

MODERN RECORDS CENTRE INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Website developments

We have made further progress in developing our website as a showcase for our archival holdings. The latest addition to the Image Gallery is an exhibition about the campaign to overturn the travel ban on Paul Robeson, the American actor, singer and human rights activist. The corresponding exhibition at the Centre also commemorates the 50th anniversary of Robeson's performance as Othello at Stratford and includes items loaned by the Royal Shakespeare Company and the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

We have now provided on-line resources for seven undergraduate course modules in history, politics and sociology. They have been very well received by module convenors and have led to some excellent work by students. We have also introduced a Topical Document feature, which shows how our archive holdings contain many past echoes of today's issues and events. So far these documents have related to a critique of the banking system, the US presidential elections and recession in the car and other industries.

Cataloguing and access

Over 1100 collections now have summary descriptions in our catalogue database, of which 878 also have a full catalogue. The overall total of publicly available record descriptions now exceeds 157,000. Notable recent additions to the database have included:

- records of iron and steel employers' organisations, negotiating bodies and businesses, 1860s to the 1980s (MSS.365), including the British Iron and Steel Federation;
- records of brewers' organisations, including the Country Brewers' Society, whose minutes start in 1822, and the National Trade Defence Association (MSS.420);
- papers of Bob Purdie (MSS.149) and Jack Askins (MSS.189), including documents relating to the anti-Vietnam War movement;
- papers of Hugo Dewar (MSS.206), including news sheets and pamphlets on the Spanish Civil War.

Separately funded cataloguing projects:

- The British Association of Social Workers archive (MSS.378/BASW) cataloguing project is well underway. Over 1,000 files have already been catalogued, representing the bulk of the Association's committee, administrative and subject files. Yet to be catalogued are the case files (although many of these will probably have to be closed for data protection reasons) and branch/region correspondence. When completed, the archive will provide a comprehensive record of British social work practice from BASW's foundation in 1970 until the early 1990s, as well as a wealth of information on British social policy and affairs, and will complement the archives of the Association's predecessors, which are already catalogued.
- The cataloguing of the Transport and General Workers' Union archive (MSS.126) was completed last year and the catalogue was launched at a successful event attended by representatives of the T&G Section of Unite. The catalogue is fully available online and the archive is already being well-used. As well as the extensive archives of the T&G itself, the collection also contains items relating to over eighty of the unions which formed the T&G or joined it later, the papers of three general secretaries (Ernest Bevin, Jack Jones and Bill Morris), and a large collection of reports and publications of many other bodies collected by the union over its eighty-year existence.

Notable recent accessions

Records of:

- the UK Association of Professional Engineers (UKAPE) (Amicus section of Unite) (acc. 643);
- the Transport and General Workers' Union, including private GEC agendas and photographs (acc. 645);
- the Biscuit, Cake, Chocolate and Confectionery Alliance (acc. 646);
- the International Transport Workers' Federation (acc. 648);
- Baroness (Brenda) Dean (relating to the Wapping printing dispute) (acc. 653);
- the Auto Cycle Union, 1903-1999 (acc. 660);
- David Michael Beaton, industrial relations officer and manager, 1968-1973 (acc. 662).

Volunteer projects

Julie Moores began voluntary work with us in September 2008 to gain workplace experience while studying for a qualification in archive administration by distance learning. During this period she catalogued the records of the Assistant Masters' and Mistresses' Association and the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers.

She has since become a temporary member of staff and has begun work on a catalogue of material obtained from the Northern Broadsides theatre company by Warwick University's CAPITAL (Creativity and Performance in Teaching and Learning) Centre. This is part of a project which they have undertaken to produce resources to enhance learning.

Continuing the work begun by Pat Gilbert, Paul Brown has begun indexing the first membership register of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, whose earliest entries are dated 1872. This is a massive task because the register contains 15,000 entries, but in time the index will prove useful in answering enquiries about individual railwaymen.

Outreach activities

The current academic year has seen an expansion of our activity in this field. So far we have hosted visits and provided presentations for students and tutors on:

- British culture and the Great War;
- archival sources for postgraduate students on the Historical Research, Theory, Skill and Method course (including a talk from a representative of the National Archives);
- the writing of biographies and autobiographies (English department);
- the making of the modern world;
- qualitative methods in politics;
- visual sociology (in conjunction with the BP Archive);
- sociology field studies;
- the history of east Africa.

The total attendance figure for these was 185.

University Archives

Acquisitions: At present work is being carried out on a deposit of the papers of the writer, A.L Kennedy. These are currently being sorted prior to being catalogued. They are to be kept with other collections which have a literary theme.

We are also expecting a small deposit of material relating to Miss Joan Browne, who was the founding principal of the Coventry College of Education and whose death was announced by the university on January 21st. A scrapbook detailing her career in teaching, a framed photograph of her taken on her graduation and items relating to the Award of Merit she received from Coventry have been offered by Juliet Amery.

Research: current research being carried out using the archives includes a project by the History Department focusing on the issue of student health since the university's inception and recently there has been considerable interest in the early architecture on campus.

Cataloguing: progress is being made listing articles of interest in all student newspapers produced on campus from the 1960s until the present. Work has also been done on the archive's large collection of transparencies in order to facilitate access to images.

For further information about the Centre, its holdings and publications, contact the Modern Records Centre, University Library, University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL; Telephone +44 (0)24 7652 4219; Fax. +44 (0)24 7652 4211; email: archives@warwick.ac.uk
URL <<http://modernrecords.warwick.ac.uk>>