

Business Archives Surveying Officer Annual Report

1st April 2021 - 31st March 2022

It's fair to say 2021/2022 has been a year of two halves, with the first half of the year still very much affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and ongoing restrictions, meaning the ability to travel and visit businesses was extremely limited. The second half of the year saw Chris Cassells leave the role of Surveying Officer to move on to an exciting position at the National Library of Scotland as Head of Archives and Manuscripts, whilst Rachael Muir joined us from the Bank of England Archive as our new Surveying Officer.

In March 2021, we were delighted to receive funding as part of The National Archives Covid-19 Fund to support our new project *Fieldwork: Mapping Scotland's Business Archives*, a Scotland-wide 'State of the Nation' survey of business records held privately.

Therefore, much of the year has been spent analysing and gathering data from previous surveys conducted by both the National Register of Archives for Scotland, and Business Archives Council for Scotland, which will help us understand more about current status of business surveying in Scotland. We can already see from the data some initial gaps which will help us form strong priorities and focus for surveying in the year ahead. For example, an analysis of previous surveys has shown us that our more underrepresented regions are Orkney, East Renfrewshire, Angus, and East Dunbartonshire. So there are lots of exciting aims and objectives that we will take forward from *Fieldwork*, including an ever-growing list of new businesses now on our list to contact, ranging from the haulage industry to mountain and outdoor retail.

We're pleased to report that we were able to begin visiting businesses again in January, with a whirlwind of surveys taking place as *Fieldwork* drew to an end in March 2022. This has included a trip to Nairn and Elgin to visit distilleries and a sawmill, as well as travel to Peebles in the Scottish Borders to revisit a textile mill collection.

Partnership has also been a crucial element to our work this year as we have been working closely with the National Records of Scotland and National Register of Archives for Scotland to safely secure and transfer the Scottish Investment Trust collection in Edinburgh, whilst also working to establish a scoping visit to the McVities factory in Tollcross, Glasgow following the announcement of its closure.

As of yet, we are still waiting to see if the expected rise of business insolvencies, particularly within the hospitality and tourism industries, will transpire following the pandemic. So far, this has not been the case, largely due to the government's furlough scheme. The Surveying Officer has continued to participate with the Crisis Management Team's work and attended the bi-annual meeting in November 2021, where long-term plans for the Debenhams Archive were discussed.

The Surveying Officer continues to provide consultancy services to a number of businesses, including further research recently being undertaken for the Loch Lomond Group. The Surveying Officer also spent a week in Stornoway, Isle of Lewis, in February to begin cataloguing the records of the Stornoway Trust. This followed a remote survey of the collection last year and was the first of several expected visits to catalogue the records this year. It is hoped that additional surveys of businesses on Lewis can also be organised due to the increased presence of a Surveying Officer on the island.

Looking ahead, several born-digital projects are appearing on the horizon for the Surveying Officer, and so attention is turning to processes around surveying extensive digital collections. This will be relatively unfamiliar territory for the Ballast Trust and the Surveying Officer, and

so we are looking forward to discussing and learning with colleagues at the Digital Preservation Coalition and University of Glasgow about how we take digital surveying techniques forward into the 21st century business environment.

Records Surveys

- Frew Collection (a collection of solicitor and bank records). Supported Kilwinning Heritage to arrange the deposit of this material with appropriate repositories.
- Royal Society for the Support of Women for Scotland, charity, Edinburgh, 1847-. This visit was a review of a previous survey, and our first in-person survey of the year, with recommendations for future management of the collection provided. Following the visit and survey report, the charity has requested the Ballast Trust / Surveying Officer be present at a Board meeting in Spring 2022 to discuss our proposals and future of the collection in more detail.
- Scottish Law Agents for Scotland, voluntary professional body, Glasgow, 1883-present. Records survey conducted in February 2022 and recommendations for future management and usage provided. Collection is being temporarily held at the University of Glasgow Archive & Special Collections.
- Scottish Investment Trust, investment trust company, Edinburgh, 1887-2022. A visit took place to review the past NRAS surveys that had been undertaken of this extensive archive. This included assessing the extent of the collection, and its suitability for transfer to the National Records of Scotland. Transfer scheduled for April/May 2022.
- Scotland's Garden Scheme, charity, Edinburgh, 1931-present. This visit was a review of a previous survey. The updated records survey was conducted in February 2022, and recommendations for future management and usage provided. A second visit is being offered to provide some repackaging and conservation improvements as part of a case study for the *Fieldwork* project.
- Gordon & MacPhail, distillery, Elgin, 1895-present. Scoping visit to discuss the current position of the company archive. Recommendations for future management and usage provided.
- Gordon Timber, softwood timber sawmill, Nairn, 1862-present. Records survey conducted in February 2022 and recommendations for future management and usage provided. Subsequently, a second visit has been arranged for the Surveying Officer to provide some repackaging and conservation improvements, and to develop the catalogue as part of a case study for the *Fieldwork* project. Due to take place in May 2022.
- Glenfarclas, distillery, Ballindalloch 1865-present. This visit was a review of a previous survey. The updated records survey was conducted in February 2022, and recommendations for future management and usage to be provided.
- R & W Scott, jam manufacturer, Carlisle, 1873-present. This visit was a review of a previous survey. The updated records survey was conducted in February 2022, and recommendations for future management and usage to be provided.
- Holland & Sherry, textile merchant, Peeblesshire, 1836-present. This visit was a review of a previous survey. The updated records survey was conducted in March 2022, and recommendations for future management and usage to be provided.
- Newsquest, newspaper publisher, Ardrossan, 19th century-present. This visit was a review of a previous survey. The updated records survey was conducted in March 2022 and found the business to hold extensive runs of a number of newspapers printed in the west coast of Scotland. Further analysis to be undertaken to understand the uniqueness of the collection, along with collections held at the British Newspaper Archive and National Library of Scotland, before recommendations for future management and usage are provided.
- Institute and Faculty of Actuaries, professional membership body, Edinburgh, 1856-present. This visit was a review of a previous survey. The updated records survey was conducted in March 2022, and recommendations for future management and usage to be provided.

- Glasgow Building Preservation Trust, charity, Glasgow, 1982- present. As part of their 40th anniversary, the Trust requested a records survey and advice on the future management of the collection. A survey was conducted in March 2022, and recommendations for future management and usage to be provided.

Crisis Management

The Surveying Officer has continued to work as the lead representative for Scotland on the UK Crisis Management Team. The team has existed since 2009 to organise agreed responses to business archives under threat and to monitor and assist in steering records at risk into suitable homes. This year there have been 16 cases that the Crisis Management Team investigated in Scotland.

- Ballet West, dance school in Argyll and Bute. Liquidators agreed to allow access to the records post-Covid but there is now an ongoing police investigation, so records won't be released until that is resolved.
- Parson Peebles, electrical and mechanical engineers in Rosyth. Recently bought out of administration, interested in future archive project.
- Alexander Inglis and Son Limited, Grain merchants in East Lothian. Liquidators have agreed to provide access to records but currently this isn't possible due to litigation issues.
- Glenburn Hotel on the Isle of Bute. Administrators were marketing the hotel for sale but are aware of our interest and agreed that they will not destroy any archive records or historical items without first arranging for a representative of the Ballast Trust to visit. No outcome to report as yet.
- Balnacraig School, Perthshire. The records of this 178 year old charity run school had been surveyed by Perth & Kinross archives in 2012. A small number of records were collected by Perth & Kinross archives with the remainder required for the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry and Kiara liaised with National Records of Scotland about this.
- Snowdon House School, Stirling. Case was highlighted to us by NRS, and our help was requested. Archive collection already at Stirling archives. Put them in touch with liquidators but no records transferred.
- Westmuir Riding Centre, 1991-2021. Contacted owner and liquidator to discuss records.
- Peter Greig & Co., Linen Manufacturer, Kirkaldy, 1825-2021. Several people contacted about this but no positive result. Liquidators, former director, fife archivist and academic researchers.
- Scottish Investment Trust, Edinburgh. Due to a merger, the archive was assessed (had been previously surveyed in 1985 and 2005) and a transfer of the records to the National Records of Scotland is being organised for April 2022.
- McVities Factory, Glasgow. Kiara has worked with Alison Rosie, NRAS and Miriam McDonald, Historic Environment Scotland to try to organise access to the site for survey purposes. A date in April 2022 has been agreed for access. Kiara or Rachael will attend on behalf of NRAS along with HES staff.
- Weir & McQuiston, Mechanical and electrical contracting business, Wishaw, 1976 - 2021. The Surveying Officer was in correspondence with the appointed liquidator and North Lanarkshire Archives, but there were no historical records deemed relevant for transfer.
- John Keenan and Sons, Coach hire company, Ayrshire, 1977 - 2022. Entered liquidation in 2022. The Surveying Officer is in correspondence with Ayrshire Archives and appointed liquidator should there be any historical records of interest.
- Thorntons Solicitors and Stuart & Stuart Solicitors. Proposed merger of these two firms prompted contact.
- JPIMedia Group direct, Newspapers, 1928-. Liquidation and previous survey done in 1987. Contact with liquidators and NRAS are taking it forward.
- Scottish Youth Theatre Archive, charity, Glasgow, 1976- . Due to an office closure, the archive is being transferred to the Scottish Theatre Archive at the University of Glasgow

Library. An initial survey to assess the extent and condition will be undertaken in April 2022.

- Scottish Amicable Life Assurance Society Archive, Stirling, 19th century-2022. The Surveying Officer will be assisting University of Glasgow Archives & Special Collections with the transfer of the archive to the University of Glasgow Library in April 2022.

Projects

The King's Theatre Heritage Lottery Fund project was completed in August 2021. The wider project was an application for funding (later successful) to support a heritage project to run alongside the King's Theatre building redevelopment. The Surveyor's work involved creating an overall plan for their archive and how that would work with the heritage project, and also delivering a volunteer pilot project and engagement workshops.

A research project for the Loch Lomond Group into the history of Auchendennan House to support a potential heritage display was completed. Ongoing research work with the Macallan was completed for their "decades" project and 27 days work has been agreed and paid for to be used by April 2022. Some of these days have been used for research work and oversight of their "Jewel Box" project to redevelop their visitor experience at the distillery. There remain a number of outstanding consultancy days allocated for the Surveying Officer at The Macallan. These will be used in the second half of 2022.

The Surveying Officer spent a week in Stornoway during February to begin the cataloguing project of the Stornoway Trust archive. This work will take place across the course of the year ahead of their centenary next year and will also involve days of remote cataloguing. The next week-long visit is scheduled to take place in June.

As an off-shoot of the *Fieldwork* project, the Surveying Office formed a partnership with the Moving Image Archive at the National Library of Scotland to conduct a pilot-survey of the independent cinema sector. Rachael contacted fifteen cinemas by email to offer a records survey and support for managing their archive collections. Only one response was received in return, which confirmed the collection in question had been transferred to an archive.

Plans are ongoing to develop a born-digital project in collaboration with the Edinburgh City Archives for surveying of the Transport Initiative Edinburgh (TIE) digital collection. This is due to take place in the summer/autumn of 2022.

Recent discussions have taken place to revive the Capturing the Energy project along with the University of Aberdeen and Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Archives, but with an updated focus on the renewables sector. It is likely to involve initial data gathering and follow-up surveys of the sector by the Surveying Officer in the second half of 2022.

Research has been underway for the Loch Lomond Group who commissioned 8 days of research to be undertaken in March/April 2022 to report on the origins and history of a distillery in the Tarbet area of Loch Lomond.

Presentations:

- Paper accepted for the *Reappraisal of Surveying Conference* in April 2022. This will be a joint paper along with Dr Alison Rosie from the National Register of Archives for Scotland titled: '*Reflections on Surveying in Scotland: Challenges, Partnerships and Opportunities*'

Participations:

- Attended the Business Archives Council titled 'The Day After Tomorrow: Business Archives and Climate Change', November 2021
- Attended a meeting of the Archivists of Scottish Local Authorities Working Group (ASLAWG) to introduce myself as the new Business Archives Surveying Officer, and to share data results of *Fieldwork*, November 2021
- Attended the bi-annual meeting of the Crisis Management Team, November 2021
- Attended the Business Archives Council Scotland conference on the subject of 'Anniversaries', December 2021
- Enrolled in the Digital Preservation Coalition's Novice-to-Knowhow training focussing on digital preservation and working with digital collections. This is in preparation of further digital preservation work due later in 2022
- Attended BACS Executive Committee meetings
- Continue to hold a position on the judging panel of the Business Archives Council annual cataloguing grant

Publications:

- Introductory article written by the new Surveying Officer for the BACS newsletter