

Bank of England Archive Service Accreditation Award

2 March 2018

I'm delighted to be here at the Bank of England to present the certificate marking the archive's accreditation, and celebrate your success.

There are over 2,500 archives in the UK and you are one of only 104 services (less than 5%) in the country to earn the award to date – a great achievement. You join five other accredited business archives – 2 of which – Lloyds and BT - are also here today.

Archive Service Accreditation is the UK-wide standard for archive services of all types and sizes across the UK - a national benchmark recognising good performance across three important areas: organisational health, collections management and access.

Archive Service Accreditation is a partnership between The National Archives, the Archives and Records Association (UK), Archives and Records Council Wales, National Records of Scotland, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Scottish Council on Archives, and the Welsh Government through its Museums, Archives and Libraries Wales Division.

And it matters that archive services meet standards, because archives matter. They allow society to hold government and public institutions to account; underpin research and inspire innovation and creativity. Archives support transparency, good governance and public understanding of our institutions – like the Bank of England.

Above all else, Archives need to be used to be useful. What really stood out for the Accreditation Panel was the extent to which this archive underpins the Bank's day to day work. The Bank of England Archive sits at the heart of this national institution, informing our understanding of the past and shaping planning for the future. Of course, there is huge public interest in the work of the Bank and the archive's public engagement work is central to the Bank's wider efforts to encourage public understanding of its national role.

Mike Anson's leading role in the Business Archives Council also underlines the Bank's important leadership role across the business archives sector, reflected in the audience here today.

When assessing the archive, the Accreditation Panel was particularly impressed by:

- The extent of the archive team's collaboration with others across the organisation and the team's active support of the Bank's wider research culture;
- The team's success in finding new ways to showcase its collections to wider audiences, harnessing public interest in - and understanding of - the Bank's work;
- The commitment to staff development and to staff being actively engaged in the work of the wider business archives sector;
- The proactive way that the team works to identify gaps in the historical record of the Bank's activities and find opportunities to fill them to ensure a comprehensive record for future generations;
- The commitment to following public records practice as a standard that should be followed by public institutions; and
- The active planning for the end of paper transfers to the archive – a challenge and opportunity facing all archive services, as digital technology changes our understanding of what it means to be an archive.

Achieving accreditation is a big deal. We don't just give it away and I am only too aware of the sheer hard work that goes into reaching the accreditation standard. More than anything it shows me that everyone involved with the service, those who deliver the service and those who use the service value it.

I saw such passion and commitment the last time that I visited Mike here at the Bank – as it happened the day I visited was the day that Bank staff were informed of the award. As I went through my regular security check at the front entrance the Security Officer asked me who I was visiting. When I told him he very proudly informed me that the Bank's archive service had just been accredited by The National Archives!

Once again, many congratulations: a well-deserved recognition for a truly unique archive. I'd like to invite Andy Haldane, the Chief Economist, to receive the award on behalf of the Bank.

Jeff James
Chief Executive and Keeper
The National Archives