

United Kingdom: Part III Archives and Archival Science

Helen Forde

Department of Information Studies, University College London, London, U.K.

Abstract

This entry traces the development of record keeping and archives services in the United Kingdom, highlighting the differences between the constituent home countries, local authority responsibilities, and the diversity of business, religious and community archives. It looks at the development of the archive profession and training, and suggests that information management may become the way the profession develops in an electronic age. The role of the main professional organizations and societies relating to archives and records management is outlined, with an emphasis on the crucial advocacy role they play in ensuring that the importance of the records, in whatever format, is not overlooked.

INTRODUCTION

Archives and records in the United Kingdom are an unrivaled source of historical information with some of the main series of national archives surviving in an unbroken tradition from the twelfth century. As the United Kingdom embraces four different home countries, the arrangements for the records and archives vary in each. This is further complicated by the different legislative systems in Scotland and by the devolution of Scotland and Wales in the recent past. Other archives of businesses, religions, local authorities, and communities also differ in their arrangements for records management and permanent preservation with globalization resulting in additional complexities.

LEGISLATION AND ACCOMMODATION FOR ARCHIVES AND RECORDS

England and Wales

The Public Record Office (PRO) Act 1838 was the first legislation for archival material in England and Wales, bringing together the records of the ancient departments of state, in particular, the Exchequer, Chancery and Courts of Law in a government department, the PRO headed by the Master of the Rolls. It did not cover papers held in government departments, though these were often transferred once the PRO, as a repository in Chancery Lane in central London, became a place of safekeeping. An Order in Council of 1852 regularized the existing situation by extending the remit of the Master of the Rolls, but the PRO staff had no control over selection in departments nor was there any provision for the

destruction of unwanted material. Access issues were not addressed, although search rooms were provided in the late nineteenth century additions to the PRO building in Chancery Lane.

In 1869, the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts was created to locate and provide access to records held in private collections. It published reports on them, providing details on the type of information contained in the manuscripts and where they were located. It continued this work on the premises of, and in conjunction with the staff at the PRO but in 1959 it received a further royal warrant and moved to new accommodation in Quality Court, Chancery Lane. By this time, it was in charge of the National Register of Archives (created in 1945), a project that was deliberately focused on nongovernmental archives and which was the forerunner of the more ambitious and all-embracing electronic databases that are now current.

Sir Hilary Jenkinson (1882–1961) was one of the dominant figures in the early twentieth century as a shaper of British archival theory. This was to become the basis of practice both at home and in many of the then colonies. He worked at the PRO, eventually becoming Deputy Keeper (effective head) in 1947, and it was here that he developed the concepts which were outlined in his book, *A Manual of Archive Administration* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922). He used his experiences to direct and guide the emerging profession to ensure that modern records, as well as those of greater age, were catered for adequately and many of his innovations, such as The National Register of Archives, survived well after his death.

After the Second World War, concern over the uncoordinated accumulation of records led to the publication of a report by the Grigg Committee (Command Paper 9163) in 1954 recommending

- Clear reviewing procedures for selection by the department.
- The appointment of departmental record officers.
- An advisory role for the PRO and the appointment of a records administration officer and staff to oversee the new procedures.
- The transfer of responsibility for the PRO from the Master of the Rolls to a minister.
- Access provision to material held by the PRO for material over 50 years old unless there were special considerations.
- The inclusion of cinematograph film, photographs, and sound recordings as public records where appropriate.

These provisions were incorporated into the Public Records Act 1958, which was followed by a further Act in 1968 to reduce the closure period to 30 years. Concern that records of the Second World War should be released en bloc, apart from those of service personnel, led to their release in 1972, following the precedent of the release of those of the First World War.

By 1976, pressure on the space required to store the increasing volume of national archives resulted in the opening of a new facility at Kew, in south west London, to which the nineteenth and twentieth century holdings were transferred. The latter was extended in 1996 to house the entire archive and the central London repository was closed apart from a Family Record Centre for genealogists, run jointly with the Office of National Statistics. This closed in 2008 due, in part, to the increasing number of archival resources available online.

Access provisions were changed by the Freedom of Information Act, which came into force in 2005 guaranteeing a general right of access to information held by public authorities subject to certain provisions about public interest. A Code of Practice was issued from the Lord Chancellor's Office to guide departments in carrying out the Act. Further consultation is currently (2008) being conducted into the feasibility of a reduction of the 30 year rule. An Access to environmental information is regulated by the EU Directive 2003/2004 EC, replacing the 1992 Environmental Information Regulations. This ensures the right of access to environmental information held by public bodies.

Data Protection legislation, initially (1984) referring only to data held on individuals electronically, was revised by the Data Protection Act passed in 1998 to cover the protection of data on individuals in all formats, while permitting the legitimate collection of such data by organizations that require access for research purposes.

The partnership established in 2003 between the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts (HMC) and the then PRO vested the responsibilities of the Commissioners in the Keeper of Public Records, who was thereafter known as the Chief Executive of The National

Archives (TNA). This enabled TNA to advise about the location and the condition of private papers and manuscripts, in addition to managing public records. The TNA now comprises the former PRO, the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, the Office of Public Sector Information, and Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

Despite the remit of the PRO as the government archive, some private collections have been deposited with the public records since, at the time of transfer, the record office was regarded as the most appropriate location. These include some Church of England material, notably the probate records for the Archdiocese of Canterbury. These records are among the most regularly consulted since they cover the testamentary records of many famous, and not so famous, people up to 1858. Together with other records of interest to genealogists these are now online.

Records designated as public records on account of their enduring value are mainly kept at TNA but a significant minority are kept in over 200 other repositories, many of them are local record offices. These are known as Places of Deposit, and the public archives held in each are subject to the same regulation as those held centrally. The National Advisory Service (the merger of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts and the Archive Inspection Unit of the former PRO) has published *The National Archives Standard for Record Repositories* setting out best practice for archive provision. It is supported by a Framework of Standards, covering a wider range of best practice to cater for the equally wide range of repositories. The governing bodies of those holding public records are asked to subscribe to the Standard, and those attaining the essential requirements are approved by TNA.

Scotland

Responsibility for the archives in Scotland is vested in the Keeper of Records and legislation consequently relates to this post. The Public Records (Scotland) Act 1937 was largely concerned with the transfer to the Keeper of the records of the central and local courts of law as well as government departments, agencies, nondepartmental public bodies, statutory bodies corporate, and local authorities. In 1937, the Keeper also had the responsibility for the creation and maintenance of the Register of Saisines (Seisins [The instrument [in Scotland] by which the possession of feudal property is proved. (*Oxford English Dictionary*)]), but that function was split by the Public Registers and Records (Scotland) Act 1948 as a recognition of the difference between the two activities. The U.K. wide Public Records Act 1958 (see above) enabled the transfer of records of public bodies operating partly or wholly in Scotland to the National Archives of Scotland (NAS), and provisions similar to those outlined in the 1958 Act for selection, transfer,

and preservation of the records were adopted by the Scottish Office in 1962 for public bodies in Scotland; at the same time similar access provisions were adopted together with the reduction to a 30 year limit in 1967.

The Keeper has also been able to take in private records, following an amendment to the Act in 1985, in which procedures for disposal were set out and the Scottish Advisory Council was established. Data Protection provisions for Scotland are in line with those for England and Wales; similarly, the Freedom of Information Act (Scotland) 2002 covers public bodies in Scotland. Currently (2008), a review of legislation on government records in Scotland is being carried out to ensure that they are appropriate and accessible; this follows the recommendation of the Shaw report (2007) (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/11/20104729/>). The NAS is situated on three sites in Edinburgh, two of which are open to the public, General Register House and West Register House. In addition, Thomas Thomson House, in the west of Edinburgh is its main repository and also houses the conservation department and offices.

Northern Ireland

The Public Records Act (Northern Ireland) 1923 established the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) shortly after the destruction of many of the Irish public records in the fire in the Four Courts, Dublin in 1922. The Act stipulated that it was legal for PRONI to bring in records, which were not expressly created by government as a deliberate attempt to ensure that as many documents as possible were retained to compensate for the very serious loss in Dublin. Private records, in particular, were targeted for collection, safekeeping, and public access. After the Second World War, the pressure on storage space increased and the Northern Ireland government followed the recommendations of the 1954 Grigg report (see above) to introduce regular reviews of material in government departments and disposal schedules. In 1976, in accordance with the practice elsewhere in the United Kingdom, the 30 year rule was introduced.

The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland has moved to different parts of the government of Northern Ireland being part of the Department of Finance from 1924 to 1984; part of the Department of the Environment until it changed to become an executive agency in 1995; and finally part of the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) in 1999. Following the review of Public Administration in 2006, it ceased to be an agency and its status is now as a division of DCAL. The frequent changes have been due, in part, to the recent troubled history of devolved government in Northern Ireland. In response to demand from government departments, PRONI drew up the Northern Ireland Record Management Standard (NIRMS) in 2002.

Wales

Welsh public records are governed by the same provisions as those in England; they were moved to the PRO in the mid-nineteenth century but requests for a specific record office for Wales were being made in a bill introduced to Parliament as early as 1913. No further progress was made until the Public Records Act 1958 nominated repositories in Wales as suitable Places of Deposit for public records (see above) and also authorized the return of the bulk of the Welsh records to the National Library of Wales.

The Government of Wales Act 1997 made provision for the concept of Welsh Public Records, which, in the following Government of Wales Act 2006, included a list of bodies whose records were to be accorded that status. The U.K. Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967 remain in force until provisions are established.

Local Records in England and Wales

No specific legislation relates to local administrative records or the provision of county or borough archive services. The Local Government (Records) Act 1962 conferred discretionary powers on local authorities (now including all county councils, London boroughs, metropolitan districts, and unitary councils) to provide a limited archive service relating to the acquisition of and access to archival material, not restricted to official material. Stewardship and wider advisory powers were not included. The Local Government Act 1972 (s224) required local authorities to make proper arrangements for archives belonging to, or in the custody of, officers of the council; this was followed in 1999 by guidance on "proper arrangements," issued by the department then responsible, the Department of the Environment, Transport, and the Regions. It refers to the management of records, in whatever format and the historical records that should be kept by an established archive.

Manorial records, held in local record offices are nominally under the custodianship of the Master of the Rolls and come under special protection due to the enduring legal position of many of the properties mentioned in the records. All pre-1925 manorial documents, except deeds and other evidence of title, are protected under the regulations published in the 1924 amendment to the Law of Property Act 1922, (s122A). Original responsibility for maintaining the register of manorial property was undertaken by the PRO on behalf of the Master of the Rolls, then by the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts following the Public Records Act 1958, and subsequently by TNA; Historical Manuscripts Commission when the two combined in 2003. The rules prevent the removal of manorial documents from England and Wales without the permission of the Master of the Rolls, require ownership

details, or changes, to be registered, require custodians to provide safe and appropriate storage conditions and permit the removal of any documents to a more appropriate place of deposit if necessary.

Responsibility for documents relating to tithes paid to the Church of England is also held by the Master of the Rolls and also exercised by TNA: Historical Manuscripts Commission. The original tithe apportionment maps and schedules, created as a result of the Tithe Apportionment Act 1838 (6&7 Will.IV, c.7) are held at TNA, and the two copies are held locally, often by now in the appropriate county record office. Rules have been issued relating to the care and custody of the records.

The Parochial Records and Registers Measure, passed by the General Synod of the Church of England in 1978, was a recognition of the public interest in these records and the need to ensure their security and preservation as well as providing access. Diocesan record offices had been established by the Parochial Records and Registers Measure 1929 but in practice, the spread of local record offices has resulted in many being designated as diocesan repositories. The principal duties imposed by the measure include the deposit of all noncurrent records and registers over 100 years old in the appointed diocesan office with reasonable access during working hours and regular inspection of the conditions provided for those which are retained.

The Local Government (Wales) Act 1994 required all new unitary authorities to provide plans to the Secretary of State for proposed archive delivery services. These were to include all records belonging to the local authority or of which they had custody.

ARCHIVE SERVICES

The functions of TNA in all three home countries are broadly similar; the main principles remain the provision of selection, preservation, and access services, together with advisory services especially on electronic materials.

In England and Wales, TNA offers services to the records management community and all custodians of records with the responsibility for caring for records, including private owners. The National Advisory Services offer advice and guidance on the creation, management, care, and use of records and archives by

- Setting standards and outlining best practice.
- Advising archive professionals using *The National Archives' Standard for Record Repositories*.
- Advising private owners and organizations on archive issues.
- Developing guidance and policies on electronic records management for government.
- Providing advice and guidance for statutory Places of Deposit to ensure the maintenance of high standards of care and access to public records.

- Promoting good records management and the cultural and historical importance of archives for evidence of good governance; this includes business archives and religious archives.

In England, services to users include the provision of resources on-site at the record office in Kew, in south west London. The service varies between the traditional advice to readers delivered in person by knowledgeable staff, to the recent *Your Archives* wiki, a Web site designed to allow users to contribute their knowledge of archival sources held by TNA and other U.K. archives. Development of the TNA web site has also enabled TNA to put its own catalog online for users to consult prior to a visit and to participate with others in the English strand of the beginnings of a virtual national archives catalog for the United Kingdom, *Access to Archives* (A2A). Gradually this objective is being achieved through the Global Search function on the TNA Web site where it is now (2008) possible to access information on collections held both at TNA and elsewhere.

Research services also include corporate research, TNA having been given Independent Research Organization status in 2005. This is frequently undertaken in partnership with university departments whose staff have specialized knowledge of TNA collections but also in the form of applied research in conservation science, information, records and archives management, digital preservation, and the provision of public sector information. It is intended to support decision making in TNA and by extension to the wider archive and library community.

Access services have changed considerably in the recent past, leading to a much wider audience through electronic means. Investment in developing these services has been high, particularly in the digitization of archival material. Access to the basic information remains free but charges are levied for copies of material, which has been downloaded, ensuring continuing income for further investment. Information on the records available in this format is on the relevant Web sites and catalogs. Partnerships, with private genealogical services in particular, have resulted in the management of such digital resources to be undertaken out of the public sector.

Access hours at Kew have increased as a result of the wider focus on citizens' rights. Regular surveys are made by the Public Services Quality Group (PSQG) to measure the satisfaction of users with services and offer users the chance to suggest improvements. These have resulted in changes to improving access and to developing a dialogue with the users.

Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland

Like its counterpart in England, NAS offers advice to government departments on all aspects of records management, to public and private owners of historical

material and to the general public on using the records in its care. Similarly, it works in partnership with other organizations to promote Scottish archival interests, and it has been to the fore in developing online services, particularly for genealogists.

In Wales, the National Library manages the Welsh archival material deposited there that includes both public records and private transfers. Services are broadly similar to those offered in England and Scotland. The Welsh Assembly has the responsibility for records management services to Assembly departments.

In Northern Ireland, PRONI has the same responsibilities for the Northern Ireland Civil Service records management and the services to users of the record office as the TNA in the other countries.

Local Archives Services

Local authorities in England and Wales manage their own archive services while those that are designated as Places of Deposit for public records (see above) have to comply with the relevant regulations for their safekeeping and access. Most countries and some metropolitan areas have archive services though some combine them with local history centres (e.g., Surrey) or libraries (e.g., Birmingham). A noticeable trend in the last 20 years has been the reduction in the number of county archivists, the posts being either downgraded or being merged with that of those responsible for History Services or Local Studies.

Changes in local government organization and geographical boundaries have resulted in some amalgamations of historic collections or joint services with several contributing partners. The results of the 2007 self-assessment exercise (Nicholas Kingsley 'Self assessment of local authority archives 2007: the results revealed' *Record Keeping*, Winter 2008, pp. 10–15) (see above) suggests that size matters; larger organizations are better able to provide a wider range of services to a higher quality than small organizations which struggle with limited resources. This suggests that further amalgamation may be the only way in which to maintain high service standards.

Local authority archives keep not only the records of that organization covering a wide range of materials including those relating to the Poor Law, health, and education but also many records donated or deposited by the community. These can include solicitors' and estate agents' papers, transport records, business and industrial records, antiquarian material, voluntary organizations' records including those of charitable bodies, local societies and clubs, literary archives, diocesan material (see below) including parish registers, estate and family archives including manorial records, and many other types of archival material local in nature. Court records from the Quarter and Petty Sessions often survive locally, and many hospitals and national health

organizations deposit their material with local authority record offices.

The emphasis on delivery for archives, both local and public in the early twenty-first century is on the contribution that the services can make to government initiatives such as education, health care, and citizenship as well as the insights into historic information that have been the traditional services offered.

ARCHIVES OF HIGHER EDUCATION ORGANIZATIONS

College and university archives are maintained by their institutions, often in conjunction with manuscript and other collections. They vary from the medieval college foundations of Oxford and Cambridge universities to the modern collections of, for example the University of Warwick where many contemporary political and trade union records are kept. Notable alumni of universities often donate their papers to these institutions in later life; these are kept as appropriate but if the content is more applicable to another organization the authors are often advised on which is the more appropriate repository.

Services to readers vary according to institution but the central point of access to descriptions of archives held in higher education organizations is the online *Archives Hub* (<http://www.archiveshub.ac.uk>); this is progressively adding information at collections level and increasingly to complete catalog descriptions. Another higher education cataloging project is AIM25 (<http://www.aim25.ac.uk/>), an organization which provides electronic access to collection level descriptions of the archives of over 90 higher education institutions and learned societies within the greater London area, the name signifying that they are within the orbit of the London ring road, the M25.

BUSINESS ARCHIVES

Many businesses in the United Kingdom hold their own archives, including those which relate to enterprises in both the United Kingdom and abroad. These range from major international companies such as BP, Diageo or Marks and Spencer, banks including the Bank of England and major mining and excavation companies to smaller local organizations. Local record offices frequently aim to retain material where the original business is no longer trading, though it is often in the way of a rescue operation; recently the records of a paper manufacturer, William Sommerville and Son Ltd., a major nineteenth century employer in Midlothian, Scotland were deposited with the Midlothian Local Studies and Archive Service having been salvaged from a skip and this is not at all unusual.

While business archives are private, and therefore not subject to government regulation apart from the

requirements for retaining certain financial records, many participate in wider activities to promote education or encourage genealogists to use their resources. The services they offer may be curtailed due to commercial needs and confidentiality agreements but where necessary these are managed sensitively. Initiatives among the larger organizations include the digitization of N.M. Rothschild & Sons' records relating to the involvement of the banking firm in nineteenth century Brazil and the development of a museum by another banking firm, HBOS, in Edinburgh with a particular remit to promote financial education among schoolchildren. Local businesses may well be associated with other activities in local study centers, contributing photographic and other material to displays. In some areas, communities have come together to ensure the survival of personal and community archives that record past local employment opportunities and businesses (see below).

Business archives are promoted by the Business Archives Council established in 1934 to encourage the preservation of British business records, and to advise on their administration and management. The Council is acutely aware that the continuing existence and accessibility of business archives is closely linked to the fortunes of their owners, and of the need to strengthen rescue activities and respond to collections at risk. Consequently, it keeps in close touch with record offices and local study centers to advise them of opportunities and to encourage the deposit of materials at risk.

FILM AND AUDIOVISUAL ARCHIVES

The British Film Archive was founded in 1935 as a part of the remit of the British Film Institute "to maintain a national repository of films of permanent value." It is recognized internationally as one of the four founders of the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAPF). It collects U.K. film of all kinds as well as material produced overseas, and currently (2008) holds over 7 million stills, 1 million transparencies, and 20,000 posters. The collecting policy is wide, including feature films, professional and amateur films, documentaries, propaganda films, and television programs. It is also the official repository for video recordings of Parliamentary proceedings and government films selected for permanent preservation by TNA. The services include involvement in film festivals, regular release of material to be seen at local cinemas, and the release of film and television programs on DVD. The preservation section is housed in premises funded by the late John Paul Getty and the staff work on the restoration of degraded materials with a view to enabling screening. Highly flammable nitrate film is housed separately.

Twelve public sector film archives are established in different parts of the U.K. forming the U.K. film archive

forum. The English regional film archives have a remit to collect moving image material of relevance to their region. This includes audiovisual material made either in or by people from each region. Some operate within a record office, such as the Wessex Film Archive at the Hampshire Record Office, others within universities, such as the Media Archive for Central England (MACE) at Leicester University or the East Anglia Film Archive at the University of East Anglia. Wales and Scotland have their own film archives held in both cases in their respective national libraries, with the same regional emphasis. No dedicated archive exists for Northern Ireland but some film material is available in the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum. The services offered vary according to funding arrangements but often include local screenings, talks to interested groups, and retrieval of material for individual and commercial use.

Specialist film archives include the extensive collections held by the Imperial War Museum, which is dedicated to film and video related to twentieth century conflict involving British and Commonwealth forces. The British Broadcasting Company (BBC) holds about 4 million items from radio and television as well as collections of sheet music and press cuttings. Material is made available both to the BBC and to individuals, and much use is made of the Web site to promote film and sound recordings of notable events and anniversaries.

The British Sound Archive is maintained by the British Library, and it holds over a million discs, 185,000 tapes, and many other sound and video recordings from all over the world, covering the entire range of recorded sound from music, drama, and literature, to oral history and wildlife sounds. The archives range from cylinders made in the late nineteenth century to the latest CD, DVD, and minidisk recordings. It includes copies of commercial recordings issued in the United Kingdom, together with selected commercial recordings from overseas, radio broadcasts and many privately made recordings. Increasingly these are being made available online.

Film and video material held in higher education organizations is promoted by the British Universities Film and Video Council (BUFVC) through its library and viewing and editing facilities.

RELIGIOUS ARCHIVES

Religious archives, other than those of the Church of England (see above), are normally kept either by the denomination in question, in a special library or in local record offices. Although each faith has different arrangements for deposit and access most have Web sites from which it is possible to ascertain opening hours. Dr. Williams' Library in Gordon Square, London is a rich source for a wide variety of both manuscript and printed sources for the

history of nonconformity in the United Kingdom. More information is available from the Religious Archives Group of the Society of Archivists and a recent report on the state of religious archives in the United Kingdom (<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives/advice-corporate.html>).

The Roman Catholic Church in England maintains diocesan records, some (e.g., in Birmingham) dating back to the seventeenth century although the Roman Catholic church was not officially recognized in England until 1850. The Scottish Catholic Archives are currently (2008) maintained in Edinburgh; many of the archives date back before 1878 when the Hierarchy was reestablished in Scotland.

The central archives of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) are held in Friends House Library, London though local records, as for other nonconformist groups, are often found in the relevant record office.

The national Baptist archives are held in the Angus Library at Regent's Park College in Oxford and include the records of some local Baptist churches from the seventeenth century, though these are also found in local record offices.

The central archives of the Congregational Union of England and Wales are held in Dr. Williams' Library (see above).

Jewish archives in England are scattered between different synagogues and university deposits, including those of prominent Jews. In Scotland, the Scottish Jewish Archive in Glasgow has been established to collect a wide range of materials to document the history of the Jewish diaspora in Scotland since the eighteenth century.

COMMUNITY ARCHIVES

Community archives have developed during the past 10 years largely as unofficial records of communities where information about earlier activities, including industry, are in the danger of being forgotten. The definition of the term is still being debated but in essence, it is agreed that a community archive should be a collection that includes primary sources, in whatever format, rather than a series of articles. All groups, of whatever origin, are encouraged to contribute to the growing corpus of information held online by CommunityArchives.org.uk as well as collecting their own materials. Typically, they are based on location but can also include literature and arts archives. The movement is supported by the National Council on Archives Community Advisory Group.

RARE MANUSCRIPT LIBRARIES

Many libraries in the United Kingdom hold rare manuscripts including the National Libraries of Scotland and Wales and the British Library in London. The university

libraries have major collections and in many cases, individual colleges, especially at the older universities also hold important materials. Professional bodies frequently own library and archival collections donated by former members.

ARCHIVAL PROFESSION

The archival profession in the United Kingdom grew up in the middle of the twentieth century, successor to a long line of record keepers, librarians, and antiquarians who were charged with the care of archival and historical materials. The development of a separate profession after the Second World War was due, at least in part, to the increasing number of archives deposited in local authority care.

Postgraduate courses were originally established at the School of Library, Archive, and Information Studies at University College London (SLAIS), at Liverpool University, and at the University of Wales at Bangor and Aberystwyth. In-house training was provided by some of the larger institutions such as the then PRO (now TNA) and the Bodleian Library in Oxford. Sixty years later the number of courses has risen to reflect the changes in need and the technological advances that make physical presence at a course less necessary. The archive and records management course at SLAIS continues to offer programs to both home and overseas students, and it has developed a research center, ICARUS. Liverpool University Centre for Archive Studies (LUCAS) also undertakes research as well as offering archive and records management courses at both postgraduate and undergraduate levels both on-site and for distance learners, and Aberystwyth University uses the advantage of collaboration with the History and Welsh History Department for the Information Studies programs. The latter offers distance learning options as does the Centre for Archive and Information Studies (CAIS) at the University of Dundee where the centre also caters for family and local historians. The University of Northumbria offers a distance-learning course in records management.

Information management has increasingly been the focus of many of these courses with the development of electronic communications, not the least at Glasgow University where the Humanities Advanced Technology and Information Institute (HATII) was formed in 1997, bringing together expertise in Information Communication and Technology (ICT) in the heritage sector. It offers an MSc in Information Management and Preservation (Digital) and has an extensive research program.

An important link between the universities and the profession is maintained by the accreditation of courses by the Society of Archivists (see below), which also offers additional training and short courses for professional development.

PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

The Society of Archivists (<http://www.archives.org.uk/>) was founded in 1947 as the first professional organization for archivists, and it has grown to include conservators, records managers, and institutional affiliates. It exists to promote the care and preservation of archives and the better administration of archive repositories, to advance the training of its members, and to encourage relevant research and publications. It has a range of benefits for its members, now (2008) nearly 2000, and plays an important role in relation to professional qualifications (see above). It holds an annual conference, has regional representation, and works with other related bodies in promoting archives. Many special interest groups operate under the umbrella of the Society.

The Records Management Society (<http://www.rms-gb.org.uk/>) launched in 1983, recognized the needs of an ever-increasing number of people working in the fields of records and information management, including those who wish to develop new management systems. It supports professionals through sharing expertise and knowledge.

The Institute for Conservation (ICON) (<http://www.icon.org.uk/>) was formed in 2005 from several groups of conservators in all disciplines, including archive conservation. It is the lead body for conservation in the United Kingdom and provides guidance, advocacy, training, and education opportunities, uniting the conservation profession and the wider heritage community.

The National Council on Archives (NCA) (<http://www.ncaonline.org.uk/>) was established in 1988 to bring together the major bodies and organizations, including service providers, users, depositors, and policy makers, across the United Kingdom concerned with archives and their use. It aims to develop consensus on matters of mutual concern and provide an authoritative common voice for the archival community. It encourages and assists the education of the public about archives, and some of its objectives are delivered through the PSQG and the Community Archives Development Group (see above).

The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) (<http://www.mla.gov.uk/>) is the designated nondepartmental public body with a responsibility for strategic work to promote the role of museums, libraries, and archives in the United Kingdom and within government programs. It has an importance in bringing the different parts of the heritage sector together to work in partnership rather than in isolation, emphasizing the value of coordination.

CONCLUSION

The twentieth century witnessed the development of the professional care for archives in the United Kingdom, and archive and records management services relevant to communities and individuals. The profession has progressed from one dominated by antiquarians to one which seeks to offer services to users of all kinds, based on the belief of the fundamental right to information. Management of that information is becoming the dominant theme in training archivists and records managers, together with partnership with libraries and museums to provide a stronger and wider platform for the heritage sector. The development of electronic communications will continue to challenge the profession, testing long held principles and offering new ways of delivering services.

FURTHER READING AND INFORMATION

All the organizations mentioned above have Web sites with additional and up-to-date information. In addition, Janet Foster and Julia Sheppard (eds.) *British Archives: A Guide to Archive Resources in the United Kingdom* 4th ed. (Palgrave, 2002) gives useful information about over 1000 archives in the United Kingdom, though current arrangements for access should be checked online or by phone. Online resources for this include the TNA Archon Directory (<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archon/>). *The Public Record Office 1838–1958* (HMSO 1991) and its subsequent volume *The Public Record Office 1959–1969* (Public Record Office 2000) give extensive details on the organization and its development.