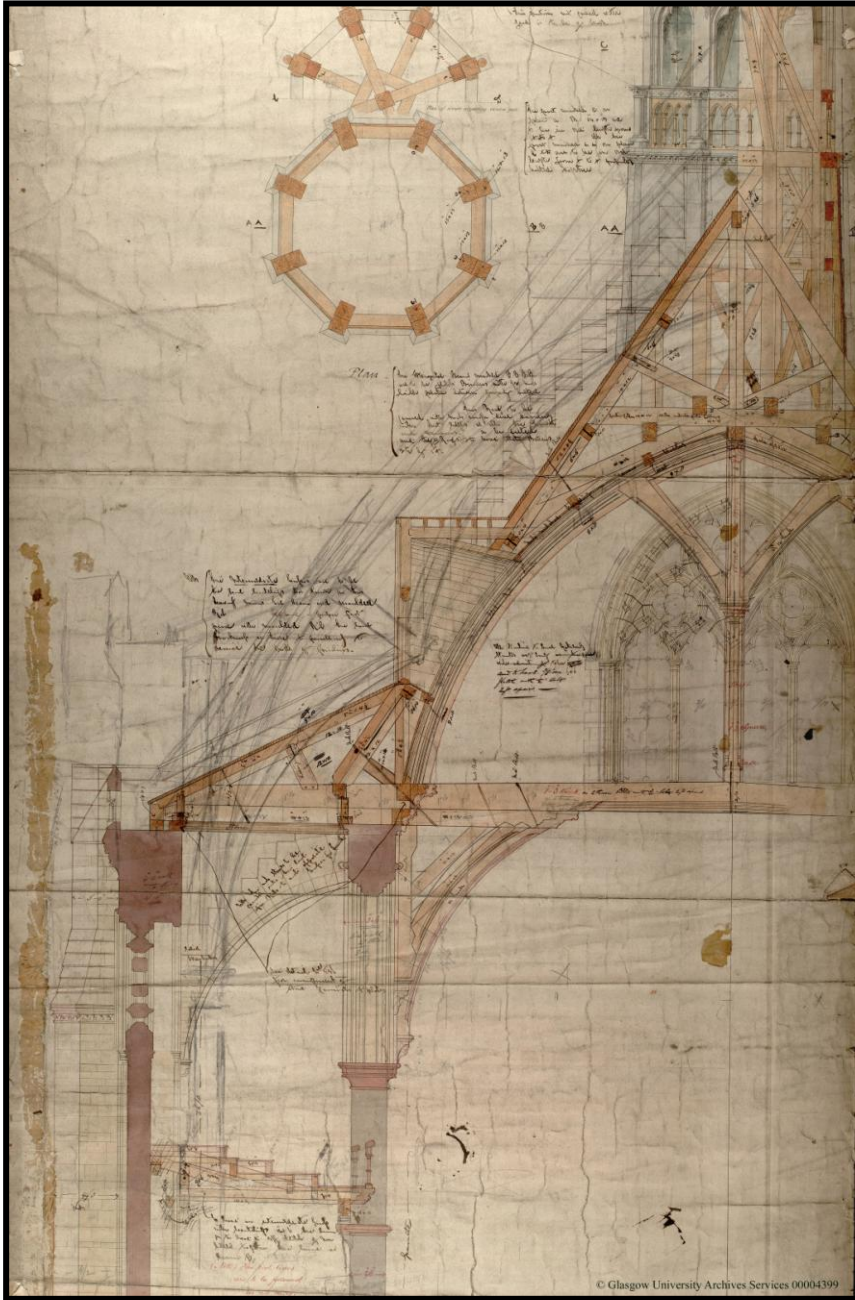


SCA

SCOTTISH COUNCIL ON ARCHIVES

Scottish Council on Archives

Annual Report 2009-10



© Glasgow University Archive Services

Contents

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR.....	4
INTRODUCTION	5
A Quality Framework for Archives and Records Services	8
How Good Is Our Culture and Sport?	9
ADVOCACY.....	10
Archives Matter	10
The Scottish Council on Archives Website	10
Support Development of Family History Centres	10
PARTICIPATION	11
Scottish Catalogues Online	11
Archives Awareness Campaign	11
DEVELOPMENT.....	13
Preservation Surveys	13
Generic Retention Schedules	13
National Sound Archive	14
Archives Pace Setters	15
SUPPORTING THE SCOTTISH ARCHIVES & RECORDS SECTOR.....	16
Business Archives Council of Scotland Strategy.....	16
Mapping University Archives	16
Digital Preservation Road Show	16
Professional Development Day	16
Highland Archives and Registration Centre	17
Archives and the Curriculum for Excellence	17
APPENDIX – THE SCOTTISH COUNCIL ON ARCHIVES.....	18



© University of Dundee

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

It gives me pleasure to welcome the Annual Report for 2009/2010 which has been a milestone year in our short history.

The Scottish Council on Archives began in 2002 to answer a need for an independent strategic organisation which would support, develop and provide advocacy for archives and record services. We can look back with some pride on a number of achievements during that earlier period. However, in 2008 the Scottish Government provided us with welcome and much needed financial support and 2009/2010 bears witness about how we have been able to use and capitalise on this investment by beginning to: build capacity; establish processes which will help deliver continuous improvement; and raising awareness of the sector and what it can deliver for the citizen.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to our many achievements over the year, firstly the staff, the Management Committee and Council Members, and the many organisations who have given us administrative and other support.

Our successes are as always a partnership and I look forward to us working together to build on the achievements of 2009/2010 and building a future which will ensure we preserve, manage and promote the nation's records.

Dr Irene E O'Brien



© Glasgow University Archive Services

INTRODUCTION

2009-10 has been a seminal year in the history of the Scottish Council on Archives, for this was the year when, for the first time and with funding from the Scottish Government, the SCA established itself as an organisation with an executive staff and premises – and began to deliver a programme of activities of direct benefit to the archives sector in Scotland.

The first part of the year was devoted to fitting out the offices, getting the organisation up and running, and establishing an ICT infrastructure and a website. Office accommodation has been provided free of charge by the National Archives of Scotland at General Register House in Edinburgh, and the SCA gratefully acknowledges the contribution which the Keeper of the National Archives of Scotland and his staff have made to the work of the SCA during this first year. It is important to recognise, however, that the SCA is an independent organisation, and its governance, administration and operation are completely separate from the National Archives of Scotland.

The SCA would also like to gratefully acknowledge the support of Dundee University, through which its staff are employed. This ensures that all matters relating to employment, superannuation and HR are dealt with through an established institution; though once again, in all other respects, the SCA remains a completely separate organisation.

The summer of 2009 saw a series of groundbreaking reports delivered by consultants on behalf of the SCA. First there was a feasibility study into the possibility of establishing a National Sound Archive for Scotland (see page National Sound Archive14); then a report into placing Scottish archive catalogues down to item level online (see page 11); and finally, the flagship project for the year was the development of a self-assessment quality framework for archives and records services (see page 8). These 3 reports pave the way for a significant development programme in 2010-11.

Elsewhere, the focus of the SCA has been on developing the sector. One of the most significant projects has been the development of generic retention schedules for local authority records, helping ensure consistency and good practice across different local authorities, and focusing on the records covered by the Shaw Report into historic abuse in children's homes in Scotland. Other significant initiatives of benefit to the sector include funding National Preservation Office conservation surveys and an Archives Awareness Campaign project for East, West and Mid Lothian and the City of Edinburgh councils.

In many ways, 2009-10 has been a transitional year for the SCA – establishing itself as a viable organisation, and putting in substantial groundwork for exciting and important projects to come. The challenge for the coming year will be to build on these foundations, and with the possibility of changes to the legislation affecting public archive and record keeping in Scotland under discussion, 2010-11 promises to be a definitive watershed for archives and records services in Scotland.

Gordon Reid
Director, 2009-10.

RESEARCH AND STANDARDS

A Quality Framework for Archives and Records Services

The Scottish Council on Archives' flagship project for 2009-10 was the development of a self-assessment Quality Framework for archives and record services, capable of being used by all archives and records services in local government, universities, health boards, and elsewhere.

Increasingly, service providers in the archives and records management sector are called on by employing organisations and funding bodies to measure the effectiveness and impact of the services they provide, and to demonstrate continual improvement.

There is an absence of authoritative literature and experience in quality indicators in the archives and records management field. This framework has been devised after considerable research in the literature. Taking into account similar initiatives being developed for libraries and museums, and incorporating best practice from around the world (including The National Archives' self-assessment questionnaire for local authority archives services), the SCA Quality Framework for Archives and Records Management Services has been recognised by the sector as a comprehensive self-assessment tool.

The framework outlines key outcomes and performance indicators for archives and records management services. It is based on the clear intent to create a framework supporting integrated archives and records management as best practice. While many archives and records management services exist independently, the Scottish Council on Archives supports the development of more integration between these services.

Similarly, archives and records management services exist in many sizes and models. The framework is intended to apply regardless of size, but tailoring of the application of the framework may be required for small services.

The quality framework can be used to evaluate all or parts of an archives and records management Service by using the whole or framework, or by concentrating on specific Quality Indicators.

The framework is intended for use by:

- Managers and Heads of Archives and Records Management Services
- Staff who will be involved in the self evaluation process
- Quality improvement officers and others who may be assessing the archives and records management services in an organisation

The initial consultation phase came to a close in March 2010. The final document will be available from the SCA website for all archives and records services to make use of.

How Good Is Our Culture and Sport?

The Scottish Government, in conjunction with the Voice of Chief Officers for Cultural and Leisure Services delivered in Scotland by local government (VOCAL) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland (HMIE), has been developing a new unified Quality Improvement Framework, with its strategic element for culture and sport provision in local authorities entitled *How Good Is Our Culture and Sport?* (HGIOCS). A draft for trialling purposes was published in autumn 2009.

The purpose of HGIOCS is to assist local authorities and other service providers to evaluate the quality, effectiveness, efficiency and inclusiveness of their culture and sport provision. HGIOCS is compatible with the Public Service Improvement Framework and "How Good is Our Local Authority / Council", and allows local authorities to evaluate their culture and sport provision in context of those frameworks.

Trials of the framework will start in 2010. Local authority chief executive officers are being encouraged, in preparing for self-evaluation, to consider how it can support the development of their services and delivery of key outcomes. Once the results of the trials and feedback have been considered, it is planned that a final version of HGIOCS will be launched later in 2010.

Each of the strategic organisations within the cultural sector (including those with responsibility for libraries, museums, archives and records, the arts, the built environment and sport) have been invited to develop a framework specific to their services which can sit within the broad HGIOCS structure. The intention is that services can evaluate themselves on their own terms and, by so doing, can demonstrate the contribution they make to cultural services in their local authority through HGIOCS. (These sector-specific frameworks are known as "Taking a Closer Look At...", or TACLA).

The Scottish Council on Archives has taken the lead in liaising with the Scottish Government Culture Division, the National Archives of Scotland and partner agencies in developing a TACLA for archives and records.

ADVOCACY

Scottish Archives Matter

Advocacy is at the heart of the work of the Scottish Council on Archives. To that end we are publishing a brochure highlighting the contribution of the archives sector to the cultural life of the nation, called *Scottish Archives Matter*. It is aimed at funders of archive services as well as the public and is designed to raise awareness of archives and records. It will show the many ways that archives and records can impact on the lives of the nation, its communities and its citizens.

The Scottish Council on Archives Website

In order to reach the widest possible audience, both across the sector and the general public, the Scottish Council on Archives has invested in a website. The website has provision for news, publications, members' area, as well as a members' forum for debate. Key documents such as the quality framework and the retention schedules for local authority records managers have been published on the website for the benefit of the sector.

:

Support Development of Family History Centres

The Registrar General for Scotland, the Keeper of the Records of Scotland, and the Lord-Lyon announced a national project to encourage local authority Archivists and Registrars to work together to deliver family history services. A large number of local authorities have indicated their interest in the project. During this year, the emphasis has been to devise the national framework and to devise a mechanism to deliver the ScotlandsPeoplesNetwork across Scotland. Over the coming year, we will be working to support joint-working, enabling family historians to access locally both the vital records delivered via the network, alongside original archives.

PARTICIPATION

Scottish Catalogues Online

Building on the existing success of the Scottish Archives Network (SCAN), which gives online access to collection-level descriptions of archive collections held across Scotland, the Scottish Council on Archives is developing a project to place item-level descriptions of archives online. The full educational, cultural and social benefits of archives are not being utilised, due to a lack of knowledge of what archives contain. This project will provide a means by which all archive offices in Scotland will have detailed searchable information about their holdings online, and will be of major benefit to all potential users of archives in Scotland.

A feasibility study was commissioned in 2009 to consider the functionality of such a project, the indicative cost, and potential suppliers of the technical solution. Its purpose was to investigate the current provision of archive catalogues in Scotland, and scope the potential size of Scottish archives online. It included a review of the current Scottish Archives Network (SCAN) website and infrastructure and recommendations on its future. The focus was on an online catalogue. As part of this the archives landscape has been examined, a survey of archives in Scotland carried out, and focus groups of archivists and end users held.

Activities undertaken in 2009-10:

- The current position of online archive catalogues in Scotland was investigated as well as the scope the potential size of Scottish Archives Online;
- The current position was surveyed and possible options for developing SCAN infrastructure, software and systems were explored;
- Two stakeholder consultations (practitioners and users) were held;
- A costed strategy with funding options was developed for a creating Scottish Archives Online.

This prepares the ground for the Scottish Council on Archives to produce a detailed costed project brief and put the funding in place to take this forward in 2010-11.

Archives Awareness Campaign

As its contribution to the national Archives Awareness Campaign of 2009-10, the Scottish Council on Archives has funded a 4-month project to raise awareness of the archives of Edinburgh City Council and East, Mid and West Lothian Councils.

Four key objectives have been identified in line with the Archives Awareness Campaign aims of raising the profile of the archives domain amongst the general public, potential partners, politicians, decision makers and funding bodies; and encouraging new users and a wider user base. The key objectives of the project are:

- Into the unknown – developing new audiences

- Safeguarding our past - proactively collecting archives
- Care at home – helping to preserve archives held privately
- Two way conversations - continuous engagement with audiences

While not specifically concentrating on this year's Archives Awareness Campaign theme of 'Take Flight', the areas identified are considered to offer greater flexibility in terms of service priorities, delivery, timescales and, crucially, creating maximum impact through achievable and lasting benefits.

As part of the project, an audience development plan will be developed to provide a coherent strategy for implementing the listed areas and deliverables detailed below, including exhibition venues, places to distribute literature, identifying potential depositors etc. Importantly, the plan will help to ensure that there is an ongoing strategy and plan of action beyond the life of the project. In this context, it will serve as a platform for future collaborative work in identifying, implementing and evaluating engagement with diverse audiences, including future depositors.

DEVELOPMENT

Preservation Surveys

The Scottish Council on Archives has provided funding for 15 archives services in Scotland to undertake Preservation Assessment Surveys with support from the British Library Preservation Advisory Centre and the National Archives of Scotland Conservation Branch.

The Preservation Assessment Survey is a tool which provides an overview of preservation needs and priorities. It looks at the preservation measures in place (for example, handling procedures, storage conditions, physical protection, environment, security, and emergency planning) alongside demand, usability, and significance. It also assesses damage to items because this influences how items can be used as well as giving an indication of any remedial conservation required¹.

A sample set of 400 items is taken from a service's collections and assessed by a member of staff from the archive service with support from staff from the National Archives of Scotland Conservation Branch. The findings are sent to the Preservation Advisory Centre and used to generate a report providing an overview of the archive service's preservation needs and priorities, a preservation priority rating for each item, an assessment of the stability of the collection, the proportion of damaged items and recommendations to improve the long-term usability of collections.

6 surveys of Scottish archive services were completed in 2009-10.

Generic Retention Schedules

There are no generic retention schedules readily available in Scotland to help local authority records managers determine how long series of records should be kept. As a result there is a lack of consistency across local authorities and a considerable amount of duplicated effort as individual records managers constantly have to research legislation and guidelines for themselves.

In addition, a ground-breaking report has been produced, *Historical Abuse Systemic Review* by Tom Shaw (2007), which carried out a two year investigation into the background of abuse suffered by children in residential schools and children's homes in Scotland between 1950 and 1995. Chapter 5 focuses on the records of residential schools and children's homes in Scotland, and states that "The lessons of this review point to an urgent need to take action to preserve historical records, ensure that residents can get access to records and information about their location".

¹ Text quoted from the British Library Preservation Advisory Centre website.

The aim of this project is to develop generic retention schedules for Scottish local authority record series, thereby aiding the efficiency and effectiveness of local authority records managers, as well as contributing to the delivery of the Shaw Report's recommendations.

This project consists of three pieces of work:

- Reviewing existing legislation affecting records retention in Scotland, and producing a summary which can be made available via the SCA website;
- Establishing generic retention schedules for classes of records in Scotland, which can be made available via the SCA website, linked to the relevant legislation and to the Local Government Classification Scheme as appropriate;
- Advising the SCA and making recommendations on future work relating to generic retention schedules for Scottish records.

The final generic retention schedules will be based around the functionality of local authorities, and not be tied to a traditional “department>service> record series” approach, so as to have the greatest possible application across different local authorities and different structures.

National Sound Archive

In 2009 the Scottish Council on Archives commissioned a feasibility study into establishing a National Sound Archive for Scotland.

After extensive consultation with the sector, the consultant's report recommended that a national sound archive for Scotland should be established, based within one of the existing nationally funded and governed cultural heritage organisations. The report also recognised that there is a significant degree of shared territory between sound recordings and film and video archives. A consensus has therefore developed that the development of a sound and screen archive for Scotland would be of significant benefit to the Scottish public, would provide a mechanism for several existing organisations to share a variety of central services and thereby achieve significant economies of scale. This would provide Scotland with a cultural heritage organisation similar in scope and remit to those enjoyed by Wales and the United Kingdom.

One of the key findings of the report was that any new organisation that is developed should work to complement that of the existing organisations in the sector. Much good work is already done by local archive services, universities and community and voluntary groups. The new national organisation should therefore clearly identify the existing gaps in provision and focus upon addressing these. This can only be done through close and ongoing consultation with the sector.

The report also found that National Library of Scotland is the organisation that is best placed to take this proposal forward. The Library has recently taken over the management of the Scottish Screen Archive and is continuing to develop this organisation.

The implementation of new provision for sound archives in association with the development of the Screen Archive therefore represents a unique opportunity to put in place a

comprehensive solution for the audio-visual sector in Scotland in a highly cost efficient manner. The plans would be developed at a moment in history when public demand, managerial efficiency and the rapid development of digital technologies combine to make a powerful case for support. By providing this support the Scottish Government would enable the development of a new high profile cultural heritage organisation that supports the celebration of Scottish identity at a crucial period in the renaissance of the nation.

The National Library of Scotland is currently looking to secure funding for a detailed project plan to be developed.

Archives Pace Setters

This is a scheme devised by the National Council on Archives to celebrate innovation within archives services across the UK. The Scottish Council on Archives forms part of the project board to oversee the development of the project alongside the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, The National Archives, the Scottish Council on Archives, the Society of Archivists and the Welsh Assembly Government. Within the scheme, which is to run from October 2009 to April 2013, a range of archive services is being sought, both big and small, and from all parts of the archive sector, to showcase how they are developing new working practice within their organisations through project working. Successful applicants will have use of the prestigious Archive Pace Setter brand.

It is expected that Archive Pace Setter projects will have a range of aims and proposed outcomes reflecting the multiplicity of opportunities within archives to improve and develop service delivery, both in terms of access and collections management and care. What will define these projects as Archive Pace Setters will be:

- They will all demonstrate innovative practice within their own organisation
- They will all demonstrate how project work can support the delivery of strategic developments within their organisation
- They will all have clear project plans in place in advance of project delivery
- They will all have clear evaluation plans that include opportunities for staff within the organisation to reflect on their working practice, as well as monitor the success of the project in meeting its aims

At a national level the projects involved in the scheme will be used to promote good practice in archives as part of wider workforce development and advocacy strategies. Archive Pace Setters will be a key mechanism for demonstrating the sector's own capacity to engage directly with the Government Policy on Archives for England and Wales and to illustrate the sector's tenacity and commitment to continue improving services through financially difficult times.

The Scottish Council on Archives has heavily promoted the scheme to archives services in Scotland, and hosted a seminar at which Louise Ray of the National Council on Archives explained the scheme to Scottish archivists.

SUPPORTING THE SCOTTISH ARCHIVES & RECORDS SECTOR

The Scottish Council on Archives has worked throughout the year to support the sector directly, as the section on development shows, and has also supported the archives sector's professional bodies in their efforts to raise awareness of professional issues, standards and continuing professional development.

As well as attending events and contributing to committees and steering groups, here are some other examples of the Scottish Council on Archives supporting the sector in Scotland.

Business Archives Council of Scotland Strategy

July 2009 saw the launch of a National Strategy for Business Archives for England and Wales. This strategy did not include Scotland. The Scottish Council on Archives is therefore supporting the Business Archives Council of Scotland to develop a Scottish strategy. As a sister document to the English & Welsh strategy, its main themes are likely to be the same, yet the strategic actions to be taken will be different, reflecting the issues of devolution and previous work undertaken by the BACS and Scottish records community.

In September 2009 the Scottish Council on Archives hosted two focus group meetings by the Business Archives Council for Scotland at the National Archives of Scotland, one for archivists and records managers and the other for heritage professionals and librarians.

Mapping University Archives

The Scottish Council on Archives has been helping the Scottish Universities Special Collections & Archives Group (SUSCAG) conduct a survey of university archives in Scotland. Based on a similar survey of collections in England and Wales carried out by The National Archives, SUSCAG has devised a questionnaire to explore storage conditions, extent of holdings, collecting policies, etc. The SCA has provided administrative support to the project and has collated responses and entered the data on a spreadsheet.

Digital Preservation Road Show

The Director of the Scottish Council on Archives gave a presentation on the subject of funding and strategic issues at the Digital Preservation Road show in October, an event sponsored by the Society of Archivists, the National Archives of Scotland and the Digital Preservation Coalition. The purpose of the road show was to raise awareness of digital preservation tools and techniques.

Professional Development Day

In November, the Director of the Scottish Council on Archives sat on the panel discussion of the joint Records Management Society/Society of Archivists event "Reach for the Sky: developing ourselves", a training day considering continuing professional development.

Highland Archives and Registration Centre

The Director of the Scottish Council on Archives attended the official opening of the new Highland Archives and Registration Centre by HRH the Earl of Wessex in November, and led the group representing the archive community and presented members of the group to His Royal Highness.

Archives and the Curriculum for Excellence

The Scottish Council on Archives sponsored the Society of Archivists' Archives for Education and Learning Group's training day in March 2010. The event was designed to inform archive professionals about the new Curriculum for Excellence, see examples of best practice, and learn how to develop their own resources.

APPENDIX – THE SCOTTISH COUNCIL ON ARCHIVES

The Scottish Council on Archives is the lead body for the advocacy and development of archive services in Scotland. We are committed to developing a national strategy to take the archival community in Scotland forward.

We are funded by the Scottish Government to represent and advise our members, and to provide a voice of consensus on all matters affecting the Scottish archives community. The Council comprises representation from local authorities, universities, health boards, national institutions, user groups and many others, and acts both as a strategic agency and a facilitator of activity on the ground.

We support historic archives, modern records management and electronic document management services, community archives, and activities such as conservation and preservation, as well as digitisation and learning. We also aim to promote archive services to the wider public by publicising initiatives such as the annual Archives Awareness Campaign.

Our Strategic Objectives are to:

- act as a focus for institutions and organisations concerned with the administration of archives in Scotland and to provide a forum for the exchange of views.
- provide a voice of consensus on archive matters and to bring to the attention of the public, government bodies and relevant institutions and organisations, issues of current concern in the field of archives.
- promote awareness of the unique contribution made by archives in preserving Scotland's cultural heritage and delivering democratic accountability.
- assess and identify the current and future funding requirements of the archive sector in Scotland.
- promote and support Scotland-wide initiatives within the archival community, and to facilitate dialogue and greater co-operation between repositories.
- promote and support collaborative working with professional colleagues in the museums and libraries sectors in Scotland.

Contact

Email us at info@scoarch.org.uk, or call 0131 535 1362.

Scottish Council on Archives,
Room 21, National Archives of Scotland, H M General Register House,
2 Princes Street, Edinburgh, EH1 3YY