

Business Archives Surveying Officer Annual Report

1st April 2020 - 31 March 2021

2020/21 has been dominated by the Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing restrictions has meant fewer records surveys. However, project work has increased significantly, and the Surveying Officer has been engaged by a number of new businesses to provide consultancy services. The inability to conduct on-site surveys has also allowed the Surveying Officer to engage more with the archive sector, including the Scottish Council on Archives, the Business Archives Council (England & Wales), the Archivists of Scottish Local Authorities Working Group, the Scottish University Special Collections and Archives Group, National Records of Scotland, and The National Archives.

Contrary to predictions last year, there has, if anything, been fewer business insolvencies in 2020/21 than previous years; thanks largely to the ongoing government furlough scheme. This is likely to change as the furlough scheme winds down. Notable crisis management cases include Debenhams, Wabtec (Andrew Barclay Sons & Co.), and the McVitie's Tollcross factory.

Of the few surveys conducted, a survey of the records of the Stornoway Trust was carried out remotely using existing lists, photographs, and discussions with staff. While no substitute for an on-site survey, this was relatively successful and offers a potential approach for future surveys where access is difficult.

The Surveying Officer provided consultancy services to a number of businesses in 2020/21, including the Macallan, Shaw Industries, the Loch Lomond Group, the King's Theatre (Edinburgh), and Whyte & Mackay. Work has also continued on the University of Glasgow's NVA collection, with a digital appraisal completed in Spring 2021. During the 2020/21 financial year, the Surveying Officer issued invoices for a total of £12,300. A total of £34,500 has so far been secured for the 2021/22 financial year in consultancy fees from five businesses.

Other notable projects include the publication of a Surveying Officer authored guidance document in partnership with BACS and the SCA. This was titled *Collecting in a Crisis: A guide to rescuing business records* and an online launch event attracted over 60 participants. The guidance itself has been download over 200 times from the SCA website. The Ballast Trust also successfully applied to The National Archives' Covid-19 fund for a grant of £25,000 to support a Scotland-wide survey by the Surveying Officer of business records held by active businesses, with a particular focus on those sectors vulnerable to the economic impact of Covid-19. Finally, the Ballast Trust also secured support from the National Records of Scotland for a project around increasing the diversity of business collections held in public repositories.

Records Surveys

Stornoway Trust, Charitable Trust, Stornoway, 1923- . Remote survey conducted and recommendations for future management provided. The Stornoway Trust subsequently requested a 30 day cataloguing project to be undertaken by the Surveying Officer in Spring 2022.

Strathclyde Maritime Design, Marine Engineering Services, Glasgow, 1975-2007. Records surveyed and collected in preparation for transfer to University of Glasgow Archives and Special Collections.

Modern Institute, Contemporary Art Gallery, Glasgow, 1997- . Records survey scheduled for Summer 2021.

Crisis Management

Wabtec Rail (Andrew Barclay Sons & Co), Rail Engineers, Kilmarnock, 1892- . Records rescued from Wabtec Rail prior to its closure for transfer to the Andrew Barclay Sons & Co. collection held at the University of Glasgow. Also in discussion with NRS and the Dick Institute to establish whereabouts of missing company minute books.

Debenhams Princes Street, Department Store, Edinburgh, 1979-2021. Survey undertaken and material deposited with Edinburgh City Archives and the Scottish Liberal Club.

Peter Grieg & Co Ltd, Linen Weavers, Kirkcaldy, 1825-2020. Business in process of winding up and currently fulfilling backlog of orders, agreed access in Summer 2021 once this is completed to conduct records survey.

Alexander Inglis & Son Limited, Grain Merchant, East Lothian, 1950-2021. Liquidators have agreed to provide access to records during the latter stages of winding the company up, most likely in Summer 2021.

Ballet West, Dance School, Argyll, 1991-2020. Liquidators have agreed to allow access to the records when Covid regulations permit. Also, situation with records complicated due to ongoing allegations of abuse by staff.

Morris Young Ltd, Hauliers, Perth, 1948-2020. Business contacted and referred to Perth & Kinross Archives.

Hendersons, Vegetarian Restaurant, Edinburgh, 1962-2020. Business contacted and referred to Edinburgh City Archives.

Carlton Bakeries, Kirkcaldy, 1942-2020. Business contacted and referred to Fife Archives.

Remnant Kings, Fabric Retailer, Glasgow, 1946-2020. Both KPMG and the company contacted, no response.

JH Horn, Plumbers, Glasgow, 1872- . Business contacted due to being in administration, subsequently recovered but unfortunately no interest in business archives.

Duncanson & Edwards, Pawnbrokers, Edinburgh, 1830-2020. Bought over by Ramsdens. Contacted Ramsdens to enquire about potential historic records but received no reply.

Parson Peebles, Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, Rosyth, 1898- . Business contacted due to being in administration, subsequently recovered but unfortunately no interest in business archives.

Projects

Produced a publication in partnership with the Scottish Council on Archives and Business Archives Council of Scotland titled *Collecting in a Crisis: A guide to rescuing business records*. Launched in October 2020 with a well-attended webinar. Guidance has since been downloaded 217 times.

Funding secured from The National Archives Covid-19 fund to run a Scotland-wide 'State of the Nation' survey of business records held privately, project titled *Fieldwork: Mapping Scotland's Business Archives*. A cataloguer from the University of Glasgow has been seconded to support the project and a 10-person advisory panel – comprised of academics, businesspeople, and archivists – convened to provide advice and guidance. Project due to report in December 2021.

Loch Lomond Group have commissioned 12 days research to be undertaken June-September 2021 to report on the history of a property acquired by the company.

Shaw Industries Agreed have commissioned a research project to examine the history of a recent acquisition, Sanquhar Tile Services (est. 1915).

Edinburgh City Archives have requested a survey of digital records from the Edinburgh Tram project, provisionally scheduled for Autumn 2021.

Work on the University of Glasgow's NVA collection is ongoing. Appraisal of the digital collection completed in Spring 2021, cataloguing to commence in Summer 2021.

The Macallan have continued to engage the Survey Officer on a number of projects through 2020/21, including research to support product launches, project supervision, and cataloguing.

King's Theatre (Edinburgh) project is underway after being postponed in 2020 due to Covid-19. Project is nearing half-way mark and will primarily deliver an Archive Plan to be implemented between 2022 and 2026 as part of the heritage section of the £25m redevelopment project.

The 42 senior professional clubs in Scotland were all contacted twice (once by letter, once by email) during 2020 to offer a records survey and support for managing archive collections. Only Aberdeen FC responded. The Sporting Heritage Network has also recently concluded a national survey of Scottish sporting collections with similar response rates from clubs. As a result, efforts to survey Scottish football records will be incorporated into the ongoing survey work rather than maintained as a separate project.

Whyte & Mackay commissioned a report on links between the company and historic slavery. The report was delivered in 2020 and found links relating to three of its distilleries.

Continued to work closely with the UK-wide Crisis Management Team to monitor and act on cases where insolvency has led to historic records being at risk.

Joined the University Court as Joint Union Liaison Committee nominated employee representative. Also joined the Nominations and HR sub-committees.

Interviewed by Elizabeth Oxborrow-Cowan as part of a BAC review of the National Strategy for Business Archives – England and Wales.

Presentations

Invited to give keynote address on future trends in business archives to the International Council on Archives Section for Business Archives annual conference in Copenhagen in June 2020. Cancelled due to Covid-19.

Presented on how to host meetings online at ARA Training Officer Network Group meeting, September 2020

Presented on *Collecting in a Crisis* publication at SCA/BACS webinar, October 2020

Presented on *Collecting in a Crisis* publication at ASLAWG online meeting, December 2020

Presented on *Fieldwork: Mapping Scotland's Business Archives* at SUSCAG online meeting, March 2021

Presented on 'key business records' at BAC/ARA online student training day hosted by Aberystwyth University, April 2021

Publications

'Collecting in a crisis: A guide to rescuing business records', SCA/BACS publication, October 2020

'Collections in crisis: 10 years of the Crisis Management Team', Business Archives Council Autumn 2020 Newsletter.

'Opening Lines', ARC Magazine, March 2021