



BUSINESS ARCHIVES  
SURVEYING OFFICER

since 1977

# **Annual Report**

**1st April 2023 - 31st March 2024**

## Review of 2023-2024

It has been a varied and exciting twelve months for the Surveying Officer, with two thematic surveys, several records at risk cases, recruitment, and consultancy work, to name but a few things keeping Rachael busy! Over 130 businesses have been contacted in 2023/24 with 27 surveys completed, and an overall response rate of 20%, which is a great increase on the average 10-15% response rate received in the past.

A continuous service offered throughout this year by the Surveying Officer has been student support, for those undertaking cataloguing placements whilst studying a Masters Archives & Records Management. Rachael has provided regular practical on-site sessions to support two students, with the cataloguing of the Scotland's Garden Scheme archive, as well as the records of Goodfellow & Stephen bakery. There has been a successful and satisfying piece of work to provide continued professional development to those beginning their career in the archives, whilst also providing a valuable follow-up for two organisations that were keen to build on the survey experience and develop their archives further. The Surveying Officer hopes to be able to offer the opportunity of new cataloguing placements in the future.

There have also been several unique surveys undertaken this year including a survey of one of the earliest examples of a community-interest company (CIC) in Scotland. This involved the Surveying Officer travelling to Glenelg in the north-west to visit the offices of the Glenachulish Preservation Trust, which works to preserve the last remaining turntable ferry in Scotland.



The launch of a new thematic survey in the summer involved contacting those in the natural environment and outdoor sector. This led to several first-time surveys including the Glencoe Mountain Resort, Scottish Wildlife Trust, the Scottish Tourist Guides Association, Action to Protect Rural Scotland, and the John Muir Trust, two of which have now been transferred to relevant archive services.

This year, the Surveying Officer has also developed a remote survey questionnaire which was successfully completed by the European Marine Energy Centre, and provided a useful insight into their physical and digital holdings. By having such a questionnaire to hand, it allows surveys to be conducted remotely in the first instance, where travel, time and money are a restriction, and then planning can take place for a more detailed survey if required.

The Surveying Officer has also 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 an incredibly high number of at-risk cases in comparison with last year, with at least 23 cases that the Surveying Officer has investigated in Scotland. Most notably, this has included the well-known brands of Ted Baker and Hunter Boots, but unfortunately there has been no progress on identifying any surviving records. However, there were successes, with the likes of Alexander Wilkies, whose records were surveyed and transferred to Fife Archives, and a small number of records left following the closure of Cairncross of Perth jewellers, after 154 years of trading.

*"When its closure was announced earlier this year The BACS Survey Officer got in touch and offered to help with the salvage of any business records - which I accepted without hesitation. She alerted me to an early records survey of the business, negotiated access with the owners, salvaged the records from the premises and deposited them in the archive. This saved me an enormous amount of time and ensured that the records were preserved in a safe and timely manner."*

Ishbel MacKinnon, Archivist, Culture Perth & Kinross

Nearly two years after initial contact had been made by Chris Cassells with the owners of Peter Greig & Co., Scotland's last linen factory, the Surveying Officer, was also delighted to help secure the safe transfer of the company's archive to Fife Archives. It shows that a significant amount of time is often required to ensure the long-term preservation of records, well beyond initial surveys.

*"When Peter Greig & Co went into liquidation, I was worried that their archive had been lost. I am grateful to Rachael Muir, 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."*

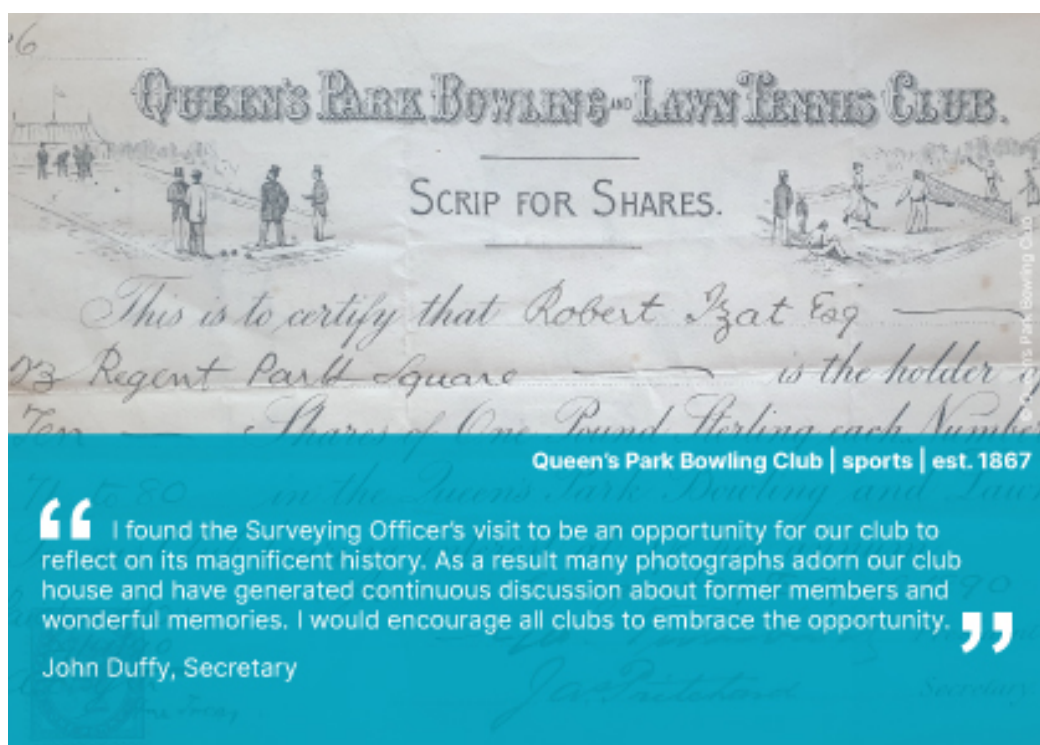
Andrew Dowsey, Archives and Local Studies Manager, Fife Archives

Consultancy work has also been steady throughout the year. In autumn, we were delighted to be asked by Johnstons of Elgin to support them in the recruitment of their first corporate archivist. As one of the oldest businesses in Scotland, Johnstons had been first surveyed a number of decades ago, and again re-surveyed ten years ago in 2013. However, it wasn't until the most recent survey in 2023, that the company decided to proceed with recruiting their own record-keeping professional. We are delighted they now have an archivist in post, and look forward to meeting them at business archives events in the future.

Further consultancy work has involved undertaking eight days of historical research for JC Peacock, formerly shipping charterers, now salt merchants, as part of their 150th anniversary this year. Newly found information will be used as preparation for a commemorative corporate history is underway. Consultancy time has also been secured for the Surveying Officer to catalogue the Scottish Women's Institute collection. For one day a week, over the next 6 months Rachael will develop a catalogue of the collection and gather a clearer understanding of what different records the archive contains.

The archive work of sporting organisations has also featured regularly this year, and the surveying Officer was able to attend the Sporting Heritage's Scotland network event at the University of Stirling last summer. Rachael managed a stand which promoted the services of the Surveying Officer's services with postcards and a new 'records for sporting organisations' guidance helpsheet designed and printed for the event. The event allowed Rachael to share past survey success, like that of St Johnstone FC, St Mirren FC, and Queen's Park Bowling Club. Time was also spent identifying and contacting those clubs with significant anniversaries coming up in the next ten years. This resulted in two surveys, one of which was undertaken remotely by reviewing Aberdeen Football Club's heritage inventory, whilst the other took place at Airdrieonians.

The year ahead as always looks very exciting with the launch of another thematic survey, this time contacting those in the timber and forestry sector, as well as a new regional partnership that will see surveys specifically launched in Angus.



## Crisis management and records-at-risk

- Alexander Wilkie Ltd, 1898, retailer, national (Kirkcaldy store surveyed)
- Balgownie Rentals, 1907, agricultural, Turriff, Aberdeenshire
- Balmanno House, 1874, care home, Glasgow
- Bonar Yarns, c.1970, fabric manufacturer, Dundee
- Cairncross of Perth, 1869, jewellers, Perth
- David Bryson & Sons, 1933, motor company, Prestwick
- Edinburgh City FC, 1928/1986, football club, Edinburgh
- Foodmek, 1971, food and drinks processing equipment supplier, Tayport
- Glasgow Play-Resource Association, c.1984, charity, Glasgow
- HIV Scotland, 1994, charity, Glasgow
- Hunter Boot Limited [North British Rubber Company], 1856, retail, Edinburgh
- Huntly & District Ex-Servicemen's Club, social club, 1920, Huntly
- J & G Innes, bookshop, 1879, St Andrews
- JS Crawford Contracts (Borders), 1946, construction, Melrose
- Kilgraston School, 1930, independent school, Bridge of Earn
- Lows Butcher (George A Low & Sons), c.1970, butcher, Glasgow
- Scott & Paterson Limited, 1983, printer, Dunfermline
- Scottish Agricultural Industries Limited, 1928, agriculture, Edinburgh
- Scottish Women's Institute, 1917, charity & membership organisation, Edinburgh
- Shearer Candles, 1897, candles manufacturer, Glasgow
- Stewart & Shields, 1950s, construction, Helensburgh
- Tayside Aviation, 1968, training school, Dundee
- Ted Baker, 1988, retail brand, Glasgow

## Record surveys, advice and consultancy work

- Aberdeen Football Club, 1903, sports club, Aberdeen. Remote survey via inventory, and recommendations report sent.
- Action to Protect Rural Scotland, 1926, charity, Edinburgh. Survey completed and recommendations report sent. Due to be deposited to Historic Environment Scotland.
- Airdrieonians Football Club, 1878, sports club, Airdrie. Survey completed and recommendations report sent.
- Angels' Share Glass, 2013, glassblower and manufacturer, Stirling. Survey completed and recommendations report sent. Due to be deposited to the University of Stirling Archives.
- Cairncross of Perth, 1869, jewellers, Perth. Closure of business. Survey undertaken, and records transferred to Perth & Kinross Archives.
- Craig & Rose (family visit), 1829, paint manufacturer, Edinburgh. Survey completed and recommendations report sent. Further survey undertaken of the family section of the archive, which have been gifted to Edinburgh City Archives.
- Crolla's Gelateria, 1895, ice-cream manufacturer, Rutherglen. Survey completed and recommendations report sent.
- Glasgow High School, 1124, school, Glasgow. Survey completed and recommendations report sent.
- Isle of Skye Ferry Community Interest Company / Glenachulish Preservation Trust, 2007/2011, charity, Glenelg. Survey completed and recommendations report sent.
- Glencoe Mountain Ltd, 1956, resort, Glencoe. Survey completed and recommendations report sent.
- Inverkeithing Local History Society, 1992, membership organisation, Inverkeithing. Completed and recommendations report sent.
- JC Peacock, 1784, salt supplier, Ayr. Survey completed and recommendations report sent. Eight days of historical research undertaken by the Surveying Officer as part of preparation for a commemorative publication to mark the company's 150th anniversary.
- John Dansken & Purdie, 1858-2005, chartered surveyors, Glasgow. Survey completed and recommendations report sent. Deposit with University of Glasgow in discussion.
- John Muir Trust, 1983, conservation charity, Pitlochry. Survey completed and recommendations report sent. Due to be transferred to Highland Archives.
- Newsquest, 1996, newspaper publisher, Ardrossan. Survey undertaken. Future of archive pending transfer.
- Paper Foundation, 2020, charity, Cumbria.





- Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland, 1784, membership organisation, Edinburgh. Survey completed and recommendations report sent.
- Scottish Forestry Trust, 1984, charity, Edinburgh. Survey completed and recommendations report sent.
- Scottish Plant Owners Association, 1950, membership organisation, Stirling. Survey completed and recommendations report sent. Interested in depositing the collection.
- Scottish Rugby Union, 1873, professional body, Edinburgh. Survey completed and recommendations report sent.
- Scottish Tourist Guides Association, 1959, professional body, Stirling. Survey completed and recommendations report sent.
- Scottish Wildlife Trust, 1964, charity, Edinburgh. Survey completed and recommendations report sent.
- Scottish Women's Institute, 1917, charity & membership organisation, Edinburgh. Survey completed and recommendations report sent. Supported the SWI with a successful records-at-risk application, and cataloguing project ongoing by Surveying Officer.
- Seven Incorporated Trades of Aberdeen, 1587, membership body, Aberdeen. Engagement and support visit to offer advice on cataloguing strategy and tools. Passed on to colleagues at NRAS for taking forward.
- Sight Scotland (formerly Royal Blind), 1793, charity, Edinburgh. Survey completed and recommendations report sent.
- Stephens, 1873, bakery, Dunfermline. Survey completed and recommendations report sent.
- St Mirren FC, 1877, sports club, Paisley. Survey completed and recommendations report sent.



# Presentations, Participations & Publications

## Publications

- Completed an article on records rescued from the Caledonian Brewery for the STICK newsletter and also the Scottish Brewing Archive Association's [newsletter no.56](#)
- Submitted an article on the Surveying Officer's past year as part of the Scottish Council on Archives' ['The Year in Review'](#).
- Rachael has produced an article titled 'Backchat' for the ARC magazine of the Archives and Records Association to provide further information on the role of the Surveying Officer.

## Participations

- Attended the Scottish Family Business Conference at the Glasgow Science Centre, April 2023.
- Completed the Scottish Oral History Centre introductory workshop, June 2023.
- Completion of University of Glasgow micro-credentials course 'Cultural Heritage Skills for Business (10 weeks). Received a B2 (very good), July 2023.
- Completed the University of Glasgow's Recruitment and Selection workshop
- Attended DCDC 2023 conference. Online, July 2023.
- Attended and manned a stall at the Sporting Heritage Scotland network event at the University of Stirling, July 2023.
- Participated as a judge on the panel for the Business Archives Council cataloguing grant, August 2023.
- Rachael attended the Business Bites lunchtime event on 'Capturing Diverse Voices', July 2023.
- Completed the Lulea University of Technology's online course on 'History Branding - Using History to Strengthen Corporate Identity'. Online, August 2023.
- Rachael attended the annual ICA-SBA conference which was held at Johnny Walker (Diageo), Princes Street. A very informative and interesting conference, with a varied range of speakers and presentations, including Olivetti, HSBC, and The Macallan speaking. Edinburgh, September 2023.
- Rachael attended two university Bitesize training sessions (Effective Conversations & Active Upstander), as part of an objective for 2023/24. A third session was completed in November 2023.
- Rachael attended a Scottish Council on Archives event titled 'Video Games Preservation Symposium', November 2023
- Rachael attended the inaugural BACS / BAC conference in London held at HSBC, and on the subject of daily digital recordkeeping. November 2023.
- Rachael attended a National Museum of Scotland event titled 'Collecting Sustainable Technology', December 2023.
- Rachael attended DAM & Museums 2024, which included hearing a presentation by Levi Archives, February 2024.
- Rachael attended an online event held by the TfL archives team about their new Google Arts and Culture online project. A superb insight into their digitisation work and online offering to visitors, staff, and the public, February 2024.

Activity Report

## 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 Dumfries, and Roughy Ferry to Stornoway.

The businesses that have been surveyed have ranged from textile mills and timber merchants to football clubs and restaurants, 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 Scottish 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. They have been no different! Records at risk within 2023-4 included the archive of the last Scottish linen manufacturer, Peter Grog & 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 File Council Archives, National Records of Scotland, and the University of Glasgow's Archives and Special Collections - a positive outcome to the end closure of these notable businesses.

Andrew Dineen, Archives and Local Studies Manager at File Council Archives, said: "When Peter Grog & 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 us persuade the owner to donate the records to Onfile Archives."

The Surveying Officer is also keen to provide second 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 2024 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 Tynemouth Island, the archive service of the Women's Isles based in

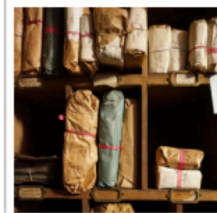
Stornoway. Along with the archive's essential local knowledge, the Surveying Officer developed a list of notable businesses in the area, with two surveys taking place, including that of a 100-year-old legal firm.

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 MEIR**  
Business Archives Surveying  
Officer for Scotland

For more information, visit:  
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The Scottish Investment Trust Collection. Courtesy: The Balfour Trust.

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