which is active in the Scottish Local Government Archives and Records Management space, has formed an Inquiries Working Group. As part of its work, and in order to capture and highlight some of the main points that have arisen in SWS HAPN (and allied) discussions, this Working Group has, in collaboration with stakeholder organisations, produced a brief. This can be found at [Improving Record-Keeping in Child Care - Scottish Council on Archives \(scottisharchives.org.uk\)](https://www.scottisharchives.org.uk)



The child client file

One of the major themes in this brief is that of the nature, purpose and content of the social care child client file itself - and it is to this that I turn in the second half of my article.

In looking at the child client file, a number of key themes come to the surface. These are:

- **Present** - records need to be both created and appropriately retained
- **Available** - records need to be available to both the person to whom they relate and also to those who come after them
- **Accessible** - records need to be both physically accessible (i.e. findable and retrievable) and intellectually accessible (i.e. understandable to the person to whom they relate)
- **Informative** - records should say all they can about the moment and the context in which they are being written
- **Person-owned** - who owns the record?

A comparison of the 'ideal' and the now across these areas can be seen in Figures 1 and 2.

These areas speak to a fundamental question. Who is the record for and what is its purpose? It is clear that the child client file has an immediate operational significance and also that organisations need to retain records for an appropriate length of time to evidence both what they did and why they did it (this latter point brings in policy and procedure documents as well as, significantly, records retention schedules). It is also clear that a situation where an individual's ability to access their own records changes when they cease to be a client is illogical. In terms of accessing records, it is also clear that 'sausage factory' information request processing is woefully inadequate.

However, it is in the last two areas of the above list that we enter new territory. Should the child client file be limited to operational data or should it also look to assist in telling the child's life story to the person involved later in their life? Life stories are often absent for children who have spent time in care.

Finally, who owns the record? This becomes less critical for electronic records, but for paper files, which offer that tactile link to the moment, it is critical. Organisations clearly have an operational retention requirement to retain copy data, but who, in reality, owns the record? In this regard, it is interesting to look at elsewhere in Northern Europe where, in some places, people moving area are physically handed their GP records to pass to the next GP. Madness or other reality? Probably more the latter.

Contacts

The ARA CALGG Group is leading a review that is creating guidance for practitioners in this space. This review can be contacted at sam.johnston@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk. For Scotland matters, contact ASLAWG at aslawg@archives.org.uk



Figure 1



Figure 2



Bangor Archive
© Archives and Records Council Wales

The records of adopted and care-experienced people - developing guidance for record-keepers and care professionals

The Chief Archivists in Local Government Group (CALGG) of ARA has announced a new project: The records of adopted and care-experienced people - developing guidance for record-keepers and care professionals.

Few record types are more meaningful to affected individuals than those of adopted or care-experienced people. Within England and Wales the records of adopted and looked-after children currently have retention periods of 100 and 75 years respectively but do not have any permanent preservation protections in law. It is likely that there are differing and varied approaches taken to the longer-term preservation of these records dependent on the authority area in which they are created. A key motivation for this project is the upcoming centenary of the [1926 Adoption of Children Act](#). Other factors include the growing pressure to develop digital preservation solutions for born-digital records, the final report of [IICSA](#) and the example set in Scotland where care records have official protection following [legislative change in 2011](#). In addition, there are now many records sitting in electronic record systems which do not have a proper data migration/preservation strategy. The project will examine these issues and cast a spotlight upon records that have both huge personal significance and are reflective of changing societal attitudes and practices.

In developing the brief for the project CALGG has consulted both CALGG members and external

organisations, notably the care sector (both adults and children's social care), academics and subject specialists who worked on UCL's MIRRA project, the Local Government Association and The UK National Archives.

There is general consensus that this is an important and pressing issue that merits exploration and analysis, and CALGG's ambition is to create a resource that will benefit all organisations involved in delivering adoption and care services including local authorities, the voluntary sector and regional adoption agencies.

Heather Forbes, from CALGG, says: *"The success of the project will be very dependent upon the cooperation and support of a wide range of record-keeping and care professionals across local government and the independent sector to ensure that datasets are both full and accurate. Thank you in advance for any support and promotion you can undertake in your locality."*

You can find out more about the project [here](#):

For further information or if you have any questions, please email Project Board Chair Sam Johnston on: sam.johnston@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Few record types are more meaningful to affected individuals than those of adopted or care-experienced people.
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How using the Public Records (Scotland) Act (PRSA) and Records Management Plan led to service improvement

In this article, **Amy Cawood**, Corporate Records Manager, NHS Forth Valley tells the not quite 'never-ending story' of how effective legislation can be the record keeper's friend.



The Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 (PRSA) came fully into force just over a decade ago in January 2013.

Its primary aim is to promote efficient and accountable record-keeping across the public sector in Scotland. The Act requires public authorities to prepare and put in place a Records Management Plan (RMP) setting out proper arrangements for the management of records.

The Act raises the profile of records management across the public sector in Scotland and supports improvements and efficiencies in public record-keeping. As well as increasing business efficiency, good records management helps authorities meet their statutory obligations and thereby respond better to their users' needs. It helps organisations to better monitor public services, maintain accurate records of the circumstances and experiences of individuals, and safeguard the records of vulnerable people.

Records are one of our most vital assets. Accurate, timely and reliable records are, of course, essential for the smooth, efficient and effective running of our health services. They support decision-making, document activities, provide evidence of policies, decisions and transactions, protect the interests and rights of staff and of members of the public, and underpin our daily work. Good record-keeping is also fundamental to the principles behind the Shaw Report: "Trust is essential to democracy - and more so where vulnerable people are concerned ... When record-keeping fails, that trust is broken, sometimes irretrievably so". (Shaw Report, 2007).¹ As a records manager, this is my bread and butter, and my role is to make this happen (if possible).

“
The 15 elements of the Keeper of the Records of Scotland's Model Plan are straightforward to understand and provide a relatively simple set of outcomes that enable compliance with PRSA.
”

I started as Corporate Records Manager at NHS Forth Valley (the Board) in October 2020. Not great timing in the middle of a pandemic. I had the added bonus of being both new to the NHS and to Scotland, having recently relocated from England. The public sector record-keeping landscape was both familiar and not, at the same time.

The role was new to the Board, but I was fairly confident that as a qualified records manager, I knew what to expect from the job - or so I thought. Now it is at this point that I am put in mind of The NeverEnding Story and the title song starts to fill my head (no matter how hard I try to get Limahl's

dulcet tones out of it). For those of you old enough to remember the 1984 film (poor you), it tells the story of a boy who finds a magical book (perhaps the Model RMP) that tells of a young warrior (here read valiant records manager) who is given the task of stopping the Nothing (the overwhelming and unstructured data sprawl), a dark force, from engulfing the wonderland world of Fantasia (here read any largish organisation or public authority) - you get the picture.

There are certainly many challenges: visibility of the role, competing priorities (especially during the height and aftermath of the pandemic), an immature approach to records management across the Board's corporate functions to name a few. Additionally, record-keeping is seen as not very relevant, simply filing or only related to paper records (even if there are tonnes of paper records still in active use across most NHS Boards). It is viewed as a burden on precious staff time and resource, rather than a means to improve efficiency and reduce effort.

Luckily, the PRSA and the supporting Model RMP are a fantastic framework on which to hang new policies, processes and ways of working. NHS Forth Valley already had an agreed RMP, submitted in 2016, so the basic route/direction of travel had been mapped out.

The PRSA gives records managers the authority to make improvements in the way in which we manage our records, in fact it compels us to do so. That cannot be underestimated. We have the law on our side, which is a powerful tool indeed. PRSA may not provide us with the spectre of financial penalties to haunt our executives with, but it does cast the shadow of reputational damage and the loss of public trust that looms very large at times. Most authorities, including NHS Boards, understand compliance, there is a plethora of stuff to comply with after all in this sector.

The 15 elements of the Keeper of the Records of Scotland's Model Plan are straightforward to understand and provide a relatively simple set of outcomes that enable compliance with PRSA. Having come from a small non-departmental public body in England, where the Model RMP doesn't exist, PRSA is a record keeper's gift. The role of the Keeper in providing scrutiny of our record-keeping capabilities allows us to identify gaps in compliance, areas for improvement and enables us to measure success and to support requests for additional resource. In fact, without PRSA I probably wouldn't be here at all - one of the gaps in provision identified in our first RMP was the lack of a dedicated Corporate Records Manager.



The Act raises the profile of records management across the public sector in Scotland and supports improvements and efficiencies in public record-keeping.



Are we nearly there yet? Not really, there is so much more to do. NHS Forth Valley has its Plan, but we still need to stitch record-keeping more securely into the everyday fabric of working life. We still have to convince colleagues that we are relevant and useful; that our Plan aligns with their plans and are in fact one and the same. Again, this is where PRSA, the RMP and Keeper come to our aid by providing a Progress Update Review process, which although voluntary, provides an annual reminder to brush off the Plan and see exactly how far we have travelled or how far from our original route we have deviated. Change will not be achieved overnight, but we understand what is required and can articulate that to our managers. PRSA is definitely a force for good and a weapon in our arsenal against the Nothing.

It may feel, at times, like a NeverEnding Story, but it is a good one and definitely one worth telling.

¹ The Historical Abuse Systemic Review (the Shaw Report), was published on 25 November 2007. Shaw carried out a two year investigation into systemic failings in the provision of residential childcare in Scotland between 1950-1995, which contributed to abuse suffered by children in residential schools and children's homes.



Advice for a competitive job market

For some time the sector has endured a challenging job market. The 2022 workforce mapping survey suggests little change in the competitive record-keeping job market. Continued strong interest from those looking to start or develop their career creates a competitive environment, presenting both challenges and opportunities. In this article **Chris Sheridan** asks Mark Leigh from Sue Hill Recruitment some key questions raised by ARA members.



How would you describe the current record-keeping job market? What opportunities do you see emerging?

We agree the job market remains competitive. At Sue Hill Recruitment we have seen demand for candidates grow as organisations continue to generate and store data. In terms of job roles, there is an increased demand for digital archivists and records managers who have experience with electronic records management systems (ERMS) and digital preservation. There has also been a shift towards more specialised roles, such as data analysts and information governance specialists.

Employers are looking for candidates who have strong communication and collaboration skills, as well as a good

understanding of the legal and regulatory requirements around records management.

Despite the competition, there are opportunities for professionals with the right combination of technical and soft skills to develop rewarding careers.

ARA provides occasional guidance and opinion to individual members on career development. What additional job-hunting approaches can you recommend to ARA members?

Your members will be familiar with opportunities advertised online, such as Knowledge and Information Management (KIM) orientated boards, LIS Jobs, Information Professionals, CILIP, jobs.ac.uk and JISC Mails.

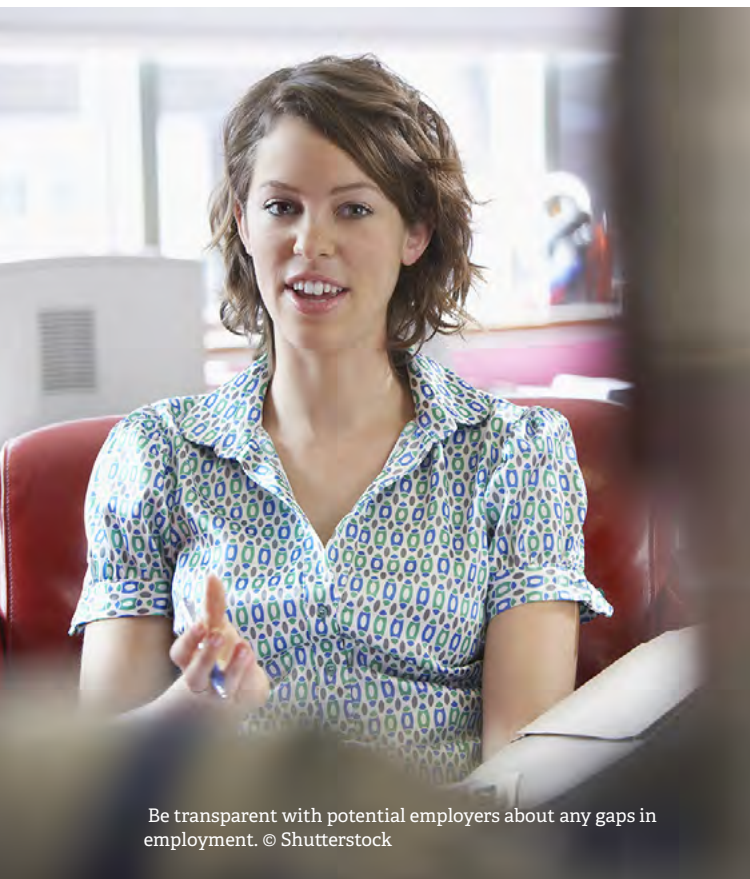
Sending speculative CVs to employers can also be a good strategy. It shows initiative and can help you uncover potential job opportunities that may not be advertised publicly. Research the organisations that you are interested in before making an approach. Look at their website, social media channels and job boards to see if they have any job openings or hiring needs. Tailor your CV and cover letter to the organisation, highlighting your skills and experience that match the company's activities; show how you can add value to their organisation. After sending your CV, follow up with the employer or recruiter to express your interest and inquire about any potential job opportunities. Be assertive!

As a Specialist Recruitment agency, Sue Hill Recruitment has a deep understanding of the Archives and Records Management sector and can provide insights into sector trends, skills in demand and salary expectations. We have access to a wide range of job opportunities,



Mark Leigh from Sue Hill Recruitment

Am / Good
enough :)



Be transparent with potential employers about any gaps in employment. © Shutterstock

including some that may not be advertised publicly. We provide guidance and support throughout the job search process and can help you find opportunities that match your skills and experience. We also provide guidance on how to tailor your CV and cover letter, provide interview preparation and coaching, and potentially help you identify knowledge and skills you may not have considered.

Overall, both sending speculative CVs and working with recruitment agencies can be effective strategies when looking for a job.

Do employers prefer experience gained through permanent roles?

Employers offer permanent, temporary, part-time and fixed-term opportunities. They also recognise the value of experience gained through temporary contracts. At Sue Hill we confirm that many employers view temporary work as a positive; it shows that the candidate is adaptable, flexible, and able to work in a variety of different settings. Employers also understand that the job market can be challenging, and that temporary work can be a necessary way to gain a broader range of experience in a relatively short period of time.

It's important to be transparent with potential employers about any gaps in employment and to explain how temporary work has helped to fill those gaps and build valuable experience.

Help ARA offers to its members:

- Job seekers may not know that we offer a free CV review and informal job advice.
- Another source for information on vacancies is ARC Recruitment - delivered straight to your inbox and with the assurance that all jobs advertised in ARC Recruitment meet ARA's Pay Guidelines.
- You can improve your CV by adding skills and experience gained through volunteering with ARA - these roles can provide you with transferable skills that help you progress your career or even take it in a new direction: management skills such as budgeting, chairing meetings, facilitating workshops, project and team management, and working with websites, social media and other communications channels.
- ARA Professional Registration can give your career a competitive edge. It is an independent validation by the ARA of your professional practice, knowledge, experience and development; it promotes ongoing improvement through reflective practice and provides post nominal letters equal to many other professions;
- ARA Membership can also improve your career prospects through discounted places and priority booking for our training and learning resources.
- Sharing your knowledge and practice by writing for our publications, speaking at our Conference or providing your expertise for training events can all enhance your professional reputation - in a small sector like ours this can make a real difference.
- As the only sector membership organisation in the UK and Ireland covering all recordkeeping disciplines, the connections you make with other members will provide valuable insights that will help you progress into leadership and management roles.



It's clear that with the right skills and approaches the record-keeping job market provides opportunity for our members. But careers do not always progress forward in the way that we would like. Some move in different directions. Some careers change, other career journeys need to account for caring responsibilities. Whatever your situation is, I'm always ready to offer help and insight on a one-to-one basis for anyone who feels they need some guidance to find the right job, or to understand what options they might explore to progress in their career. Even for those who aren't working towards Professional Registration, ARA's Competency Framework provides a great checklist to see where there may be gaps in knowledge or skills - and our training and learning resources can help plug those gaps - as can volunteering with ARA.

Chris Sheridan
Head of Professional Standards and Development



Taking a bite out of business archive learning

A collaborative approach to training from the Business Archive Council and Business Archive Council Scotland

2023 began with a bang for the business archive sector with the Business Archive Council (BAC) and the Business Archive Council Scotland (BACS) collaborating on a range of learning events, some of which will be of benefit to members of each organisation, and some to the record-keeping sector as a whole.

Business Bites is an initiative by BAC and BACS to encourage conversations, bringing together the small community of business archivists and custodians of business archives across the UK, many of whom work alone, to share their experiences. Regular social meet ups will be held online every few months, with a rotating theme to kick start conversations and allow people to meet their peers. Anything and everything business archives will be openly discussed among friends.

Business Bites take place bi-monthly on the last Wednesday of the given month. Each event will last an hour each and focus on a topic related to Business Archives. Events will be held virtually via Zoom, the programme for this year's series is below.

The programme began in January with an 'open to anyone' webinar on digital preservation in the business archive sector. Jenny Mitcham from the Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC) and Gemma Evans from the National Library of Wales gave attendees an introduction to the newly produced resource 'Digital Preservation for Small Businesses - an Introductory Guide'. Conversations focused on how the guidance could be scaled up or down to suit any business archive, and Jenny provided more information on the additional support the DPC could provide.

March's member only event was led by Sophie Clapp from the Boots archive, who talked about her unique approach to fundraising for business archives. Sophie argued that the main stakeholders with an interest in the archives of a business are not the business themselves, but academics, who will be using the collections for research. Changing the stakeholder view in this way has allowed the Boots archive to apply for various funding projects to have the archive conserved, preserved and used in a range of research projects with a wide range of academics. Many delegates had not viewed their collections in this way before and left inspired to investigate new ways of achieving their funding goals.

Research using Business Archives was the topic of the May webinar. Dr Alix Green and Dr David Churchill talked about the academic work they have carried out using and informed by business archives. They gave hints and tips on how archives can get involved with universities and students to get the most out of their collections as well as promote research using business archives.

Booking is now open for the member only July event, 'Capturing Diverse Voices', which will focus on how business archives across the UK are using their collections to showcase the diverse voices held within them. Events are also scheduled to take place in September and November, and event write ups will be available in both BAC and BACS newsletters. Booking links are provided in the table above.

Work has already started on the 2024 event programme, so if you have any ideas for a webinar subject, get in touch at Business.Bites.Contact@gmail.com You can sign up to the events by searching Business Bites on Eventbrite or google.

Date	Topic	Speaker	Open to
26th July	Capturing Diverse Voices	The Macallan Nationwide	Members only
27th September	Sustainability in Archives	ARA Environmental Sustainability Group, London Metropolitan Archive	Everyone
29th November	Modern Collections Development	abrdn	Members only



New Data Protection and Digital Information Bill

The Government has introduced the Data Protection and Digital Information Bill which, if enacted, would make changes to the requirements set out in the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Jess Pembroke, Head of Data Protection at Naomi Korn Associates takes us through the changes.

Will this be a new Data Protection Law?

No, this Bill changes the wording of some parts of the existing legislation (Data Protection Act 2018, Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations and the UK GDPR) which will remain in force.

What happens to the EU GDPR?

The EU GDPR will remain in force and organisations processing the data of UK and EU citizens will have to comply with the requirements of both laws. For example, when processing data of a citizen in the EU applying for a course, a University must comply with the EU GDPR, whereas for a UK student, the University must comply with the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.

Why is the Government making these changes?

You can read the Government's statement here: [British Businesses to Save Billions Under New UK Version of GDPR](#).

What are some of the main changes?

1. Definitions may change, including the meaning of identifiable personal data.
2. Data Subject access requests may be classed as vexatious; however, these requests can currently be classed as "manifestly unfounded" or "excessive" so this might not have significant impact.
3. There will be more detailed complaints processes for complaints including "acknowledge within 30 days and respond substantively 'without undue delay'".
4. The Data Protection Officer (DPO) requirement will be removed and replaced with "Senior Responsible Individual" for certain organisations. However, this only means DPOs are not a legal requirement, all businesses will still need to task an

individual or group with delivering data protection compliance.

5. The rules around direct marketing may change, allowing charities and others to send direct marketing without consent.
6. The fines for breaching the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations would match those in the UK GDPR.
7. The current requirements of Records of Processing Activities (ROPA) and Data Privacy Impact Assessments (DPIAs) will be less prescriptive.

What do I need to do?

Watch and wait - until this Bill is enacted the law remains the same. Once the Bill reaches its final stages the ICO is likely to provide information and advice, or you can seek support from a Data Protection Service provider. Once the final text is available, organisations will have to update policies and internal processes to reflect the changes.

At the time of writing (6th June 2023) the Bill is at the Report Stage in the House of Commons. The Bill will need to pass through further stages, including the House of Lords, before being enacted. This could happen in 2023, or it may be Spring 2024 before the Bill (and the confirmed changes) are passed into law.

[Naomi Korn Associates](#) is running a training event on 'Introduction to Information Rights Law for Archives, Libraries and Museums', in October 2023. Book a place [here](#).

Naomi Korn Associates offer a range of data protection services to help organisations with their data protection responsibilities so that it is managed legally, safely and strategically. They also provide downloadable resources, operational tools and templates, jargon-free advice, practical training and mentoring to ensure organisations comply with data protection on a day-to-day basis. For more information contact info@naomikorn.com.

Sustainability in Collections Care

There's been a lot of events relating to sustainable collections care happening over the past few months and they are easy to catch up with online. Fay Humphreys from the Section for Preservation and Conservation tells us more:

A common theme has been the sharing of experience, which is one of the best ways to get ideas of what could work for you. There's a wide variety of actions that could be taken, but what is relevant and achievable will be dependent on your own circumstances and the resources available.

The American Institute for Conservation (AIC) Sustainability Committee, in collaboration with the Institute of Conservation (ICON) Sustainability Network, have been running the series 'Conversations with Change Makers - Strategies for Reducing the Energy Consumption of Buildings' with speakers from a range of institutions and private practice. It's a hot topic and one where it is especially useful to hear from others who have already been implementing changes, and it gives a good starting point if this is something you might be looking at.

Both groups have video recordings of the events for all to view on their webpages below:

AIC Sustainability Committee: [Sustainable Practices - Wiki \(conservation-wiki.com\)](https://www.conservations-wiki.com/)

ICON Sustainability Network: [Resources \(icon.org.uk\)](https://www.icon.org.uk/resources)

Take a look at the rest of their resources too, it's all divided into handy categories so you can pick and choose what to focus on with content ranging from introductory information to frequently used materials and buildings issues.

The latest ICON Sustainability Network (SN) Twitter Conference was held on 26 April, with a range of short presentations featuring recent projects, experiences and more useful resources. Find out about the steps others have been taking from glove recycling and reusing materials, to making action plans and using sustainable development goals with the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) [Our Collections Matter Toolkit](#).

See the SN Twitter [Conference \(icon.org.uk\)](https://www.icon.org.uk/conference) webpage for the programme (plus those of previous years) and catch up with the proceedings on the ICON Sustainability Network Twitter account [@icon_sn](https://twitter.com/icon_sn)

The TWA Digitisation Grant is back for 2023

2023 marks the TWA Digitisation Grant's SIXTH successful year. In that time it has supported over 110 organisations, offering a total of £108,000 in funding. Last year 31 separate projects were funded with over £30,000 awarded. And, as the Match Funding Pot proved very popular last year, it's back too.

Applicants will find:

- THREE grants x £3,000 each
- £500 added to a Match Funding Pot per eligible application
- Claims of up to £1,000 against the funding pot (on a first come, first served basis)
- Six weeks to make a match funding claim from date of winners announcement

Key dates:

- Opens: 19th June 2023
 - Closes: 28th July 2023
- Winners to be announced at the ARA Annual Conference

Available to the following UK institutions:

- Public, private & charity archives
- Business/corporate archives
- Public & private libraries
- Museums
- Galleries
- Institutions and organisations that have applied before (even for the same project).

The grant can be used for:

The digitisation of Bound Volume Collections, Archive Collections, and Photograph Collections. See website for full terms and conditions.

To apply:

Check eligibility and download an application form via the TWA designated grant [page](#).

Why Archives and Records Matter conference

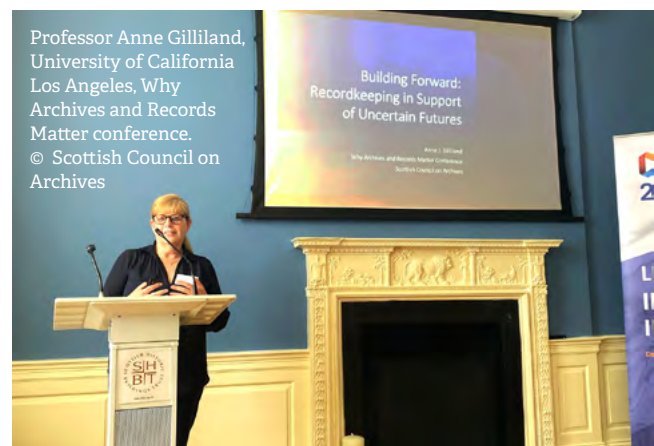
The Scottish Council on Archives (SCA) held a conference in Edinburgh on 11th May on the theme of Why Archives and Records Matter. Almost sixty delegates heard presentations from a wide range of speakers and participated in a workshop which asked questions about the future of the sector and whether Scotland needed a national archives and records strategy.

The point of the conference, which had a mixed audience of professionals from within and outside the sector as well as users of archives and records, was to demonstrate the importance and impact of the work of record-keeping across many different areas. SCA's Audrey Wilson spoke about the successful Voices - The Community Story, an oral history project in 2022 that captured stories on the theme of migration from people across Scotland. Ashleigh Thompson from Edinburgh City Archives talked about the benefits of participating in the project, and how it had inspired her and her colleagues to plan a rolling Edinburgh Voices project. William Hepburn and Jackson Armstrong from the University of Aberdeen explained the background to an exciting and innovative project which used 15th and 16th century Aberdeen Burgh records to help create an interactive video game using records about the series of plague outbreaks. Jacqueline Eccles from the University of Dundee spoke about several mental health projects where use of, and interaction with, archival material had benefited patients. Projects such as Change Minds gave people an opportunity to tell their own stories, feel listened to and get a better understanding of mental health treatment in the past. Louise Williams from Lothian Health Services Archives (LHSA) spoke about the work that she and her colleagues have carried out to inform and support the Infected Blood Inquiry. LHSA provided a safe, trusted environment for the people working on the Inquiry, and helped to build connections and provide a foundation for future work. Meic Pierce Owen, Corporate Records Manager with Fife Council, told a wonderful story about his own family history research, where he had proved a link to John Lennon. Meic also set out a number of challenges for the profession, suggesting that current recordkeeping was not meeting the needs of the most vulnerable in society.

The keynote speaker, Professor Anne Gilliland from the University of California Los Angeles, gave a very thoughtful and thought-provoking presentation, asking what kinds of proactive interventions the profession can make to help to resolve far-reaching, large-scale, interacting and complex challenges facing the world and affecting local regions today. Noelle Campbell of Visit Scotland explained the importance of ancestral tourism to the Scottish economy, as well as the challenges of recovering from COVID-19, followed by a showing of the Coming Home - Ancestral Journeys in Scotland film, commissioned by SCA and launched in early 2022. The final two speakers were Amy Cawood from NHS

Forth Valley, who set out the benefits and impact of using the Public Records (Scotland) Act and the Records Management Plan for service improvement; and Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, Rosemary Agnew who made the case for the importance of records to transparency and improvement in Scottish public services, highlighting the need for trust in the record and using records as an enabler for better engagement and service delivery improvement.

In a world of fake news, deepfake technology, 'alternative facts', and now the rise of artificial evidence, the conference made the case for archives and records acting as a bulwark of evidence, trust and reliability. It was very timely.



Dr Jackson Armstrong, University of Aberdeen, Why Archives and Records Matter conference. © Scottish Council on Archives



The Augustine Gospels at Westminster Abbey

The Augustine Gospels - one of Corpus Christi College Cambridge's most precious and historic items - was part of King Charles III's Coronation service at Westminster Abbey on Saturday 6th May. The 6th-century Gospels are the oldest surviving illustrated Latin Gospels in the world and the oldest non-archaeological artefact of any kind to have survived in England, continuously owned and in use for over 1,400 years. Their fundamental significance to the nation was recognised when the Gospels were inscribed in 2023 on the UNESCO UK Memory of the World Register.

On the day of the coronation, at around 11.20, Dr Philippa Hoskin (Director of the Parker Library and the Dorothy and Gaylord Donnelley Fellow Librarian) handed the Gospels to the Master of Corpus Christi College, Professor Christopher Kelly, behind the altar screen. The Master processed with the Augustine Gospels down the aisle and stood in front of the Right Reverend and Right Honourable Dame Sarah Mullally DBE, Dean of His Majesty's Chapels Royal, who read Luke 4: 16-21 in English. The book of Gospels was open at the page showing the portrait of St Luke and the beginning of the Gospel of Luke (ff. 129v-130r). After the reading, the

Master walked over to King Charles III to show him the Augustine Gospels before taking the Gospels back behind the altar screen as the King began to get ready for the anointing. The manuscript's 25-minute participation in the coronation came to an end with the Fellow Librarian taking the manuscript back to her custody.

Sub-librarian Tuija Ainonen comments: "We were delighted at this opportunity both to draw the attention of an international audience to the Parker Library - one of Cambridge's greatest national heritage treasures - and to our College as a place of learning, education and research. We wish to continue our recent emphasis on access, not only to the College itself through the establishment of the '[Bridging Course](#)' (which has transformed our student body), but also through sharing more widely the remarkable resources of the [Parker Library On the Web](#). [The Gospels of St Augustine MS 286](#) can be viewed online and downloaded in full as a pdf."

The Augustine Gospels. Parker Library. © Corpus Christi College Cambridge.



Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II Book of Condolence

Antony Oliver and Sarah Oliver from Sheffield Libraries, Archives, and Information reflect on their work on the Book of Condolence for the late Queen Elizabeth II:

We were asked by a colleague from the Lord Mayor's office here in Sheffield to bind many loose single sheets, which contained messages of condolence for Her Majesty, the late Queen Elizabeth II.

There were almost 600 single sheets of thin card containing handwritten entries. In addition, there were printed messages received via email. The sheets had been crudely hole punched along the left margin of each sheet and placed inside a standard ring binder.

The item was too big to bind into one volume and needed to be split in half. After pagination, the sheets were made into sections using a conservation grade heat set tissue and a spatula. A set of endpapers for each volume were prepared using a combination of John Purcell handmade papers and Louise Brockman marbled papers. Both volumes were then sewn onto three unbleached linen tapes using Barbour thread. The volumes were covered in half Arbelave Library Buckram cloth with Louise Brockman marbled paper infills.

The volumes were displayed for the King's Coronation in May.



Making single sheets into sections with conservation grade tissue and spatula



Book open at front showing marbled endpapers



Sewing up sections on sewing frame



Book open at title page



Book fully covered with book-cloth & marbled papers (spine view)



Book in bespoke archival box

Backchat



Annabel Valentine talks to **Isabel Churcher**, Strategic Partnerships Manager at The UK National Archives, about her new role and the switch from the museum to the archives sector.

Firstly, can you tell me a bit about your career so far, and why you chose to work in the heritage sector?

When I was thirteen I wanted to work in Africa to find the remains of our early ancestors. That aspiration led to an archaeology degree and lots of field work. The thought of exploring history all around us really excited me. I learnt that I love finding out about new things, I was good at giving guided tours to provide insight into heritage and I welcomed the immediate feedback from visitors. I also hugely enjoyed working outdoors (though that is now reserved for gardening). However, I realised that I wasn't cut out for the uncertainty of getting work that archaeology presented and so I chose to go into museums. Initially my focus was on service improvement and especially public engagement. My highlight was winning the National Gulbenkian Award for Visitors with Disabilities when I led the joint co-curation project at Hereford Museum and the Royal National College for the Blind. I worked in several museums services, including Birmingham Museums which has a highly diverse population to represent. Then I moved into development roles to have a larger national impact, which I've done at the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, the Arts Council and now at The UK National Archives.

You've recently taken up the post of Strategic Partnership Manager at The UK National Archives, can you tell me what that role entails?

The archives sector needs to have significant supporters, advocates and a lot more investment - and that is what the role focuses on. Specifically, I lead on developing external relationships with key partners and national agencies, representing The UK National Archives sector leadership team and the archives sector. Internally, I seek out opportunities for senior staff to engage with key stakeholders and, as I come from a different sector, I've been able to achieve this early on. Horizon scanning of key strategies, policies and issues is

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The archives sector needs to have significant supporters, advocates and a lot more investment - and that is what the role focuses on.
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important so that colleagues are well briefed and can plan strategically.

How have you found your first few months in the post?

I am new to the archives sector and new to The UK National Archives which has highlighted three key issues. Firstly, I've got a lot to learn, and everyone I've met has been so generous with their knowledge and their time. Being curious and a qualified coach, questions come easily to me and colleagues are very patient answering them all. The team are thrilled to have me, which is such a great feeling, and I'm excited at the prospect of getting to know a new sector. Secondly, I bring a fresh perspective because I have gained experience in several different organisations on local, regional and national projects in museums and development agencies. I find organisational and sectoral culture



Isabel at
Wolverhampton
Archives April 2023
© Mike Rogers

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I believe partnerships are about creating something, managing change and making a positive impact.
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fascinating, and I'm learning to navigate the differences at The UK National Archives and in the archives sector. Finally, I am an example of how new hybrid working enables people to contribute differently. I live in Birmingham and visit Kew two days a fortnight, aiming to align with key meetings and meet people in person. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, this way of working wouldn't have been available to me.

What projects are you looking forward to working on in the coming year?

Key priorities are establishing strong relationships with our main stakeholders and being able to advocate for archives effectively. Finding ways of persuading senior staff to invest more in archives and prioritise their work is vital to the success of the sector. I shall be driving forward the work of the Archives Unlocked Steering Group set up to oversee the delivery of the vision for archives. I work closely with our grants and funding team to find new forms of investment from external funders. We shall also have greater focus on working internally to ensure that our work is well communicated across The UK National Archives, enabling us to benefit from expertise in other departments too.

You've previously worked in the museum sector, what lessons do you think archives can learn from museums?

The standout lesson for me is that public engagement is hugely important, not only for sharing all the work that staff do but also to get support from investors, stakeholders and the public. During my early learning at The UK National Archives and archive visits, I can see that archives are set up differently to museums. I firmly believe, however, that there are so many people interested in their heritage and they should have more access

to it. There are creative and interpretive skills in museums that archives could benefit from, and co-curation is just as relevant to archives as museums.

What advice do you have for archive services who want to create partnerships with other organisations and don't know where to begin?

My advice is to do plenty of research about an organisation to see if there is some alignment in interests - even if initially tenuous. Find out from others what they are like to work with and who is best to contact. Then find ways of getting to know the relevant staff and build a trusting relationship with them. Demonstrating that you keep to your commitments and that you're open and trustworthy are key ways of creating an appropriate working culture. Can you be useful to them? Perhaps you know people that they want to be connected with and you can support those new relationships? What is exciting is that it's brand new, so do everything you can to keep it positive, constructive and mutually rewarding. I believe partnerships are about creating something, managing change and making a positive impact. So this means thinking creatively, driving forward projects and most of all enjoying the possibilities that getting to know a new organisation presents.

Isabel in her garden
© Isabel Churcher



And finally **arc** magazine

Our next edition of the **ARC Magazine** is due out in September/October 2023 so look out for it in your inboxes. If you have any content suggestions for future editions, please email ARC Magazine arceditors@archives.org.uk



All our back issues are now on our new TownsWeb hosting platform [here](#).

aratoday

Meanwhile, ARA Today, our electronic members' bulletin which contains all the latest ARA and industry news, is circulated on the first Wednesday of each month. Please send any content suggestions for future editions of ARA Today to deborah.mason@archives.org.uk.



ARA 2023 CONFERENCE

BELFAST
30th August to
1st September 2023

