

# **Working with Local Authority Archivists: How They Support Community Archives**

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# Local Authority Archives



ME:

An archivist with ERC, worked for various LA archives in...  
West Central Scotland.  
Former Sec. and Chair of ASLAWG.

Going to cover today what:

LA archives do  
what we've got  
how community archives and other local heritage groups...  
might be better able to work with us to our mutual benefit

# local authority provision



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Mon	2 9 16 23 30
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 A.B. MACHINERY SUPPLY  
 A.B. ELECTRIC SUPPLY  
**ANDERSON, BOYES & CO<sup>LD</sup>**  
 MOTHERWELL — SCOTLAND  
TELEPHONE: MOTHERWELL 131 (2 lines) TELEGRAMS: ELECTRIC MOTHERWELL



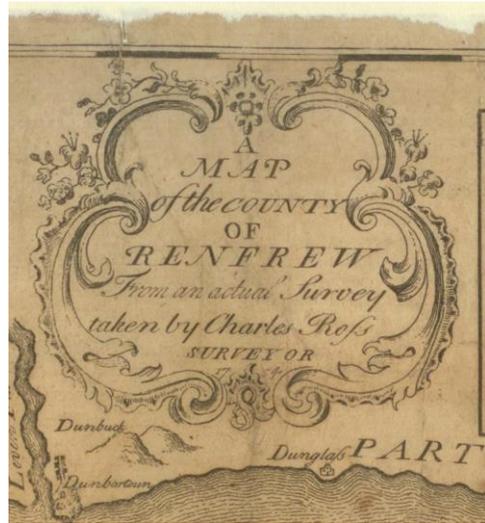
Every LA in Scotland has some form of archival service— although as we'll see the provision is patchy and diverse.

Some archive services are delivered through the Council Library, Museum or Leisure Services; there are some jointly provided by neighbouring authorities; many now have been devolved to Trusts or other ALEOS.

Note on slides: all very little to do with what I'm talking about; just fairly random images which I hoped might be of interest if not of relevance. Better than dry bullet points, I hope!

Ayr archive store; Crest of the Loyal Order of Ancient Forresters; Edwardian Kilsyth; Calendar advertising Anderson Boyes coal cutting machines

# Collections

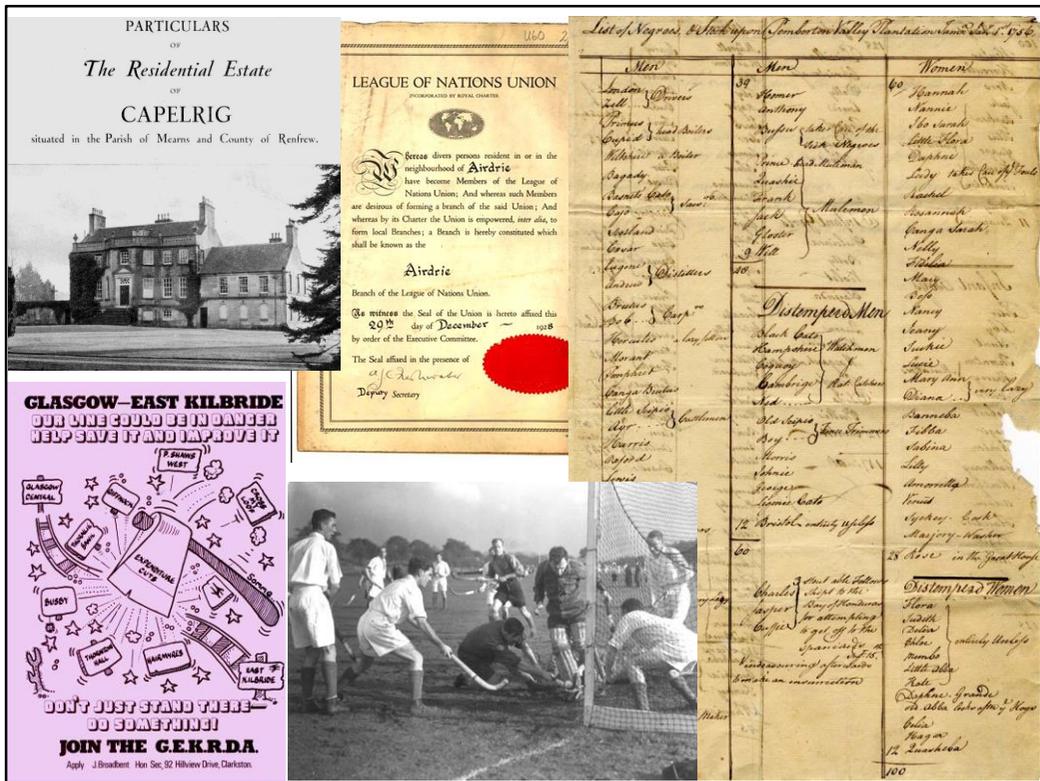


Main thing that LA archives do, of course, is the collection, safeguarding and promotion of archival material. Archives are unique, and while much of the information we hold is of national or international importance, it is also hyper-local.

Main division in holdings will be LA records (comprising the archives of the current LA and of its predecessors) and the equivalent of the NRS's "G&D", the records of other local organisations of archival value. In addition, some LAs have material on loan from NRS under Charge and Superintendence: shipping and port records, church records, some prior LA records.

Each authority will have an accessions policy defining the scope of what they hold, although the range and size of collections varies hugely. Smaller LAs such as mine or Claks have only a few dozen linear metres of records; whereas Glasgow has many miles.

[These images] – rather sinister robotic children in the drill hall of Woodside School in Glasgow; a beautiful cartouche from Ross's Map of Renfrewshire from c. 1770



Of real interest to community archives and other local history groups will be the archives of the authority itself, along with the archives of its predecessor Regions, Districts, Burghs and Counties. These may sound, at first, somewhat dry but these are a brilliant source of local history. Yes, minutes and accounts, but with everything from police and fire records to tramways, or water provision to the building plans of the Dean of Guild Court.

You will find records of clubs and societies, sporting organisations, noteworthy individuals, trades unions and businesses.

Some more images to give an idea of the holdings from LA archives –

Here are a couple of examples of campaigning and political groups: GEKRDA and League of Nations Union

...Whitecraigs Hockey Club

...and of estate records: the sale catalogue for Capelrig in Newton Mearns and from an Ayrshire landed family archive:

“Charles, Jasper & Cussie: stout able fellows shipt to the Bay of Honduras for attempting to get off to the Spaniards and endeavouring afterwards to make an insurrection”;

“Flora, Judith, Delia, Chloe, Mumbo, Little Abba, Kate:  
“DISTERPERED WOMEN; entirely useless”

All life is here, waiting to be discovered in your local archive!

# Work of the Archivist



Co-incident photo; no suggestion that the work of a LA archivist is like trying to push a 20-tonne truck through the mud at Rouken Glen!

How LA archives can support you –

Use of collections to compliment and inform your own holdings and research

LA archivists have a good community of knowledge sharing and support –  
talks,  
expertise on digitisation, DP, copyright  
what to keep – and what NOT to keep: hence the “delete”  
[more on archival selection: government recs?]  
discuss the potentially thorny issue of material we each want?

Publications – Raddle,  
online knowledge resources & online exhibition spaces  
tie in with social media  
Hosting meetings in an appropriate setting? Exhibition space?  
Friends/volunteers: Dumfries, Dundee, me

Key point on how the LA archivist can support community archives –  
ASK!: SHY BAIRN GETS NAE SWEETIES

# Conservation



Archivists are NOT conservators but  
prioritisation

[how I do that]

basic work

[brass p clips, melonex, boxes, A/F card

storage and advice

[vid cassettes in codex; separate photos and negs]

good practice

sources of funding

Just 2 (?) LA archives have inhouse conservators but all will have some level of expertise and contacts; again, just ask

These images.

# Challenges



Need to manage expectations

resources

range of duties:

me – “an archivist”: Fol, RM, HA, DP; now corporate

governance,

risk management, etc. [Not a brag, a nightmare!]

weak statutory provision

very diverse range of services across Scotland

Describe Paisley store



That's me; closing remarks (and continuing the "random images")

Know your archive: research  
coverage  
services  
holdings

"Lost papers of the Gartsherrie Estate"

Cassette tape just to raise issue of medium of storage.  
beware the false dawn of the digital panacea!

Further info: ASLAWG new secy. - Ashleigh Thomson at Edinburgh