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arc
magazine

March &
April'23

ARA2023
CONFERENCE

BELFAST
30th August to 1st September 2023

Welcome

arc magazine

March & April 2023 edition

W Welcome to the March/April edition of ARC Magazine.

In this edition we tackle some of the biggest issues facing the record-keeping profession today. Of importance to all our work is the Campaign for Records, which was formally launched at Parliament in January. We report back from the launch event at Portcullis House; it is heartening to see the fundamentals of our profession given a prominent platform.

On a related note, Ruth Macleod unpacks the concept of advocacy and considers what we can do to make our case to a range of audiences, in practical terms.

Our features take us round the world in the search for knowledge. Makiya Davis-Bramble explores how her mixed-Caribbean background influences her professional practice, and shares the Caribbean sayings handed down through her family that might help us to approach archival work from a different perspective.

From there we travel to Sierra Leone, where Aminata Allen provides an insight into why good public sector record-keeping is so vital for good governance: a lesson that applies the world over. Closer to home for many, I suspect, is Rachel Mitchell's piece on getting to grips with Microsoft 365.

Elsewhere, we hear from ARA's Diversity and Inclusion Allies on the task of the Accessibility Working Group, Chris Sheridan reports on how the Association is supporting workforce development and, as always, we bring you the latest news and success stories from across the sector.

Big thanks go to all the contributors who have given their time and expertise. It goes without saying that the magazine would not be possible without your contributions. If you have an idea for a feature, would like to share some news or simply have some feedback, please get in touch: arceditors@archives.org.uk.

Happy reading

Michael

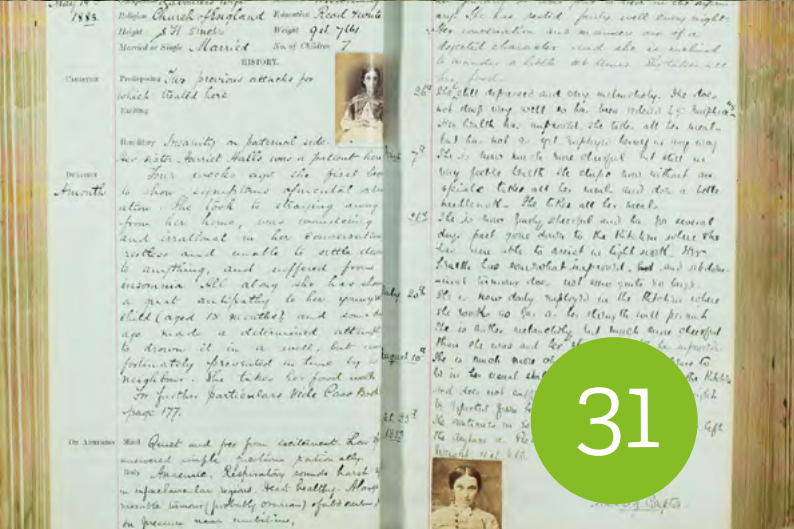**Michael Gallagher**
ARC Joint Editor

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Opening lines

Diversity and Inclusion Allies **Philip Milnes-Smith** and **Iida Saarinen**, both early career professionals with hidden disabilities, explore the need for an Accessibility Working Group and introduce some of the work they will be undertaking this year, withyour help.

There is a metaphorical window through which generations of people have been accustomed to view the world and its history – and the view it affords is one which makes it hard to see disabled people at all. That framing is so powerful that should a viewer accidentally notice that, for example, Henry VIII needed to use a wheelchair and stairlift in later life, there has been squeamishness about mentioning it in terms of disability. In Henry's case, to a certain extent, the tension has existed from his own lifetime when the public image embodied in Holbein's portraiture was understandably intended to project powerful magnificence (rather than physical weakness, discomfort and vulnerability).

Making that window larger so that we can see more of the disabled people who were previously invisible is, indeed, a deliberate act. But it is not an act of erasure or replacement – starting to see disabled people does not stop us seeing non-disabled people. Representation (in media, advertising, or on executive boards, for example) is sometimes said to be important to help people feel included, by seeing someone like themselves, because "you can't be what you can't see". But, in the case of disability, it is also important because it affords visibility to those previously "out of sight and out of mind", who might

otherwise be dehumanised into, at best, a "not to be spoken of in polite company embarrassment", or, at worst, "unproductive mouths" whose deaths are no more than a statistic.

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The Accessibility Working Group of the Diversity and Inclusion Allies is necessary because the profession operates in a contemporary ableist culture (not necessarily conscious or calculated) which marginalises disabled people as less than non-disabled people. We exist, in part, to promote the accessibility of our premises and outreach events, and of our catalogues, collections and records. Our intention is to "usualise" the idea that there are disabled people in our communities, whose contributions, needs and lives are important. We also want to remind our profession of the fact that past disabled people are present and absent in our collections, and that both deserve careful handling in our description and outreach work.

In addition, however, we are seeking to support the recruitment and retention of disabled people as record keepers. If this only makes you think of wheelchair and stairlift users (like Henry VIII), that would not be surprising. But disabled people are a far from homogenous group. There are many kinds of impairment (most non-visible), including long-term health conditions affecting physical and/or mental health. It is also important to remember that disability is not someone's sole identity – even if discrimination based on other protected characteristics is avoided, someone's social class, or hometown accent, may increase or decrease their appeal to recruiters and their 'fit' within an organisation. Inclusive recruitment and retention require a broader view than just accommodating disability.

Disabled people can face additional challenges due to the temporary nature and geographical scarcity of record-keeping posts. Flexible and/or part-time working may not be a plausible option for the hiring organisation due to funding cycles, regardless of whether a person is sustainably able to work a 40-hour week. It is a careful balancing act and disabled people often have internalised ableism to deal with – in addition to that present in the society around us. But we may also, of course,

Statue of Richard III in front of the cathedral in Leicester, England. © Shutterstock

have a lot to offer. Beethoven did not stop being a great composer when he lost his hearing, any more than Richard III's scoliosis prevented him from functioning as a warrior and monarch.

This year we will be starting to share a series of blogposts, telling different stories of disability and accessibility and we are interested in guest contributions from those not in the working group. We are particularly interested in sharing the experiences of other disabled professionals (which can be anonymous), including examples of reasonable adjustments. If you are interested in sharing your work or experience, we can be contacted through the Allies email address: diversityandinclusion@archives.org.uk

From the Board

Vice Chair, **Ruth Macleod**, reflects on what advocacy really means when you are faced with an on the spot opportunity to be a voice for the sector.

We talk a lot about advocacy in the sector, and it is something that is one of ARA's strategic aims – it has its own section on our business plan and we check that at every board meeting – so of course, I have given it some thought. Normally my thoughts are small scale around my own work or slightly wider around what I think ARA might be able to do, but sometimes the ideal opportunity to actually advocate for the whole sector – to the right person at the right time – comes along and you find yourself having to rapidly distil all the things you want for the record-keeping profession into a few pithy sentences! Such an opportunity presented itself to me when I represented ARA at the recent parliamentary launch of the Campaign for Records.

As well as introducing the Association and our take on the campaign I was also tasked with introducing each speaker – for this role I needed to know who they were and I was introduced to each in turn. This brought me face to face with the Minister for Arts and Heritage. As a history graduate he is keen on the heritage aspects of our work, but how to make him understand the vital importance of things like records management and information governance? Fortunately one of our other speakers, Richard Ovenden, was right next to him and helpfully putting the case for digital preservation. I focused in that moment on the role that archives play in protecting the truth, in providing an accurate history, but also, hopefully conveyed that the record makers need to be part of the process. History is a continuum and our part in it is to gather the records from the record makers, manage them, process them, keep them safe and archive them for future generations to use as history and current generations to use as evidence.

The Campaign for Records has not yet formulated a set of 'asks'; it is truly at the launch stage, bringing together a wide range of stakeholders from within government and also from allied sectors such as investigative journalism, law, policing and academia, as well as not-for-profit organisations campaigning on freedom of information and data rights. At this stage of the campaign we are very much setting out the sector's vital importance to democracy, to fairness and to justice – particularly in its role as keeper of the facts and evidence.

Alongside the Information and Records Management Society we are bringing many heads together to examine what works and what doesn't, where improvement is needed and where awareness needs raising. Listening to the speeches at the launch I could see my thoughts on advocacy presented through a range of different viewpoints. Understanding those diverse viewpoints will strengthen our case – we must talk to those we seek to influence not just in language they understand but with a starting point of topics they care about. In the case of the Minister, perhaps this is the value of facts to the historical record. In the case of others it is the value of evidence easily produced for freedom of information requests and inquiries. "To each his own" should be our motto for advocacy. I hope that in reading the report of the launch on pages [8 -13] you will find arguments to use the next time you are faced with the perfect opportunity to make our case.

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Parliamentary launch of the Campaign for Records – Democracy and Rights in the Digital Age

At an event at Portcullis House, Westminster, on 18th January 2023 the Archives and Records Association and the Information and Records Management Society (IRMS) launched the Campaign for Records – Democracy and Rights in the Digital Age. The event was hosted by **Chris Evans MP**, Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Archives and History.

The Campaign for Records highlights the need for better records management in public life and calls for more resources, modern law, better regulation and improved freedom of information and access to public records.

Without a robust framework for the collection and preservation of records, the age of dis- and mis-information will continue. Accusations of 'fake-news', conspiracies and cover-ups will abound and trust in government and democracy will be further undermined.

Fundamentally there needs to be proper investment into the record-keeping sector and its work. The campaign will also consider the need for a new, comprehensive legislative framework to ensure that digital records across the public sector (and its partners and contractors) will provide the essential records and evidence that the public need to rebuild and maintain trust in government and diminish the threat to representative democracy.

Speakers at the event reiterated many of these themes. Attendees, who included campaign stakeholders and contributors as well as members of IRMS and ARA, heard from Ruth Macleod, Vice Chair of ARA; Reynold Leming, Chair of IRMS; Chris Evans MP, MP for Islwyn, Shadow Minister for Defence Procurement, Chair APPG Archives and History; Richard Ovenden, Bodley's Librarian at the University of Oxford; Jon Baines, Senior Data Protection Specialist at Mishcon de Reya LLP and Lord Parkinson of Whitely Bay, Minister for Arts and Heritage.

Reynold Leming, Chair of IRMS, speaking at the launch event on 18th January 2023. © Deborah Mason

Ruth Macleod, Vice Chair of the Archives and Records Association introduced the event and spoke of the need to restore trust in democracy, saying:

"The way to do this is through improved record-keeping leading to quick responses to freedom of information requests and the ability to provide relevant evidence to public inquiries. There can be no accountability unless some form of account is kept. It may seem oxymoronic that history also has a future, but the future of our history is under threat. Unless we safeguard the records that we keep and continue to archive them and ensure

that those archives are fully representative of who we are and what we did, our future history will be fatally flawed".

Then followed an entertaining introduction from Reynold Leming, referencing Sherlock Holmes and the importance of data. Introducing the Information and Records Management Society, - a membership organisation for professionals with a wide range of job titles who are fundamentally in the trade of memory preservation, knowledge management and the protection of information rights - he said:

"It is a craft to which Sherlock Holmes would I think have offered his patronage. To quote from *The Adventure of the Copper Beeches*: 'Data! Data! Data!' he cried impatiently. 'I can't make bricks without clay.'

He continued with some further quotes from *A Scandal in Bohemia*:

"For many years he had adopted a system of docketing all paragraphs concerning men and things, so that it was difficult to name a subject or a person on which he could not at once furnish information."

"It is a capital mistake to theorise before one has data. Insensibly one begins to twist facts to suit theories, instead of theories to suit facts."

Concluding:
"Our records contain both the information to guide us and the evidence of what we have done. They must be both protected and leveraged, balancing innovation with lawfulness and ethics. The role of our Society [IRMS] is to provide resources, education and community for our members, along with external advocacy, including particularly via this Campaign, to ensure there is investment in the profession and that it operates within a modern and robust legal framework".

Chris Evans, MP for Islwyn, then spoke about the importance of preserving records and archives to fight against the era of misinformation and 'fake news' which dominated the period between 2016 to 2020.

He said that "archives have a pivotal role to play" and praised archivists, and others that work in the sector, calling them "the holders of truth". He also called for appropriate investment in the record-keeping sector to ensure that digital records across the public sector can deliver the vital records and evidence required by the public to rebuild and

Chris Evans MP, speaking at the launch event on 18th January 2023. © Deborah Mason

sustain trust in government. He finished by saying: "I believe that the collection and preservation of archives and records is vital for assessing historical 'truths' and the way we have remembered events. Archives and records aid us in connecting with our personal, local, national, and global pasts and help us to understand our present. It is vital we continue to protect archives and records for generations to come, so they too can learn from the past and to continue learning from our shared histories".

You can read more on Chris Evans' blog.

Richard Ovenden, Bodley's Librarian at the University of Oxford, then highlighted the importance of digital preservation and the challenge posed by the "private superpowers" that are the big tech companies.

He said:
"This poses a huge challenge for us all. The tech industry has increasing power and control over this data generated by all of us every time we go online (and when we aren't even aware of it). The financial power this dominance gives them allows big tech to innovate at a pace that the public sector struggles to keep up with. Regulation often lags behind the rapidity of change in the industry, and archives and libraries are no different. I have argued in the pages of the FT and elsewhere for a 'memory tax' to be levied on the profits of the tech industry to fund the preservation and fair access to digital records. Colleagues: we need to think more broadly across the policy landscape than regulation alone – the knowledge infrastructure of our society must be protected. Like a safe water supply, society needs to be able to rely on a safe reservoir of knowledge, one that is not subject to a tech sector that often

Richard Ovenden - Bodley's Librarian - speaking at the launch event on 18th January 2023. © Deborah Mason

behaves like the medieval church – stretching across political jurisdictions, with immense wealth, and the ability to see into our souls!

"We can only hold those in power to account if we have access to the records of their behaviour, their decision-making, and the discussions with their advisors and staff. This issue has, of course, come to be at the heart of much of the hottest political controversies of recent times: who made what decisions, when, and why around the management of the COVID-19 pandemic, for example. The keeping of records is intimately connected to the good conduct of governments, not just so that the administration of government business can be efficiently carried out, but so that the electorate can hold those officials to account, to ensure that their obligations are understood, and that they have been followed".

He went on to highlight the role of the Digital Preservation Coalition and the importance of long term planning: "We [the DPC] are now over a hundred organisations, and a few years ago we were joined by the UK Nuclear Decommissioning Authority. They have to think hard about access to knowledge over the long-term! As nuclear waste is dangerous for thousands of years, society long into the future needs to know a vast amount of information about what nuclear waste is buried in what location, when it was placed there, what containers it was stored in, and so on. I repeat: for society to know where it is going, it needs to know where it has come from. Long-term thinking in public policy terms, must come back into fashion". In rounding off his speech he gave five reasons

why the role of libraries and archives is of great importance to society, and need to be supported:

- they are essential tools for educating our fellow citizens, providing access to knowledge, mostly free of charge and open to all, helping to level up society, providing opportunity for all to learn, understand, and become both curious and sceptical;
- they are places where a diversity of knowledge can be encountered – not just the prevailing opinions of the echo chambers in which we live, but places where new knowledge can be encountered, where new ideas can challenge received opinion;
- libraries and archives support the well-being of citizens and the principles of an open society through the preservation of key rights and encouraging integrity in decision-making. Archives can be "fortifications in the defence of one's rights", as citizens of the former East Germany understood when they insisted on access to the former Stasi archives;
- in an age of disinformation and misinformation, libraries and archives are reference points for facts and truth, where knowledge can be consulted, cited and verified and relied upon;
- they are places where the identities of individuals, communities, and society are preserved and celebrated, whether through local history in our villages, towns and counties, or through celebrating the cultures of diaspora communities who have come to enrich the lives of our nation.

He concluded with the hope that George Orwell's warning in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* does not come true:
"The past was erased, the erasure was forgotten, the lie became truth."

You can read Richard's full speech here.

The next to speak was Jon Baines who advises on data protection and freedom of information law at the law firm Mishcon de Reya. He is also, separately, chair of the National Association of Data Protection and Freedom of Information Officers and as such has a deep knowledge of the statutory scheme for freedom of information. His speech, therefore, concentrated on this important aspect of the campaign.

Referring to the judgement made in 2022 that refused an application for judicial review of the legality of the government's use of instant messaging technologies for official business, he put forward a number of questions about the role of the Information Commissioner in providing relevant guidance and enforcement where the law is unable to.

Jon Baines of Mishcon de Reya - speaking at the launch event on 18th January 2023. © Deborah Mason

He said:
"We [also] know that the Information Commissioner recognises this: in November 2021 his office published guidance on "Official information held in non-corporate communications channels", observing at the time that, 'the use of non-corporate communications channels for official business is an issue that has arisen across a range of sectors [but] such channels create a number of risks and potential challenges to compliance [with the law]'.

"That guidance was helpful, but what did not accompany it, and what has not tended to emanate from Wilmslow (where the Commissioner is based) is robust action to improve things".

Jon continued to say:
"... what I would like to propose is that our current regulatory regime could do more and could be better used to improve records management.

"Most of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) is given over to making and responding to specific requests for information. However, at section 46, the Secretary of State is tasked with preparing a Code of Practice, 'providing guidance to relevant authorities as to the practice which it would, in his opinion, be desirable for them to follow in connection with the keeping, management and destruction of their records', including on "the practice to be adopted in relation to the transfer of records under the Public Records Act 1958 or the Public Records Act (Northern Ireland) 1923 and the practice of reviewing records before they are transferred under those provisions", (this is commonly known as the "section 46 Code").

"The most recent section 46 Code was issued by the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport in 2021. The Information Commissioner is tasked with 'promoting the observance by public authorities of the Code'. And while the Commissioner doesn't have actual enforcement powers in relation to the Code, he can give formal 'practice recommendations' to public authorities who are not, in his assessment, conforming with the Code. When he does so he must first consult with the Keeper of Public Records. Yet, as far as I know, since the Act commenced in 2000, the ICO has served only one such (in respect of the section 46 Code), and that was as far back as 2007, on Nottingham City Council".

Jon went on to ask a series of questions:
"Why, also, do we not see the Commissioner suggesting to underperforming public authorities that he (with The National Archives' assistance) can conduct a consensual audit of their records management (under section 47 of the FOIA)? Why are practice recommendations and audits not deployed more? Is it because the Commissioner doesn't see records management as an area needing improvement? (I don't think that can be right, given the guidance I referred to earlier). Does he lack resources? (If so, I have not heard him, or his predecessors, clamour for more in this area)"

But concluded:
"No, I fear that – over the years – the Commissioner has – oddly, perhaps perversely, given the issues we are discussing tonight – come to see records management as less and less relevant to his functions. The result of this is that one regularly

> ❝ It may seem oxymoronic that history also has a future, but the future of our history is under threat.
>
> **Ruth Macleod, Vice Chair ARA** ❞

sees statements in formal notices in relation to FOI requests along these lines: 'The FOI Act cannot require a public authority to change its systems, although the Commissioner may make an adverse comment if she believes there is evidence of particularly poor record handling'. When clearly her (now his) powers are more than this.

"And we have the rather odd situation that the Commissioner has not updated his guidance on the section 46 Code since 2016, despite the fact that – as mentioned earlier – the most recent Code post-dates this by five years.

"So my brief observation, and suggestion, tonight is that the FOI Act, and the Information Commissioner, could contribute more than they do to the pressing issues facing records in the UK. I would suggest that the Campaign – to the extent it has not already – work to get the Commissioner on board and cajole him into doing more

You can read more of John's thoughts on FOI and Information Governance on his blog here and the Mishcon de Reya blog here.

The final speaker of the evening was Lord

Parkinson of Whitley Bay, Minister for Arts & Heritage and Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Minister in the Lords. He opened by saying how important archives were to him personally as a history graduate, and how useful they had been to him in his career as a government advisor. Particularly referring to his time at the Home Office under Theresa May, he mentioned the importance of records in the inquiries into the death of Stephen Lawrence, Hillsborough, the death of Daniel Morgan and the Historic Child Sexual Abuse Inquiry. He also talked about how vital record-keeping was to the ongoing inquiries into Contaminated Blood, Grenfell and COVID-19 saying:

"The past is very present, so it is very important that we look after the records".

Referencing the age of "contested truth" he spoke about the sanctity of records and their role in preserving "sacred facts". Referencing Richard Ovenden's Orwellian quote, he talked about how the Russians were targeting archives in Ukraine with the specific aim of erasing history and replacing it with their own "warped version of the truth".

Whilst caveating that he was speaking within his DCMS remit (and much of government records management falls to the Cabinet Office) he highlighted initiatives that were improving both record-keeping and access to records:

- The UK Government website archive
  – this holds information published since 1996 and has 6.5 billion digital files, including 3 million social media posts from 1,000 government accounts
- New technology developed by The UK National Archives which allows the transfer of digital records on a little-and-often basis using a proprietary technology that enables government workers to upload, prepare, digitise and transfer records to the UK National Archives
- The availability of a wide range of case law from court judgements and higher tribunals that has been made available using the same digital transfer technology. In some cases, court judgements are available for public access within hours of the judgement being made.

Lord Parkinson also sought to reassure the assembled guests that DCMS continued to work with the UK National Archives in the updating of codes of practice and guidelines and that the Cabinet Office were currently revising guidance regarding non-corporate channels – having last updated this in 2013.

You can find out more about the campaign here.

If you would like to get involved in the campaign or provide a guest blog please email: info@campaignforrecords.org

ARA
Conference
2023
Communities

The ARA Conference will be held in Belfast this year from 30th August to 1st September at the Europa Hotel. The theme is Communities.

At time of going to press we have confirmed Dr Peter Crooks as our Friday keynote. Peter is Associate Professor/Senior Lecturer in Medieval History at Trinity College Dublin and the Founding Director of Beyond 2022: Ireland's Virtual Record Treasury – a project which recently won the Ellis Prize (which we covered in the January/February edition of ARC Magazine).

Full package member delegate rates are £595 early bird and £650 standard. Information on non-member and day-delegate rates is available on the conference microsite here.

Bursaries are available as usual and information and how to apply for bursaries can be found on the conference website.

Our conference venue, The Europa Hotel, has a strong commitment to environmental sustainability.

Professional Development News
How ARA is supporting workforce development

In this article Chris Sheridan, Head of Professional Standards and Development, explains how ARA is responding to some of the pressing issues facing the sector.

Throughout 2022 we have strengthened our relationship with the UK National Archives and sought to work more collaboratively, particularly around professional development and sector advocacy. We know that this is an issue important to many members. We have also improved and strengthened communications with our volunteering members active within ARA's Nations, English Regions and Sections. This helps improve transparency and participation in the governance of ARA and deciding what our priorities should be.

The 2018 workforce development strategy published by the UK National Archives responded to the key challenges then facing the archive sector. It focused on digital skills, career development and diversity and inclusion. There was a sector-wide recognition for the need for change – the COVID-19 years of 2020 and 2021 in many ways escalated that change but also used up resources that might have been directed elsewhere. The economic hangover from the pandemic was compounded by war in Ukraine pushing up energy prices and a general cost of living crisis across both the UK and Ireland.

It is with this background context that we have sought to develop new initiatives and refine existing ones to support the three professional disciplines - archives, archive conservation and records management – that we represent.

In the last edition of *ARC Magazine* we announced a review of the competency framework. Launched in 2017 and developed in consultation with employers and members, the framework is a powerful professional development tool designed to support members and the wider record-keeping sector. It can be used by individuals to periodically help them structure and plan their career development. Employers can use the framework as part of their staff appraisal process, helping ensure their staff meet national ARA standards in practice and professional development. Used in this way it can also help identify skills gaps and training needs and this also applies to volunteers and volunteer-led groups.

This year's review of the framework will help to ensure that it is fit for purpose. We want it to be a tool to join the dots between ARA-accredited postgraduate qualifications, apprenticeships, professional registration and our annual CPD and events programme. As well as consulting widely both in the UK and Ireland and internationally, we are also looking at record-keeping roles from a broader skills perspective. Part of the review included an analysis of 100 jobs advertised during 2021 and 2022. Person specifications give employers an opportunity to add more insight into the kind of person they would like to employ. Strong communication skills were requested by almost all employers (97%), followed by planning and organisation skills (59%), digital skills (45%) and staff and volunteer management skills (40%). Just over a quarter of roles required a commitment to CPD (26%).

In order to meet some of those requirements, we have launched a new central training programme this spring. Developed with members, for members - and using insights gained from skills survey members - this complements the events organised and delivered by our fantastic team of volunteers across ARA Nations, English Regions and Sections of interest.

The Spring 2022 programme began in March with 'Disaster recovery: How to Train your Team' and 'Introduction to Advocacy'. These will be followed by a three-part course on Copyright, and Introduction to Project Management, with more sessions still to be announced. In autumn 2022 we also launched an online webinar series on the topic of web archiving. We will deliver more in-person and online CPD opportunities, both free and paid. All our training events can be found here.

A criticism made of professions and sectors is that they

Workforce development is a conversation to be had by all and we're working to make these conversations and connections as transparent and effective as possible.

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resist change, finding comfort in their traditional career routes and practices. Professions can be guilty of shaping the next generation of practitioners in their own image, unconsciously excluding people from backgrounds different to their own and stifling the workforce diversity they consciously seek to achieve. This concern, shared by many, has a long history - I can recall as far back as the Blair government and its 'fair access to professions' initiative. This initiative introduced new thinking and led to apprenticeships that allow a more diverse range of candidates to join professions that would otherwise exclude them.

ARA has played a key role in developing the Level 7 Archivist and Records Manager apprenticeship, which we hope will be launched in 2023. It will provide employers with a new recruitment pathway, complementing the academic route by maintaining standards, while reaching out to those not in a position to study a postgraduate qualification in England and Wales. We've begun conversations with a number of employers who will offer paid work experience, helped by funding from the UK National Archives, so that potential apprentices can gain experience before deciding whether the apprenticeship is for them. Once the apprenticeship is fully launched we will continue to support both employers and apprentices wherever we can to make this initiative a success. As well as the paid work experience, we currently offer apprentices other benefits including free ARA membership.

As well as making non-academic routes into the sector more accessible we are also looking at the academic pathway and have changed the way in which we accredit postgraduate programmes at universities. Currently six universities offer ARA-accredited postgraduate programmes in the UK and Ireland. We will continue to work with the accredited programme leaders to help align learning outcomes to the needs of the record-keeping sector.

The learning does not end with the qualification, whether completion of an apprenticeship or a postgraduate degree. A key part of the career support we offer is professional registration. ARA offers three levels of professional membership: Foundation, Registered and Fellow. These awards continue to attract interest from members and potential members alike, as they recognise the breadth of skills and experience across the sector. From the specialist knowledge demonstrated by the trainees that completed The UK National Archives' Bridging the Digital Gap programme through to senior managers and professionals with 30+ years of knowledge and experience. Professional registration provides the recognition that these experiences deserve. We average around 26 applications a year, but we're keen to build on this to give recognition to those members who continue with their professional development. Professional registration also offers a competitive advantage above the academic qualification. This independent validation of your career experience is essential for a competitive job market. We offer lots of support for candidates, those considering applying and mentors. This includes guidance, examples of completed competency forms and free online consultations.

Workforce development is a conversation to be had by all and we're working to make these conversations and connections as transparent and effective as possible. Members can have confidence in knowing that the feedback and insight given in ARA surveys and other forms of engagement influences all aspects of ARA activity. If you have any thoughts or comments then please contact me at chris.sheridan@archives.org.uk.

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Decolonising the Archive: A Caribbean Approach

In this article **Makiya Davis-Bramble** explores how her mixed-Caribbean cultural background gave her the insight needed to explore how historical narratives were collected, researched, and catalogued.

In many cultures around the world, family traditions are taught and coveted by community elders. Grandparents and great-grandparents alike pass down treasured cultural practices to family members both young and old. These inherited recipes, customs and sayings influence the way we navigate through life and, interestingly, even the way we work.

Whilst undertaking a career in the heritage sector, choosing an archival project to pursue has personally come down to two things: does the project benefit the local community it serves, and will marginalised histories be explored? It was really important for me to help highlight unacknowledged histories that remained hidden within objects and documents. However, in order to do this, it was essential to view working practice through a decolonial lens. This meant that a working framework had to be created to re-contextualise, re-interpret, and re-imagine items existing in the archive. Processes were also included, such as taking a deeper look at why certain items have historically been accessioned over others, and what tools could be implemented to make archives more inclusive and accessible to use in the future.

Now this is where my cultural heritage came in. I come from a mixed-Caribbean background and found that many of the sayings and principles shared by my grandmothers could be used to help reshape the way archives unpack their collections. Decolonising the archive with Eastern Caribbean wisdom felt like a natural way to approach creating equality and representation in heritage spaces.

Below I share four Caribbean sayings I've grown up with, the meanings behind them, and how they allowed me to approach archiving from a different perspective.

1.   Wash in the first water.
All things have a purpose.
Do not let a present opportunity pass you by.
When you first spot things that need to be amended or altered in the archive, such as cataloguing and item

labelling, this can sometimes be overwhelming. With many archive services running with strict budgets these tasks present a challenge of prioritisation among other strands of work. Instead of making a mental note to address things later on, it is often more helpful to assess the timescale of any issue you find. Oftentimes, it is easier to slot in a piece of work during a quieter time in the day than it is to officially find a block of time to tackle it.

Taking hold of opportunities also rings true for decolonising projects in general. If your archive wishes to create a public facing project such as an online exhibition, object handling session, or simply sharing stories from the archive, these workstreams can be looked at as an opportunity to explore inclusive histories and connect with diverse community groups.

2.   Laugh and cry lives in the same house.
The same thing can bring opposite emotions and meanings.
Within the archive, object interpretation is a key tool to demystify the nature of items and the histories they hold. When looking to re-interpret a collection piece it is important to recognise the dual meanings and perspectives that can be present. A booklet on town planning doesn't just represent information on how a town was structured but also how social changes were presented and marketed to the local community. A colonial trading log doesn't just represent the interests of British trading companies, it also highlights the goods most meaningful to the British public and sheds light on the colonies the resources originated from.

Acknowledging that an infinite number of stories can be told from one object is one of the first steps in decolonising narratives and the constructions of Britain's social and cultural reality today.

3.   Dirty water cools hot iron.
All things have a purpose.
As archivists, we understand that every item is purposeful and has a usefulness to exploring a particular

part of history. This usefulness can change over time and identifying new uses for objects can help to bring more nuanced narratives to the forefront. For example, a 50-year-old university student newsletter is a clear source for looking at academic practice, university structure in the UK, and the experiences of students. It therefore may also be identified as a source of black histories and women's histories in Britain at the time, if it shares photographs and holds stories of students and alumni from these backgrounds.

Challenging what I call your "collection perception" and thinking outside of the box can help to assist with illuminating different community experiences, and helps to develop new forms of interaction and engagement concerning archive services as a whole.

4. Who don't hear must feel.
Seek and heed advice as your actions have consequences.
Receiving and listening to constructive feedback is a great way to begin to address the need for inclusivity and representation within the archive. Whilst some initiatives have to go through senior management approval and may take a while to get off the ground it is important to reassure the local community that work will be undertaken. Taking feedback on

board ensures that the archive meets the needs of its users, helps archives re-focus their lines of work, and empowers the local community to share their stories through facilitating wider conversations.

This saying also applies to learning within the archive space. There are many sources of information on anti-racist practice, archive decolonisation, and diversity and inclusion available online in the GLAM sector. To learn more about how to implement these tools in your archive you can attend lectures, talks, and even create your own book clubs to discover new ways of working. Redeveloping your learning presents a great opportunity to foster new engagements and understand different viewpoints.

Archival practice is not just historical: it is also cultural and personal. My cultural background poured into my work and gave me the insight needed to explore how historical narratives were collected, researched and catalogued. Decolonising ultimately changes the way we share, collect, and present the stories of communities, organisations and individuals. Continuing to build on this knowledge and draw on different experiences is the main step towards enhancing how the archive tells stories and reflects the realities of the people represented within its collections.

This article was originally published as one of eight blogs on the topic of decolonising the archive.

All the blogs can be found on the Archives and Records Association website here.
These include:

- Sarah Pymer from Hull University Archives writing about the work of the University Library and Archives in decolonising the curriculum and creating a fairer, more inclusive institution

- Victoria Cranna, Archivist and Records Manager at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine looking at decolonising the LSHTM Archives Service

- Kate Bevan looking at how the Historic England Archive is addressing the issue of inclusive cataloguing

- Philip Milnes-Smith on the broader implications of a recent ARA ALES event ('Decolonising the curriculum, the help teachers need and the role of the archives in achieving a decolonised history') which was presented by Orlene Badu.

And a series of introductory blogs from Philip Milnes-Smith, archivist at Shakespeare's Globe:
- 'Decolonising: what country, friends, is this? - introducing decolonising as an archival practice, drawing on the history of its usage and the emerging work of the Allies to support the sector'

- 'Decolonising: to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up - working towards a provisional definition of decolonising catalogues'

- 'Decolonising in practice: the strangers' case - looking at decolonising catalogues in a contemporary organisation without direct entanglement in empire'.

When you neglect public record-keeping you set yourself up to fail at good governance – a lesson from Sierra Leone

In 2019, **Aminata Allen**, Archivist at the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone, went home to Sierra Leone to assess its records management practices for the research component of her master's degree. In this article, adapted from a presentation made at the IRMS Conference in 2022, she gives a laser sharp insight into why good public sector record-keeping – and investment in educating and supporting record keepers – is so vital for good governance.

Sierra Leone is a country on the West Coast of Africa that shares its borders with Liberia and Guinea.

The country, according to Statistics Sierra Leone, has approximately 8.3 million people and more than 16 spoken languages. English is the official language, inherited from Britain during its colonial rule. Sierra Leone is rich in mineral resources like diamonds, bauxite, rutile and gold, but it is still amongst the least developed countries in the world. The country's wealth is unfairly distributed due to a decade-long civil war, political upheaval, bad governance and corruption by public officials.

According to a World Bank report, Sierra Leone's low GDP growth (4.1% in 2021) is due in part to the country's need to manage its natural resources more transparently and create fiscal space for development. One way to do this would be to improve records management practices.

The importance of efficient records management is not a new phenomenon in Sierra Leone. In 1895, the colonial governor needed access to all relevant records pertaining to the rental payment of Banana Island, which is on the outskirts of the city of Freetown. To his dismay, the information was unavailable due to a lack of proper record-keeping. This triggered the start of structural records management reform. The Colonial Secretary pushed the drive for proper record-keeping and recommended the appointment of a records management clerk. That initiative preserved many colonial records which are still used today for research purposes.

Sierra Leone gained independence from colonial rule in 1961, and in 1965 Parliament enacted Public Archives Act No. 44 , which made the Archives office responsible for storing, arranging, repairing and conserving public records for long-term preservation. However, this Act has been dormant over the years. Moreover, government records are still mostly maintained in hard copy. Many of these records are stacked around offices or sitting neglected in government storage facilities without any information regarding their contents. As the stockpiles increase, efficiency further decreases.

Many attribute the country's state of record-keeping to decades of political upheaval and instability. Since becoming independent in 1961, Sierra Leone transitioned from a parliamentary democracy

> The improvement of record-keeping is absolutely essential for moving any reform process forward
>
> **Late Sierra Leonean President Dr. Ahmed Tejan Kabbah**

Library and storage for inactive records at a ministry. © Aminata Allen

Map of Sierra Leone. © mapcruzin.com

Vital Records. © Aminata Allen

Vital Records. © Aminata Allen

to a one-party system, then to military rule, and, finally, to democratic governance. [1] As the political dynamics changed, proper records management and preservation gradually became neglected. In the 1990s and early 2000s, Sierra Leone went through 11 years of civil war in which many public institutions were burnt down or vandalised and countless public records were forever lost.
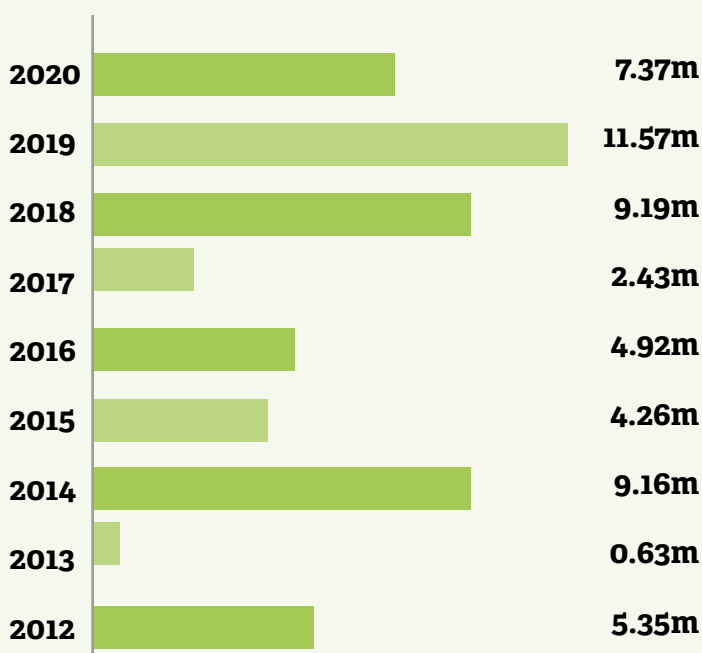
The massive loss of records, combined with the government's ongoing failure to streamline its practices, created opportunities for abuse. For example, for several decades, the government was unknowingly paying 'ghost' workers, or people who were claiming a salary under the names of persons who were already dead. A UK-based charity, The International Records Management Trust, helped to resolve that problem by comparing and validating existing records to ensure that only actual employees received salaries.

Poor records management also causes costly inefficiencies. For example, in 2019, the government was preparing a peace-building national conference called Bintumani 3 that was intended to unite all the political parties. Two similar conferences had been held in the 1990s, but the 2019 event organisers had difficulty in finding records of the previous two. It was therefore very challenging for them to build upon the systems, reference points, and lessons learned from hosting the previous conferences.

Late Sierra Leonean President Dr Ahmed Tejan Kabbah noted in August 2003 that: "The poor storage and retrieval of information slows down work of the public services and impacts negatively on policy formulation, planning and finance control. The improvement of record-keeping is absolutely essential for moving any reform process forward". [2] Despite these words, more than 20 years after the end of the war, the government has made little effort to improve the way public records are organised and kept. This has had a measurable impact on the economy.

Once a year, the Audit Service of Sierra Leone audits all public institutions and submits its report to Parliament. The report details how every public institution uses its allocated funds. Below is the estimated loss from 2012 – 2020, when the last report was published. (The currency used in the reports is the Sierra Leone Leones but for the benefit of readers, the Leones are converted into British Pounds at the exchange rate at time of writing).

Sierra Leone Public institutions losses

Year	Amount
2020	7.37m
2019	11.57m
2018	9.19m
2017	2.43m
2016	4.92m
2015	4.26m
2014	9.16m
2013	0.63m
2012	5.35m

Amounts in GBP (Millions)

This is a country where an average family survives on less than 1 pound a day. Imagine how many lives could be improved if all these monies lost were used to improve development programs in the country. Now multiply these figures by 10, 15, or 20 years.

Common irregularities for loss across all the audit reports

Unexplained expenditure

Unsupported payments

Tax irregularities

Inventory/stores irregularities

Unretired imprest funds allocated for specific purposes

Payroll irregularities

Irregularities in contract management

Cash irregularities

Irregularities in procurement activities

Poor Records Management

The audit report notes that one of the main reasons it is so difficult to prove evidence of corruption in Sierra Leone is the lack of proper records management. As we all know, transparency and accountability largely depend on the availability of records to provide needed information. When public records are disorganised and disconnected, corruption and impunity are allowed to flourish.

The structure of government ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) makes clear that records management is neither prioritised nor recognised as an expert profession in Sierra Leone. This may be due, in part, to the fact that for many years, the government employed clerks with little formal education to serve as records custodians and perform other office tasks. It may also be due to the fact that records management is given little consideration because of its invisible, supporting role even though it is the bedrock of all other business strategies.

A few Sierra Leonean MDAs have recently started to hire professional records officers with expertise in handling public records, but their salaries are pathetically low (less than 100 pounds per month), and they are positioned at the very bottom of their organisations' hierarchy. It is therefore impossible for such professionals to implement strategies that could improve records management as they have no decision-making power, especially on strategic planning and budget allocation.

The training for records professionals in Sierra Leone is woefully inadequate. Although there is an institute for information and communication studies at Fourah Bay College at the University of Sierra Leone, the students graduate with more theoretical knowledge than practical skills because the school lacks almost all necessary resources including even the most basic books on modernised records and archives management. Most of the books in the school library are encyclopaedias published from the 1960s to 1980s. This is compounded by an equal lack of computers. If a student does manage to get on a computer to do research, internet access is almost impossible due to the country's inconsistent electricity supply. This means that even if the government decides to improve its record-keeping processes, the next generation of professionals is largely untrained in the kind of systems that would produce maximum results and garner wider respect for the profession.

With the right political will for change, good governance can thrive. Sierra Leone needs to take urgent and drastic steps to change the way its records are kept and managed.

I propose the following steps to improve good governance through good record-keeping in Sierra Leone:

- The government and international development partners need to make records management a core component of the country's development strategy.

- The government needs to review the National Records and Archives Act to empower current records professionals to be taken seriously.

- The government needs to establish a records management commission or give legislative authority to partner with existing commissions like the Directorate of Science, Technology and Innovation or the Right to Access Information Commission.

- International development partners must make systematic records management a prerequisite benchmark for any financial support given, setting performance indicators in the interim to measure efforts made to improve the process.

- The government must improve the country's power supply. Public offices need undisrupted electricity to successfully implement systematised and modernised records management programmes.

- The massive backlog of records that are currently held in storehouses and MDA offices must be addressed urgently.

- The government must establish a records centre to hold the MDA's semi-active records and upgrade the National Archives to hold all archived MDA records.

- The government must invest to improve the quality of education for aspiring records professionals.

- The government must empower records and archives professionals to be key players in implementing strategies that would improve information gathering, management and preservation.

- Financial remuneration for record-keeping professionals should be increased and better resources should be made available to enable them to do their work and encourage pro-activity.

Finally, no matter how long a country-wide records management programme might take, it is crucial not to delay its start. Continued inaction merely increases unorganised records accumulation and allows for continued inefficiencies, missed opportunities and avenues for abuse.

[1] Zack-Williams, Tunde. *When The State Fails*. Pluto Press, 2012, pp. 251-256
[2] No record could be found with the full speech made by the president. It was mentioned in the book *Integrity in Government through Records Management - Essays in Honour of Anne Thurston*. 1st ed., Routledge - Taylor & Francis Group, 2014, p. 45

Getting the best out of Microsoft 365: The answer? Good Information Architecture

In this article **Rachel Mitchell**, Trainer and Consultant at <u>Leadership Through Data</u> looks at how you can get the best out of Microsoft 365 (M365) regardless of what stage you are at in your deployment.

Whatever project you're jumping into, be it a new kitchen or home renovation, you wouldn't do it without a defined plan or design, would you? How about when you're at work, a change project for example? The answer should be a resounding no! So why then do we always attempt to embed a complex Information Technology tool that changes how we work and collaborate on all levels (both internally and externally), with no real plan? Enough is enough, I say, we need to stop doing this.

Due to the pandemic, over the past two or three years I've seen many organisations reacting quickly to the needs of their companies and organisations by rolling out online collaboration tools such as Microsoft Teams. The right thing to do, of course, however pre-pandemic I saw organisations releasing the 'Microsoft 365 beast' without any real plans as to how it would work for them and their external partners. Organic development is good, but without a plan it will lead you to a new set of problems.
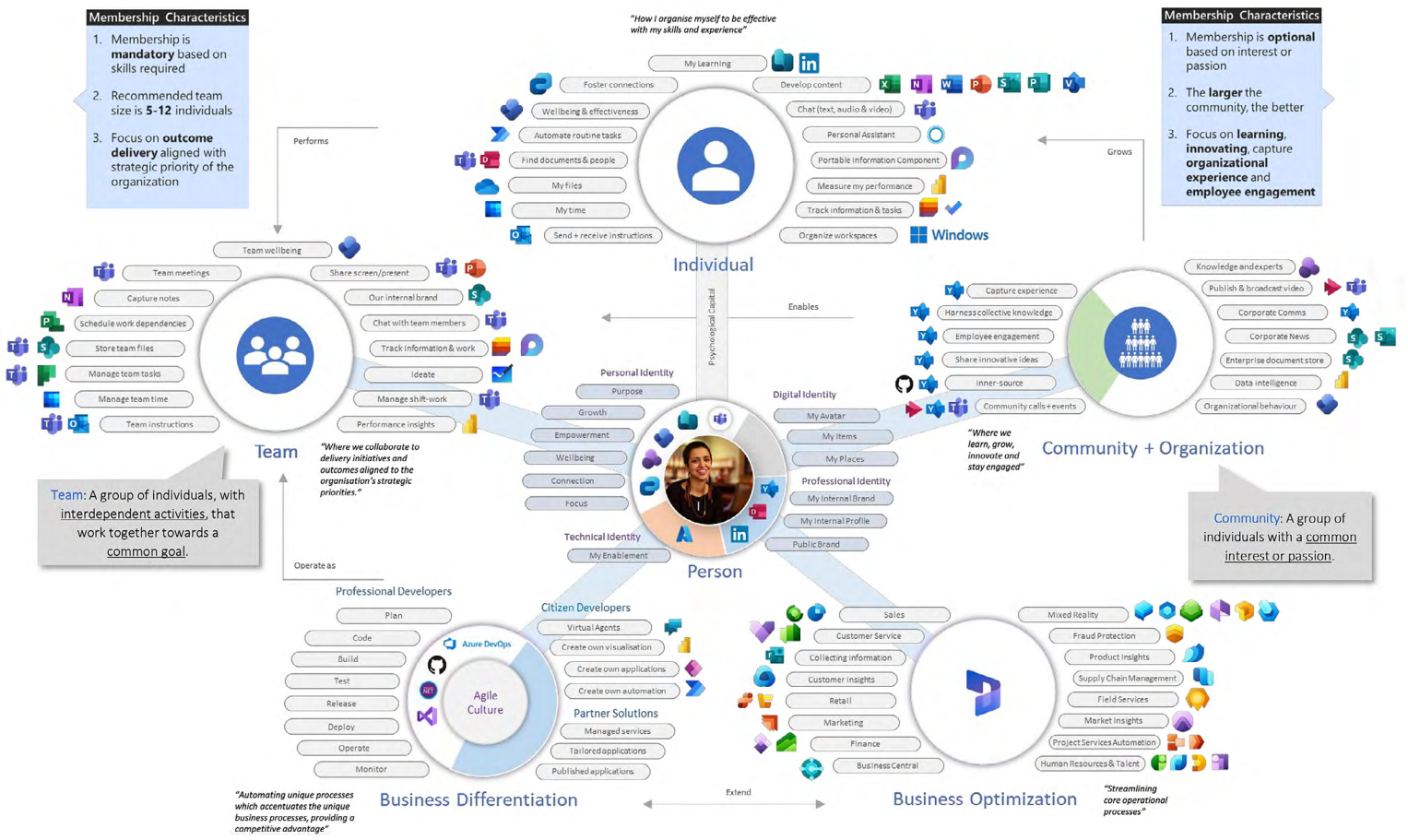
Do not despair my fellow M365 friends! It's never too late to put a 'harness on that beast' and tame it into obedience for you and your organisation.

Here are some simple planning steps you can take to regain control of the M365 platform.

© Unsplash

Modern Collaboration Architecture (MOCA)
Extended v1.1

Understand Microsoft's modern collaborative architecture

First, we need to understand what Microsoft envisaged their platform would be used for. This is critical, as if we understand this then we can work with their technology and the embedded architecture, rather than against it. The key to unlock this power is in their description of the Modern Collaborative Architecture. This includes the slide above, taken from this Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation.

This Microsoft© slide shows the power of the platform and the context within which you work; as an individual, as part of a team and as part of an organisation. All of these requirements need to be considered when planning your architecture.
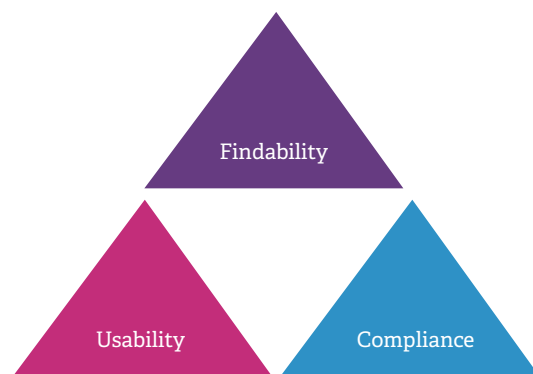
Use leadership through data's 'Golden Trinity' of information architecture as a framework

When considering your requirements, use the Golden Trinity of Information Architecture to help. The outcomes you are ultimately trying to achieve or improve upon are:

- Findability - Design that enables greater findability via search, navigation, browse, filters, etc
- Usability - Design that takes ways of working into account and meets the needs of users
- Compliance - Design that supports compliance with information management and governance requirements.

Developing Information Architecture can be difficult for records/information managers, archivists and other traditional information

Factors of the Golden Triangle of IA

Source: 'The Golden Trinity of Information Architecture' - Leadership Through Data - Microsoft 365 Information Architecture Training Course © 2023 Course workbook.

governance (IG), records management and data protection roles. I'd like to stress however, this is not the same, although some of the same key principles and products can be applied.

You may find that you need some professional assistance to work through your Information Architecture design to maximise your organisation's positive outcomes. Let's explore them in more detail, and how you can make a business case for resources to be deployed to assist in this area.

Getting buy-in from senior management

Good Information Architecture will not only improve the 'Golden Trinity' described above, but will also improve efficiency, effectiveness and innovation. These are the key factors that need to be communicated to get senior management buy-in, and don't forget our old friend risk reduction! Nothing gets the attention of a board of directors or other governance entity better than a red risk.

Share the love and allow collaboration for colleagues

Innovation is often the surprise factor here, but by better storing, presenting, and enhancing knowledge by sharing internally, an organisation can better exploit that knowledge in all functional business areas.

It can often be a surprise how badly an organisation's outcomes can be affected due to departments or even individuals working in silos. It's almost always due to poor Information Architecture. For an organisation where shared drives are the norm, and each department is presumably familiar with their local folders and storage, search can also be stifled across functions and permissions can often be restrictive, with valuable information often only available to a very small number of employees. This goes completely against the concept of having a 'learning organisation'.

"Learning organizations [are] organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together." **Peter Senge,** *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* **(1990).**

If people don't know what information is held, it can't be leveraged to improve operations. This leads to stale regurgitated ideas and duplication of effort to collect or develop the same information or knowledge. A costly endeavour!

Further resources

For further help on this topic, Leadership Through Data runs a Microsoft 365 Information Architecture training course). ARA members get a 10% discount on public courses using code ARA10.

If you require more in-depth help or training, or assistance with your Information Architecture development,

Getting buy-in from senior management. © Unsplash

Leadership Through Data can help. Just pop us a message and have a chat. We're friendly people.

Want to keep up to date with the ever-changing Microsoft releases? Leadership Through Data also host FREE webinars called 'Ketchups' which condense all the latest updates into one simple webinar that's easy to understand and related to information governance and records management. You can register for the next 'Ketchup' here.

More about the author

Rachel Mitchell joined Leadership Through Data in 2022. She is a highly experienced information governance professional with a proven track record in both data protection and records management with the mantra 'making it easy to do the right thing'.

As a serving Data Protection Officer and IG lead with a Master's in Information and Records Management she can help you translate theory into practice. Rachel has worked in information and its subset of intelligence since 1998, providing information solutions to public authorities, latterly in the health and social care sector.

Rachel's skills and enthusiasm will help you get the solution or skills you require with her knowledge of technical solutions including Microsoft 365 and her focus on 'getting the day job done'.

The five phases of good Information Architecture

There are five phases of good Information Architecture development that we at Leadership Through Data recommend:

- Information Audit
- Design
- Implementation and Adoption
- Testing and Refinement
- Ongoing Governance

As mentioned previously, some work may already have been completed that can contribute to this work in records management, data protection or other disciplines, for example, Information Technology. This can contribute to your Information Architecture project, but it needs to be looked at with a slightly different lens to get the Information Architecture outcomes described.

Phase 1 – Information Audit

- Ask yourself 'what do we hold', 'where' and 'why'?
- You many have done previous audits, have a good information asset register or a record of processing activities that will have some of the information required
- This audit should take that a stage further and look at the use of information in the context of your organisation: what are you collectively trying to achieve?
- It should also consider the different users and their needs.

Phase 2 – Design

- The second phase is to get into the detailed design
- You need to appreciate all of the capabilities in Microsoft 365 to ensure that you are exploiting them to deliver your organisational outcomes
- The embedded taxonomies and tools such as content types can help with this.

Phase 3 – Implementation and Adoption

- The next step is to implement your design
- We recommend the use of a test environment where you can safely try out your design ideas to reduce problems occurring on implementation. Don't play a game of risk and reach the final live stage where you find out that something has been missed or forgotten
- Don't forget, this phase is all about your users. How do they find the design? Does it work for them? Is it intuitive? Is it something your mother would be proud of?

Phase 4 – Testing and Refinement

- It goes without saying that this will be cyclical, and the key here is to 'fail fast'
- Test, trial with users, identify snags, refine, re-implement and repeat.

Phase 5 – Ongoing Governance

- Not to sugar-coat anything, but this is where many organisations fail
- There is an ongoing resource requirement for continuous improvement and flexing of your architecture to meet changes in business needs, so this needs to be accounted for in general business planning post adoption.

Any of these five phases can be applied at any point in your Microsoft 365 journey, plus for those in question, you can reverse engineer the organic development that may have occurred in the pandemic. The benefits of a good Information Architecture and using your Microsoft 365 tools to help your business in the way Microsoft intended is a winning combination and the key to success.

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© Unsplash

Crowdsourcing project for Welsh archives

#CrowdCymru is a digital volunteer crowdsourcing project funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and run jointly by Gwent Archives, Glamorgan Archives and Cardiff University Special Collections & Archives.

Accessed via a crowdsourcing platform established by the National Library of Wales, this bilingual digital system enables remote volunteers to tag, annotate and describe the digital heritage collections held within these exceptional repositories.

Archive services across Wales hold millions of irreplaceable records, but many are only minimally catalogued and therefore difficult to identify and find. This project harnesses the knowledge of individuals in communities across Wales and beyond, to enrich its collective heritage for the benefit of current and future generations - locally, nationally, and globally.

This project is completely digital, and available to anyone, anywhere with online access and volunteers control how much or how little they wish to contribute. It is hoped to engage the interest of those who might have wanted to become involved in volunteering with South Wales archives but are unable to travel to the sites, or live too far away.

The partners have made an exciting variety of collections available for the project. These include a collection of Cardiff Dockland Community Photographs taken between 1900-1920; the Edward Thomas Archive, a detailed personal archive of one of the lesser-known war poets; and the diaries of Priscilla Scott-Ellis, written while volunteering as a nurse during both the Spanish Civil War and WWII. More collections will be added as the project progresses.

For more information visit Twitter or contact Jennifer Evans (jennifer.evans@ gwentarchives.gov.uk), Digital Volunteering Project Officer.

Edward Thomas Archive. © Cardiff University Special Collections & Archives

Cardiff Dockland Community Photographs Collection. © Glamorgan Archives
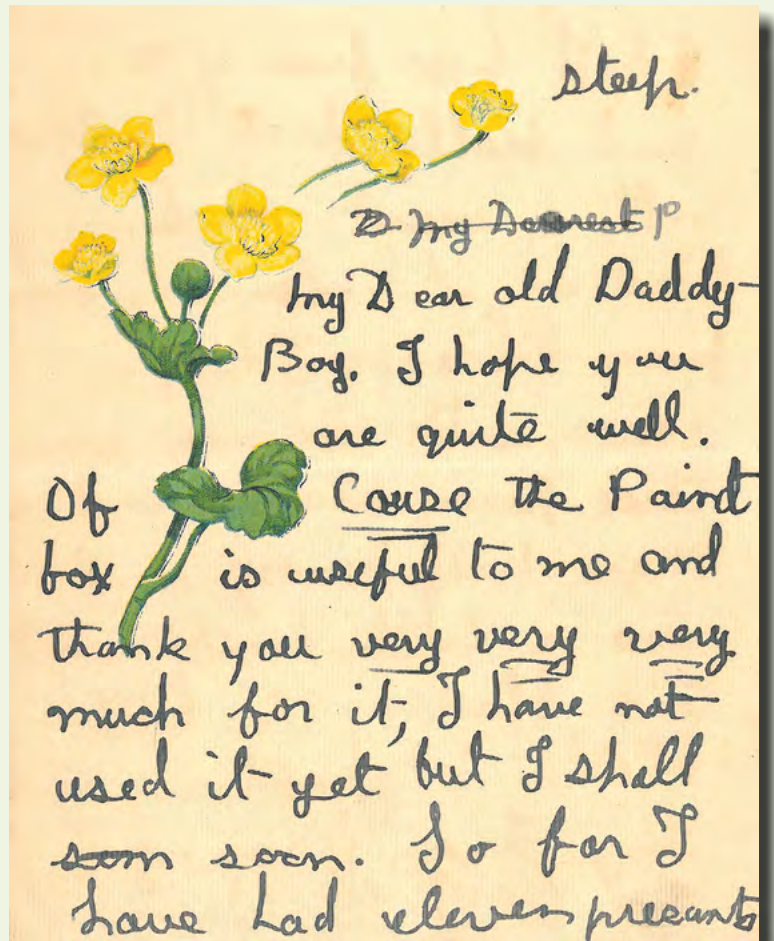
British Records Association awards 2022 Janette Harley Prize

The British Records Association (BRA) awards the annual Harley Prize in memory of BRA member Janette Harley, who died in 2015. It is intended to raise awareness of research and achievements in the world of archives and is awarded for the best, or most original, piece of recent published work which reflects the aims of the Association: to promote the preservation, understanding, accessibility and study of our recorded heritage for the public benefit.

The 2022 winners are Dr Janet Weston (Centre for History in Public Health, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine), and Charlie Barnes (Dead Earnest Theatre) for Power and Protection, two short films and a website about the Court of Protection, c1900-1983, created as part of 'Measuring Mental Capacity', a research study funded by the Wellcome Trust.

Three further entries were highly commended:

- Dr Jennifer Aston (Northumbria University), 'Petitions to the Court for Divorce and Matrimonial Causes: A New Methodological Approach to the History of Divorce, 1857-1923', Journal of Legal History (2022) here.

- Dr Hazel Hall, Dr Bruce Ryan and Dr Iain McGregor (Edinburgh Napier University), 'Lorna Lloyd's Diary of the War' podcast series, September 1939–January 1941 here.

- Dr Angela Muir (University of Leicester), for her online talk, 'Gaol Files from the Court of Great Sessions in Wales' here.

A call for entries for this year's Janette Harley Prize will be made in April.

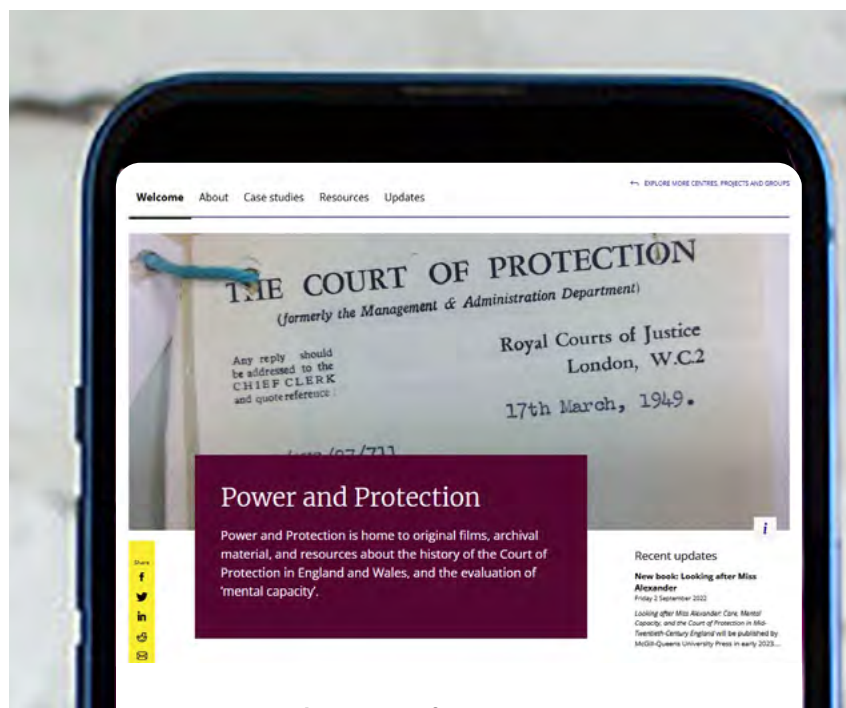Still from the short film 'Power and Protection: the case of Miss Beatrice Alexander'. © LSHTM/ Dead Earnest Theatre

Logo for the Centre for History in Public Health at LSHTM

Logo for Dead Earnest theatre company

Screenshot of the Power & Protection homepage. © LSHTM/Janet Weston

Nominations are now open for the Archive Volunteering Award 2023

Putting yourself forward for an award - or nominating others - has many benefits. It helps to review all the good things you do and also show - particularly in the case of volunteers - how much value you put on the work of the people in your organisation. The publicity if you win can also be very helpful. Even if you aren't in a position to nominate your own organisation, think about who you know and who is doing excellent work. Maybe give them a nudge - we are all too modest!

The Archive Volunteering Award welcomes projects which demonstrate how archives have supported volunteers through the past year and have adapted projects to suit their circumstances, whether remotely or in new ways of working. Winners have a national platform to celebrate their volunteers' contribution to the service and gain publicity for their archive's role in supporting individuals and community through volunteering programmes.

The 2022 Award was awarded to the Revealing Wigan Archives project by

Archives: Wigan & Leigh.
This national award is supported by ARA, The UK National Archives, the Welsh Government's Museums, Arts, Archives and Libraries Division, and the Scottish Council on Archives.

The award winner is announced in June each year as part of Volunteering Week. It is open to archives across the United Kingdom and Ireland. Awards will be publicised widely throughout and beyond the sector.

Nominations are now open and you can find out more information here.

The nomination form includes guidance. Organisations may nominate projects, or ongoing volunteer programmes, that ran during the 12 months up to the nomination date.

If you have any queries about the award please contact Deborah Mason, (01823 327077) or via volunteeringaward@archives.org.uk

> "I am delighted that our project and our amazing volunteers have been recognised like this. Our community highly values the archives, it helps people to connect with their shared heritage and provides a safe accessible space that they can visit throughout the year. It is important that public spaces like ours exist, especially where customers can feel pride in their sense of place and celebrate local history.
>
> Young people, particularly school children, need exciting and inventive ways to help them become interested in history. We want the next generation to understand the importance of their history and that of the place they live. Our volunteers play a significant role in this. I am sure that they will take great pride in knowing that we have been given this award."
>
> **Lesley O'Halloran, Director of Customer and Culture at Wigan Council**

Wigan & Leigh staff and volunteers receiving their award from David Mander OBE.
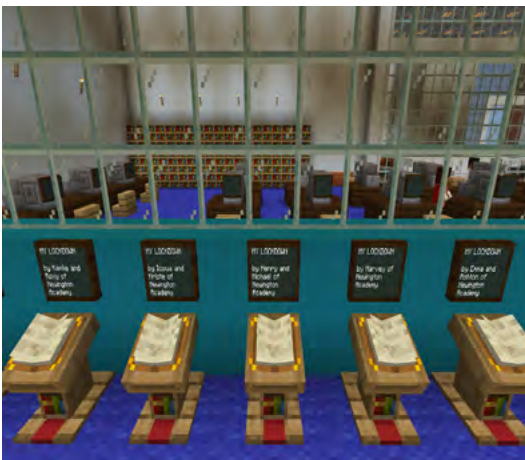© Courtesy of Archives: Wigan & Leigh

East Riding Archives build an 'Archiverse' with Blockdown project

Participants can explore the archive repositories in the Archiverse. © East Riding Archives

School pupils crafting their contributions in the Archiverse. © East Riding Archives

Written contributions on display in the Archiverse. © East Riding Archives

Young people taking part in an Archiverse Minecraft event. © East Riding Archives

The concept of combining a videogame with contemporary collecting was a fun experiment when the East Riding Archives first launched the East Riding Blockdown project in January 2022.

Supported by a grant from The Audience Agency, the project used the Minecraft videogame as a digital storytelling platform and creative tool for collecting young people's experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic for permanent preservation in the archives. The aim was to enable young people to make their mark on East Riding history and inspire them about archives in a fun way.

An explorable Minecraft world called the 'Archiverse' was unleashed online and via in-person events, including school workshops, with a recreation of the Treasure House, home of the East Riding Archives, at its centre. Young people were tasked with crafting their lockdown experiences in the Archiverse via building and writing activities to become 'history makers'. They could also learn about archives from 'archivist' characters that populate the Archiverse.

As more participants contributed their experiences, the Archiverse world grew with stories. Future history makers can now be inspired by these creations. Each story is exhibited in the Archiverse and exported, catalogued, and preserved in the real-world archives as digital records in the East Riding Blockdown collection ERBP. These creations are now accessible to future generations researching the impact of the pandemic on young people.

Since the project launch, more than 120 young people aged 5-15 have contributed their experiences to the Archiverse.

Heritage Peace Trees planted at Surrey History Centre

On 17th November 2022, staff at Surrey History Centre, the county archive run by Surrey County Council, welcomed members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community to plant seven trees to mark the centenary of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Women's Association UK.

For many years Surrey History Centre has worked closely with the Woking Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and were delighted to celebrate this partnership by planting several 'Heritage Peace' trees in their grounds as part of Surrey County Council's contribution to this initiative. Surrey County Council's Natural Assets team went above and beyond to source seven trees that would not only flourish in the History Centre's grounds but best represent this partnership. The planting of trees also connects with historic records in the History Centre's care, which include the archives of Gertrude Jekyll and a host of other garden designers and landscape architects.

Trees selected consist of Punica Granatum (Pomegranate), Ficus Carica (Fig), Morus alba (White mulberry) and Olea Europaea (Olive). The Olive tree is specifically symbolic as it symbolises peace and longevity.

Di Stiff, Collections Development Archivist, said: "It's such a privilege to be part of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Women's Association centenary initiative. We have forged strong links with the Woking Ahmadiyya Muslim Community for over 10 years now, through their archives being preserved in our collections and through joint outreach events, so 'Heritage Peace' trees that have South Asian and Islamic significance are perfect symbols of our partnership".

Staff from Surrey History Centre and Surrey County Council's Natural Assets team gather around the tree planting. © Surrey Heritage.
Ahmadiyya Muslim Women's Association requested not to be included in publicity photographs as per the principles of their faith.

Scaling Up 'Change Minds'

Change Minds began in 2015 as a collaboration between the Norfolk Record Office and the mental health charity The Restoration Trust. It utilises the records of the former Norfolk County Asylum in a wellbeing project.

The programme recruits participants with lived experience of mental ill-health, who engage with case records of patients and research their lives and experiences. The participants then attend creative workshops and develop artistic responses to their research, including poetry, painting and photography.

After the success of Change Minds, the team is expanding its reach. 'Scaling Up Change Minds' is developing a hub website and members-only toolkit, intended to provide the advice, guidance and resources that heritage organisations, in partnership with mental health service providers, need to run Change Minds. The team is testing the hub with five partner organisations, who will run their pilot iterations this year.

Norfolk Record Office is working with HMP Norwich to deliver Change Minds with prisoners. This naturally involved a lot of restrictions to the usual format - no internet access, site visits or original records - meaning the team had to run the workshops flexibly. However, feedback has been positive, with participants interested in asylum histories and keen to talk more about their mental health.

Once the toolkit has been developed and tested, the team hopes to make Change Minds available more widely, enabling other archives to run their own wellbeing offers.

Norfolk Record Office would like to thank the National Lottery Heritage Fund for their generous support in funding this project.

Case record of a patient at the Norfolk County Asylum, 1890s. SAH 288. © Norfolk Record Office
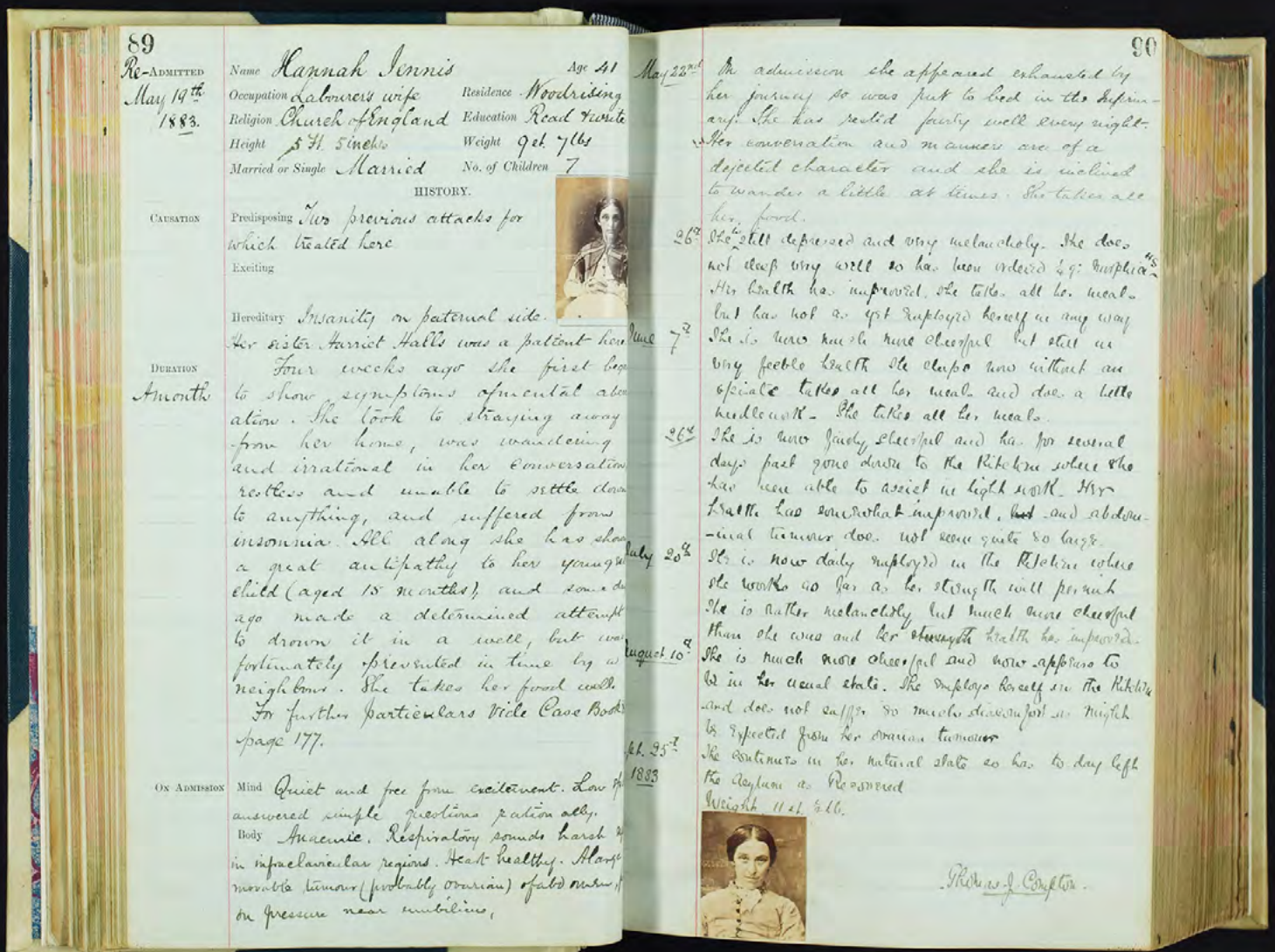
Backchat

1. Can you tell me a bit about your career path so far and how you got into the sector?

Like many of us I suspect, I started off taking an undergraduate degree in History. I went to Aberdeen: a long way from my school near Grimsby, but I was attracted to the flexibility of the Scottish degree system.

When I was in my third year there was the opportunity for some undergraduates to sit in on a postgraduate palaeography course. I'd already had a short introduction to the wonderful archives and special collections there and I was interested in anything which could help me better access them. It was taught by Dr Grant Simpson and he was just wonderful. When the course finished, he asked if I'd ever thought of being an archivist. I hadn't, and didn't really know what the role entailed so I managed to get a couple of weeks of work experience at North Yorkshire County Record Office. They were great and really took the time to show me all the different bits of the service, from the search room to conservation - by the time I'd finished I knew what I wanted to do.

I went back to Aberdeen for my final year, before going to Liverpool University Centre for Archive Studies. When I graduated, I went back up to Scotland for my first professional role as Archivist and Records Manager for Glasgow School of Art. After a couple of years, I moved to Glasgow University to become Assistant Archivist (Research Support). Part of this role involved telling student groups about the archives and how to use them. I did more and more of this, even being asked to convene a course when a member of academic staff was on research leave. Then in 2003-4, I was seconded to help set up the new archives and records management training programme at the University. For the first year or so I was part-time in the archives and part-time teaching on the course, before moving to the teaching side full-time.

Teaching with some of the Collections in the University of Glasgow Archives and Special Collections. © University of Glasgow Photographic Unit.

> Good inter-personal relationships go a long way, no matter what career path a graduate takes.

Graduation 2021, with University Tower in the background.
© Maria Economou.

2. How would you describe your role at the University of Glasgow?

I'm still teaching on the archives course, the MSc in Information Management & Preservation (IMP), based in Information Studies. I am also the Postgraduate Taught Convenor for the School of Humanities, a role which involves a lot of meetings about everything from university processes to student support. The University encourages us to develop professional and research links more widely, so I am a member of The UK National Archive's Forum on Historical Manuscripts and Academic Research, and a trustee for the Scottish Catholic Heritage Commission.

My role is great as it is so varied; one day I might have a PhD supervision, followed by teaching in person and remotely using the technology in our Archives and Special Collections search rooms, before meeting a colleague to discuss a new course or a new way of teaching a session.

3. What are some of the key skills that students learn, and how have these changed during your time?

We accepted our first students on the IMP programme in 2004, so we were aware that graduates needed to have skills in managing records created in both analogue and digital. We started off with this understanding and the programme grew around it. Technologically we have moved on and continue to do so, with the sorts of records we create both in our organisations and personally becoming ever more complex. Allowing students to understand this - and also how we can apply the traditional principles of archives, records and information management - is still important.

4. What advice would you give to people starting out in their careers?

Network! Firstly, look within your own organisation. Who does what? Who is responsible for what? Ultimately, I think good inter-personal relationships go a long way, no matter what career path a graduate takes. For the archivist, records and information manager, digital curator... the role works best with good communication. Learn who manages the IT systems, who is responsible for managing different files, who makes sure staff new and old know the ropes? Know how your organisation works and where to go for the information you need. Secondly, make links and create contacts from outwith your organisation where you can. I still remember the huge amounts of help, support and advice I got from fellow professionals when I started out. Enrolling on the ARA Registration Scheme was great as I got a mentor who was a wonderful help for all those small but important questions, and just for checking in.

5. Are there any areas that you think more experienced professionals could look at developing?

I think my point about good networks still stays true no matter what career stage someone is at. But I think it's

In archives and special collections. © Adele Redhead

important to constantly evaluate and re-evaluate our own skills. Where do I want to be in five or ten years? What skills do I need to develop to get there? For some this will be management, others IT, but we should never stop developing professionally.

6. How do you see the future of archives and record-keeping education?

We definitely need to be mindful of the changing environment we work in and the way society is evolving. More routes into the profession are good; apprenticeships, microcredentials courses, part-time and Continuing Professional Development routes all have a place alongside the traditional diploma or master's programmes.

7. And finally, what do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

My children are at peak "needing mum's taxi" age, so a lot of my time is spent running them around! Apart from that I like to cook, especially Italian food, and I've started learning Scottish Gaelic thanks to Duolingo. I like relaxing with my cats too, who are frequently seen in the background on Zoom calls and lecture recordings.

arc

And finally

arcmagazine

Our next edition of the **ARC Magazine** is due out in May/June 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.