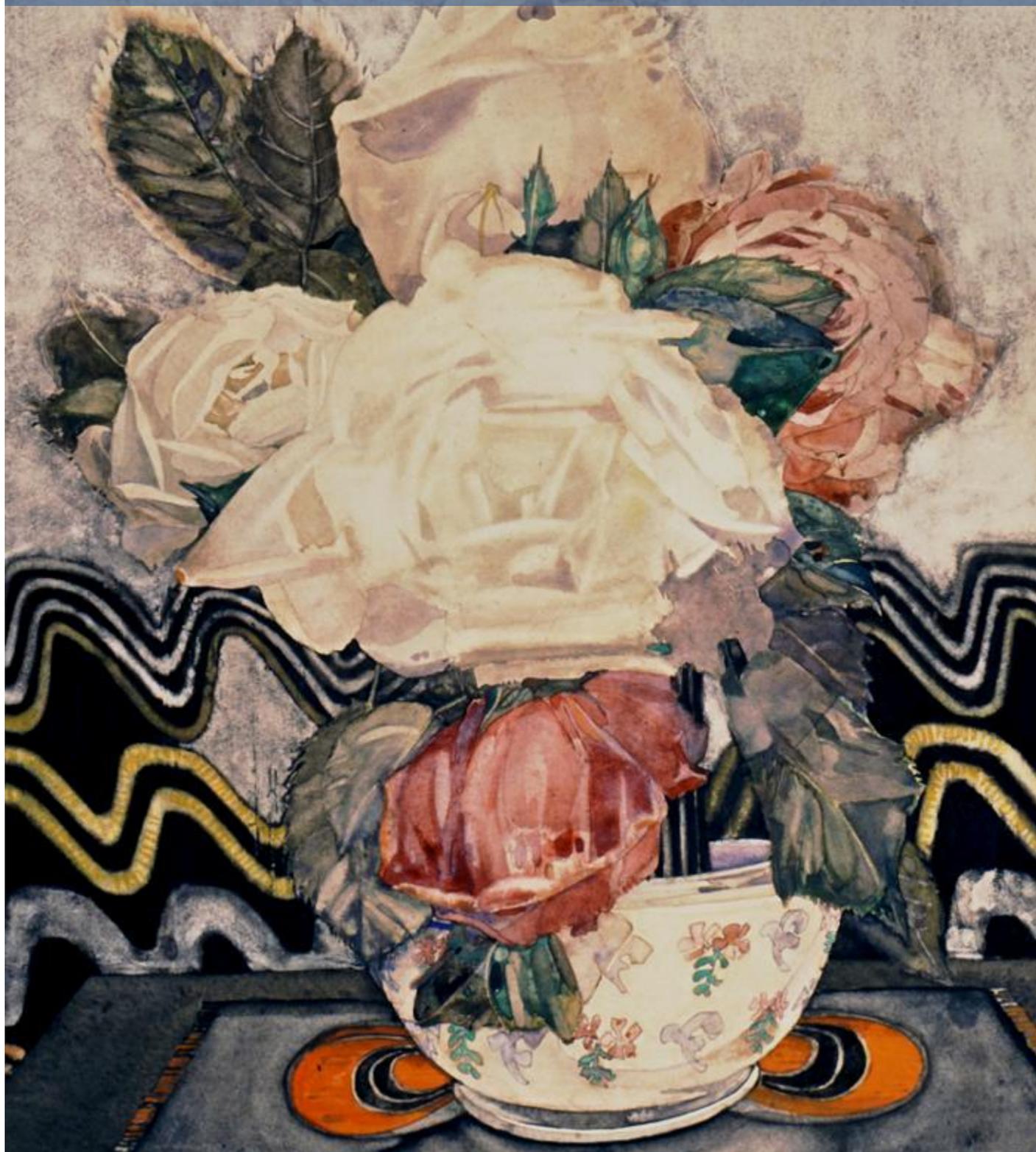


ISSUE 9

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2011

BROADSHEET



News Review from the
SCOTTISH COUNCIL ON ARCHIVES



WELCOME TO THE ISSUE (number 9)

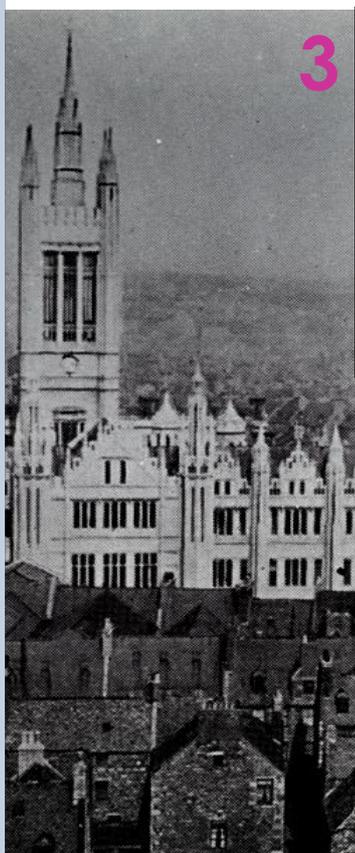
In honour of St Andrew's Day, Issue 9 is a celebration of all things Scottish—Scotland's archives to be exact. In a recent SCA publication, *Scotland's Archives Matter*, Sally Magnusson states that "our archives are our national memory ... They show us the forging of the Scottish nation over the centuries..." When one thinks about Scotland the stereotypes of tartan, whisky or golf instantly spring to mind, and these symbols of our traditions and heritage ought to be celebrated (especially on our national day!). Scotland's archival collections are the proud custodians of this 'national memory', but we are also looking to the future. From contemporary authors and advanced internet resources, to cutting edge conservation techniques, the archive and records management sector not only represents Scotland's history but is key to the future.

Through special features, and our regular contributions, *Broadsheet* aims to highlight these achievements. Issue 9 also presents a new regular section that aims to emphasise the diverse range of archive users and thereby demonstrate the sector's very real impact.

As ever, we hope you enjoy the issue and continue to get in touch with your news and activities from across Scotland.

www.scoarch.org.uk

The Editorial Team



Glasgow School of Art Archives and Collections

'White Roses'
Charles Rennie Mackintosh (Ref:
MC:G 17)

Date: 1920

Pencil and watercolour drawing of
white roses in a vase by Charles
Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), 502
x 472 mm.

Links:

[www2.gsa.ac.uk/
archivesandcollections](http://www2.gsa.ac.uk/archivesandcollections)



REDEFINING QUALITY: The 16th Annual Public Services Quality Group Forum

By Victoria Brown
Scottish Council on Archives

Around the 4th or 5th century BCE, Lao Tzu was alleged to have said, 'If you do not change direction, you may end up where you are heading.' This slightly ominous warning couldn't be more relevant to the many public services across the UK working in an environment of rapid change with increasingly limited resources. At the sixteenth annual Public Services Quality Group forum at The National Archives on the 2 November 2011, presenters shared fresh perspectives and their experiences of tackling the ongoing challenge of striving for a top quality service in uncertain times.

A key message emerged from the six main presentations: seize opportunities to be proactive to change. Malcolm Todd of The National Archives began by explaining that although the current political environment has required a review of the objectives of *Archives for the 21st Century*, working to ensure the sustainability, popularity and relevance of archives remains an important focus. While Dr. Sarah Horton and Mary Ellis of CyMAL and Elizabeth Oxborrow-Cowan discussed the benefits of using practical tools for service development in a changing environment, on a different yet related note, Lizzy Baker of the East Riding Archives and Local Studies Service offered her experience of the service's approach to challenges presented by the implementation of its ambitious 'Transformation' programme.

Sue Thiedeman of the London Cultural Improvement programme encouraged the sector to continue to learn from those who had successfully adapted to organisational change and resource limitations - another central theme of the day. Dr. Deborah Jenkins of the London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) spoke about shared services and the co-location of collections within LMA. Although Dr. Jenkins endorsed the benefits of shared services in some circumstances, in the case of LMA, this transition took place in the context of a set of 'non-negotiable' implementation principles. Including a requisite commitment that proposed changes didn't compromise existing standards of quality.

Anna Siddall was also able to pass along encouraging news on the progress of an Accreditation Standard for Archives, including the confirmation of its pilot in 2012. There was also an opportunity to hear updates on PSQG initiatives, including the Archive Pace Setters Award and Security and Access and Surveys.

For further information please visit www.archives.org.uk/latest-news/redefining-quality.html



Converting prized components of a collection into digital assets is by no means a recent addition to the heritage professional's agenda. It is however one which invariably brings with it limited experience of the potential pitfalls until they arrive with a virtual thud on an unsuspecting in-tray.

My predecessors had the foresight to begin digitising our historic photograph collection almost at the very onset of the internet explosion, so that by the turn of the millennium, literally thousands of images had been scanned and indexed. The dream of a digitised collection was fast becoming reality.

However, while colleagues were busy scanning and indexing the world had also been busy producing hand-held devices with previously unimaginable computing power. The standards by which digital assets were measured had also changed, so much so that our early lead in the digital race had morphed into something of a disadvantage leaving us with thousands of images scanned to a resolution well below industry standards, with index records held in formats no longer widely used. When a new digital strategy called for a fresh look at our assets the scale of our virtual shortcomings became apparent.

With the need for a fresh programme of re-scanning it seemed *(continued on next page)*

VIRTUAL LESSON FROM HISTORY

Why a False Start Can Be a Good Thing

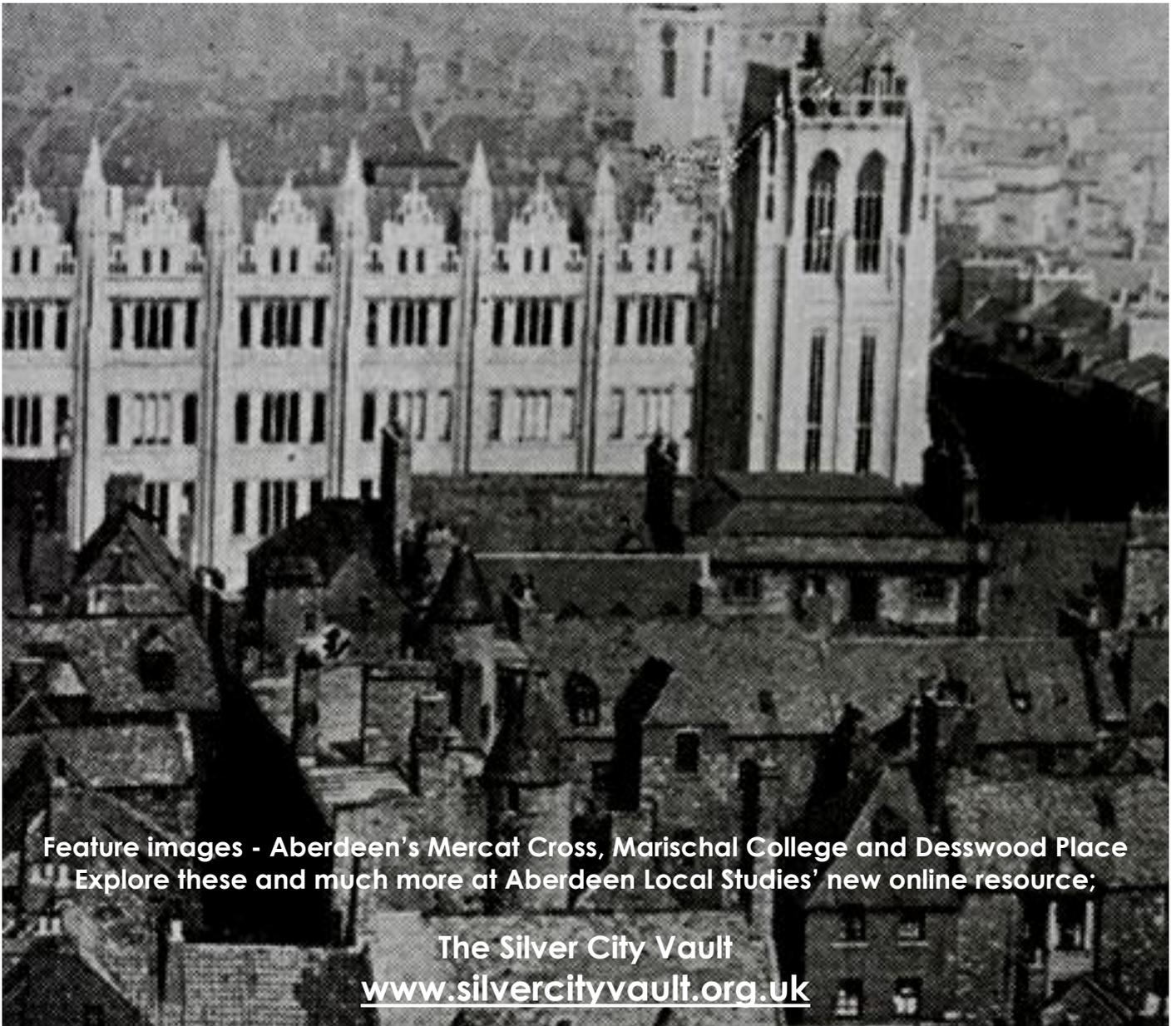


By **DAVID MAIN**

Local Studies Librarian, Aberdeen City Libraries

unavoidable that the early output would be consigned to the scrap heap. However, our huge collections of seemingly useless scans were saved from the recycle bin thanks to the development of a new web resource, *The Silver City Vault*. Our tiny images became prime candidates to be uploaded as thumbnails. Amongst others, lists of obituaries, marriages and paupers were converted from a variety of electronic formats into one comprehensive Local Studies index of over 50,000 searchable records on a single web platform. Over a month since the Vault launched and success is assured with thousands of hits from all over the world.

In addition to the old war-time adage of 'waste not want not', the Aberdeen experience also testifies to the fact that knowledge and skills gained from an early start can be preferable to perpetual postponement; awaiting handwritten directions to an ever-changing route is no real option. While the approach of the metaphorical hare in the digital race had given us a large quantity of imperfect stock, the approach of the tortoise would have seen us still waiting at the start line wondering exactly which way to head.



Feature images - Aberdeen's Mercat Cross, Marischal College and Desswood Place
Explore these and much more at Aberdeen Local Studies' new online resource;

The Silver City Vault
www.silvercityvault.org.uk



BRINGING THE PAST TO LIFE

Sara Sheridan
Author

“There really is nothing like having the original material to hand ... a particular word or phrase has sparked an entire plot – like an echo from history, still very alive.”

Sara Sheridan is an acclaimed historical novelist. Her latest book *Secret of the Sands* is inspired by three letters from the John Murray Archive in Edinburgh. Sara is an avid user and supporter of Scottish archives. She gives *Broadsheet* a glimpse into her research and describes the direct impact of archives (and archivists!) upon her work.

I am a self-confessed swot. I always loved books. At the age of 10 my mother came into my bedroom to discover me crawling across the covers, demanding to be sent to Switzerland. I had been reading Heidi and decided that I had the same disease as Clara. My mother knew she had a problem on her hands. That sense of imaginative engagement is still what makes me want to read and write today.

I've always had a keen sense of history. My father was an antiques dealer and he used to bring home boxes full of treasures, and each item always had a tale attached. It is impossible not to feel connected to such stories when you are holding an object or original document in your hands - relating to your history through the world around you (be that buildings or old letters, the landscape or other artefacts) fascinates me.

When I started writing historical fiction my first book, *The Secret Mandarin*, took me almost 8 years. I wrote it based on the work of Victorian botanist, Robert Fortune, who went to China for the East India Company to steal tea plants with which to set up their Himalayan plantations. In addition to his original writing I trawled archives for material, visited museums and interviewed historians. My main protagonist was fictional – an actress called Mary Penney – who I created from the artefacts and records that other women had left behind. Later, when I embarked on my second book, *Secret of the Sands*, I discovered that in addition to traditional resources there was a plethora of digital material. That ranged from simply being able to ask a question on Twitter to being able to access out of print or non copyright material onto my laptop and search it with ease.

We are in the middle of the biggest revolution in reading and writing since the advent of the Guttenberg press, and archives are embracing the future. New technologies and resources offer exciting opportunities. They democratise access to information and allow communication that can genuinely inspire non-traditional users of archive material. However, I do feel strongly that the greatest resource any archive has to offer is its archivists – I can't begin to count the amount of times that someone working with the material day to day, with professional expertise, has pointed me in the right direction of vital artefacts that would have taken me days or weeks to find myself, if at all. Archives bring the past to life, and your material needs you!

“Without archives many stories ... would be lost and along with those stories, vital clues that allow us to reflect and interpret our lives today.”

(Sara in Scotland's Archives Matter)

www.scoarch.org.uk/projects/scotlandsarchivesmatter

CONSERVATION

the bench

The Carron Company of Falkirk was one of the most famous iron-founders in the world. It was also one of the oldest (established in 1759) and occupies a unique place in the industrial history of Scotland. In its early days it financed some of the steam engine experiments of James Watt, and invented and produced the Carronade Naval Gun. Other Carron products included bathroom ware, industrial and domestic heating and catering appliances, hydraulics and other engineering apparatus.

The collection containing Carron Company Business reports, accounts and related business records was purchased by National Archives of Scotland in 1983. In 2004 the collection was surveyed with the aim of determining the condition of the documents. Part of the collection was affected by water, and subsequently by mould, causing severe damage. As a consequence, several documents that were particularly important for research were not available to readers. The survey resulted in upgraded storage for the documents and a conservation project began on the damaged volumes.

A large Stock Book from 1772-1774 was one of the worst cases. The damage throughout the book was excessive and the cover and boards were missing. Only one board was present and fragments of the other. However, the board appeared to be from another volume as it was smaller in size. The book block was sewn on to 7 double raised cords. The sewing and sewing supports also sustained damage; they were weak and broken in places. The paper of the book block was made of thick hand-made paper with iron-gall ink manuscript. However after being exposed to water and mould it became very thin and weak in the affected areas. Planar distortion, discolouration and large loss of material were present,

especially at the front and back of the volume; also the ink was faded in areas. Furthermore, the fragile pages were quite difficult to separate.

Full conservation treatment was undertaken. The pages were gently separated during the cleaning process, and the mould was removed from the surface. The pages were then aqueously treated, repaired and strengthened. Repaired sections of the book block were sewn again on 7 double raised cords, using the original holes and sewing pattern. The volume was then bound in a new binding and covered in reverse calf leather.



... IMPACT

As an academic based at the London School of Economics, Richard Fleischman's research into early book-keeping practices resulted in a thorough understanding of the Carron Company records.

I have visited the Carron archives many times, from 1990 through two decades. Whereas my first visit was a solo venture, I subsequently introduced fellow academics and colleagues to the wonderful archive that has been so instrumental in the rehabilitation of British Industrial Revolution cost accounting.

My main focus was on costing methodology as distinct from financial reporting and the Carron records served me well. However, I soon became aware that Carron's management extended into the financial area as well, specifically with the integration of the financial and costing records and the application of sophisticated double-entry book-keeping at a very early date. The conservation of the records was vital to that endeavor.

Now retired, I may not be visiting again, but I trust that future scholars will benefit from what you have done.

By **JOHANA LANGEROV**

Book and Paper Conservator with the National Records of Scotland



Shortbread, bagpipes, castles, Robert Burns ... the list of iconic Scottish symbols is seemingly endless. Each one has a story or a myth, and represents a part of our national history and heritage—a heritage that is rightly and proudly celebrated around the world, never more so than on St Andrew's Day.

If tartan, whisky or golf symbolise some of the aspects that make Scotland unique, then surely the invaluable contribution of our archives and the professionals dedicated to preserving and documenting our 'national memory' must be acknowledged and celebrated.

Broadsheet certainly believes so and in honour of our national day we bring you some 'Symbols of Scotland', courtesy of our archive and records management professionals.

Scots Wha Hae...

THE FLOWER: Thistle
*Royal Botanic Garden
Edinburgh Archive*

Taken from a variety of Victorian watercolours in the collection of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh Archive.

This specific example features the Milk Thistle, the Marsh Thistle, and the Field Thistle. By 'C.C.P.' (possibly Charlotte Cowan Pearson) and dated to July 1866.

www.rbge.org.uk/science/library-and-archives

SYMBOLS OF SCOTLAND

Documenting our National Memory



THE DRINK: Whisky
Diageo Archive

Scotch whisky was first mentioned in the Exchequer Rolls in 1494 as aquavita, or the water of life. Ever since then the whisky industry has played a major part in Scotland's history.

At the Diageo Archive, we have recorded the history of some of Scotland's oldest distilleries dating back to the 18th century, the history of the blender's art, the cooper's craft, and the stories of many great Scotch whisky houses.

Today whisky is synonymous with Scotland and we collect records from countries all over the world where it's enjoyed. This success dates back to the whisky boom in the late 19th century when companies began to export their whiskies to all parts of the globe creating a new, global generation of connoisseurs.

Advertising from the 20th century shows how much Scotland and Scottish history have continuously been used to market whisky.



THE FOOD: Haggis National Records of Scotland

'Haggis at Gleneagles Hotel', c.1974
Source and Copyright: Crown Copyright,
National Records of Scotland (BR/
HOT/4/134 British Railways Collection)

www.nas.gov.uk

THE SPORT: Golf Victoria Brown, SCA

Edinburgh City Archives holds probably one of the first written set of rules for the *'the ancient and healthfull Exercise of the Golf'*. Dated 7th March 1744, these rules were recorded well before the highest authority in golf was established, the Royal and Ancient (1754).

Golf is one of the most popular and revered sports in the world. Its origins continue to be debated, but the sport remains synonymous with Scotland. Indeed, during the middle ages Scottish shepherds played a similar game involving stones and rabbit holes! By 1457 the sport had become so popular that King James II banned it, believing that it distracted from archery practice.

Found on pages 206-210 of Edinburgh's Town Council Minutes, 1744, this passage concerns an application to the council on behalf of *"gentlemen of honour skillfull in the ancient and healthfull Exercise of the Golf"* to establish rules for the Silver Club competition played on the Links of Leith.

<http://lothianlives.org.uk/?p=1032>

THE (OTHER) DRINK: Beer Scottish Brewing Archive, University of Glasgow Archive Services

When thinking about symbols of Scotland, drinks are never far from the top of the list. Whisky may spring to mind first, but beer should not be overlooked. Scotland has been producing (and consuming!) beer in all its forms for many centuries, and these Scottish products have been exported worldwide for over 200 years.



Within the ledgers, registers, photographs, cans and bottles of the Scottish Brewing Archive, the breadth and depth of our brewing heritage can be explored. With around 120 breweries at the start of the nineteenth century, Scotland clearly took its beer seriously, and as Scotland's brewers started to export, the names of Tennent's, Younger's and McEwan's became known worldwide. These brands developed much of their marketing around images of Scotland – Younger's with Father William in his tartan trews, McEwan's and their Scotch Ales, and Tennent's with Piper Export, the Scotland series of Tennent's lager cans, and of course, the Tennent's Lager Lovelies, an iconic Scottish brand. So, whatever your taste, you can raise a glass to one of Scotland's symbols – Beer!

<http://www.archives.gla.ac.uk/sba/default.html>

THE CLOTH: Tartan Scottish Register of Tartans

On St Andrew's Day the Register will feature a design that illustrates the perception of tartan as an iconic Scottish symbol. Many tartans have been created to promote brand identities and to market intrinsically Scottish products—one particularly fine example of this is the Irn Bru tartan.

Irn Bru is an essentially Scottish drink, first produced in 1901 by AG Barr, and now marketed throughout the world. The design specifically promotes Irn Bru, with the colours based on the label and packaging.

The tartan was recorded by the Scottish Tartans Society in 1997 and it is now included in the Scottish Register of Tartans. As a final note, the Register can confirm the tartan is not 'made from girders' but woven from 100% wool.

www.tartanregister.gov.uk/tartanDetails.aspx?ref=1856





Briefly outline your current position and the work involved.

I'm the relatively new – I started in July - Head of Public Affairs for the Archives and Records Association (UK & Ireland), which has a membership of more than 2,000 people who work in archives and record management. The Public Affairs title particularly emphasises the work I do to lobby and influence on behalf of members, but the role includes all the standard 'PR' or 'external relations' tasks: lots of communication with members and all kinds of audiences; media work; event management; reputation management. The ARA is a tight ship of only three full-time employees and literally hundreds of members doing the 'day job' and working for the Association. I'm the only paid communication person so....keeps me busy.

Describe Archives in three words.

Special. Unique. Exciting.

Why Archives?

In a way, archives are where I started. My second ever job (my first was at Puffin Books where I typed letters to people like Roald Dahl and was allowed to have a go at copywriting in any spare time) was at the British Institute of Recorded Sound. I was the Director's PA and Publications Assistant. And all around me were colleagues collecting tapes, vinyl, wax cylinders, while others were out recording stage plays and recitals. Down the corridor was 'wildlife sounds' – magnificent noises

reached my desk. I can only say that I felt completely at home within about two hours. When the BIRS was taken in by the British Library and became the National Sound Archive I did the communication work and was then offered a job in the BL press office. So if I hadn't been in an archive I may not have begun nearly thirty years in communication and public relations. After eventually leading communication at the British Library and then Middlesex University, I took a break (the gap year I never had) and looked for the next challenge. When I got this job, I got that feeling again....like coming home.

What has been the highlight of your career so far?

I was Head of Corporate Communication at the British Library in the late 1990s and one of the team opening the new building at St Pancras. Like many others, I'd

been working towards that opening for most of my working life. The building had been in construction for nearly two decades; planning had begun in the 1960s! As we drew close to welcoming users, there was an extraordinary 'last push' under Chief Executive Dr Brian Lang, an unsung hero if there ever was one. A small group of us had a cycle of daily meetings, action lists, reporting back, moving to the next issue. On the day of the reader opening, Brian beckoned me outside and said 'time to raise the flag' – we had a rather grand flagpole on the piazza. When we got there, he asked me to do it. There's a leader for you. That moment was followed by the formal opening by H M The Queen who very kindly agreed with me that 'there would have been quite a lot of communication to do!' That was perfect too. But the day when the readers arrived and the flag went up. Unbeatable.

What projects are you working on at the moment?

I'm talking to possible media training providers. By early 2012 I need to be offering really good, practical training for members – and have very good guidelines I can put on the website. The All-Party Parliamentary Group - more below – is keeping me busy with event management (there are three on the blocks at the moment). And I'm scoping out improvements to our website. Now I produce a members' e-newsletter every fortnight, I'm never far away from working on the next one!

Interview continues on next page...

What do you feel are the main challenges currently faced by the sector?

I don't think we're good enough yet at making a noise about the crucial nature of our work and skills. Right now everything is about surviving really hard times. We have to be pragmatic and we have to have very strong, clear arguments.

Why do you feel it is important that archives work to increase their public profile and awareness?

Those who use archives in the UK are virtually all huge supporters – no other sector could possibly achieve a 96% satisfaction rate from its users – and they 'get' what archives are about. But too many people are clueless; they don't know the difference between an archive and a library and they don't realise that this profession is keeping their history safe. They will get it eventually, but everyone remotely concerned with archives has to say it, again and again.

Can you tell us a little more about your work with the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Archives and History?

The Group that my predecessor, Rene Kinzett, put together, is really beginning to fly. All-Party Groups have to have a certain number of members – 20 – from across the political parties; they do not have formal power, but any gathering of MPs and Lords who care about something has to be very valuable. Membership is growing all the time. We now have MPs and Lords who are prepared

to stand up and be counted about the role of archives. We need friends everywhere; and it's very good to have some at Westminster. Many of the group are historians themselves and frequent users of archive services. In the 2011-2012 period the group will visit at least one archive, host events at which archives issues are discussed, honour an archivist and a historian for their contribution and host an annual lecture by a historian.

The SCA and ARA have recently been exploring how they can further work together to promote tools and share resources to benefit the sector as a whole. What do you think are the key challenges and benefits of partnership working?

All of us who care about archives must work together. It's a given as

far as I'm concerned. And I've been struck by how easy it is to find common ground in this relatively small world. Each group or membership may have slightly different priorities but we all want the best future for archives and all who work in them. When the ARA and SCA met recently we brought different ideas and resources to the table and came away with a good list of shared initiatives.

November 2011

ARA:

www.archives.org.uk/

ARA Scotland:

www.archives.org.uk/ara-scotland/ara-scotland.html



Marie Owens pictured with Dr Irene O'Brien (SCA Chair) and John Chambers (ARA Chief Executive) at a recent meeting between the two organisations.

AND FINALLY...



An example of the recipe cards available from the SCA website.

On Saturday 26 November, early Christmas shoppers in Edinburgh's Old Town were greeted by the enticing smells of spiced gingerbread, freshly baked locust bread and sweet orange marmalade emanating from Captain Taylor's on South Bridge. The Scottish Council on Archives was joined by Scotland's History Festival, the charity Streetwork and a variety of speakers to host the Edible Archive event, 'A Taste of History'.

Aimed at encouraging public awareness and engagement with Scotland's archival collections, the day was very well attended and provided a fantastic opportunity to rustle up some of the wonderful recipes collected by the project and share tales of favourite foods and memories. The delicacies on offer included Invalid Fruit Tart (Lothian Health Services Archive), Ginger Beer (submitted by a member of the public), an SCA version of Locust Bread (Bute Archive at Mount Stuart) and Orkney Pancakes (Orkney Council Archive). The recipes for these and much more are available to download from the SCA website at www.scoarch.org.uk/projects/ediblearchive

A full report, along with some great pictures and comments, will be published in the December/January edition of *Broadsheet*.



The Edible Archive recipe wall

A SCOTTISH COUNCIL ON ARCHIVES PUBLICATION

General Register House Rm. 21
2 Princes Street
Edinburgh
EH1 3YY

T: 0131 535 1362
E: info@scoarch.org.uk
W: www.scoarch.org.uk