



Elizabeth Oxborrow-Cowan, M.Sc., RMARA, MIC

Elizabeth Oxborrow-Cowan Associates Ltd
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PROFILE A highly experienced senior professional archivist and qualified management consultant with extensive experience across all elements of the UK archive sector resolving both technical and strategic issues.

- Wide understanding and experience of all types of archive services including local authority, museum, university, arts, community and private sectors.
- Unique combination of technical archive and management consultancy skills to provide strong, informed critical analysis and relevant solutions.
- In-depth familiarity with working with all levels of management and users including cabinet members, professionals, volunteers and community groups to provide a balanced awareness of relevant issues.
- Strong reputation for delivery of high quality and independent analysis with is focused on action and productive outcomes.
- Up-to- date knowledge of sector issues and direct involvement in the development of high-level strategy and advocacy for the archives sector through senior involvement with the Society of Archivists. The National Council on Archives and the Archives and Records Association.
- All projects are delivered to time, budget and specification.

KEY SKILLS

- Strategic and transformational planning for archive services
- Consultation with stakeholders institutionally, regionally and nationally
- Feasibility and evaluation studies, and options appraisals
- Integrating archive services into museum and library services
- Collection access reviews
- Archive building assessment and design against *BS5454 Recommendations for the Storage and Exhibition of Archival Documents* and individual archive service needs.
- Collection reviews of content, condition and significance
- Heritage Lottery Fund documentation and evaluation
- Training in the principles of caring for and accessing archives, creative thinking and team building.

EMPLOYMENT

2003- Present

Director – Elizabeth Oxborrow-Cowan Associates Ltd

Elizabeth has built up a very successful archive consultancy in the last seven years. Her client base is wide-ranging – public, private, large, small, practitioners, managers and policy makers. She works with individual institutions, local and regional bodies and on the national scale. Elizabeth is also very familiar with working alongside other professionals including architects, conservators, curators, librarians, and engineers, as well as staff at all levels from the frontline to board members.

2000-2003

Deputy County Archivist, Greater Manchester County Record Office

Elizabeth was responsible for a variety of areas within the operation of this large local authority archive service including developing on-site user facilities, funding bids, staff development, volunteer management and management of specific collections such as the renowned Documentary Photographic Archive and the Manchester Ship Canal collection.



1996-2000

Archivist, Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester

Responsible for all aspects of collection management and access including proactive collecting, preservation management, cataloguing and access initiatives. Also involved in the design and implementation of a new object storage and archives access areas in a multi-million pound capital development of the museum site funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Qualifications

- Diploma in Management Consultancy jointly awarded by the Institute of Business Consulting and the Certified Management Institute 2009
- An endorsed programme by the Institute of Leadership and Management on Leadership and Management, equivalent to an NVQ Level 4. 2008
- Assessor and Internal Verifier for the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in Archive Studies 2002
- Registered Member of the Society of Archivists 1999
- M.Sc. (Econ) Archive Administration, University of Wales 1996
- B.Sc. (Hons) Modern History, Economic History and Politics, University of London 1990

PROFESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT

- Expert Adviser to the Heritage Lottery Fund
- Director of the National Conservation Services Ltd
- Preferred supplier for MLA's Light Touch Peer Review Scheme to provide support in using MLA's Culture and Sport Improvement Toolkit
- Assessor for the Archives and Records Association's Assessment Scheme for Registered membership
- Member of the UK Working Group for the United Nation's Memory of the World Programme

MEMBERSHIPS

- Archives and Records Association – Registered Member(RMARA)
- Institute of Consulting – Member (MIC)

KEY PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- A National Archives Awareness Campaign for the UK, Comma The Journal of the International Council on Archives Autumn, 2003 and the ICA Conference in Marseille, 2003.
- Photographic Care at the Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester, Journal of the Society of Archivists April 2002
- 'The Archive Service of the Future' – the Society of Archivists' Conference, 2007.
- 'The Dark Side of the Moon – Communicating the archives' message to public policy makers' – Society of Archivists Regional Sub-committee November, 2007
- 'The Impact of Capital Investment in Archive Services' – The Society of Archivists' National Conference, September 2009

A SELECTION OF PREVIOUS PROJECTS

Access and Audience Development Plans for Heritage Lottery Fund bids

Aberdeen University Special Libraries and Archive Collections, Aberdeen – creating an Access and Audience Development Plan to open up collections to a wider audience both within and outside the University.

Kent Archives Service, Kent – Elizabeth worked in a consortium to deliver an AADP for a major capital bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for this very large local authority service spread across three sites.

Conservation Management Plans for Heritage Lottery Fund bids

The Keep (East Sussex Record Office, Brighton and Hove Museum, University of Sussex inter alia), East Sussex – delivery of a conservation management statement for a 5-partner bid to the HLF for a Round 1 capital bid.



Hull University Archive, Hull City Archives and Hull Local Studies Library, Hull – Elizabeth led on this major project analyzing the content, care and access to these three collections to create a detailed action plan and data for a major bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a Hull History Centre. The HLF consequently awarded Hull £7.7million, the largest ever HLF award to an archive project or to a project in Hull.

Kent Archives Service, Kent – Elizabeth delivered CMP a very large local authority archives service housed across three sites ahead of a possible move into a new building to be shared with the library service. Elizabeth also advised on the Access and Audience Development Plan and Training Plan.

Rambert Dance Company – a CMP was required for this world famous contemporary dance company to inform both collection care in a possible new location and also provide solutions for the long-term care of the collections in existing accommodation.

Great Dixter House and Gardens, East Sussex – Elizabeth surveyed the archives held informally within this famous private house, which had only recently passed out of private hands into a trust. She led on the development of a conservation management plan for an HLF bid for £4.2million which, inter alia, would provide professional care for these family archives for the first time. The bid was successful and a professional archivist was appointed as well as dedicated accommodation for the archives being developed for the first time.

Stage 1 HLF Applications

The Garden Museum – Elizabeth provided developed the Conservation Statement, wrote a Collecting Statement, developed training requirements, assessed current and potential collections, advised on architectural and audience development issues, developed contacts with comparator projects, and undertook stakeholder management with partners and stakeholders. This was to support development of a Stage 1 application for a multi-million pound project to build a new archive and develop onsite resources for this dynamic small museum based in a converted church in Lambeth.

Huddersfield University – Elizabeth wrote the Conservation Statement, undertook stakeholder analysis and fed into audience development for a multi-million pound bid to create a new and much larger and outward facing archive service within a refurbished building for the University.

Stage 2 HLF applications

UK Centre for Carnival Arts - Alongside three other consultants Elizabeth successfully developed a pilot phase of an online archive for carnival arts which included identifying and launching online collections, undertaking focus groups, delivering demonstrations of the online archive to a wide range of communities, and developing costings for a regional team to develop the archive. The UKCCA was awarded £635,000 by the HLF on the basis of this work.

Transformational and Business Planning

Heritage Change Programme for London Cultural Improvement Programme – Elizabeth was a one of three consultants, developing on behalf of LCIP, in this major project creating new tools for supporting London borough heritage services through a period of rapid change as a result of the severe funding cuts since 2010. Following detailed analysis of London borough heritage services, Elizabeth developed a whole suite of new tools including a future operating model, operations analysis matrix and characteristics of a future heritage service. These are available at <http://bit.ly/gcuv6i>. Elizabeth then provided workshops and support to pilot projects to disseminate these tools.

Bedfordshire and Luton Archives Service – Light Touch Peer Review for which Elizabeth was the Consultant Archivist. This was a day long consultation with a wide range of stakeholders resulting in a feedback and report to identify developmental areas. Elizabeth was invited back to support BLARS develop its strategic plans.

The Keep, East Sussex – working with associates to deliver a full business plan and activity plan for this new multi-million pound new building which brings together for the first time the East Sussex County Record Office, University of Sussex archives and the local studies collections of the Brighton and Hove Museum.

NHS Grampian, Aberdeen – Elizabeth delivered a full analysis of the archives service including collection content and appraisal requirements, cataloguing and access requirements, preservation budget, possible



digitisation projects, and a costed-options appraisal for the future development of the service. She also assisted negotiations with Aberdeen University over greater co-operation between the University and NHS archives.

National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port – Elizabeth enabled the Museum to understand and manage archive collection content at its Ellesmere Port site by providing a detailed assessment of holdings and a five year costed strategic plan as well as creating a statement of significance and delivering an outline volunteer programme. This project was funded by Renaissance as part of its Collection Review programme in the North West. Elizabeth's report was used a key document for managing these collections and improving their access.

The Science Museum, London – Elizabeth reviewed all aspects of the Museum's archive service and creating a development plan to deliver collection care to professional standards, manage the collection content to ensure the long-term development and relevance of material and significantly improve access ahead of a large move of all the archives to Swindon.

Tyne and Wear Archives Service, Newcastle – Elizabeth collaborated on an options appraisal for this very large local authority service housed within a Class 2 listed building, shared with a large museum. The options appraisal assessed the potential and outline costs to improve physical and intellectual care and improve access. The Report enabled significant changes in the operation of the archive service.

Architectural work

AMK and Bennetts Architects, Worcestershire – working as an expert adviser on their Private Finance Initiative Bid to build and run the new Worcestershire Library and History Centre

Hull History Centre, Hull – judging the first round of architectural submissions for a new multi-million pound building bringing together three archive services.

Tyne and Wear Archives Service, Newcastle – an options appraisal for accommodation analyzing potential within existing accommodation (a Grade 2 Listed building shared with the large Discovery Museum) and new build.

Technical support

Emergency Response Plan, The Harris Museum, Preston – Elizabeth guided the development of a disaster management plan including providing analysis of the current situation, developing a framework plan and advising on good practice. This resulted in very significant improvements in the museum's emergency planning process.

Assessing cataloguing backlogs, The University of Sussex Special Collections, nr Brighton – Elizabeth provided a detailed assessment of the time required to catalogue the University collection, based on the Logjam methodology, and an impact assessment on the importance of working on the collection. Her assessment resulted in a successful application to gain funds for cataloguing this collection.

Collection care

The Houses of Parliament – working in conjunction with a Conservation Consultant to create an options appraisal for off-site storage for the Libraries of the Lords and Commons and the Parliamentary Archives. Elizabeth appraised the content, use, and accrual rates of off-site collections as well as profiling user needs and developing a strategic overview of storage.

Digital Archives

The Keep, East Sussex – working alongside staff from East Sussex Record Office, the University of Sussex and Brighton and Hove History Centre to create a digital preservation policy and data management plan.

Resource Discovery

The National Archives, Kew – working with DJS Market Research to assess the reaction of users and content contributors to key online archival resources including ARCHON, Access 2 Archives, The National Register of Archives and Hosprex. This project undertook extensive market research of users and contributors within a short timescale to provide evidence of current issues and strengths of these resources and desired functionality. The project also mapped these findings against previous research undertaken with users inside the National Archives. This research provided the basis for an extensive redesign of these unique and highly valued online resources to make them fit for the digital age.



Learning and Education

The Parliamentary Archives – Elizabeth led on the development of a feasibility study for a national outreach programme working with regional partners and the Parliamentary outreach team, and investigating potential for working through the Internet and social software. Elizabeth developed an initial concept, pulling in a number of complex requirements, into a coherent proposal, consulted widely within Parliament, identified, evaluated and made initial contact with possible regional partners; developed a practical 5 year action plan; helped work up financial projections and supported the promotion of the project to major internal stakeholders. The study resulted in a successful internal funding bid and the project is now running until 2013.

Heritage Builds Bridges, London – Elizabeth led on the evaluation of an HLF-funded project to catalogue collections of Hillingdon Borough, Brunel University and the British and Foreign School and develop online access with educational content. Elizabeth assessed the project's success in meeting its goals around cataloguing quality and quantity, the quality of digitised images, the quality of the project management and relationship management.

MLA South West – analysing the current capacity within local authority archive services across the South West for delivering education and proposing means of creating a sustainable network to support educational work within the archive sector as well as investigating ideas for programmes of activity within the requirements of the Strategic Commissioning framework.

Evaluation

Heritage Builds Bridges, London – assessing the outreach impact and project management of this project based at Hillingdon Archives with Brunel University.

MLA North West, Warrington – assessing the Logjam Project, which quantified and analyzed the cataloguing backlog in the North West of England. The methodology went on to be used by other regions.

Establishing an archive collection or archive service

General Teaching Council, Central London and Birmingham – Elizabeth provided professional advice and guidance on the development of the archive for this non-departmental government body ahead of its abolition as well as liaising with The National Archives. This project was undertaken within a very limited timescale and involved both digital and paper records. It resulted in a major digital education archive being deposited with the Institute of Education.

University of Hertfordshire – Elizabeth delivered a Strategic Paper explaining the benefits to the University of establishing an archive for the first time including proven benefits of archive services, potential uses, a programme of activity for establishing the archive and outline costings supported by key documents such as a draft collecting policy, records schedule and job description for an archivist. During the work she undertook extensive consultation at all levels of the University plus with external stakeholders.

Continuing professional development and training

MLA/Creating Capacity – since 2009 Elizabeth has run very successful day courses as part of the MLA/ Creating Capacity training programmes. These included the ever popular 'Archives for Beginners', 'Introduction to Project Management' and 'Introduction to Time Management'

Liverpool University Centre for Archive Studies (LUCAS) – creation of a long-distance learning package for the Certificate/Diploma in Archives and Records Management.

Museums Documentation Association – creation of on-line resources giving guidance on caring for archives on the 'Collections Link' website.

Society of Archivists/ Archives and Records Association – assessment of comparative models for continuing professional development amongst heritage and information professions both in the UK and the USA. Resulted in a detailed report comparing the schemes structure, operation, income, costs and benefits and areas of possible future research for the Society. Elizabeth was invited back to undertake a brainstorming session to help the ARA take forward developing its CPD programme.



Creative Thinking, Facilitation and Team Building Workshops

Barking and Dagenham Heritage Services, London – Elizabeth devised and lead on an intensive day-long creative thinking and team-building workshop for heritage, marketing and outreach staff including frontline staff and managers to address issues linked to the imminent opening of two refurbished manor houses.. It was a really high energy and productive day and Elizabeth was invited back to deliver a team building day for the new, expanded staff team.

Archives and Records Association – facilitating a day to assess the strategic development of CPD for ARA members.

Promotion and Advocacy

International Council on Archives, Paris – developing web content for a complete redesign of the ICA website with the strategic aim of widening membership and awareness of the ICA's work.

Museums Development Association – Elizabeth developed text for the MDA's *Collections Online* website, explaining the nature, management and use of archives for a lay audience.