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SCOTTISH ARCHIVES & RECORDS:  
**the Year in Review**

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2022-3

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## Foreword

Welcome to *Scottish Archives and Records: the Year in Review 2022–3*, produced by the Scottish Council on Archives (SCA). The publication contains a collection of articles about the fascinating recent and ongoing archives and records projects from across the country, as well as information about SCA's work over the past year.

There are articles about events and exhibitions marking anniversaries of designers and schools; cataloguing work on diverse collections created by and for people with disabilities, radical thinkers, and members of the LGBTQ+ community; outreach projects that celebrate our landscape and traditional crafts. In short, work that emphasises the multiplicity of the work archivists do and the collections that make up the nation's documented history.

We are grateful to all our contributors who answered our call for articles, and thank them for their articles and images.

We hope that you enjoy this new publication, and we look forward to working with many of you as we continue to support the archives and records sector.

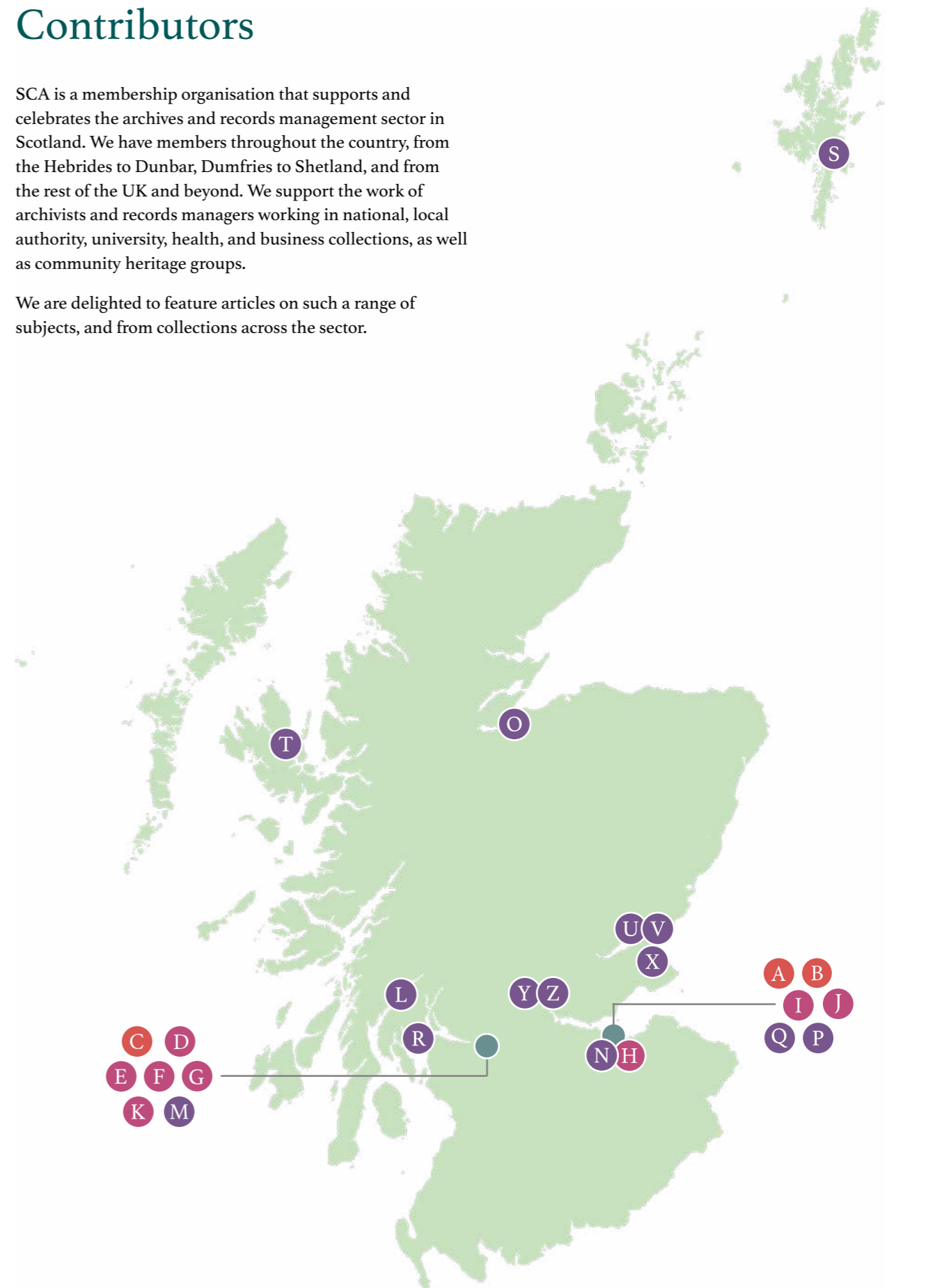
BRUCE JACKSON, *Chair*  
JOHN PELAN, *Director*  
Scottish Council on Archives



## Contributors

SCA is a membership organisation that supports and celebrates the archives and records management sector in Scotland. We have members throughout the country, from the Hebrides to Dunbar, Dumfries to Shetland, and from the rest of the UK and beyond. We support the work of archivists and records managers working in national, local authority, university, health, and business collections, as well as community heritage groups.

We are delighted to feature articles on such a range of subjects, and from collections across the sector.



Cover image: Bernat Klein pattern book, 1964. Courtesy Heritage and Information Governance, Heriot-Watt University.

# The Scottish Council on Archives

## A BUSY YEAR, AND OUR TWENTIETH!

### TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY

SCA had another very busy and active year. 2022 marked the organisation's twentieth anniversary, and we celebrated the occasion with a reception at the Scottish Parliament building, attended by guests from across the archives and records sector and beyond. To coincide with the reception, we launched a small booklet and exhibition called *Twenty Treasures*, featuring 20 special items from Scottish repositories. A supporting podcast series explored these items in more detail, telling the stories of the people and places they represent. The selection included an admission card for a child who came to Scotland on the Kindertransport in 1939; the papal bull for the foundation of the University of St Andrews; the earliest surviving Scottish bank note; a fourteenth century burgh court roll for Aberdeen; and the Letters Patent to the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011.



Scottish Parliament reception launching the *Twenty Treasures* exhibition and publication, celebrating CSA's twentieth anniversary.

### MANIFESTO FOR LOCAL ELECTIONS

With local authority elections taking place in May 2022, we produced *Why Archives and Records Matter – A Manifesto for Local Government*, which was sent to every newly elected councillor in Scotland. The manifesto, published in English and Gaelic, emphasised that archives and records management services underpin and support every aspect of local and national government. Without them, local authorities and other public sector bodies would not be able to function effectively. It also set out the contribution our sector makes to vibrant communities, by telling the stories of places and the people who have lived there; health and wellbeing, through use

'Carson a Tha Tasglannan is Clàran Cudromach' (Gaelic language version of *Why Archives and Records Matter – A Manifesto for Local Government*), May 2022.



Fact Sheet: Copyright, published in July 2022. *Tune Times*, Vol. 1.6 (Feb. 1934). © National Jazz Archive, all rights reserved.

of archival material to help with a variety of conditions, including dementia; economic recovery, by supporting the £100 million ancestral tourism market; and a fairer society, by providing evidence to ensure accountability and transparency.

### CAPACITY BUILDING

We again delivered a full and varied programme of CPD events for archivists and records managers, on a variety of topics informed by our annual training and development survey. We were honoured to be joined by Jane Henderson, Professor of Conservation at the University of Cardiff and the Secretary General of the International Institute for Conservation, who provided a stimulating insight into environmental monitoring, as she demystified relative humidity. We also had training sessions on emergency planning, inclusive cataloguing, and copyright. SCA commissioned Dr Ellie Pridgeon



Stornoway's inaugural Pride march, October 2018. Courtesy Tasglann nan Eilean. © John MacLean

to create a brief copyright guide, which was launched in August, and provides insight and simple solutions to a notoriously complicated subject. The SCA Annual Lecture was given by Emilie Gagnet Leumas, Fellow of the Society of American Archivists and Chair of ICA Expert Group on Emergency Management and Disaster Preparedness. Dr Leumas provided a timely insight into archives put at risk due to conflict or extreme weather.

We received a grant from Queer Heritage and Collecting Network (QHCN), funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, to deliver training workshops to provide both archivists and other heritage professionals, and community groups, the skills and confidence to develop their outreach projects, to record and celebrate the queer community. We were delighted to again collaborate with OurStory Scotland, a charity and community history group who record the histories of Scotland's LGBTQ+ communities, to put together three engaging and thought-provoking workshops. SCA also took over QHCN's Twitter account for a day in February, and celebrated the many

items and collections from across the country that reveal queer lives and experience. Items featured included letters from Anne Lister, activist and protest materials in the fight for equality, to a recent acquisition by Tasglann nan Eilean, of a series of photographs that captured the inaugural Hebridean Pride march in 2018.

### YOUR SCOTTISH ARCHIVES

After a significant delay caused by the pandemic and lockdowns, the *Your Scottish Archives* portal project got back on track in 2022. *Your Scottish Archives* is being developed by the Scottish Council on Archives in partnership with Archives Hub and will improve online access to Scotland's archive collections, particularly those held by local authorities, universities and smaller repositories.

Development of the new portal involves migrating data from Scottish repositories at collection and item level where possible. Contributors will include local authorities, universities, business, private owners,



'Outreach to Ownership' Workshop, Glasgow. Part of the AHRC-funded project to support community groups and their collections.

Audrey Wilson, left, with Eileen Brooke-Freeman, Cultural Heritage Officer, Shetland Amenity Trust being interviewed for BBC Radio Shetland.



and community groups with archival material. The project will improve the level of access to archive collections available to current and potential users and provide more opportunities for engagement both physically and virtually with archives. The new portal will provide resources for members of the public, historians, researchers and genealogists who wish to interact with and use Scotland's archives collections as well as learning tools for teachers and archivists working with schools and colleges.

### SUPPORTING COMMUNITY ARCHIVES

Our work helping community groups with their archives has continued to grow. Highlights of the programme have included the oral history project, *Voices, The Community Story*, which focused on the stories of migrants in Scotland (see page 6); a case study of the West Boathouse and Community Archive (see page 28); and oral history workshops called 'Gaps in the Archives' in Glasgow, Perth and Inverness as part of the work of the Community Archives and Heritage Groups (CAHG Scotland), which SCA chairs.

SCA continue to be a partner in the Historic Environment Scotland's initiative, *Scotland's Community Heritage Conversations* (SCHC). Other partners include Archaeology Scotland and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. SCHC is an online bimonthly event series bringing together volunteers, community groups and heritage professionals including archivists.

SCA was awarded funding from the *Outreach to Ownership* (O2O) project, managed by Historic England and Historic Environment Scotland, and supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). SCA's *Everyone's Stories Matter* project was motivated by concerns in the

sector about the future of community archives, including vulnerability of community archives, physical and digital; inaccessibility; lack of support; lack of inclusivity; and lack of skills and knowledge. SCA held workshops in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Stornoway, providing basic first steps advice on cataloguing and asking groups what the main challenges were around starting and/or maintaining a community archive. SCA commissioned Dr Ellie Pridgeon to facilitate the workshops and produce a detailed report for the stakeholders and funders. We were successful in securing additional funding to provide one-to-one training for groups in 2023.

### ACCREDITATION AND PRESERVATION

SCA, alongside National Records for Scotland, are the assessor body for the Archives Accreditation programme in Scotland. Six assessments of services, at various stages of their journey through accreditation, took place last year. We were pleased to announce Highland Archives as the most recent service to be awarded accredited status in May 2022.

We continued to work in partnership with the National Manuscript Conservation Trust to deliver the third year of a preservation/conservation funding scheme for Scotland, with generous support from the National Records of Scotland.

And finally, we were delighted to welcome two new members of staff, Miriam Buncombe as project manager for the *Your Scottish Archives* portal and Justina Gedgaudaitė as our Digital Communications and Administration Officer. The development of *Your Scottish Archives* was significantly impacted by the pandemic, but we are back on track now and hope to launch the first stage of the site in late 2023. ●

To find out more about our work, visit: [www.scottisharchives.org.uk](http://www.scottisharchives.org.uk)



'Outreach to Ownership' training session with Stornoway Historical Society.

Workshop topics included basic conservation skills.



# Voices: The Community Story

## SCOTTISH COUNCIL ON ARCHIVES

To mark Scotland's Year of Stories: 2022, the Scottish Council on Archives (SCA) created a nationwide project, *Voices: The Community Story*, collecting stories from across Scotland that record the experience of migration. The project captured oral histories from 'New Scots', from second or third generations of earlier migrants, and from people already living in the UK who have decided to relocate to Scotland.

We set ourselves the challenging goals laid out in the National Archives' *Archives for Everyone* strategy: to build trust, tear down barriers and be bold. In 2021, a survey was sent to Association of Scottish Local Authority Archives Working Group members, and the response was incredibly positive. A common desire soon emerged to capture the stories of people who had come from somewhere else and were now living in their area or region.

The project introduced archives to many people who had not engaged with or been aware of this part of the heritage sector. It was also an opportunity to learn new skills, meet new people and form future partnerships, as well as bring together archivists, heritage professionals and community group members, often volunteers. Training opportunities on various topics, including interview techniques and storing recordings sustainably, were provided, and over 30 recordings were captured. These histories record the story and experience of people from Afghanistan to Venezuela who, for various reasons, have made Scotland their home.

SCA is indebted to our partners: the National Library of Scotland, Scottish Refugee Council, Tasglann nan Eilean, and Colourful Heritage; the local authority archive services who took part, Aberdeen, Clackmannanshire, Dumfries and Galloway, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Highlands, Orkney, Perth and Kinross, and Stirling; the many other organisations who offered support, The Welcoming Association, Yemeni Scottish Foundation, Elphinstone Institute, and Forth Valley Welcome; our own intrepid intern, Taylor Webb; and, of course, everyone who told us their story!

What follows are some of the voices that made the project such a success. You can listen to a selection of the stories on the SCA website: [bit.ly/VoicesRec](https://bit.ly/VoicesRec)

AUDREY WILSON, *Partnership & Engagement Manager*  
Scottish Council on Archives



Ashleigh and Sara in the archives office working on a box list for a new collection.

### A EDINBURGH CITY ARCHIVES: THE LOCAL ARCHIVE

When Edinburgh City Archives was first approached about *Voices: The Community Story*, our team embraced the concept. We did not have any existing oral history collections and immediately saw this as an opportunity to diversify our collections further and engage with new communities. Our enthusiasm was peppered with reservations about resources and the logistics of making it a success. However, we managed to make this work by dedicating a team member to the project, and our service has tangibly benefited from being involved in *Voices*. Although we now have our first oral history collection, the project has many other legacies.

The first is the 'waterfall effect' of new skills and knowledge. Before our involvement in *Voices*, our team had very little experience in recording oral history, nor did we have any suitable recording equipment. One team member attended the oral history training that was organised for those participating in this project, and SCA provided us with all the necessary forms and guidance that we required following the training.

We are now in the process of training the wider team in how to record oral history and as a direct result of the success of our *Voices* project, we were able to make the case to purchase our own recording equipment. From one staff member attending organised training, we will have an entire team trained and able to collect and support oral history.



*Voices* interviewee, and secretary of the Yemeni Scottish Foundation, Nabiha AlBanna, right, at the workshop celebrating Yemeni cuisine as part of Refugee Festival Scotland, with one of the attendees, Fakhriya. Photo by Eloise Bishop



Celebration event to mark the completion of the *Voices* project, on 30 November 2022 in Edinburgh City Chambers. The day featured talks from participating collections and interviewees, and music by Ando Glaso, the Roma community archive heritage group based in Glasgow.



Reminiscing with a depositor before recording an oral history, Edinburgh City Archives.

We will also be offering training to local community groups and societies, and we can loan them our recording kit. Furthermore, we are working to include oral histories as part of some of our deposits. For example, we recently welcomed a new accession from a former guide at Edinburgh Castle. This collection includes fascinating correspondence from celebrities and dignitaries across the world, and the depositor has some wonderful stories to complement much of this correspondence. We are going to record the depositor of this collection reminiscing about his time as a guide and on some of his career highlights. This will add a new dimension to an already fantastic collection.

Second is the inspiration for several high-profile new projects. Following the success of our original *Voices* project, we have decided to do a wider *Edinburgh Voices* project. This will be a rolling project that will involve us recording Edinburgh 'voices' at various times throughout each year. We may decide to have certain themes or to appeal to certain audiences. We aim to launch next year and gauge

interest amongst our audiences, which should give us a better idea if we need to tailor our approach to ensure diversity. Ideally, we want this to broaden the representation of Edinburgh's diversity within our collections.

In addition, we have a branch of our team who work predominantly on the City of Edinburgh Council's response to the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry (SCAI). They will receive training on capturing oral history and intend to use these skills to capture the voices of care-experienced individuals as well as the knowledge and experiences of those who have worked in Edinburgh care. This will benefit care-experienced individuals and the SCAI team, as the information recorded is likely to help inform future practices around care records, and to fill gaps in current knowledge of what happened in the past. Most importantly, it will allow care-experienced individuals to share their experiences on their terms, allowing a different perspective often lacking in the more common types of care records.

Finally, *Voices* enabled us to form new relationships with individuals,

groups, and communities. SCA put us in contact with local groups that we had very little engagement with in the past, including The Welcoming Association and Craigmillar Now. We worked in partnership with both groups to identify relevant individuals to take part in *Voices*. We also got a new volunteer, Sara. She was recommended to us by our partners at Craigmillar Now to be interviewed as part of the *Voices* project. During our interview with Sara, she mentioned her interest in archives and heritage and her desire to undertake a course. After the interview, we mentioned that we take volunteers and that our team could help her along the way with experience and knowledge if she decided to do a course. Sara has been a fantastic addition to our volunteer group, and she has been accepted to start a postgraduate archives course in September 2023.

Our team are thankful to have been a part of this project, and the benefits of our involvement continue to be realised! ●

ASHLEIGH THOMPSON  
Records & Archives Officer  
Edinburgh City Archives

## B THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SCOTLAND

As the country's largest library, the National Library of Scotland (NLS) holds an extensive collection of materials related to the nation's history and culture. However, recognising the importance of local histories and stories, NLS seeks to extend its support to community-based archives and create greater accessibility for wider audiences and was delighted to collaborate with SCA on the *Voices* project. NLS colleagues brought invaluable digital preservation expertise and provided technical training, greatly contributing to the success of this collaborative project.

The objectives of our partnership were to strengthen community sound archives by providing essential resources, expertise and training, and enhancing their sustainability and accessibility. We were also keen to use the project to promote collaboration and reach new communities of cultural heritage creation and preservation. Through outreach and community engagement, the partnership sought to emphasise the value of networking and the sharing of best practice in digital collecting so we can continue to preserve and share Scotland's sonic heritage. While developing contacts and facilitating

a culture of two-way knowledge exchange, we built good relationships with migrant communities under represented in the national collections.

Another objective was to give groups a basis from which they could foster engagement within their own communities. NLS acknowledges the difficulties with 'centralising' such collections and aimed to promote a sense of ownership and pride in the material created.

The successful outcomes of NLS's contribution to the project included online training sessions, covering cataloguing, preservation and digitisation techniques, and introducing some basic recording skills for creating oral histories. These educational opportunities equipped community archivists with the necessary skills to collect, manage and preserve their own collections effectively. These sessions were recorded and are accessible on the SCA website.

NLS colleagues also attended events, conferences and seminars, and were on hand to discuss and support partners and contributors. The events themselves were great, fostering a real sense of camaraderie among those involved as well as being a space for knowledge exchange, storytelling and relationship building.

The partnership between NLS and SCA helped create support for the empowerment of migrant community cultural creators and collectors, strengthening their capacity to manage, preserve and share their collections. More generally, our work created opportunities to enrich public knowledge, understanding and appreciation of migrant communities' contribution to Scotland's cultural heritage archives.

Furthermore, the partnership laid the foundation for ongoing collaboration among archives, creating a network that will continue to support each other well into the future.

The partnership between National Library of Scotland and Scottish Council on Archives has been a resounding success, engaging and empowering community archives, fostering collaboration, and enriching Scotland's cultural heritage. This collaborative approach is a testament to the value of partnerships in advancing requirements of preservation and accessibility for archives. With the momentum gained, the potential for continued growth and impact on community archives across Scotland is very promising. ●

CHARLIE McCANN  
Sound Curator  
National Library of Scotland



*Voices* project interviewee Frishta and family outside Lewes Castle Museum and Archive, Stornoway.

Chris Afuakwah, Scottish Refugee Council, leading a storytelling training session.  
Photo by Iman Tajik

## SCOTTISH REFUGEE COUNCIL

At the time of writing, there are over 108 million displaced people globally. This number has grown significantly since I began working with people seeking refuge, just over six years ago. Behind these staggering statistics are people from all walks of life, backgrounds, nationalities, gender and sexual identities, religious beliefs, family groups and professions. Each have hopes and dreams, aspirations, hobbies and interests, challenges and injustices faced. In short, behind these statistics, there are over 108 million individual, diverse, unique, interlocking stories. Stories that we can all learn from and find ways to relate to, and which show that people are so much more than their immigration status and the crisis they fled from.

I have a particular interest in stories. My role at Scottish Refugee Council (SRC) is all about supporting new Scots communities to share their stories, in the media or through other opportunities. So, I was delighted to be approached by Scottish Council on Archives for this partnership, and to support new Scots to take part in *Voices: The Community Story*.

An individual story can shatter stereotypes and assumptions, and push people to action. Millions across the world were moved by the death of Aylan Kurdi, the two-year old Kurdish boy whose body washed up on the shores of Turkey in September 2015, provoking an international humanitarian response, and, albeit temporarily, a change in rhetoric from the British Government. In response to the photograph, the then prime minister, David Cameron, announced that the UK would resettle thousands more Syrians.



Eight years on, we are living in different times. As the Illegal Migration Bill becomes an Act, following last year's Nationality and Borders Act, the power of stories is all too clear. The prominent headlines about refugees are that they are "illegal" and "economic migrants", declaring, "we can't take them all", "we need to look after our own first". When historians look back at this period, they will be able to chart how this anti-refugee rhetoric grew and became laws, permeating every aspect of public life. But this is not the only story.

Despite all the challenges that people seeking refugee protection face, there is so much resilience, strength and power in this vast, non-homogeneous community of people from all over the world. It is vital that these stories are heard, seen, documented, archived. Not only can stories provide hope and inspiration now, but they will give the historians and researchers of the future a clearer understanding of this era and of the

lives of people who have fled their homes and found themselves in Scotland.

### *Archiving is an act of resistance*

I had no prior experience of working in the heritage sector, but I was captivated by the enthusiasm and energy of the SCA team. I really appreciated how organised SCA were in their approach to the partnership. They were clear from the start on which geographical areas they wanted to connect with groups in, and of the input required in joining the project. I also really appreciated the opportunities for personal development too, from learning about oral history and audio editing skills, to sharing knowledge at events, to making new connections. But what I really loved seeing was the enthusiasm of the groups who got involved in the project.

We offered some guidance on the wording of the initial information sheet and then shared it out with our

networks. SRC has a wide network of refugee-led and -supporting community groups based across Scotland, many of whom are part of our New Scots Connect forum, a useful tool for sharing information, events and projects. From this, we were delighted that several groups got involved with the project.

I was pleased to be asked to join the steering group, a great opportunity to learn more about the heritage sector and make new connections, while sharing knowledge with participants and offering a bit of extra support to new Scots groups who got involved. Being on the steering group involved presenting at an event introducing the steering group to stakeholders, presenting a webinar for participants on how to support new Scots to share their stories safely, receiving training on oral history best practice and audio editing, sharing resources for participants to access additional support (asylum information, charities etc.), and attending an evaluation event in November 2022. Additionally, I sat in on two interviews by student journalist Manar Melhi, and conducted my own interview with SNP Councillor Abdul Bostani.

I consider the project to be a great success. Groups such as the Yemeni Scottish Foundation and Forth Valley Welcome, who had no prior knowledge of how or why to engage with their local archives, were suddenly engaged and excited with the prospect of contributing their stories to Scotland's archives. I hope that this project was just the start of their archiving and storytelling journey.

At the final event in November, Syrian participants from the Highlands expressed their gratitude and excitement at being able to contribute to Scotland's history. This was a big deal for participants; to be asked by their new home to feed into its national story. And for a long time to come, these recordings will be available for people studying this



Glasgow Afghan United started as an informal football club.  
Photo by Abdul Bostani



eventful period of global movement, or interested in discovering who lived in their local area.

As a result of the project, I also have a much greater understanding of the importance of archives and how to access them. I have new connections with practitioners from different sectors and areas of expertise, I have strengthened bonds with the community groups who got involved, I have gained skills in audio editing and oral history, and I feel proud to have been part of a small but mighty contribution to Scotland's archived history of migration in 2022. And finally, I was able to build on these new audio editing skills to start a podcast project at Scottish Refugee Council in 2023. The first few episodes are available at: [www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/podcast](http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/podcast)

With thanks again to Audrey and Taylor at Scottish Council on Archives for their support and enthusiasm throughout the project. ●

CHRIS AFUAKWAH  
Storytelling Officer  
Scottish Refugee Council

It was an honour to get involved in this excellent project. In a diverse society, it is very important that we understand each other to foster better integration and counter myths and hostile rhetoric about migrants, asylum seekers and refugees and this project, which has involved people from so many varying backgrounds, supports this greater understanding. Chris Afuakwah, who interviewed me, made it easy for me to tell my story and the story of Glasgow Afghan United, which has grown from an informal football team to a registered Scottish charity working in education, sport, employability and integration. It has been great to listen to other recordings and learn more about people's experiences of coming to Scotland. I would like to congratulate everyone involved in *Voices: The Community Story* project for this fantastic work.  
COUNCILLOR ABDUL BOSTANI  
Glasgow City Council

## **D** Business Archives SURVEYING OFFICER FOR SCOTLAND

It has been a busy 12 months for the Business Archives Surveying Officer for Scotland, with surveys taking place across the country from Elgin to Dunfermline, and Broughty Ferry to Stornoway.

The businesses that have been surveyed have ranged from textile mills and timber merchants to football clubs and auctioneers, as well as a number of third-sector organisations including charities and membership bodies.

Two thematic industry surveys were launched during the year, which meant a specific focus was given to Scottish bakeries with more than 30 businesses contacted and 19 Scots-Italian ice-cream manufacturers.

The survey officer role has existed since 1977. Through it, the records of over 700 Scottish businesses have been surveyed and helped secure a home for many of these collections with business owners and university, local, and national archives. 2023 has been no different! Records-at-risk cases within 2022-3 included the archive of the last Scottish linen manufacturer, Peter Greig & Co., the Scottish Investment Trust, as well as the Caledonian Brewery, the last operating brewery in Edinburgh. All were surveyed as they neared closure or had closed, with recommendations provided on securing long-term homes for the collections. This work resulted in all three collections being safely transferred to repositories at Fife Council Archives, National Records of Scotland, and the University of Glasgow's Archives and Special Collections – a positive outcome to the sad closure of three notable businesses.

Andrew Dowsey, Archives and Local Studies Manager at Fife Archives, said: "When Peter Greig & Co. went into liquidation, I was

worried that their archive had been lost. I am grateful to the Business Archives Surveying Officer for tracking the records down, identifying the records worth permanent preservation and for helping to persuade the owner to donate the records to OnFife Archives."

The Surveying Officer is also keen to provide sectoral development opportunities where possible. So we have been delighted to arrange a student cataloguing placement with the charity Scotland's Garden Scheme following a survey, with a second cataloguing placement organised for summer 2023 at the bakery, Goodfellow & Stephen. Both roles have been designed to provide students with important practical arrangement and description experience whilst working with unique, privately-held collections that otherwise would be difficult to access.

The past 12 months have also seen the first regional surveying pilot undertaken in partnership with Tasglann nan Eilean, the archive service of the Western Isles based in



The Scottish Investment Trust Collection.  
Courtesy The Ballast Trust.

Stornoway. Along with the archivist's essential local knowledge, the Surveying Officer developed a list of notable businesses in the area, with two surveys taking place, including that of a 125-year-old legal firm.

Looking ahead is the launch of the next thematic survey, this time approaching businesses, charities, and organisations involved in Scotland's outdoor and natural environment economy, a relatively overlooked industry in terms of its record-keeping, whilst also developing a second regional surveying project.

If you are aware of any at-risk business collections or have suggestions of any businesses that would benefit from an archive survey, please do get in touch. ●

RACHAEL MUIR  
Business Archives Surveying  
Officer for Scotland

For more information, visit:  
[www.busarchscot.org.uk](http://www.busarchscot.org.uk)

or contact:  
[surveyingofficer@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:surveyingofficer@glasgow.ac.uk)

## **E** Digital Preservation Coalition LET DIGITS FLOURISH: iPRES COMES TO SCOTLAND



The prestigious Digital Preservation Awards is the most prominent celebration of achievement for those people and organisations who have made significant contributions towards a sustainable future for our digital assets.

It brings practitioners and experts from around the world together for a week of training, thinking, talking and planning a more sustainable future for our digital archives. iPres addresses a global challenge with a globe-trotting pattern – previous venues include Beijing, Amsterdam, Boston, Kyoto, Bern, Vienna and San Francisco – returning to Europe every three years. Its scheduled European stop in 2022 was also the 20th anniversary of the DPC, a coincidence too good to be ignored. So, an invitation was issued in 2018 for the global digital preservation community to come to Glasgow for a week in September 2022, to share their insights, listen to the needs of the sector in Scotland, and plan the future with us.

Around 450 in-person delegates from six continents and a further 220 people online joined the DPC under the motto 'Data for all, for good, forever: Let Digits Flourish'. The conference was built on five ideas: community, environment, exchange, innovation and resilience. It included more than 120 papers, panels, posters, tutorials and presentations of all kinds. The first evening saw the presentation of the biennial Digital Preservation Awards, specially extended to mark 20 years of the DPC.

The second evening was a birthday party for the DPC, including the launch of our members' tartan, commissioned to mark the occasion. The conference ceilidh saw the

Scottish archives have become good at tracking emerging practice in the world of digital preservation. But, for a week in September, the whole world of digital preservation was tracking Scotland, as the Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC) brought iPres to Glasgow.

Any research into contemporary archives reveals archivists' low confidence in digital skills, with digital preservation as the least developed skill set of all. A survey by Jisc and The National Archives in 2019 spelled this out. Most archives in the UK have no dedicated digital or digital preservation strategy; most report inadequate funding (or none at all); and most report that organisational buy-in is a significant barrier to developing digital skills. Archivists often claim that their archival qualifications have failed to prepare them with digital skills, even those graduating after 2010. The consequence is that 67% of archives are not taking steps to preserve digital documents, and 87% have no web archiving capability.

That's a sustainability crisis for the sector in Scotland, but it doesn't end there. Data volumes continue on an exponential curve globally. It is estimated that around 50% more data is generated every two years. Volumes are easy to measure, but greater complexity is perhaps more serious. Recently the largest increases are reported in unstructured data. Non-database sources – video streaming, voice assistants and 'internet of things' devices – have led to an explosion in digital diversity and crippled more traditional approaches to data warehousing.

In summary, skills are in short supply and instead of getting ahead of the problem, practice is falling behind. Digital memory is in trouble, not because we don't know what to do, but because we urgently need a flexible and skilled workforce that can respond to the challenge. That's why DPC brought iPres to Scotland in September.

iPres is the premier international conference marrying theory and practice in digital preservation.





iPres 2022 student volunteers made sure delegates would find their way within the venue.

release of the DPC's strategic plan for the coming five years – our mandate from our members.

The last day of the conference was handed over to site visits, with around 20 different archives in Scotland hosting and meeting delegates to share their work and extend their personal and professional networks accordingly.

The facts and figures give some indication of the work that went into making it a success and the energy that was released. Delegates had plenty to say about what they liked.

Rachel Talbot of the British Geological Survey was delighted to join the conference; *“Having been introduced to the world of digital preservation through my MSc at the University of Glasgow while also being six months into my first post-graduate role in Information Management in Edinburgh, it felt like the stars had aligned that iPres2022 was being held a train-ride away, in Glasgow. Through iPres2022 I have found, at this early point in my career, the invigorating and inspiring effect of a gathering of like-minded, passionate people pathing the way at conferences. No more was this relevant than when I attended the long paper presentation, ‘Green*

*Goes with Anything: Decreasing Environmental Impact of Digital Libraries at Virginia Tech’ by Alex Kinnaman, Digital Preservation Coordinator at the Virginia Tech University Libraries.”*

Wellington da Silva, Archivist at the National Library of Brazil, spoke on *“the final work of my Master of Public Policy: ‘Why Digital Preservation Should be Treated as a Public Policy’, in the Lighting Talks section. Lighting Talks are the ideal way for the first international presentation; it is an incredible experience to be at the biggest digital preservation event, presenting a work in another language. It is an experience which makes me want to improve more in the area of digital preservation in order to contribute more for diffusion and adhesion.”*

Kevin Wong of the National Archives of Singapore said, *“iPres 2022 in Glasgow was my first in-person conference in three years, and the first iPres conference I had attended in person. It was an excellent opportunity to finally meet people whom I, up till then, had only seen virtually. I also made some new friends after chance encounters during lunch – not something that happens easily online. The conference*

*was full of ‘aha’ or ‘hmm’ moments for me. One of these came during the tutorial on ‘Mitigating Risk and Building Cyber Resilience in the Age of Ransomware’. Several participants highlighted the potential for synergy and cooperation between digital preservationists and cybersecurity professionals, because we both think about data in similar ways, and share similar concerns about how data is treated. For example, we both care about the integrity of data, and the availability of data, even if we sometimes use different terms to talk about these concepts. I had noticed some of these similarities before, when speaking to our own cybersecurity colleagues, but never connected the dots and seen them as an opportunity.”*

DPC funded more than 150 places at the conference, including supported places for all our members and places for student volunteers. The programme committee was around 50% larger than any previous year to ensure the next generation of leaders have experience working at scale. Conference proceedings were published in November and recordings of most iPres 2022 sessions were released to open access in January 2023.

Digital preservation is a pressing challenge for archives around the world. There's no Scottish solution to digital preservation: it's only through dialogue and participation with colleagues that we can make the progress that is urgently needed. DPC's base in Glasgow means that Scotland is tightly integrated into a global effort to track, inform and innovate good practice in what is arguably the biggest challenge facing the sector. ●

WILLIAM KILBRIDE  
Executive Director  
Digital Preservation Coalition

For more information, visit:  
[ipres2022.scot](http://ipres2022.scot)  
[www.dpconline.org](http://www.dpconline.org)



## Glasgow Caledonian University Archive Centre SCOTLAND'S ANTI-APARTHEID MOVEMENT

The Archive Centre at Glasgow Caledonian University stands out visually on the ground floor of our Sir Alex Ferguson Library. We believe art and illustration are a fantastic way to engage with our audiences and have actively increased our visual presence over the last few years. Visuals are particularly good conversation starters with our international students or visitors with literacy challenges. We were delighted to add a permanent exhibition wall to our space in the summer of 2022 allowing us to share more of our visual treasures from across our collections. It has also resulted in our innovative space being used for more academic, cultural, public, and community engagement.

Our first exhibit of eight posters from the Anti-Apartheid Movement Scottish Committee records brought new and returning faces to the Archive Centre and resulted in numerous conversations with researchers, students, staff, visitors, and the general public. The posters were original and, as campaigning tools, captured part of the Scottish Anti-Apartheid Movement's history of activism and their call to action. They reflect Scotland's participation in AAM national campaigns and were used by the organisation in their struggle to end apartheid in South Africa and free Nelson Mandela from imprisonment.

Our exhibition programme is ongoing, and our space is accessible and open to all with no card or library membership needed. ●

CAROLE McCALLUM  
University Archivist  
Glasgow Caledonian University

For more information, visit:  
[www.gcu.ac.uk/currentstudents/essentials/archives](http://www.gcu.ac.uk/currentstudents/essentials/archives)



The university's collection holds the minutes, papers and correspondence of the Anti-Apartheid Movement in Scotland from 1975 to 1994. It also holds some Glasgow and Edinburgh branch meeting material and other documentation that pre-dates the establishment of the Scottish Committee. There is also a large collection of national and international material which helps create a full picture of the Movement's activities and gives an indication of other organisations that gave their support. The Archive is also rich in ephemera including, posters, stickers, and postcards.

[archives.gcu.ac.uk/anti-apartheid-movements](http://archives.gcu.ac.uk/anti-apartheid-movements)

# Glasgow City Archives

## ANOTHER BUSY YEAR

The service has been in recovery mode this year, with opening hours gradually being extended. While not back to normal, planned recruitment should enable us to reach our full opening hours from early 2024.

Glasgow City Archives continued to be heavily involved in the Scottish Child Abuse Enquiry and related activities, impacting other work areas. Alongside this, the service continues to deliver against key priorities of Glasgow City Council, Glasgow Life and Museums and Collections.

### EXHIBITIONS

It has been a busy year in respect of loans and returns of exhibits to and from other institutions. In May 2022, ten Charles Rennie Mackintosh architectural drawings from the City Archive collection returned after a three-year tour. Locations included Liverpool, Maryland, Albuquerque, and Nashville, as part of the Glasgow Museums and Collections 'Designing the New: Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Glasgow Style' exhibition.

A Honeyman, Keppie and Mackintosh architectural plan was on loan to V&A Dundee for the opening of its Scottish Design Galleries. This was returned in the summer of 2022. Two further items were loaned to the V&A Dundee during 2022–3. The first was the plan of a men's urinal in Alexandra Park for the Scottish Design Galleries. The second loan was from the Stirling of Keir letter book, Jamaica, 1766, for the 'Tartan' exhibition.

During the year, an exhibition, 'Scottish Women's Hospital; the story of their heroic efforts during World War I', was on display in the City Archives foyer. This was the work of a PhD student at Glasgow University. His Research Intern post was grant-funded by the Scottish Graduate School of Arts and Humanities, enabling him to further his PhD

research and to learn new skills in public engagement.

Finally, during 2022–3, we have been working with museum colleagues on an exhibition marking the 150th anniversary of the implementation of the Education (Scotland) Act, 1872. Opening in December 2023, the exhibition will be the first co-produced exhibition between Museums and Archive staff to be sited in the Mitchell Library, home to the City Archives.

### VOLUNTEERS

Glasgow City Archives accommodates volunteers, including recreational volunteers (usually family historians), pre-professional, and work experience volunteers. Over the year, volunteers contributed 433 hours, improving their employability and skills, diversifying the workforce and supporting health and wellbeing.

The recreational volunteers are long-standing and continue to produce vital indexes to some of our most significant collections. This includes indexes to our poor law applications, described as outstanding on a UK basis, and globally significant. During this year, two volunteers have rehoused the personnel files for Scottish Women's Hospital staff during WWI and are in the process of producing a database of staff details.

We continue to support the development of pre-archive course volunteers. Over the last year, four such volunteers undertook a variety of activities, including cataloguing, answering enquiries and preservation work. And for those who have not yet committed to a career in archives, we continue to offer work experience placements, widening their skills and opening the possibility of pursuing a career in the sector. This year, we had three placements, who undertook a variety of archives tasks.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

A key service priority, we aim to create quality visitor experiences which incorporate a wide variety of programming for tourists, repeat local visitors and priority groups.

Our link to local communities has been greatly enhanced by our weekly feature in the *Glasgow Times*, which has been ongoing since September 2020.

One of our successes over the last few years is our use of social media channels. A marketing review of all social media channels within Glasgow Life highlighted our fast growth, extensive reach, and high level of user engagement. Of particular note was our reach across the Scottish diaspora, a target audience for the City's Visitor Strategy.

Facebook figures are particularly strong: our 'reach' was 18.2 million, impressions 26.1 million, engagement 1.6 million, and followers 50,780. The audience includes 21.4% from the Scottish diaspora.

Our work with the Scottish Council on Archives on the *Voices: The Community Story* project sat perfectly with our service objectives, and oral history recordings were conducted with members of the Italian, Lithuanian, Roma, and Yemeni communities. We were able to provide an add-on to the project with a show-and-tell around Glasgow's story from the earliest times to the twentieth century; enabling the group to make connections with Glasgow and its history.

As the year progressed, we embarked on a recovery programme for all users (in person, online, and programming for new audiences), offering in-house, external, and remote talks to family, local history, and other groups. In line with the



Dr Elsie Inglis and colleagues in Zurich, following the Scottish Women's Hospital unit's repatriation from the Front, February 1916. Courtesy Glasgow City Archives.

City's Visitor Strategy, target audiences included Glasgow and areas across Scotland, England and Ireland, and the wider diaspora.

To achieve this wider reach, the City Archives have participated in various online and in-person events to attract tourists. This includes participation in 'Scottish Indexes' online conferences, which attract audiences from the UK and Ireland, USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand; attending the Back to Dublin three-day Family History Fair; delivering talks to Canada and welcoming Canadian Family History groups to Glasgow.

In relation to Glasgow City Council and Glasgow Life's commitment to highlight Glasgow's legacies of slavery and Empire, the archives supported the research by Dr Stephen Mullen for the Glasgow Slavery Audit and organised and hosted its launch by the Leader of the Council.

As part of Book Week Scotland, the Archives launched two books which used our collections extensively and which are also relevant to the story of Glasgow and the Empire.

- *The Glasgow Sugar Aristocracy: Scotland and Caribbean Slavery, 1775–1838*, by Dr Stephen Mullen
- *Walfrid: A Life of Faith, Community and Football*, by Dr Michael Connolly

In addition, we hosted the regular annual week-long visit by students and lecturers from the University of London, supporting their study of Glasgow and Legacies of Empire.

### GRANT FUNDED PROJECTS

In partnership with the Open University Scotland, we held the final event of the Royal Society of Edinburgh's £20,000 funded project, *Mapping the Cultural History of Glasgow*, with a public workshop on 'Cultural Events in Glasgow 1868–1938'. This year we have worked with the Open University (the major applicant) and the Director of Scottish Studies, Guelph University, to develop a grant application to the Arts and Humanities Research Council of around £850,000 to take this project further.

### INTERNAL USE

The City Archives and Records Management team holds records from across the former Strathclyde Region. Inevitably, the team has been very heavily involved in the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry and related activities, including the various Redress Schemes, Freedom of Information (FOI) and Data Protection applications, and police and court inquiries. Consequently, the City Archivist has been working closely with various Glasgow City Council departments, including Social Work, Legal, Data Protection and FOI teams. In addition, there has been frequent communication with ex-SRC local authorities and regular contacts with the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry. ●

IRENE O'BRIEN Archivist  
Glasgow City Archives

For more information, visit:  
[www.glasgowlife.org.uk/libraries/city-archives](http://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/libraries/city-archives)

### ACCESSIONS

There have been 70 accessions in total during the year. All add to the vital tapestry, which helps tell Glasgow's story.

#### Local Authority Records

- Glasgow City Council: Natural Environment and Parks: slides of Glasgow Garden Festival, 1988
- Glasgow Corporation Parks: register of permanent employees, Northern District, 1884–1970.
- Glasgow Corporation and Strathclyde Regional Council: building drawings and conservation reports, c.1972–1985.

#### Business Records

- Rolls-Royce, Hillington: photograph album showing construction of site, machinery in use by workers and teachers at Stow College, 1939–1940.
- Glasgow Garden Festival: newspaper cuttings, reports, adverts, and correspondence, 1984–1988.

#### Ecclesiastical

- Glasgow Anderston Relief/UP/UF/Old Church; additional records, 1770–1854.
- Thomas Coats Memorial Baptist Church, Paisley: additional records, 1879–2020.
- Scottish Episcopal Church – Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway: minutes, correspondence, financial papers, reports, and photographs, 1906–1912.
- Scottish Episcopal Church – Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway: Papers of John Alexander Spens (Diocesan Registrar), 1854–1931.

#### Miscellaneous

- Pollokshields Heritage Group: minutes, newspaper cuttings and videos, 1905–2020 (bulk 1992–2016).
- Sheila Lennox MacAskill (1946–2000), gay rights campaigner: minutes, annual reports, and correspondence, 1973–1981

## H Historic Environment Scotland A NEW HOME FOR THE HES ARCHIVE

For the last 20+ years, staff have welcomed visitors who wanted to consult the Historic Environment Scotland (HES) Archive (previously RCAHMS) at John Sinclair House, 16 Bernard Terrace, Edinburgh. However, we are now embarking on an exciting project to transform a building into a specialist archive facility. Archive House already had the name and is an existing building in the Sherwood Industrial Estate in Bonnyrigg, Midlothian, which will be converted to a high-quality facility to house the organisation's extensive records and archives.

The HES archive is currently held in several facilities in Edinburgh and central Scotland. We will be consolidating all material into one place where we can operate more efficiently and provide the best possible conditions to preserve the archive. The project, expected to be completed by 2026, will meet recognised standards for archive buildings and be an exemplar of reuse and retrofit.

With overall project management by Gleeds, Architectural and Passive House design by Oberlanders, and specialist engineering input

from Buro Happold and Curtins, the project aims to be the first public building to be designed implementing the new Scottish Government Net Zero Public Sector Building and Energy Standards. This takes into account not only the carbon emissions of the building while in use, but also the carbon emissions associated with the building materials and maintenance. As well as providing a long-term home, there will be a new extension which provides all the working space required for the operation of the archive, such as conservation and cataloguing studios, digital archiving and digitisation services. The planning application was submitted in June and we have started the detailed design process (RIBA stage 4). We will start the construction early in 2024 on the current timeline.

We will retain a presence in the centre of Edinburgh for access by researchers and members of the public. The existing Archive Search Room and Library in John Sinclair House will move to Longmore House, the HES headquarters, where a new reading room will open in 2025–6. With this new dual campus, we

are already exploring how we will operate and have been learning from colleagues elsewhere who are already transporting archives for access.

Work is well underway to prepare the archive for its move, and we are taking this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to examine every box and folder to document and analyse contents, resolve legacy issues, introduce QR codes to aid location movement and management, undertake conservation and improve housing. We have identified 55+ projects to complete that fall into three overarching headings: collections care (e.g. conservation, mould remediation and rehousing), management (e.g. planning for decant) and discovery (e.g. cataloguing, digitisation and documentation). By 2026, we will have a much better understanding of our uncatalogued holdings and conservation needs to inform the future strategic direction of our work. ●

LESLEY FERGUSON  
Head of Archives  
Historic Environment Scotland

For more information, visit:  
[www.historicenvironment.scot](http://www.historicenvironment.scot)



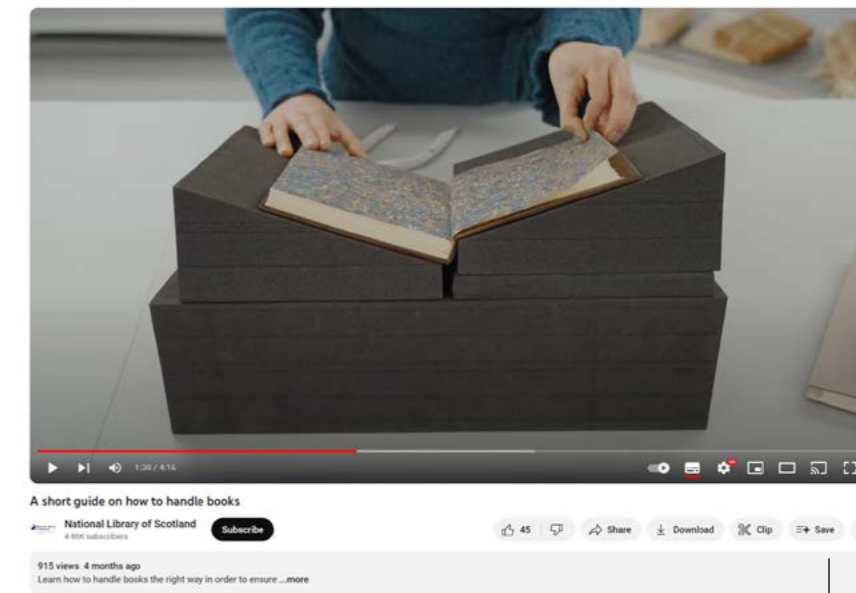
## I The National Library of Scotland PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

### CONSERVATION FILMS

The National Library of Scotland (the Library) was delighted to receive funding from the Scottish Library & Information Council (SLIC) Innovation and Development Fund in early 2022 for a project to design, develop and disseminate training resources in collections care.

The need for this project arose following the pandemic. The Collections Care team at the Library has a duty to provide training to all staff working with collections to ensure they can do so safely and confidently. Prior to the pandemic, this training had always been delivered face-to-face. However, as a result of lockdown and the digital pivot, the Library took all in-house training online, developing training and resources, alongside undertaking 'train the trainer' development within the team so that Collections Care could deliver this more effectively. With the funding from SLIC, the Library was able to build on this investment of time, resource, and knowledge in order to develop training resources that could be of value to other archives and libraries and, therefore, shared across the sector.

The first phase of the project was focused on consultation. The Library pulled together a small but invested group of partner archives and libraries and then gathered data on their collections care training needs. These partners represented local authority libraries and archives, specialist libraries, volunteer-led libraries and colleagues at SCA. The partners fed into the consultation via an online questionnaire designed to elicit information on the need for collections care training resources, the required content as well as the desired format of such resources.



NLS films can be viewed at [www.youtube.com/NLofScotland](http://www.youtube.com/NLofScotland)

The results of this consultation supported the concept that the most valuable way to disseminate collections care training is online. There was clear support for various preventive conservation issues to be addressed through this training, focusing on particular format types. This shaped the Library's approach to the project and led to the development of online training resources focussing, initially, on the handling of bound volumes, maps and large-format items. This project's audience- or user-centred focus has been one of the greatest elements of its success. By asking interested stakeholders what they needed and wanted, the Library ensured that the project was designed to meet those needs rather than assuming what those needs were.

The second phase of the project was focussed on the development of a series of online film resources. The Library decided to meet the needs of users by developing three videos focusing on:

- *Bound volumes*: book handling

advice film (including how to take a book off the shelf)

- *Newspapers*: a film focussing on large format, fragile items which are often difficult to handle, access and store
- *Maps and plans*: a film focussing on the conservation, storage and care of a large-format, flat estate plan.

The Library worked with an external filming company, Stroma Films ([www.stromafilms.co.uk](http://www.stromafilms.co.uk)), to produce these films and members of the Collections Care team stepped up to the plate to be filmed while working with Library collections items. The films are now available on the National Library of Scotland's YouTube channel under the banner 'Behind the scenes: Conservation'. It was a huge collective effort to produce these films, and thanks must go the Collections Care, Public Programming and Development staff at the Library.

The Library would encourage other archive and library services to take a look and to use and share the videos as part of their training programmes

if appropriate. It is hoped that the film entitled 'How to handle books' might be a tool for sector colleagues to train others, including readers, how to use book supports in reading rooms. Feedback from anyone who has viewed the films or has ideas for other areas or formats that would be beneficial for future films is welcome to contact me. ●

JULIE BON (j.bon@nls.uk)  
Head of Collections Care

For more information, visit:  
[www.nls.uk](http://www.nls.uk)

[www.youtube.com/NLofScotland](https://www.youtube.com/NLofScotland)

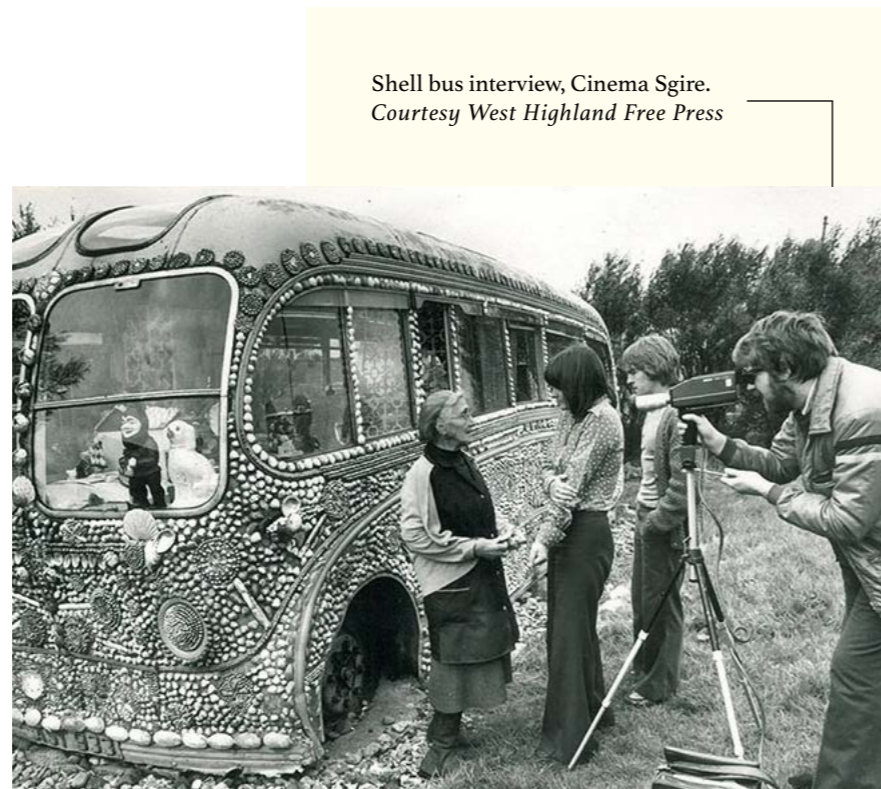
### HIDDEN GEMS FROM A COMMUNITY VIDEO ARCHIVE

A collection of over 100 videotapes produced by communities in the Outer Hebrides in the late 1970s has been digitised and made accessible to all as part of a programme of local and online events.

The videos were produced under the *Cinema Sgìre* community education project, which was based mainly in Uist and Barra, and ran from October 1977 until March 1981. As well as providing a mobile cinema service, the project included a video production element which involved local communities learning to record videos of everyday life in the islands. Set up by Comhairle nan Eilean, the original project was largely supported by the Scottish Film Council, the Highlands and Islands Development Board and the Gulbenkian Foundation.

The tapes were under the care of Museum nan Eilean, but their obsolete, rare format and the cost and complications of digitising them meant the content was impossible to access. Therefore the decision was taken in 2020 to donate the collection to the Moving Image Archive (part of the National Library of Scotland) due to their specialist knowledge.

Now, thanks to the partnership between Museum nan Eilean and the Moving Image Archive, the tapes have



Shell bus interview, Cinema Sgìre.  
Courtesy West Highland Free Press

been preserved, digitised and made accessible online. Local company UistFilm was contracted to compile a detailed catalogue and deliver a series of community engagement events across the Outer Hebrides.

Covering the whole of the Western Isles, the collection gives an intimate insight into traditional ways of life in the islands in the late 1970s as well as community developments. We see a local blacksmith (nicknamed 'Jellicoe') at work in his smiddy in the Ness district of Lewis, for example, and demonstrations of the traditional processes in making tweed, from shearing sheep to *waulking*. Discussions on current affairs and community development are recorded, as well as visits to Welsh and Irish community development projects.

Singing and dancing at local *Mòds* also feature prominently, including a Welsh male voice choir's impromptu performance on the pier in Stornoway as passengers disembark from the ferry. There is a comic re-telling of the Bonnie Prince Charlie story by Harris Drama Group, alongside interviews with people of all ages, in Gaelic and

English, including older tradition bearers. Taken together, the collection provides a wealth of valuable material appealing to many interests.

The response to the community screenings has been fantastic. Many people have recognised themselves or family and friends and shared stories or information. This is just one example of the feedback received:

*"For those who don't know the islands so well, you get a different view from these films, seeing the place from someone else's viewpoint, and the Gaelic ...[a] wealth of vocabulary is seen throughout. There are lots of audio archives available, but with the addition of film, you get a richer picture of that time, from the fashions, the wallpaper, customs etc., yet with people conversing naturally."*

The project was funded by Bòrd na Gàidhlig and The Gaelic Language Promotion Trust. ●

KAY FOUBISTER  
Acquisitions Curator  
Moving Image Archive

For more information, visit:  
[movingimage.nls.uk](http://movingimage.nls.uk)

### CATALOGUING THE WILLIAM GALLACHER MEMORIAL LIBRARY ARCHIVE

The National Library of Scotland has successfully completed a cataloguing project on the William Gallacher Memorial Library Archive, making this important collection fully searchable for the first time since 2017. Recognised as one of the country's leading resources on Scottish labour history and radicalism, the archive component to this hybrid collection offers inestimable research opportunities for scholars and members of the public alike.

Founded in Glasgow in December 1968 as a tribute to the life and work of the Paisley-born politician, activist, and trade unionist William 'Willie' Gallacher (1881–1965), the heart of the archive contains a number of Gallacher's own personal papers, pamphlets, ephemera, photographs, and personal artifacts, alongside material relating to his funeral and later commemorative events organised by the Scottish labour movement. This unique archive also contains over 60 individual special collections given by fellow activists or amassed by librarian Audrey Canning during her tenure as the archive's custodian.

From shipbuilders and suffragettes to miners and ministers, teachers and trade unionists, the special collections will surprise the most experienced researcher with its breadth of content, bringing historic events and the personal stories of countless working men and women to life in novel ways, through their letters, papers, photographs, objects, and recorded voices. You will find a miner's lamp, love letters between two young activists, an election address, a 1926 General Strike bulletin, a conscientious objector's prison bible, a doctor's notes on her patients' housing conditions, and a repatriation notice for a prisoner of war, finally returning home from the Spanish Civil War. The variety of archival material, the diversity of stories, and the spread of geographic representation lend a richness and depth to the collection that will appeal to users in academia, historical societies, and community action groups alike.

Some of the topics represented include the 1926 General Strike, the Spanish Civil War, the suffrage movement, women's work,

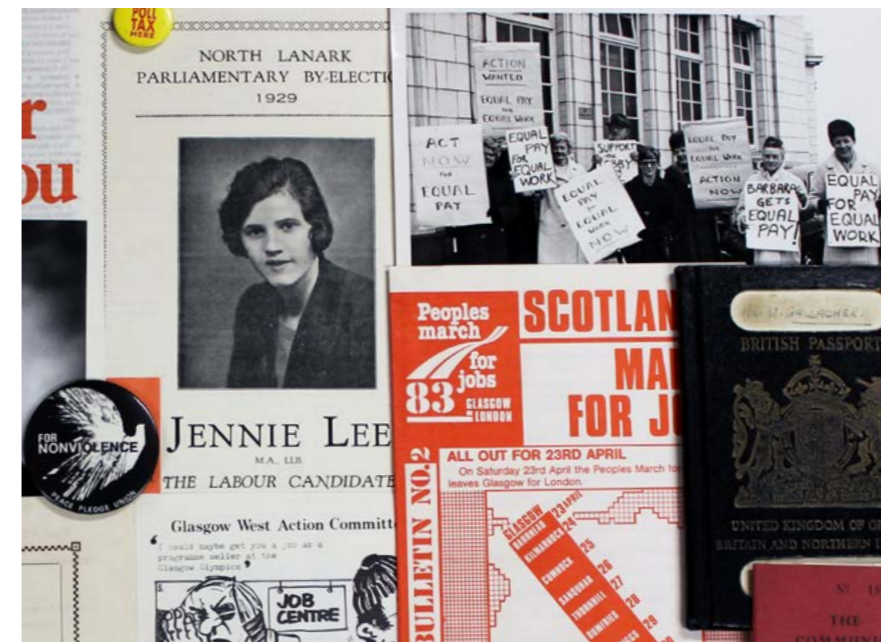
Communist Party history, and the campaigns for a new Scottish parliament. Notable individuals represented include John Maclean, Mary Barbour, Helen Crawford, Mary Docherty and Pat Devine. This cataloguing project has also revealed the papers of many of their lesser-known comrades, such as Kathleen Tinney and her husband Joseph Harrison Maxwell, both teachers and 'Red Clydeside' activists, William Docherty, Mary's father, a miner and member of the Workers' Theatre Movement, and the Glasgow Alternative Bookshop Collective.

The establishment and administration of the Memorial Library itself is well represented in the records created by librarians Bob Saunders and Audrey Canning as they worked to develop the Library's print and archival collections and support early researchers. Books and printed material from the Memorial Library were also transferred to the National Library of Scotland's General Collections Division and will be catalogued separately.

The National Library of Scotland holds the country's premier collection of archival material relating to Scottish labour history and the trade union and co-operative movements, to which the William Gallacher Memorial Library Archive is a significant addition. Enquiries and visits from researchers and members of the public are welcome. ●

CLAIRE DOOHAN  
Assistant Curator

The William Gallacher Memorial Library Archive catalogue may be viewed at:  
[manuscripts.nls.uk/repositories/2/resources/22401](http://manuscripts.nls.uk/repositories/2/resources/22401)



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# J National Records of Scotland

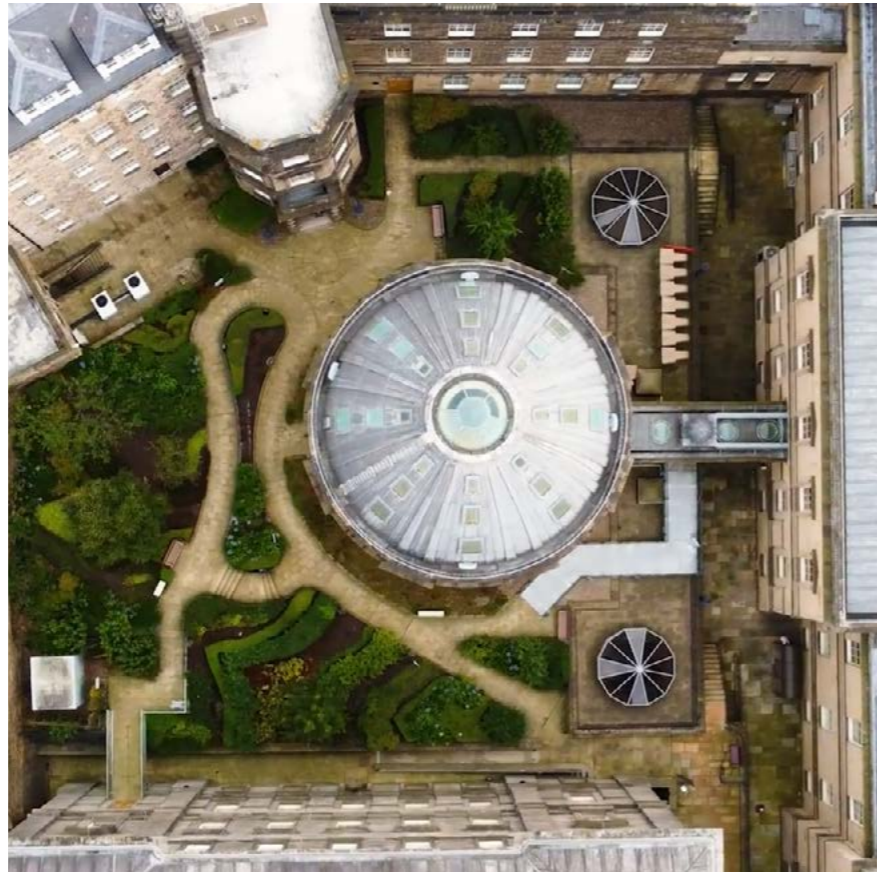
## A YEAR OF GROWTH

National Records of Scotland (NRS) has continued to grow and develop its services and collections over this past year, opening up the national collection to new and wider audiences. We successfully retained UK Archive Service Accreditation in November 2022 and were delighted to have our high standards of governance, collections management and access recognised once again.

Over 10,000 records were produced in person to 3,000 visitors to our Historical Search room last year. Alongside this, we continued to service our remote and virtual visitors, answering just under 25,000 search room enquiries and nearly 5,000 enquiries relating to adoption records. These figures are around 50% of pre-Covid levels, and we look forward to seeing those figures continue to rise significantly during 2023-4.

Visitors to General Register House would have noticed that we continued work on the long-term project to repair the iconic Adam Dome. Specialist teams have been working on this five-year project, due for completion in autumn 2023, when we plan to reopen the main front door on Princes Street to the public. Just as that project ended, another in one of our other impressive spaces, New Register House Dome, was being planned, starting in summer 2023. One of the favourite spaces for NRS visitors is the Archivists' Garden at the rear of General Register House – we have created a suite of online materials which give details of the planting and design, as well as insights into the records which inspired these choices.

Over the year, we continued to expand our collections and collection access. We received a particularly significant deposit of records from the Scottish Met Office, as well as



The Archivist's Garden, to the rear of General Register House, Edinburgh. © Crown copyright

records from the Crown Office, Sheriff Courts and private organisations. Cataloguing continued across these collections as well as Scottish Government and churches, and we concluded a project to quantify and prioritise our backlog and cataloguing activities. We were delighted in August 2022 to secure the family archive of the Earls of Balfour (GD433) for the nation. This significant collection of national and international importance is now a permanent acquisition to the national collection, and we have developed new outreach and learning resources to aid access and understanding for new audiences. We re-tendered our web archiving supplier contract and continued active collecting around public bodies' digital response to

current events, such as the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II and the appointment of the new First Minister, as well as adding further websites to the national collection. We have improved how depositors can transfer their born-digital records to NRS, and we published revised *Depositor Guidelines* for born-digital transfers.

We grew our online offering with several significant digitised record releases on ScotlandsPeople ([www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk](http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk)), including nearly 5.5 million entries for the 1922 census, birth registration entries for 1922, marriage registration entries for 1947, and death registration entries for 1972. We released nearly 4,000 Scottish Government Cabinet Records in our annual release, as well as nearly 80,000 entries from several prison registers. We refreshed our

ever-popular *Scottish Handwriting* pack in partnership with the Scottish Records Association and launched this in February 2023 – a printed pack can be purchased online via ScotlandsPeople or a free digital version downloaded online.

During 2022-3 we played an important role in supporting access to historical records for a number of public inquiries (including the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry) and in helping people searching for personal information on their time in Scotland as children and who may be considering applying to Scotland's Redress Scheme. We met our targets of responding to Freedom of Information requests within 20 working days and are continuing to tackle the backlog of requests for access to closed archive material which built up during our Covid closure periods. We also have an important role to play in creating the future historical record, and our team of conservators sealed 10 letters patents and 20 commissions under the Great Seal of Scotland for Scottish Government.

Like many archives and public bodies, NRS has been working hard on equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). 2022 saw the creation of our EDI Assurance Group, which oversees our work towards mainstream equality across NRS. In April 2023, we published the *Mainstreaming Equality Duty Report*, which included our refreshed organisational equality outcomes for 2023-5. Within the archive, we have started this off by publishing an EDI statement on our online public catalogue for the first time.

Looking beyond NRS itself, we are always pleased to work collaboratively with partners and stakeholders across Scotland to support the archive and recordkeeping sector. With the Scottish Council on Archives, we deliver the management of the accreditation programme across

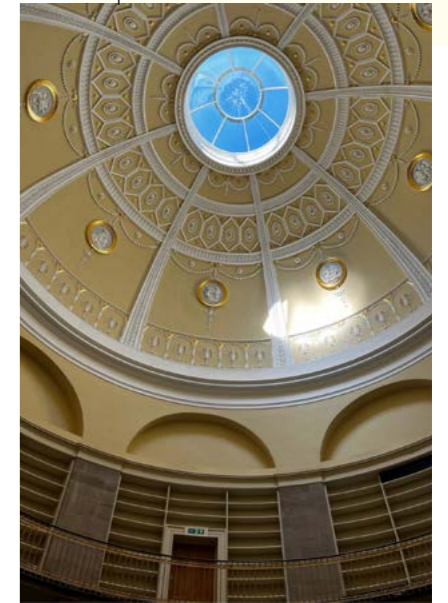
Scotland and support improvement in the Scottish archive and recordkeeping sectors. We assessed five Scottish archive services this year and supported additional assessments elsewhere in the UK. We also marked ten years of our ground-breaking Public Records (Scotland) Act, which continues to drive improved recordkeeping across Scottish public authorities forward. Throughout the year, we hosted events that engaged with more than 700 PRSA stakeholders on various record-related topics.

At the end of the year, we were delighted to partner with the National Museum of Scotland to loan our star item, the Declaration of Arbroath. This exhibition marked the Declaration's 700th anniversary, delayed from April 2020 – it was hugely popular with the public, attracting over 30,000 visitors during the month-long exhibition. Seeing the substantial contributions from several NRS teams bear fruit and giving the public a chance to see this document for the first time in 17 years was hugely satisfying. ●

CHARLOTTE BERRY, *Head of Records & Archives Engagement*  
National Records of Scotland



The restored Adam Dome, General Register House, Edinburgh.  
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For more information, visit:  
[www.nrscotland.gov.uk](http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk)

Whittingehame, the Balfour family home in East Lothian.  
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## Scottish Indexes CONFERENCES

As with many people, our research dramatically changed in spring 2020. As we walked out of National Records of Scotland (NRS) on 16 March, we had a feeling that it would be some time before things were 'back to normal'. On the journey home, we discussed hosting free Scottish Indexes online conferences. We were blown away by the enthusiasm of genealogists, archivists and others from around the world who immediately swung into action to help us make this happen. It quickly became apparent that many people wanted to learn more about the records we use as genealogists. There has continued to be a keen interest in the presentations by archivists showcasing the treasures they care for. I want to share some highlights from our last five conferences, held between 12 March 2022 and April 2023. I also want to share some of the comments made by people who attended them.

In March 2022, John Pelan, Director of the Scottish Council on Archives (SCA), introduced the audience to the planned new portal, *Your Scottish Archives*. Not only did this presentation show the audience how to use the new portal, but it also celebrated the diverse archives around Scotland. We were given a sneak preview of the new website, which will include features such as a knowledge base and glossary as well as the catalogue.

Following each presentation, viewers were given the opportunity to ask the presenter questions. This allows a global audience to interact directly with the presenter. One audience member asked, "It sounds as if there must be vast amounts of material that will need to be digitised. What efforts are to be made to achieve this task?" This question

demonstrates that the audience realised the scale of archives across Scotland. John was able to answer the question, helping the audience to be realistic in their expectations of all records being digitised and encouraging people to visit archives in person.

Rachel Hart, Head of Archives and Rare Books, Keeper of Manuscripts and Muniments at the University of St Andrews Libraries and Museums, delivered a fantastic tutorial on 'Reading Old Scottish Handwriting'. For many people, the challenge of reading secretary hand is a roadblock to further research. Rachel's introduction to the subject inspired people to develop their skills and pointed them in the direction of resources to enable them to continue learning.

Both George MacKenzie, retired archivist and former Keeper of the Records of Scotland, and Margaret Fox, archivist at Traquair House and formerly an archivist at National Records of Scotland, highlighted the value of family and estate papers. George shone a spotlight on the 'Waring of Lennel papers', which include a unique collection of letters, mostly addressed to Lady Clementine Waring. Margaret, on the other hand, revealed the records relating to workers on the land in her presentation, 'Traquair's Tenants, Cottars and Workers'. Both presentations helped the audience think about their research and whether their ancestors would be mentioned in similar records.

At the Scottish Indexes Conference in November 2022, Phil Astley, Archivist at Aberdeen City Archives, presented 'Criminal Portraits'. Phil has gathered research from civil registration records, newspapers and other sources to learn more about

individuals featured in the 'Register of Returned Convicts'. The mugshots within this volume are fascinating, not only because people who would never normally be able to afford to have their portrait taken appear but also because we can see the development of criminal photography during the period. One viewer commented, "The photos are great, almost makes me wish I could find some criminals in my family." Comments like these show the presentations inspire viewers to develop their research skills and move beyond the basic records.

To celebrate the release of the 1921 census, Tessa Spencer, Head of Outreach and Learning at National Records of Scotland, joined us at our January 2023 conference. Dr Irene O'Brien, senior archivist at Glasgow City Archives has also been a regular supporter of our conferences. Most recently, Irene spoke on the subject, 'School Records for Family Historians'. Although using examples held by Glasgow City Archives, Irene was able to explain which records would be standard across Scotland.

Genealogists have also demonstrated how to use a variety of records in their presentations. For example, Andrew Armstrong, genealogist at Relatively Scottish, presented 'Records of the Kelso Dispensary'. Andrew volunteered to transcribe some of the more than 24,000 Kelso Dispensary patient records, which you can now search on [scottishindexes.com](http://scottishindexes.com). Held by National Records of Scotland (reference HH71), these records date back to 1777. One of the many patients was Christopher Black, who was diagnosed with pneumonic affections in 1827 and subsequently died. Researching the family, Andrew knew that Christopher did not appear in the 1841 Scottish census but had no evidence



of his death; that is, until he found the entry in the Kelso Dispensary. Other presentations have similarly shown through case studies how researchers have used records from various Scottish archives to research their family history.

This has been a brief overview of the presentations; what have been the results? We have received a lot of positive feedback with many people telling us they now intend to visit a Scottish archive. Here is just a handful of the many comments we have received:

- "Your conferences give a good insight into what's out there, many sources I otherwise wouldn't know about."
- "I find Scottish indexes very good, not just your presentations but also the helpful comments section. People are so kind in sharing their knowledge on how to navigate online resources and read old style writing."
- "Your presentations make using the Scottish Archives much easier. Knowing what is held where when you're travelling from another country (Australia) means you

can prepare your itinerary so you can access information you need."

- "I am, probably illogically, not alone in finding archives to be a bit frightening – is there a scientific word for this phobia? The Scottish Indexes Conferences on archives have been very helpful. Just knowing that an archive exists and what records it holds is so useful. The archivists have made some really beautiful and helpful presentations. So, thanks to them all for turning what seemed like chambers of horrors into fun places to research!"

Both ourselves and Irene O'Brien have spoken with people in an archive who have attended the conference. It shows that archivists engaging with the audience and celebrating their records together with genealogists has encouraged more people to visit Scottish archives.

In the five free conferences we held between 12 March 2022 and 15 April 2023 there were 33 presentations. Over 2,000 people attended at least one of these conferences on Zoom with an average audience of around 900. In

addition to this, some view the live stream in our private Facebook group.

At our conference in April 2023, 41% of the audience was from the United Kingdom, with the rest being predominantly from Australia, Canada and the United States. We achieve this by showing each presentation twice, once between 7am and 3pm UK time, then again between 3pm and 11pm UK time. Each presentation is followed by a live Q&A, enabling viewers from Australia and Canada to interact with archivists from across Scotland.

We will be continuing to host these free Scottish genealogy conferences four times a year. Our aim is to help people trace their family tree using a variety of records, to celebrate archives and to encourage people to use their resources, online and in-person, to discover their rich heritage. If you would like to take part, contact us at [info@scottishindexes.com](mailto:info@scottishindexes.com).

EMMA MAXWELL, *Genealogist*  
Scottish Indexes

For more information, visit:  
[www.scottishindexes.com](http://www.scottishindexes.com)

# SCOTLAND 70 SCOTLAND 70



## Case Studies

'Scotland 1970', promotional brochure for the 1970 Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh.  
*University of Stirling Archives*

One of the 'Twenty Treasures' chosen to celebrate SCA's 20th anniversary (see page 2).

# L The Argyll Papers

## DONALD MacDOUGALL, ARCHIVE ASSISTANT TRAINEESHIP

The Argyll Papers consist of historical records and documents belonging to the Campbell family, the earls and dukes of Argyll. The archives span over seven centuries and provide insights into the family's involvement in local, national, and international affairs, their extensive business interests and estates, including Tiree, Mull, Clackmannanshire and Stirling. Argyll Estates manages the archive, which is located within the former stable block at Inveraray Castle.

The traineeship developed from a collaboration between Alison Diamond, Argyll Papers Archivist, who had worked on a youth-heritage placement project, Heritage Horizons, run by CHARTS. CHARTS is a membership-guided charity that supports collaborative work across the culture, heritage, and arts sector in Argyll and Bute, develops programmes that support members, and advocates for the needs and benefits of cultural activity.

CHARTS has a remit to develop opportunities for young people and supports early employability experiences. Alison discussed with CHARTS the need not just to provide

young people with opportunities to learn about archives, but also for paid employment that delivered tangible learning outcomes. Too often, young people hoping to work in the archives sector are expected to work for free, creating a barrier to employment and restricting who can enter the profession. How could they work together to challenge this?

*Argyll Aspires* was the answer. Led by CHARTS and supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the project created paid trainee and apprenticeships at three locations: Dunollie Museum, Castle, and Grounds (Oban), Auchindrain Township (west of Inveraray), and the Argyll Papers (Inveraray Castle). *Argyll Aspires* also included a curatorial training project on the Isle of Bute with Rothesay Academy and Mount Stuart based on the Argyll Collection, a unique collection of 173 artworks established between 1960 and 1990 as a learning resource for the young people of Argyll and Bute. Work programmes were designed to support young people in achieving qualifications or professional accreditation in each role. In the case of the Argyll Papers, the 14-month

work programme was tailored to modules that formed the Archival Studies PGCert with the Centre for Archive and Information Studies at the University of Dundee.

Deciding on a suitable candidate amongst the many strong applicants was difficult. No previous experience or qualifications were required, but demonstrating an interest in the sector was important. Donald MacDougall's application stood out though. He had a History and Politics degree and volunteered at Dunollie Castle. Crucially, he was based in Seil – one of the Slate Isles – and wanted to continue living on the family croft while also pursuing a career in archives. *Argyll Aspires'* focus is to support young people with limited access to further education and employment. Donald's situation fitted the exact challenge the project sought to address, and he was offered the role.

Much of Donald's day-to-day work involves responding to enquiries from researchers such as academics, family historians, and genealogists. Some come in person and have specific goals – such as researching an event or individual – while others come to learn about the archive and its history more broadly. The archives are housed in an eighteenth-century stable block within Inveraray Castle's grounds and are an unusually photogenic repository. Even seasoned researchers are taken aback by the archive's appearance and scale. Donald's role involves welcoming visitors, introducing the site and the archive, and supporting their



Donald MacDougall's traineeship involves a wide-range of skills and activities. © CHARTS



Plan of proposed alterations to Assapol farm steadings, Ross of Mull, 1 Aug 1896 (ARG/12/01/360).

research and interests. Inevitably, Donald admits, one apparently simple enquiry can spawn multiple research angles and more questions than answers!

With so many enquiries to deal with, Donald said it can sometimes be hard to prioritise the more mundane but crucial activities of being an archivist. However, cataloguing the archive, reviewing its condition, and assessing donations for accession into the collection involve core skills that can be applied at any site.

Alison describes Donald's contribution in glowing terms, "he quickly established a rapport with the existing volunteers. Collectively, the group has a huge amount of knowledge, which they happily share with each other and visitors to the archive. He communicates so well and never talks down to people."

Alison sees Donald's background and links to the area as a major reason for his success in the role. She explains, "Usually, you find yourself 'adopting' an archive – viewing it from the outside. But because Donald's family are from the area, his ancestors feature in the archive, which is a powerful connection to have." The MacDougalls are frequently mentioned in the Argyll Papers,

and Donald's knowledge of his own family's history complements Alison's knowledge of the Campbells perfectly.

In turn, Donald says he immediately felt welcome and was keen to praise Alison's formidable work ethic. "She does everything! Alison is incredibly generous with her time, helping the volunteers and driving projects like my traineeship forward. I have learnt so much from her."

As well as gaining his Archival Studies PGCert, Donald is applying for the Archives & Records Association continuing professional development registration at Foundation level. He is also a member of the Historic House Archivists Group and the Scottish Association of Country House Archivists. Donald regularly met with the other trainees to share experiences and provide mutual support. He has contributed a great deal to the peer-to-peer learning model central to the *Argyll Aspires* project, enhancing the experiences of the wider group.

Perhaps his greatest supporter, however, is Alison. Looking to the future, CHARTS Director Kathleen O'Neill, Alison, and Donald all hope that new funding can be found to continue his involvement with the

Argyll Papers. "We mustn't lose him!" says Alison.

Many heritage projects have enabled conservation and repair work, educational and training projects, and public outreach to take place. Despite these opportunities, young people face obstacles to entering the profession, as paid learning and early-career roles are scarce. Volunteers often undertake a great deal of valuable work, joining management committees, carrying out core activities related to a site or place, and providing administrative support – but volunteering shouldn't be the only way to develop crucial professional experience, contacts and qualifications.

Restricting who can enter the sector isn't just bad for those hoping to have a career in archives; it is bad for the sector too. People working in archives should represent the wider population as without their perspectives and insights, we all lose out. ●

Written by Abigail Daly for *Tacit-Tacit* on behalf of CHARTS

For more information, visit: [www.chartsargyllandisles.org/project-showcase/argyll-aspires](http://www.chartsargyllandisles.org/project-showcase/argyll-aspires) [www.argyll-papers.com](http://www.argyll-papers.com)



# M Glasgow Building Preservation Trust

## WEST BOATHOUSE PROJECT



### THE WEST BOATHOUSE

Glasgow Green, the cradle of sporting Glasgow, was shaped and moulded by the Clyde. Sitting on a flood plain of the river, it was fertile ground for many sports and has been home to the city's rowing community for over 200 years. Perched on the north bank of the river, just upstream from the tidal weir, is the West Boathouse. Built in 1905 by City Surveyor A. B. McDonald, the boathouse was a unique addition to the river frontage. Viewed from Glasgow Green, the building is austere with little hint of the architectural flourishes seen from the riverside. Viewed from the water, the building rises dramatically from the banks. The large arched windows, deeply recessed eaves, and cantilevered balconies are playful and elegant. This attention to detail and investment in the sport is perhaps a recognition of the popularity and status of rowing at the turn of the twentieth century. Regattas attracted tens of thousands of spectators, and many of the club members were influential men within the city (there

were no women members at this time), able to exert a little political pressure to get an impressive new boathouse in a prime spot on the river.

By the late 1990s, Glasgow City Council, who own the building, were becoming increasingly concerned with the condition of the West Boathouse. Historically, the resident clubs had carried out essential repairs and maintenance, but the building now faced significant structural problems. In 2015, Glasgow Building Preservation Trust (GBPT), a charity that rescues and repairs historic buildings, began working with the rowing clubs and Glasgow City Council to explore options to save the building.

Time was running short – surveys of the building revealed the below-ground timber foundations were deteriorating rapidly. Of the original 30 timber foundation piles, 28 had wholly rotted through. The exterior cladding was in danger of collapse, and the roof leaked like a sieve. Interior facilities were outdated, and the accessibility of the building was, by modern standards, very poor.

Composite image of the West Boathouse on Glasgow Green. The upper half photograph was taken by David Collie in 2022, showing the building in the final stages of renovation. The bottom half was taken by Alisdair Woodburn in 2016, four years before works began.

After several years of hard work and generous funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Historic Environment Scotland, Glasgow City Council and many others, the £2.8 million *Rejuvenation of the West Boathouse Project* got underway in 2019. This included an extensive community engagement programme with a focus on river and sporting heritage.

### HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT: WHY SPORTING HERITAGE MATTERS

Sport is integral to our shared past – reflecting and influencing broader societal changes. It can also provide a gateway into conversations around colonialism, class, immigration, gender, attitudes to the body and many other aspects of our shared social history. Sport and play are essential, vital forms of human expression and make a valuable and important contribution to our cultures. There is a universality that can transcend cultural divides and help us tap into new audiences, challenge stereotypes and break down barriers.

A key part of the *West Boathouse Project* was working through the heritage collections of the three resident rowing clubs: Clydesdale Amateur Rowing Club, Clyde Amateur Rowing Club and Strathclyde University Boat Club. Small sports clubs face many challenges and pressures – getting clubs over the 'fear factor' when resources are tight is critical. Collections encompass objects and



Volunteer Aisha making good use of a hat stand!

Brass, Aye? and Strum for Life.

documents, and the professional divisions between 'archives' and 'museums' can be unhelpful for small groups trying to tackle a mix of the two. We aimed to find a middle ground, adhering to best practices where possible, but with an emphasis on finding practical and affordable solutions. 'Do no harm' should always be our first principle, but this can often lead to 'do nothing', a paralysis born out of a fear of doing the wrong thing.

With support and advice from the Scottish Council on Archives, Glasgow Museums, The Sporting Heritage Network and many helpful academics and heritage specialists, we developed a practical resource kit and ran online workshops to help small sports clubs and community archive groups see the potential of their collections and share their sporting heritage.

The resident rowing clubs are very proud of their long histories. Clydesdale Amateur Rowing Club is the oldest surviving club on the Clyde, founded in 1856. Clyde Amateur Rowing Club was formed in 1865. They have shared the building since its construction and have now been joined by Strathclyde University Boat



Club, founded in 1967. Before its closure for renovations, the building was packed with photographs, vintage boats, oars, pennants, medals, and a wide range of rowing-related material dating from the 1860s to the present day. Very little of the collection had been catalogued or recorded. With the help of volunteers, we've slowly worked our way through digitising and cataloguing around two-thirds of the collections.

Like many projects, Covid forced a hiatus in activity but also allowed us more time to experiment and evaluate options for digitisation, cataloguing and sharing. Our goal was to find affordable and accessible options, which included rigging a makeshift overhead mount for photographing oversized objects using a camera boom arm mounted on an old hat stand!

### 'UP THE WATTER'

On Sunday, 14 May 2023, we officially reopened the West Boathouse with a big party. This event was a 'thank you' to the many project partners and community groups we've worked with over the past four years, and an opportunity to celebrate and promote the history and heritage of the river 'Up The Watter' from Glasgow Green to the Cuningar Loop, taking in a 6km stretch through the east end of the city. Kicking off in the morning, the

rowing clubs gathered a small flotilla of boats together for a procession upriver. The lead boat – an 'eight' – featured representatives from all the West Boathouse clubs and was carrying a specially commissioned new flag for the building. The flag was created by artist Fiona Fleming, who worked with participants from the Glasgow Disability Alliance on a design that celebrated the rebirth and renewal of the River Clyde. The flag was presented to the goddess of the River Clyde, Clota (played by Julia Anne MacDonough).

More festivities followed, with fabulous aquatic-themed sets from Strum for Life and the G5 Kids choir, speeches from rowing club representatives, GBPT and Olympic silver medalist Harry Leask. We also launched our Environmental Policy for the West Boathouse and our *A-Z of Rowing on The Clyde* project publication. Picnic lunches and ice cream floats powered a final, joyful, singalong stramash of the 'Tide Is High' with community brass band, Brass, Aye? and Strum for Life. All in all, a grand day out. ●

INGRID SHEARER,  
Heritage Engagement Officer  
Glasgow Building Preservation Trust

For more information, visit:  
[www.gbpt.org](http://www.gbpt.org)

## N Heriot-Watt University COLOURS OF KLEIN

2022 marked the centenary of the birth of Scottish Borders-based textile designer and artist Bernat Klein. Born in Serbia, Bernat studied at the Bezalel School of Arts and Crafts in Jerusalem from 1940–3, attracting many refugees from Nazi Germany, including former staff and students from the Bauhaus. After the war, he moved to Leeds where he studied textile technology and developed a lifelong collaboration with designer Tibor Reich and the architect Peter Womersley, who designed Klein's house, High Sunderland and studio. He also met Margaret Soper, his future wife and business partner.

In 1952, Klein set up his own company, 'Colourcraft', in Galashiels, initially weaving woollen scarves and rugs. In 1956, he bought the High Mill, now part of Heriot-Watt University's Scottish Borders Campus. A major catalyst was seeing an exhibition of Georges Seurat, the pointillist artist. This inspired him to recreate this effect in fabric, which was achieved through dip dyeing the yarn to produce dots of colour. He used his paintings as a basis for the colours, which were essentially colour studies of the local landscape. Where Klein excelled was in breaking down the colours in nature and translating these into fabric, using a range of colours to trick the eye into interpreting this as one shade. His use of strong, bright colours and textured fabric, such as mohair, was very different to the traditional tweed produced in the Scottish Borders.

Following capital investment from Imperial Tobacco in 1962, the company was rebranded as 'Bernat Klein' and expanded, employing more designers and marketing staff. His distinctive branding of a dark grey background with white lettering juxtaposed with the colourful

fabric. A significant breakthrough was the use of a mohair tweed inspired by a rose in the 1963 Chanel spring collection. His fabric was subsequently used by many notable designers, including Nina Ricci, Pierre Cardin, Hardy Amies and Christian Dior. A wider range of fabric was then produced, such as luxurious velvet tweed, slubby "bubble" tweed and lighter fabric in silk and linen mixes.

One of Bernat Klein's underpinning principles was that everyone should be well dressed and that this should be affordable for all, using colours that suited you. His wife Margaret played a significant role in developing the business. She was a keen home knitter and in 1963 designed a range of knitting patterns with matching wool and fabric so that home dressmakers could buy into the brand. The factory shop in Galashiels also sold fabric. In 1965, he launched a range of portable colour guides based on eye colour to allow shoppers to buy colours that suited them.

Bernat was part of a glamorous, more London-based art circle, and was a friend of Princess Margaret, who wore a velvet tweed overdress in Los Angeles. This kind of promotion also helped raise awareness of the existing industry in the Borders. However, following pressure to produce larger profits, Bernat left the company in 1966. He proceeded to provide design consultancy work for carpets and enamelware and created a range of coordinating interior carpets and upholstery for the Department of the Environment. The next phase of his career came in 1973 with the launch of a mail-order business



featuring garments in woven woollen fabric and printed synthetic jersey with designs based on his artwork. A range of shops and concessions followed, but these closed in 1980 during the recession. Margaret Klein designed a range of knitwear in the 1980s using home knitters, and Bernat finally retired in 1990. In 2003, Heriot-Watt University recognised his contribution to the textile industry with an Honorary Degree. He died in 2014.

At the merger of the Scottish College of Textiles and Heriot-Watt University in 1998, the collections held by the college became part of the university collections. The core of the Bernat Klein collection were pattern books from the 1960s that had remained in the High Mill after he left the business. Subsequent donations and purchases have expanded the collection to include garments, loose fabric samples, wool, knitting patterns, publicity material and photographs. This has created a significant resource for teaching and research, and Bernat Klein remains one of the most popular research areas.

The centenary in 2022 provided an opportunity to showcase Bernat Klein's work at the Edinburgh Campus with an exhibition in the James Watt Centre. This featured garments and fabric samples from the 1960s to 1970s, along with knitting patterns, wool and publicity material.

The exhibition will be in the library at the Scottish Borders Campus from September 2023 to June 2024. The full collection is available for research by appointment at the Scottish Borders Campus by contacting [heritage@hw.ac.uk](mailto:heritage@hw.ac.uk). ● HELEN TAYLOR, Archivist, Heriot-Watt University

For more information, visit: [www.hw.ac.uk/uk/services/is/heritage.htm](http://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/services/is/heritage.htm)

## O Highland Archive Service CENTRAL TWO CENTURIES



Central School pupils trying to date a photograph from the Highland Archives Centre.

In 2021, the Highland Council, Eden Court Highlands, and the Highland Archive Service came together at the request of Ailsa Fraser, Central School headteacher, to form a 15-month-long plan to mark the school's bicentenary. The project, entitled *Central Two Centuries*, was due to run until late 2022 but, in fact, started relationships which have continued ever since.

Central School serves the Inverness city centre population with a roll of around 190 pupils. Initially situated on Queen Street when opened in 1821, it was established by the Society for Educating the Poor of the Highlands with the aim of "instructing the poor of the town and training teachers in the most approved system, for the charge of their schools in the country". It acted not only as a local school but as a training hub with a much further reach. In the 1870s, with the coming of the Education (Scotland) Act, Central moved to Kenneth Street, where it remains to this day with over 200 years' worth of stories to explore.

In coming together to decide what we would explore (and how), it was clear that each organisation brought different abilities – the archive could

provide historical information, the school could give pupils' time and teachers' skills to develop and expand on that information, and the theatre could bring creative interpretive talent in areas like music and filmmaking.

The first priority was raising awareness of the anniversary with pupils and the public. The head teacher and the archive Community Engagement Officer, Lorna Steele-McGinn, created 'time capsules' about the school's history, which were hidden around the school grounds for each class to find, take back to the classroom and explore with teachers. This was pupils' first introduction to *Central Two Centuries*, and their appetites were whetted! Their enthusiasm to discover more, encouraged by teachers, was harnessed by the Eden Court engagement team who worked with pupils to create a short 'call out' film asking ex-pupils and staff to share their memories. Again, the various areas of expertise were brought to bear with the school preparing pupils, the theatre team producing the film, and the archive providing guidance on permissions needed for contributions to be transferred to the Highland Archive Service.

The film was given a cinema preview at Eden Court for pupils and project partners. As the school went on summer holidays, the film did its work, raising awareness of the project and prompting people to get in contact. Over the summer, the archive service worked on creating a timeline, situating the school's development in the context of local, national, and international events. It was a revelation to pupils to learn that Central was opened the same year as Constable's Haywain was painted, over 20 years before the current Inverness Castle was completed and 40 years before Inverness Cathedral! When we started the bicentenary celebrations, the school had already seen eight monarchs.

On 13 August 2021, exactly 200 years since Central opened, pupils marched from the school's original Queen Street home to its present location to plant a memorial tree. This was followed by tea and cake for attendees, including families with four generations of Central pupils.

Over subsequent terms, Highland Archive Service worked with pupils and teachers to learn about the events the school has witnessed. We examined the role it played in global conflict (the logbooks revealed details of activities during WWI, WWII, and the Boer War) and visited Inverness's war memorial. We learned about the achievements of recent pupils and long-gone teachers, including a 1950s Olympic swimmer to a teacher so loved by his pupils they paid for his headstone in 1827.



Recording interviews with former teachers, ex-pupils and current students.

Students marching from the school to Eden Court.



We were privileged to record interviews with ex-pupils and staff from across the decades, such as one BBC newsreader dressed in Central colours who had the BBC News studio as a backdrop. Current pupils prepared questions and welcomed interviewees to the school, the archive Community Engagement Officer conducted interviews, and Eden Court recorded and edited them.

During visits to and from the archive, pupils and staff pored over extracts from historic documents, prompting discussion about how and why we keep records. They then used this knowledge to recreate events recorded in school archives, from book drives and fundraisers to handwriting practice and spelling bees.

Alongside studying Central's history, the school community worked with Eden Court's engagement team to create music and photographs inspired by the school's past, present, and future. Interested in the 1833 Slavery Abolition Act (mentioned on the timeline), pupils asked the archive for more information, and we delivered a series of workshops on the Highland connection to the Caribbean slave economy. Pupils were so engaged with this subject that Eden Court led sessions on African drumming and dance with them, which they threw themselves into.

We recreated the opening of the Victorian building with pupils reciting

contemporary news reports and a special episode of 'Learn With Lorna' (LWL), Highland Archive Service's series of short, livestreamed films telling stories from the collections. This episode telling the story of the school was livestreamed into classrooms as well as shared with parents and the general LWL audience.

On 23 June 2022, pupils marched from Central to Eden Court Theatre, where they gave an African drumming display on the lawn before processing into the theatre to perform a play about *Central Two Centuries* that they had written and rehearsed with Eden Court's engagement team over the previous weeks. The play was interspersed with film footage, interview clips and photographs created throughout the project. On leaving the auditorium, the audience was greeted by a display of the astonishing 'living archive' created by pupils to be housed in the school – over 200 fabric bolts transformed to illustrate Central's timeline, with drawings of prime ministers and monarchs, spotlights on legislation and information about local and world events.

At the end of the 2022 academic year, a celebratory event was held at which pupils recreated a photograph taken in 1901, and the material created and gathered for the project was transferred to the Highland Archive Centre.

But the partnerships didn't end there. In May 2023, the school, archive and theatre again came together to mark the crowning of Central's ninth monarch, King Charles. The archive delivered a series of talks about the reigns of the nine kings and queens, and each class was allocated one to study further in class before holding a special assembly to present their findings, filmed by the Eden Court team.

As a result of *Central Two Centuries* we have accessioned eight boxes of physical material and a substantial number of digital images and interviews. We have formed a long-lasting bond with Central School and with Eden Court Theatre with whom we went on to run a Highland-wide LGBTQ+ project... but that's another story!

*Central Two Centuries* was a joyous project. The teachers' passion enabled pupils to absorb and share a huge amount of information about the school while pupils astonished us with their sense of fun, empathy and passion. Thousands of Invernessians have passed through Central's doors, including some of our own staff, and we were delighted to play a part in marking its bicentenary. ●

LORNA STEELE-MCGINN  
Community Engagement Officer  
High Life Highland

For more information, visit:  
[www.highlifehighland.com/archives-service/](http://www.highlifehighland.com/archives-service/)

## Lothian Health Services Archive LOTHIAN GAY AND LESBIAN SWITCHBOARD

In April 2022, Lothian Health Services Archive (LHSA) launched their Wellcome Trust funded project, *Speaking Out*. The project involved cataloguing and promoting the Lothian Gay and Lesbian Switchboard (LGLS) collection and concluded in June 2023.

LGLS was founded in January 1974 after the gay rights organisation, the Scottish Minorities Group, received a request from the Samaritans who wanted to refer clients to a specifically LGBT organisation.

A helpline was established, and it took its first call on 2 March 1974, becoming the first gay switchboard in the UK (beating London by just two days), and the first registered gay charity in Scotland in the 1980s.

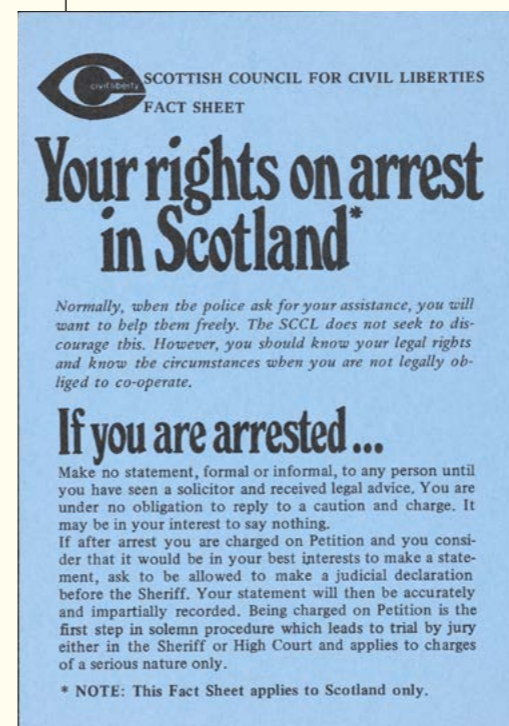
LGLS was an activist-run mental and physical health service for LGBT+ people in the Lothians and beyond. It offered a unique listening and befriending service to anyone experiencing issues or difficulties in connection with their sexuality. They also provided practical information such as details about gay-friendly venues, promoted sexual health education, and advocated for legal and social equality.

Switchboard activists filled a significant gap in mainstream healthcare provision by offering tailored support to LGBT+ people, publicising sources of support through their specialist knowledge, and communicating with hard-to-reach groups with public health messages.

Switchboard was not only a helpline, members also worked with organisations to raise awareness of LGBT+ issues. For example, in the 1970s, Switchboard volunteers delivered education sessions on homosexuality to medical students and clinicians in local hospitals and worked with the early HIV information charity, Scottish AIDS Monitor (SAM), to communicate key messages on sexual health after cases of HIV and AIDS came to light in the 1980s.

The archive comprises records created and collected by LGLS, including minutes, correspondence, call logs, volunteer resources, and promotional materials. This is a complex collection containing a large volume of personal and sensitive

Your rights on arrest in Scotland, a fact sheet produced by the Scottish Council for Civil Liberties.



Gay Scotland, Issue No.13 (March/April 1984).



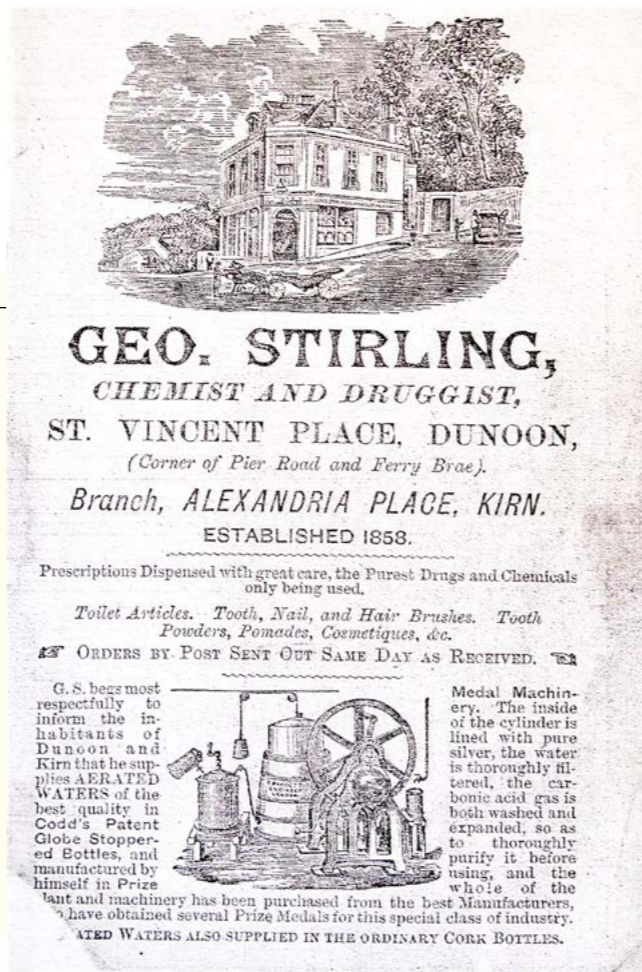


# R The POP shop DUNOON GOES POP

The People Of Place or POP shop is a design, heritage and enterprise facility in Dunoon. It was founded by Hannah Clinch of Tacit-Tacit and is supported by Dunoon Community Development Trust, formerly known as the Dunoon Area Alliance. The shop and the services were developed in response to locally focused research into the lived experiences of creative workers living in Dunoon. This research was started at Glasgow School of Arts Innovation School. It co-designs heritage inspired solutions to climate change that build health and wealth in the community, and has desk and collaboration spaces, a gallery and a workshop.

*Dunoon Goes Pop* is a heritage and enterprise collaboration between Hannah, archaeologist Dr Manda Forster of DigVentures, and local illustrator Walter Newton. Over the longer term, it aims to bring soft drinks making back to Dunoon whilst exploring the area's history. Through doing this, the project will also reflect on the ethical and environmental impacts of its production. Dunoon was a popular seaside resort from the Victorian period onwards and, although few people go 'doon the watter' any longer, tourism is still an important part of the local economy. Bringing visitors and locals a more

An advert promoting George Stirling Maxwell's aerated water and highlighting the prize-winning machinery used to manufacture the drinks. The illustrated building is still a chemist on Dunoon's high street.



nuanced understanding of the area's history has many benefits.

The project began in 2019, following research undertaken with staff from the Castle House Museum and Argyll and Bute Council's Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme. The museum's archives and collections included tantalising evidence of a thriving soft drinks industry located on Dunoon's Argyll Street, established by chemist George Stirling in the 1880s.

This research resulted in a shop

window heritage trail along Dunoon's main high street called 'The Shop Keepers of Dunoon'. Material such as historic photographs, advertisements, postcards and objects represented many characters who ran businesses along the street. But George Stirling's story seemed particularly interesting, and the idea of making soft drinks locally as a way to investigate and explore the area's history evolved.

The *Dunoon Goes POP* team realised that this simple product could also be used as a lens through which to examine many issues such as Empire and colonialism, health and wellbeing, sustainable development and rural inequalities. Simply put, the archives could reveal as much about the present as it did the past.

The team accessed funding via CHARTS Argyll and Isles' Place Makers: Micro-cluster Networks programme, funded by Creative Scotland. This supported them to research how to produce different flavoured syrups inspired by

characters from Dunoon's past in a fun and engaging way. Hannah explains, "Our research includes how to develop flavours around person-centred narratives, so we've identified characters from the local area who we think are interesting or underrepresented." Having singled out these people, the challenge was to match them with a complementary flavour. In the case of George Stirling himself, ginger beer seemed appropriate. For Margaret Parker, a female entrepreneur who ran a clothing shop specialising in Parisian pattern cutting, lemon and lavender, and Robert Bryden architect of Dunoon Burgh Hall, a rhubarb flavoured cordial. The 'American Years' describes the period 1961-92 when the Polaris nuclear submarine base was stationed in the Holy Loch. Its presence greatly impacted the area and population, so an 'American Cola' was produced.

Walter's role was to bring these people to life through illustrations and animations, developing eye-catching branding for each syrup. He's created a suite of images that can be used on a variety of products, materials and media – in leaflets, posters, displays,

Community engagement has been built into every stage of the project, from archival research and oral history to children's workshops and taste-testing.



Workshops led to the development of flavours themed around characters from the area's past. Sampling was an important part of the process!



film and, of course, the bottles of pop. But how to make the drinks?

*Dunoon Goes Pop* conducted market research into local soft drink production with support from John Ahrens, a consultant on small-scale food manufacturing. This helped to develop their knowledge of how to produce drinks in an economically viable and environmentally sustainable way. It allowed the team to create an informed social enterprise model where product development could positively contribute to Dunoon's microeconomy.

Other aspects of the drinks production were important to consider. The sugar and spices involved in the manufacture of George Stirling's drinks were only available due to Britain's exploitation of enslaved people and places within its Empire. Glasgow was known as the Empire's 'Second City' and many merchants, traders and manufacturers became wealthy from this. How did they spend their money? The grand villas that dot the Clyde and coast around Dunoon offer one answer. So you can see how, from this one product, much bigger subjects can be addressed in a really simple and accessible way.

Following the American Years, Dunoon struggled and still ranks in the 15% most deprived areas according to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (2020). George Stirling was a chemist, and carbonated drinks during this period were often promoted for their health benefits. However, we now realise the damage done by high-sugar diets. By getting people to make soft drinks with us, we are hoping to support wider learning around the impacts of sugar on health, both of people and the planet.

The Castle House Museum was pivotal in the initial research, supplying access to the collection and expertise. Artefacts in their collection, which included bottles inspired the project. A network of other heritage and design professionals living in the area have also benefited from

participating in the project. Accessing freelance work opportunities in a rural context can be challenging, but enterprises such as *Dunoon Goes Pop* can bring valuable investment into businesses. So far, the project has received funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for a year long collaboration with Dunoon Burgh Hall and the National Lottery Community Fund to develop plans for the *Dunoon Goes POP* garden, located at the back of the POP shop.

Hannah is keen to point out that the project has evolved organically over the years and is likely to take a few more years to get up and running as a fully-fledged social enterprise. Starting out as a piece of archival research, it has produced exhibitions, a walking tour, posters, workshops, tasting sessions, animation, and many, many bottles of pop!

The project's latest development centres on Victorian architect Robert Bryden, who designed Dunoon Burgh Hall (celebrating its 150th birthday this year) alongside many other public and civic buildings in the area. His portrait appears, rather dramatically, in the guise of a slightly stern-looking Viking in the colourful stained glass windows of the main hall. The syrup flavour, called 'Rhubob and Bryden', will be made from rhubarb produced by community growers.

*Dunoon Goes Pop* shows how archives can stimulate a huge range of work. They can inspire products supporting sustainable economic growth, contribute to community wellbeing and wealth building, and encourage learning and skills development. Fun and humour are often forgotten about when heritage projects are designed. But the Pop project shows how powerful they can be in bringing people and places together. ●

Written by Abigail Daly on behalf of Tacit-Tacit.

For more information, visit: [popshop.scot](http://popshop.scot)

## S Shetland Amenity Trust SHETLAND HERITAGE CONFERENCE

Shetland Amenity Trust is a registered charity established to protect, enhance, interpret, celebrate and make accessible Shetland's natural and cultural heritage. It provides the Museum and Archives service for the local authority, including an outreach programme and support to local history groups, museums and heritage centres.

In 2022–3, the Trust jointly hosted a networking event for heritage groups and agencies and a heritage conference in partnership with Shetland Heritage Association (SHA), a voluntary organisation which aims to support and provide an independent voice to community museums and heritage groups. The events were funded as part of our Scottish Government *Island Heritage and Culture* project, which sought to develop local projects directly linked to the heritage and culture of Shetland.

The March conference attracted 82 participants from across the isles with a range of interests; half attended as interested individuals, and half as members of heritage groups, charities and other agencies involved in Shetland's heritage. Our conference included a pre-recorded presentation from Neil Ogilvy from Museums Galleries Scotland about their work and the network of geographic forums. We were delighted to welcome Audrey Wilson from the Scottish Council on Archives (SCA) to introduce the work of the SCA, the Community Archives and Heritage Group Scotland and the wide range of community projects led by SCA.

Audrey's presence was invaluable – she made time to answer questions and discuss project ideas and led an interesting discussion on oral history. Eight further group sessions explored digital records, built heritage,

natural heritage, living heritage, gaps in Shetland's story, a straw basketry demonstration, a behind-the-scenes tour of Shetland Archives and a screening of footage from the Shetland Film Archive. Discussions highlighted concern that aspects of our heritage may be at risk of being lost, such as oral tradition, traditional crafts and living heritage. The event had a really warm and positive feeling, as reflected in the post-event feedback:

- "Just the sheer presence of so many energetic, friendly, committed people and the warmth and helpfulness of the staff."
- "Meeting new people and engaging with like-minded folk. Feeling inspired."
- "The whole event was a triumph and the networking opportunities were marvellous."
- "This is so important to preserving our heritage that I'm delighted to see its gaining traction. We must maintain the momentum."

Momentum has indeed been maintained. Feedback from discussion groups and the post-event survey confirmed the desire for a strong heritage network and identified priorities for future workshops and events throughout the isles, working in partnership with SHA and other

volunteers and agencies. Learning more about Shetland Archives collections and how to use them, how to care for your own collections and how to make, store and share oral recordings were all popular topics for future learning. Our mailing list has grown to 115 people, and we have established a small working group to support and deliver network events. Advice and support from both MGS and SCA have been invaluable as we progress ideas for future work.

We aim to provide a varied programme of activities to create opportunities for knowledge exchange, networking and shared learning. Through trialling a range of initiatives and having conversations within the heritage community, we can build on the conference and determine what people want and need from the network. Building a strong network will provide opportunities to strengthen relationships, share ideas and work collaboratively to secure a resilient and sustainable heritage sector in Shetland. ●

EILEEN BROOKE-FREEMAN  
Cultural Heritage Officer  
Shetland Amenity Trust

For more information, visit:  
[www.shetlandamenity.org](http://www.shetlandamenity.org)

There were lots of networking opportunities for delegates during the conference.



## T Skye and Lochalsh Archive Centre STRING/LINES



Thatched cottage. Duncan MacPherson Collection. © Highland Archive Centre



Handling a 'seic', a flexible bag or pouch made from soft rush and sedge. Photo by Caroline Dear

The Highland Archive Service comprises four archive centres in Caithness, Inverness, Lochaber, and Skye and Lochalsh. Our Archive Centre in Skye was previously the Dualchas Heritage and Museum Service, which has a legacy consisting of exciting archaeological finds, textiles and artworks deepening our material culture alongside our archive collections.

Working with artist Caroline Dear, the service launched a year-long project that involved collaboration with archaeologists, musicians, a poet, and others, as well as working closely with ATLAS Arts and Viewfield Community Gardens. It was supported by Creative Scotland and had several outcomes throughout the year, including talks, string ceilidh gatherings, an exhibition, and publications.

Caroline began investigating the long history of making string and rope by hand through working with Dr Karen Hardy, an archaeologist specialising in the Palaeolithic period. Caroline also deepened her knowledge of local traditional ropemaking to balance the research into archaeological evidence of string

and net making, using the archive in Portree. This project culminated with an exhibition, STRING/LINES, at the Archive Centre.

Rope made from heather, known as *sioman* in Gaelic, was a common sight in Hebridean crofts and is a skill which was just part of everyday life. On Skye, the tradition died out earlier than the Western Isles, possibly due to the impact of the Highland Clearances and the tourism industry, which has existed since the beginning of the 1800s.

Heather was traditionally gathered in September when the sap has risen and is more flexible. It was pulled, not cut, and places with a gentle slope seem to make it grow longer. Once gathered, it was hand twisted by men into long coils of rope throughout the winter. There are accounts of people at traditional ceilidhs in the islands, telling epic stories while everyone was busy spinning, mending or making rope. One account from South Uist recounts how Angus MacLellan was making heather rope as he told stories, interspersed with song, throughout the evening until by eleven o'clock "you couldn't see him at last for the heather rope all round

him – coiled round his chair." (Tess Darwin, *The Scots Herbal*, p106). This is not as fanciful as it might seem; when making rope, to stop the rope from twisting in on itself and breaking, you need to wind it around your body in a specific way so that the twist is counteracted.

Inside the house, heather ropes were used to dry fish, being strung from corner to corner. Smaller, more delicate heather was carefully selected to make thinner ropes used as bindings, cleaning brushes or small baskets. Cross-leaved heath, *Erica tetralix*, is known in Gaelic as *Fraoch an ruinnse*, 'rinsing heather', as it was used to make pot scrubbers.

Mending and repairing with plants from our environment, sharing manual skills, and the loss of knowledge have been recurring themes as Caroline and I blathered in the Archive Centre. Bouncing off ideas, talking about ropes that bind us, separate us, the threads of information connected in a web of skills, knowledge, and history. Webs of research woven between the archives, and living memories across our community and the complexities of digging into collections, are like a

ball of string. Pulling at one thread while untangling another highlights interconnected stories, experiences, and skills. Pull, and we find another barrier, stop to untangle the problems, then move on to the next.

My recent university studies led me to explore ancient forms of record keeping which have contributed to archives as we know them today. Resonating with me, like something from home, were the Inca systems of writing in *quipus*, or knotted cords – intricate cords that were an abacus-like system for recording numbers. However, there have also been teasing hints suggesting they might encode long-lost stories, myths and songs.

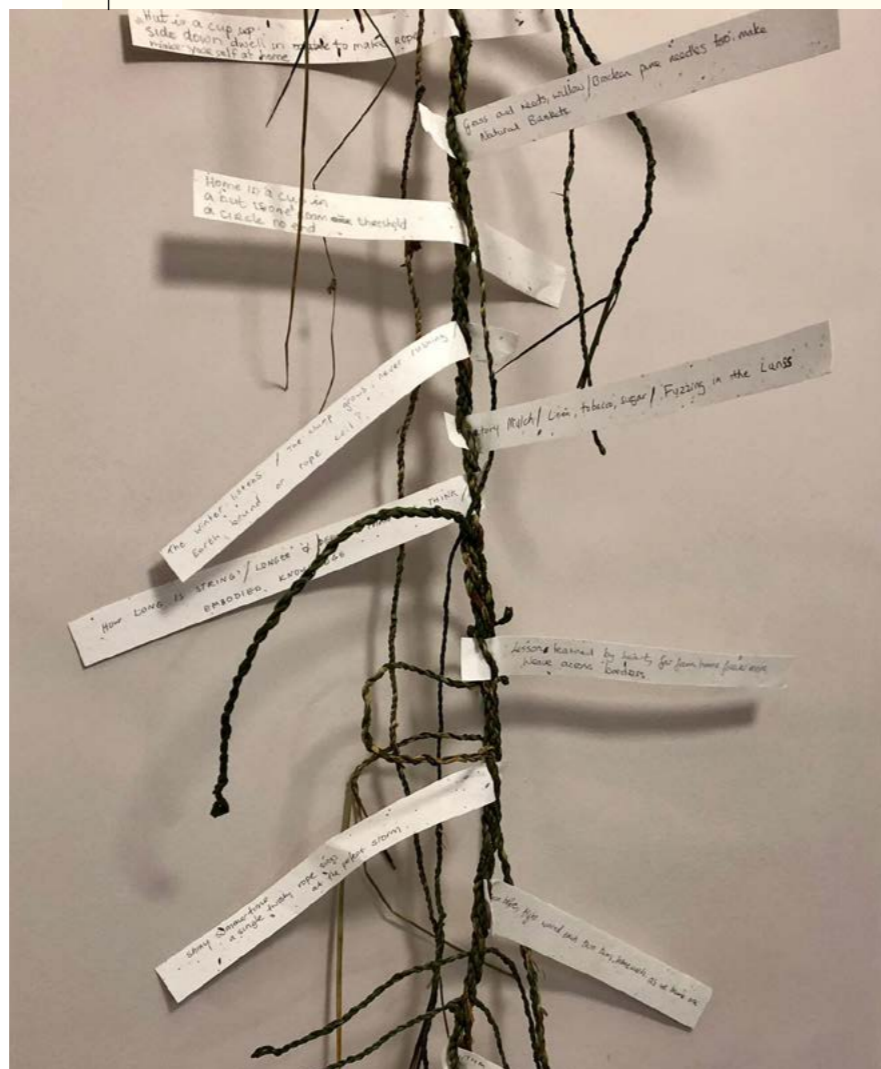
Sharing stories and folklore, chattering as the warmth of the work distracts you, are familiar from home too. There are similar traditions, such as the gathering of dew during the Beltane fire festival. To ensure a good supply of milk, a woman, or sometimes the two together, a hair rope would be drawn along the dewy grass, while saying, “Bainne an te so shios, nam ghoghan mhor fhein”, roughly translating to “milk of this one above, milk of that one below, into my own big pail”. This rite was known as ‘gathering dew’. The ropes were said to be made of the long hair of Highland cattle and were generally used as cart ropes.

Community engagement was key to expanding our knowledge and encouraging collaborative working. Heading out loaded with archive photographs and rental books detailing the use of heather ropes for payment, and Caroline with a bag of plant-based materials, we ran a series of ‘archive ceilidhs’ across three village halls. Local musicians sang traditional *waulking* songs and played tunes connected to weaving, cutting grass and others



Hiku rope, part of a practical workshop where we created words and string.

Community string and poetry workshop.



A fishing float with string made from natural fibres.  
© Highland Archive Centre



with rhythmic working beats. Sharing stories and knowledge, we introduced new audiences to the archive and found volunteers to participate in the making of rope. Rhythmic handwork fills you with a deep sense of peace, and silence falls while watching fingers glide over intricate twists and turns as the emotional transference of knowledge and skills is learnt and shared. Adding in poet Katharine Macfarlane, we held a practical workshop where we created words and string. Creating a community rope by weaving in words produced a collaborative community artwork, which was added to the exhibition.

Teaming up with the Highland Archaeology Festival, we hosted two online talks with archaeologists Dr Karen Hardy, Dr Tuija Kirkinen and Dr Susanna Harris to discuss our relationship with plants, string making and textiles from the Neolithic and Mesolithic, and contemporary historical sources from Scotland and Finland.

Recalling, learning, and sharing skills can rewire memory. While looking for examples of ropemaking in the archives there was a buzzing at the back of my head. Why the sudden

loss of craft? Now ropemaking is something you learn at night classes or relegated to demonstrations at shows. It is no longer a social practice or functional skill transferred within the family and community. Industrialisation and the use of cheaper synthetic materials are factors, as are controls on access to materials. Some communities were left dangling by threads as access to materials for making and

passing on skills was destroyed by circumstance. One example of this is the Glendale Factors Rules of 18 June 1882, which stated: “No Dogs, No Reading Newspapers, No collecting of Rushes, Driftwood or Heather or Seaweed”. Another, from *History of Skye* by Alexander Nicolson, quoted a crofter from Sconser, who had been cited to appear before the Royal Commission in 1882, declared that the houses in his district were the worst in Skye because the people were not allowed to take thatch from the hills. “A neighbour of mine”, he said, “went out to cut heather for ropes, and the huntsman came upon him and they threatened to shoot him if they found him there again. They were afraid we would disturb the muirfowl.”

Historically, knowledge and languages are recorded by ‘the winners’ and visitors to communities who have left fragments of our traditions in the margins of their books. We find traces and examples of the bonds of ropemaking through images, oral accounts and recollections that have survived. They are alternative ways of understanding and representing the past. Yet it is clear that written records – the very stuff of archives – are not the only interpretation of the past. Memories, whether personal or collective, select shapes and fragments of the past into a story or image that helps us understand the present. ●

CATHERINE MacPHEE, Archivist  
High Life Highland

For more information, visit:  
[www.highlifehighland.com/skye-and-lochalsh-archive-centre](http://www.highlifehighland.com/skye-and-lochalsh-archive-centre)  
[bit.ly/IslandString](http://bit.ly/IslandString)



‘String / Lines, unravelling the story of string: people, plants and place’ exhibition at Skye and Lochalsh Exhibition Room, November 2022.

# The University of Dundee Archive Services

## THE BIG BACK GARDEN PROJECT



Opening of Baxter Park, 1863.  
Local History Section, Wellgate Library



Following the Quiz trail, 2022.  
University of Dundee Archive Services

The Big Back Garden (BBG) is an interdisciplinary, multi-partner project about Baxter Park in Dundee. It started with a school project, broadening to work with local residents and organisations. The project examined the park's history and provided evidence for research into the impact of outdoor spaces on our physical and mental wellbeing. BBG is an example of how archives can be used to connect the academic community and other bodies with local communities.

Why did we choose Baxter Park? Because it is an iconic part of the city. It has been the big back garden for Dundonians since it opened in 1863 and still plays a central role within the community. Its genesis lies with linen manufacturer David Baxter, who had recognised the detrimental impacts of Dundee's rapid industrialisation. He paid for the land on the edge of town and employed Sir Joseph Paxton to design it. He then donated the park to Dundee, naming it the 'People's

Park', saying he wanted to provide a space "of easy access, affording the means of healthy recreation and exercise".

The potential to explore the urban green space using our collection of nineteenth-century Baxter Park Trustees minutes was realised in 2018, during a training session, thanks to Douglas Roberts, the then Education Development Officer at the Scottish Council on Archives. While Dundee Archive Services staff regularly worked with local primary schools, using the minutes as the basis for a secondary school project seemed an excellent route to expanding our community engagement programme.

However, it wasn't until early 2020 that the project got underway, thanks to funding from the Wellcome Trust and the enthusiasm of Morgan Academy's Head of History. Morgan Academy, which sits next to Baxter Park, incorporated the BBG project into the S3 pupils' history curriculum. An introductory chat and hands-on

workshop with original material was followed by the 66 pupils researching aspects of the park using copies of minutes, press cuttings, photographs, postcards and plans. Over the course of six weeks, the pupils learned about the place that they regularly walked through, played in or simply hung out at. They explored its origins, development and changing use, working not just with our records but material loaned from the local history section of Dundee's Central Library, Dundee City Archives and the Friends of Baxter Park, who were all keen to be involved.

What we all discovered was that the park's history of over 150 years reflected not just the socio-economic story of Dundee, but also that of the wider world. The pupils could place the park's history in a wider context, examining nineteenth-century industrialisation and its impact on health and welfare, the development of leisure and recreation, political developments in the early nineteenth

century, the impact of World War II and post-war societal change. The fruits of their research now form the basis for seven recorded narratives which chart the park's history from its planning in 1860 to its regeneration and re-opening in 2007. These can be accessed via QR code plaques fixed on benches across the park and through the BBG website.

The next step came in 2022 when the BBG project widened its scope to include the lived experiences of park users. We recorded the memories of members of the local Boomerang Reminiscence Group and joined with Dundee Voluntary Action (DVA) to run Chatterboxes, a drop-in oral history day at the park's activity centre. DVA provided volunteers who, along with our staff, recorded not just the memories of park visitors but also their current perceptions and use of the site. The day was a great success, and many of the recordings are available online. These conversations helped inform research by Dr Susan Mains (University of Dundee School of Humanities, Social Sciences and Law) and Christine Kingsley (University of Dundee School of Art and Design) into the impact of urban green space on health and wellbeing.

The importance of accessible public spaces has been highlighted as a key

priority since the Covid-19 pandemic; this was mentioned in several of the Chatterbox interviews. Collaborating with artist Julie Cumming, Susan and Christine's research on perceptions and use of urban green spaces developed into a film about the park and its impact on visitors. The film takes audiences on a virtual walk where they can pause, observe and listen to the landscape by focusing on specific user experiences. Together with the project's 'Quiz Trail', this means that even remote visitors can be involved with the park's history and its benefits.

The BBG project has always aimed to reflect the 'People's Park' ethos – not just as a celebration but also offering users a broader understanding of the park's role in their community. Certainly, evaluations by the pupils demonstrated increased awareness of how its history related to their own lives. In addition, conversations at the Chatterboxes event and with users in the park consistently expressed pleasure and appreciation of its impact on their wellbeing, from simply strolling through it to the opportunities to engage with other users through events like yoga sessions or just chatting on a bench.

While our part in the project is now

less active, the People's Park ethos continues across the community. The local young carer's group regularly uses the Quiz Trail, and the Boomerang Community Centre is hosting a permanent capsule display about the project incorporating clips of the project's interviews. This has been loaned out to a community day at Morgan Academy, to the local library and to the local Dementia Resource Centre. More recently, publicity about the project and an exhibition in the Central Library has led to our staff being asked by various local societies to talk about BBG. In turn, these have led to more information and stories being offered to us. We're now in the process of listing and arranging a BBG collection to be added to our holdings. We were also pleased to gain a commendation in the 2023 Stephen Fry Public Engagement Awards.

We hope the BBG project will continue to inspire individuals, groups and communities to discover, use and benefit from all of Dundee's green spaces. ●

JAN MERCHANT  
Senior Archivist  
University of Dundee Archive Services

For more information, visit:  
[www.bigbackgarden.com](http://www.bigbackgarden.com)

Morgan Academy narrators, Head of History Annabel Quinn, and University of Dundee Archive Services Senior Archivist, Jan Merchant at the Big Back Garden project launch, September 2021.  
University of Dundee





## The University of Dundee Archive Services THE BRITTLE BONE SOCIETY ARCHIVE

In 2010, the University of Dundee Archive acquired the collection of the Brittle Bone Society (BBS), a Dundee-based charity which assists people living with *Osteogenesis Imperfecta* (OI) or “Brittle Bones”. The condition has degrees of severity but is characterised by bone fragility, causing bones to fracture easily. Those with the condition can experience dozens of fractures in their lifetime. The Society was founded in 1968 by Margaret Grant, a Dundee woman who had OI, as did her daughter. OI was not a well-known condition at the time, and there was little in the way of support or assistance available for those living with it. Margaret began reaching out through letters in Sunday newspapers to try and find others like her and her daughter, eventually forming a small support network which would later become the Brittle Bone Society.

Funding from the Wellcome Trust in 2021 has allowed the BBS archive to be catalogued and made available to researchers for the first time. This cataloguing project concluded in 2023, though work is ongoing with new deposits from the Society.

The archive of the BBS gives us a unique look at the birth and development of a small charity, made more valuable for its perspective of disability in the UK. A collection created by people with disabilities is a rare thing indeed, given many archives of disability have been created by institutions or medical professionals. Such a collection gives a voice to those people who have previously been denied agency over their own history.

The collection comprises over half a century's worth of records, covering the administration of the society, fundraising efforts, research papers, poetry, photographs, and audio-visual material. A small number of oral history recordings were also made

A fundraising stall in support of the Brittle Bone Society.



during the cataloguing project that supplements our existing recordings of Margaret Grant and long-serving BBS staff member Sheena Moreland.

As part of the project, an online seminar entitled 'Documenting Disability: Preserving and Accessing Disabled Heritage' was organised to bring together archivists and researchers who work with archival collections relating to disability. This afternoon seminar took place on 27 July 2022 and consisted of talks from archivist Alex Cowan, PhD researcher Sam Brady, senior lecturer Dr George Gosling, Access and Inclusion Worker Katie Sawyer, and Assistant Professor Dr Gracen Brilmyer. The seminar concluded with a panel session which discussed the importance of disability archives, their current use, and potential issues that can be encountered when cataloguing these collections (such as outdated or offensive terminology).

This offered a range of experiences and perspectives on the relationship between disability and archives, and the views of those participants with lived experience of disability were especially valuable. Terminology and accessibility were consistent themes throughout the talks and the

panel, and we can see these are now conversations which are now common across the sector. The seminar was recorded and is available to watch online: [bit.ly/disabilitydoc](https://bit.ly/disabilitydoc).

To mark Scotland's Year of Stories in 2022, the university invited artists, designers, and creative writers to explore the stores and choose objects and archives which inspired and intrigued them. Sculptor Susie Johnston chose the BBS archive as her inspiration for a sculpture made of ceramic wishbones – the Society's symbol. This was displayed in an exhibition in August 2022 alongside some material from the BBS collection.

In May 2023, the project archivist gave a talk at a BBS advocacy event at Scottish Parliament to raise awareness of OI and call for May to be recognised as OI Awareness Month. This was primarily as an update to the cataloguing project but provided a unique opportunity to use the archive as an advocacy tool. This included readings of poetry by two BBS members selected from the archive to demonstrate the progress that has been made since the Society's founding and the work yet to be done. ●

ALASDAIR BACHELL, *Archivist*

## The University of St Andrews FOLGER SYMPOSIUM

In May 2022, the University of St Andrews hosted a Folger Symposium on 'Reading Scotland before 1707'. This was the culmination of four years of preparation by academics from English, History and Music and was a key element in the Folger's outreach activity during the closure of its buildings in Washington DC for refurbishment between 2020–3. Hailed by the Head of the School of English as “a spectacularly successful and beautifully organised event run in conjunction with colleagues in the Folger Shakespeare Library”, the weekend brought together an invited audience of international scholars and interdisciplinary specialists from post-graduates to professors and the University Collections of archives and rare books were central to the event.

We worked hard to produce a display tailored to the interests of the delegates and to the topics being discussed. It was set out in the university's Senate Room, on the same landing as the King James Library, which was also open for visitors. The display was timetabled as part of the programme, rather than being an 'add-on' or optional session, and there was a very positive reaction, with much interest and even excitement being expressed by delegates. Some visitors even missed the wine reception to stay at the exhibition and browse at leisure!

Some of the themes that we were able to illustrate included the links between Scotland and Europe and the significance of the importing of printed books from the Low Countries with a volume of tracts of Archbishop William Schevez (d. 1497). That subject re-emerged in the presentation by Professor Andrew Pettegree on the Dutch book trade later in the weekend. The first complete translation of the

*Aeneid* into a form of English based on the Paris edition by the humanist scholar printer Badius Ascensius was authored by alumnus Gavin Douglas, and published as *Eneados* in 1513. We had a first edition on show as the long lead time on this event enabled us to have this book conserved before display.

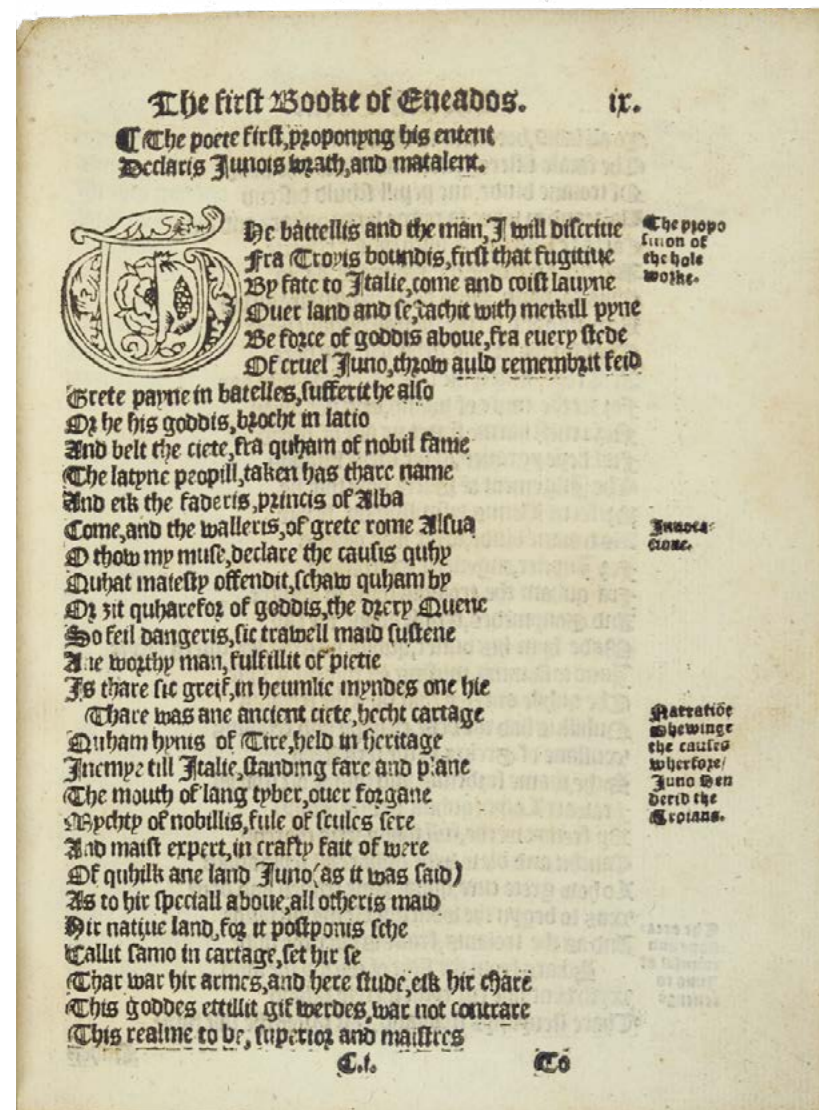
The theme of 'Literature, Scots Law and the Written Record' enabled us to share our two manuscripts of the *Regiam Maiestatem*, along with the first printed edition of the text. Other highlights included a manuscript of the poems of John Johnson and a mathematical treatise by John Geddy, an *incunabulum* containing Scots verse as annotations on the end papers, some of the earliest books printed in St Andrews, a bifolium of the *Auchinleck Chronicle*, Blaeu's *Atlas Novus* showing Fife, an early anthology of neo-Latin poetry (*Delitiae poetarum Scotorum*, 1637), and Andrew Melville's copy of Buchanan's *Rerum Scotticarum*

*historia* (1582). The physical setting of the symposium within the seventeenth-century Parliament Hall and the association of the space with King James VI and I added to the overall impact.

The format of the symposium was unlike a 'normal' academic conference. Rather, the sessions were hosted by a small panel, who each made very short presentations to introduce their theme. There was then extensive unstructured time for discussion, exploration of ideas and following of trains of thought. This provided a rich forum for the offering of expert insights into questions being raised, and there was no reluctance amongst those present to offer their opinions. The relaxed and convivial atmosphere enabled all participants to feel comfortable. Saturday's afternoon session focussed on 'The Scottish Book in Manuscript and Print'. Hosted by Professor Andrew Pettegree, Professor Emily Wingfield from Birmingham and Dr Helen

The team put together a display related to topics discussed in the conference, which was well received by delegates.





Items from the University's collections, tailored to the interests of the delegates and to the topics being discussed, were displayed. Images courtesy of the University of St Andrews Libraries and Museums.

Book I of the 13 *Bukes of Eneados of the Famoso Poete Virgil* translated by Gavin Douglas, 1553 (St Andrews TypBL.B53CV).

One of the many manicles of Archbishop William Scheves in a fifteenth-century volume (TypNL.A85JT).



Vincent from the National Library of Scotland, this provoked a wide-ranging discussion and was illustrated by a different selection of books and manuscripts from the University Collections than had been out the previous day. We made very effective use of the visualiser to illustrate the points being made. This allowed us to handle material and to have that projected onto a large screen so that everyone could see the items and point out particularly relevant features as the conversation evolved. It formed a responsive and powerful way of embedding the material objects within the conversation as it flowed.

An additional feature of the weekend was the performance of a dramatic reading, with music, of *The Mous and the Lyon*, a new short

story by local author Shirley McKay, author of the Hew Cullan Mystery Series, with music by Bill Taylor on harp and members of the St Andrews Renaissance Singers. This was a one-off presentation, introduced by Bill as the sort of entertainment that might have been offered to guests in a Scottish noble's household in the seventeenth century. We enjoyed this in the glorious acoustic of the MacPherson Recital Room in the University's Laidlaw Music Centre.

On Sunday, there was a fascinating discussion on Scotland on stage and a focus on the household, court and patronage, which included a reflection by Georgianna Ziegler, Reference Librarian Emerita of the Folger, on Esther Inglis, calligrapher and creator of a hand-crafted miniature book which had been on display on

Friday. The afternoon concluded with another dynamic engagement with Reformed Scottish Literature, from psalms and sermons to the reshaping of the national identity through the national covenant. In his inimical fashion, Jamie Reid Baxter delivered his presentation in Scots, perhaps encapsulating the way in which the weekend had enabled a revisiting and re-imagining of the culture and history of sixteenth and seventeenth century Scotland. ●

RACHEL HART  
Senior Archivist (Keeper of Manuscripts and Muniments)  
University of St Andrews

For more information, visit:  
[www.st-andrews.ac.uk/library/special-collections/archives/](http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/library/special-collections/archives/)

## The University of Stirling Archives ABERLOUR CHILDREN'S CHARITY

The University of Stirling Archives and Aberlour Children's Charity are working together to open up access to Aberlour's archives, which preserve a detailed record of almost 150 years of caring for children across Scotland.

From a small home for "motherless bairns" established in 1875, the orphanage grew into a large institution with over 6,000 children passing through its doors until its closure in 1967. Today, Aberlour is one of Scotland's largest charities, providing a range of services which help disadvantaged children and their families. Its archives comprehensively document the charity's operation and the lives of the children in its care through administrative records, case files, annual reports, photographs, publications and fundraising material.

The University of Stirling Archives is working with Aberlour to improve access to the archive for care-experienced people, their families and the wider research community. In August 2022, the University Archives was awarded a grant to catalogue Aberlour's archives by the *Archives Revealed* funding programme, which is jointly supported by the UK National Archives, the Wolfson Foundation and the Pilgrim Trust. The programme provides archive services with funding to make collections accessible that otherwise would be difficult to catalogue using existing resources.

A scoping study grant awarded in July 2020 highlighted the value and extent of their historical records. This led to the transfer of Aberlour's archives to the University of Stirling Archives, a process that began in the summer of 2021. In January 2023, work began on the *Archives Revealed* cataloguing project, which produced a comprehensive online collection catalogue.



Ron Aitchison presenting his personal archive to the University of Stirling Archives, August 2022.



Cataloguing Aberlour Children's Charity archive has been one of the most meaningful projects I have worked on.

The collection documents how social care practice has evolved in Scotland, and we can see how this impacted establishments like Aberlour and how they adapted to support the children in their care.

For me though, the most valuable component of this project was being able to catalogue and repack over 2,500 case files of former residents, covering children who were admitted between 1893 and 1922. In doing this, we discovered the stories of how children came to be at Aberlour, hopes that family and relatives had for the children, and we often saw what these residents came to do in later life, with letters and photographs sent back to the Orphanage providing updates on how they were. We get a true insight into the life of the child and are able to understand a little better what life would have been like for them at this time.

Through this project, we have been able to provide a voice to the children of Aberlour and guarantee their experiences are no longer silent or at risk of being forgotten. Instead, their stories can be heard, retold and inform us for many years to come.

JENNIFER ROACH  
Project Archivist

Photograph of children in Aberlour Orphanage Jubilee Year Appeal booklet, 1925.

The University Archives is continuing to improve access to the archives of Aberlour through an ongoing digitisation programme focusing on the *Aberlour Orphanage* magazine. First published in 1882, the magazine provides a detailed account of life in the institution, including a daily journal of events, extracts of letters from former residents, lists of subscribers, and donations received. The publicity surrounding the project has also led to the donation of an extensive collection of personal material relating to the Orphanage from Ron Aitchison, who was admitted to Aberlour as a six-month-old baby in 1950. Ron's collection provides an insight into a childhood spent in the orphanage, adding an additional chapter to the story of Aberlour.

The Aberlour Archive is also a key element in a major research project taking place in the university's Faculty of Social Sciences. *Archiving Residential Children's Homes* (ARCH) is a three-year project which aims to improve current record-keeping practices across the residential care sector. The first phase of the project carried out a review of the Aberlour Archive to reflect on how the lessons

ABERLOUR ORPHANAGE JUBILEE YEAR APPEAL, 1925



Tiny Tots

of historical activities can inform (and improve) current practice.

As Aberlour approaches its 150th anniversary, the charity's commitment to preserving and making accessible its story has created a valuable resource which, through cataloguing, digitisation and research, continues to support the care-experienced community. ●

For more information, visit:  
Aberlour Children's Charity  
[www.aberlour.org.uk](http://www.aberlour.org.uk)

View the archive's catalogue at:  
[collections.stir.ac.uk/collections/getrecord/GB559\\_ACCT](http://collections.stir.ac.uk/collections/getrecord/GB559_ACCT)



We often speak to people who have been brought up in the care system, or have some experience of care, and they often don't have much of a written record of what their life was like. The archive really provides people looked after at Aberlour with the fullest possible account of their life. The partnership we have with the University is very important to us – both from the preservation of the archive but also for the long-term learning of students in health and social care.

SALLY ANN KELLY  
Chief Executive  
Aberlour Children's Charity

Aberlour Children's Charity Archive,  
University of Stirling.



## The University of Stirling Archives ARCHIVING RESIDENTIAL CHILDREN'S HOMES (ARCH)



Aberlour Orphanage's dining room.



Aberlour Orphanage's gardens.

### FINDING A "FAMILY SUCH AS OURS" IN THE ARCHIVES: PHASE ONE OF THE ARCH PROJECT

The ARCH project explores recordkeeping practices for everyday group life for children in residential care. This research is being supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG). Using the archival collections of the Aberlour Child Care Trust (Scotland) and the Bodelschwingh Foundation Bethel (Germany) as their starting point, researchers at the Universities of Stirling and Osnabrück are collaborating to develop a detailed understanding of how daily experiences in group care can be captured and preserved. Examining past recordkeeping, current hopes, and future uses, ARCH explores how day-to-day records can be created and kept to best support care-experienced individuals' identity and memory needs.

In Scotland, the first phase of the ARCH project considers how everyday group life features in the Aberlour Children's Charity collection.

Spanning from the foundation of the Victorian Orphanage in 1875 through to the 1980s, the archive includes the organisation's administrative records, children's case files, the Aberlour magazine, as well as a small amount of photographic material and ephemera.

At Aberlour, the warden's role was often described in familial terms: "father to the very large family, doing all that a very wise parent ought to do" (1935); if this is the case, how well does the collection capture the everyday of this 'family' life for children?

### CASE FILES MISS GROUP EXPERIENCE

Aberlour's case files (1920–79) provide minimal evidence of everyday experience in care. The "happiness of a family" so carefully woven into the narrative of the home's identity within the organisation's published magazines does not feature in these files. Facets of home life and group identity, such as Christmas celebrations or Scout camps, frequently described within the printed magazines, give way to silence in children's files.

Why should this matter? Interviews with the charity's recordkeeping staff and volunteers, conducted during the ARCH project, suggest that for Aberlour these files are the records most likely to be accessed by care-experienced individuals. As such, this file forms the most accessible record of an individual's time in care, yet does not record an extensive – and important – swathe of their personal experience: everyday life.

### THE HIDDEN EVERYDAY

While Aberlour Orphanage housed up to 500 children at one time, children's voices, faces and daily experiences are few and far between within its archives. Two key sources on everyday life have been retained: a small number of 'house' logbooks, and a series of magazines, which provide the most detail. Known as the 'Blue Book', these included a daily diary, which, though written by the warden, offers descriptive depictions of daily activities. However, as a key function of these publications was to raise funds, the content of these magazines may need to be taken with a pinch of salt. An interview with former resident, Ron Aitchison,



Scottish Episcopal Church Orphanage & Convalescent Home,  
Aberlour

revealed that among resident children the magazines were known as the "blue liar". Nonetheless, letters sent by Aberlour leavers make a regular appearance in the magazines. These brief interludes provide a small glimpse of a child's eye view of group life, with one girl correcting the warden: "You said the girls 'enjoy darning boys stockings' [...] This fact is definitely wrong" (1937).

A surprising source for daily life is offered by the medical logs created for the orphanage's in-house infirmary wing. Outlining decisions on medical treatment, the logs incidentally preserve the children's own choices, uses of the spaces around them and independent activities. Through the lens of minor injuries, the logs depict everyday scenes within a large group of children, from the dining hall disputes resulting in "table fork stuck in right buttock" (1960) to child-led foraging, "abdominal pain. Was eating green gooseberries" (1960).

#### GROUP EXPERIENCE, IDENTITY AND MEMORY

Reading the Aberlour magazines provides a sense that care givers, up to the 1960s, were highly aware of the unique nature of children's experiences growing up in residential care, as well as the lasting impact this experience had. The warden, for instance, writes how rituals of the orphanage "will be double Dutch to the uninitiated but readily understood by the old boys and girls" (1940). Depictions of difference are used throughout the magazines as a point of interest to captivate potential donors, such as in the inclusion of astonishing statistics like the orphanage's consumption of 53,280 two-pound loaves of bread annually (1920). Beyond this, the magazines suggest a level of awareness of the continued influence of this unique childhood experience on identity. In published letters, former residents describe how they define themselves as "one of the old boys" (1925) or are trying to "live up to the good name of Aberlour Orphanage" (1943).

Of even greater interest is the indication that care givers (1920s–60s) acknowledged that children who spent childhood in care benefitted from revisiting group memories as adults and even supported them in this. The Scout Master, for example, encourages leavers to "try to keep in touch with your pals and keep the spirit of the orphanage going". A continued desire for physical connection and tangible evidence when remembering group life emerges in correspondence. One leaver writes: "I often wish I knew someone near here who had been in the Orphanage, as oh! It would be so nice to talk about it" (1940–1), while another describes that letters from the warden are his "most treasured possession" (1948). This long-standing awareness of the importance of remembering and memory sharing, tied to the unique aspects of life in residential care, was not reflected in organisational recordkeeping practices.

#### NEXT STEPS

Looking at the archives of residential care for Aberlour between 1920–80 has provided much food for thought. Overall, the lack of young people's voices is particularly striking. The collection available now highlights how material capturing everyday life can be lost when the memory needs of care leavers are not integrated into longer-term retention approaches. This retention ethos is also palpable

in the focus of historic management of the collection. Information maintained about records supports organisational needs, but does not consider links between case files and records relating to children's everyday experiences, which remain dispersed throughout the collection and hard to discover.

On the other hand, a close look at these materials has brought to light archives which offer valuable resources for past care leavers and have the potential to support and evidence memories of everyday group life. Most importantly, looking backwards has revealed how practices of memory sharing and spaces for revisiting group experience had previously been integrated into ongoing support for care leavers.

Now in its second phase, the ARCH project is currently working alongside young people in Scotland and Germany to build a living archive informed by the strengths and gaps of the historic records. Building collaboratively, it is hoped this new approach to collecting can explore ways to capture better records of everyday life which are meaningful to young people, and will offer them the resources they need in the future. ●

MIRIAM BUNCOMBE

*Research Fellow Phase One*

For more information, visit: [archproject.stir.ac.uk](http://archproject.stir.ac.uk)

Aberlour's clock tower.



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We welcome applications from individuals and organisations.

Find out more at:

[www.scottisharchives.org.uk/members](http://www.scottisharchives.org.uk/members)

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