



BUSINESS ARCHIVES
SURVEYING OFFICER

since 1977

Annual Report

1st April 2024 - 31st March 2025

Review of 2024-2025

It has been a whirlwind of a year for the Business Archives Surveying Officer with lots of ground covered in terms of surveying, engagement, funding bids, profile-raising, recruitment, and relationship-building.

Approximately 83 businesses, organisations, trusts and charities were contacted by the Surveying Officer throughout the year, which resulted in 18 survey visits, and a 21.6% success rate. This again built on last year's success rate and continues to show an improvement against the usual 10-15% response rate.

Included in this year's proactive surveying was the roll out of the second regional archive survey, which this time featured Angus. More than 20 businesses were contacted at the end of September 2024 including Glamis Castle, Angus Soft Fruits, Strathmore Woollen Company and Saddler's of Forfar. However, responses were low despite repeated approaches by Rachael, and unfortunately no in-person surveys were arranged as a result of the project.

Separately, a thematic survey approaching companies and organisations within the Scottish forestry and timber trade was also developed and rolled out in January and February of 2025. Although initial engagement has been slow, further support provided by the Chief Executive of Confor, the UK forestry body has helped increase interactions. Currently, three surveys are planned for the summer including the Scottish Timber Trade Association, Donaldson Group, and Scottish Woodlands, and there is potential interest from the forestry sector for a more detailed look at heritage and story-telling within the Scottish forestry and timber industry, so it will be interesting to see how this develops in 2025-26. Rachael has sourced examples from Sweden in order to share and inspire about what could be possible. Further surveying work is needed in the short-term with long-term plans still to be confirmed, but there is likely to be the option of possible sponsorship from the sector.

A key focus for September and October was the consortium application to the Archives Revealed fund. The Surveying Officer led the work to bring together a consortium partnership that applied for funding to create a two-year project 'Supporting Scotland's Sporting Heritage'. This involved a fortnightly meeting with the other consortium partners, writing the application, and gathering evidence, statistics, and supporting documents. The application was hugely helped by Kiara's proof-reading, editing, and development of the budget. We were delighted with the final application, and accompanying letters of support we received. Unfortunately, the application was unsuccessful but the consortium partners have agreed to explore other funding options. Rachael has contacted the Scotland team at the National Heritage Lottery Fund and it is hoped that a follow-up application will be submitted in summer 2025.



Throughout the year, Rachael has continued the cataloguing of the Scottish Women's Institutes collection, as well as attending their monthly Heritage Meeting evenings. In November, the SWI found out that their heritage project will be funded by the Heritage Lottery. This project includes funds to continue Rachael's cataloguing of the collection for 1 day a week for a year (c.£9,600 income). The Surveying Officer also held five volunteer sessions over the summer at the Ballast Trust for the SWI. These sessions were designed for the volunteers to be able to gain experience of working with the SWI

archive, as well as share their own specialist subject knowledge which can be incorporated into the archive. The Surveying Officer had also been contacted by a student from the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh with regards to undertaking research of the SWI archive being held at the Ballast Trust, and Rachael facilitated access to several research visits whilst the archive has been stored at the Ballast Trust. We look forward to seeing how the project develops over the course of the year.

The Surveying Officer presented at an Edinburgh 900 event organised by Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce to celebrate the city's anniversary and its businesses. The presentation was well-received, and led to two



Scots War Gardens Vehicle, WWII, Scottish Womens' Institutes

potential surveys of a chartered accountant firm and drinks company.

Continuing to develop an understanding of the renewables landscape in terms of record-keeping has been another ongoing objective over the last 12 months. The Surveying Officer has been developing her

new WordPress and website skills by creating a new project page which provides details on the second phase of the Capturing the Energy project. In collaboration with the University of Aberdeen, this phase will focus on developing our understanding of recordkeeping within the renewables sector specifically. The Surveying Officer will be working on the project twice a month until December 2025 when the outcomes of the project will be reviewed.

Recruitment has played a significant part in this year's work for the Surveying Officer with meetings at the start of January with the head of Grand Lodge to discuss recruitment plans by the organisation. It resulted in the Surveying Officer and Director of the Ballast Trust working hard to revise a job description for the Grand Lodge of Scotland as part of a long-running plan to appoint a Heritage & Collection Manager for the library, archive and museum. Rachael oversaw the write-up of a job description, the advertising, and the short-listing of the interviewees. Questions and a presentation question were set, and interviews were held in early April. Rachael was one of three persons on the interview panel.

The Surveying Officer had also created a recruitment timetable and summary for a bakery to take forward the recommendation of a corporate archivist and records manager that had been supported by the company's owner and is currently on hold. In addition, following a survey of Scottish Canals in 2024, a meeting was held in 2025 to discuss the taking forward of a recommendation to recruit a records manager to the organisation and tackle storage capacity issues. This was confirmed in March 2025, and recruitment is due to go live in May 2025, with the Surveying Officer leading on advertisements for the position.



In December, the Surveying Officer also interviewed three students for a second phase of cataloguing at Goodfellow & Steven. Two students currently studying the postgraduate course were offered the position and undertook 5 weeks of on-site cataloguing in Broughty Ferry. They were well-supported by the business at all times, and it was a fantastic example of teamwork, and provided suitable practical experience alongside their studies. It is likely that following the completion of cataloguing that the collection will be transferred to a public archive service, although this is still to be finalised.

During spring 2025, the Surveying Officer has been busy establishing the programme for a BACS summer conference to be held in June 2025 at the Scotch Whisky Experience. A good range of speakers from across the drinks, brand and marketing industries have now been confirmed. The event will also include an evening reception launch for the new BACS journal, and the AGM.

Now at the end of the 2024/25 reporting year, the Surveying Officer is taking bookings for surveys into July 2025 with a variety of surveys on the horizon including a children's charity, a forestry group, a health food retailer, and a business gateway enterprise. The forestry and timber survey will conclude, with another regional survey launched, as well as a new thematic survey, possibly exploring independent Scottish schools, with support from SARA, or building on the drinks industry conference to be held in June.

On a last, positive note, a personal highlight of the year was being awarded UK Record Keeper of the Year by The Archives and Records Association (UK & Ireland) at their annual conference in

Birmingham. This was an honour to receive from peers, and hopefully highlighted the role of the Scottish Surveying Officer to a wider audience!



Crisis management and records-at-risk
There have been three successful cases of records having been safely deposited that were initially at risk. This included the archive of Craig & Rose, paint manufacturers, that were surveyed in 2023. As of September 2024 it had been transferred to Edinburgh City Archive.

The records of Charles Henshaw & Sons, architectural metalworkers, were also surveyed by the Surveying Officer following the company's liquidation at the request of Historic Environment Scotland. Following successful

engagement with the relevant insolvency practitioner, a successful transfer of the records was completed, resulting in a superb business collection saved for the nation.

The company of architectural metalworkers, Charles Henshaw & Sons Ltd was founded in 1904 and created many decorative, memorial and security features for churches, schools and commercial buildings throughout Scotland. When the firm went into administration in 2024, HES approached BACS for advice; the Surveying Officer contacted the administrators and created a summary of the Henshaw archive which comprised ledgers, sketchbooks, designs, photographs and publications covering most of the firm's history.

The Surveying Officer went on to provide invaluable liaison with the administrators and support as HES formalised the deposit of the material and arranged its transfer. As the Henshaw collection is important in its own right, and also relates to collections of architects' papers already held in the HES Archive, we were delighted to receive this significant archive to make it available to the public and are very grateful for the Surveying Officer's assistance.
Veronica Fraser, Historic Environment Scotland

And finally, the records of the John Muir Trust were transferred to Highland Archives. Although not deemed at risk at the time of the survey, it became clear that due to storage pressures and changing staff, the records were not being managed and were at risk. With the support and help of the charity, a successful transfer of the entire archive was completed, totalling over 70 boxes of records charting a variety of eras and subject areas across its history.



Pitlochry Festival Theatre Poster, 1957

- Scottish Football Museum (to survey collection of the Scottish Premier Football League)
- Scottish Women's Institute, est. 1917, (membership organisation/charity), Edinburgh
- The Denholm Group, est. 1866, (shipping agent), Glasgow
- The Young Women's Movement, est. 1924, (charity), Edinburgh
- Venture Scotland, est. 1984, (charity), Edinburgh
- Walker's Shortbread, est. 1898, (baker), Aberlour

Record surveys, advice and consultancy work

- ALLIANCE, part of Health Care and Social Alliance Scotland, charity
- Charles Henshaw & Sons, est. 1904, (building facade specialist), Edinburgh
- Confederation of Forest Industries (Confor), (membership body), Edinburgh
- Demarco Archive, (arts trust), Edinburgh
- Galloway & MacLeod, est. 1921, (agricultural merchants), Stonehouse, SL
- Glasgow Film Theatre, est. 1974, (creative arts/charity), Glasgow
- GMAC Film, est. 1982, (film charity), Glasgow
- Grandison & Son, est. 1886-2018, (plasterer), Peebles
- Ian MacLeod Distillers Ltd, est. 1936 (as Leonard Russell whisky broker), Edinburgh
- Institute of Chartered Foresters, Edinburgh (membership body), Edinburgh
- Motherwell Football Club, est. 1886, (sports club) Craigleith, Edinburgh
- Perth Theatre, est. 1900, (arts centre), Perth
- Pitlochry Festival Theatre, est. 1951, (creative arts/charity), Pitlochry
- Prestwick Scotland, c.1930s, (airport), Prestwick
- Scottish Bowlers Fellowship, est. 1954, (membership organisation), Glasgow
- Scottish Canals (non-departmental public body), Falkirk
- Scottish Decorators' Federation, est. 1857, (professional body), Stirling

Presentations, Participations & Publications

Presentations

- Rachael presented her rescheduled Business Bites event titled The Importance of Records Surveying. Online, June 2024.
- Presented at Edinburgh 900 event hosted by Edinburgh's Chamber of Commerce in partnership with Edinburgh City Archives. December, 2024.
- Business History workshop. Glasgow, July 2024.
- Organised and hosted visit by the School Archivist Group to the Scottish Business Archive at Thurso Street and presented on the role of Surveying Officer. Glasgow, March 2025.

Participations

- Attended the 'ICA SBA Annual Masterclass' event Bringing heritage to life in a corporate setting. Online, June 2024.
- Attended Business History Summer School workshop on archives. Glasgow, July 2025.
- Attended the Archives and Records Associations annual conference titled Climate and Crisis: Tackling It Together. Birmingham, August 2024.
- Attended the Scottish Council on Archives' Meet the Funders event. Online, September 2024.
- Attended the annual BACS/BAC conference on Liquid Gold: realising the potential of your business archive collection. Glasgow, November 2024.
- Attended the Scottish Records Association conference titled: "Estate, Household and Family Collections and their Use in Research. Online, November 2024.
- National Museums of Scotland seminar titled Contemporary Collecting and Sustainable Technologies. Online, November 2024.
- The ICA symposium on Archives of Sports Materials and Collections in Japan. Online, November 2024.
- The Surveying Officer attended the SCA Conference BUILDING EVIDENCE: How Archives and Records support Scotland's Historic Environment. Stirling, December 2024.
- The ARA SBR seminar titled: Section for Business Records Lunchtime Session: Christmas is just around the corner! Have you bought your presents yet?. Online, December 2024.
- Hosted visit by the School Archives and Records Association to the Scottish Business Archive at Thurso Street. Glasgow, March 2025.

Publications

- Rachael has again contributed an article reviewing the Surveying Officer's year as part of the Scottish Council on Archive's '[A Year in Archives](#)' for 2023/24.

