



Archives and Records Association UK & Ireland Annual Conference 2026

5-7th August, Glasgow

Call for Papers

The Archives and Records Association's Conference will be held in Glasgow in 2026. The theme for our conference will be **'Authenticity'**.

As we return to a fully in-person conference for 2026, it feels appropriate to address the theme of authenticity - how do we approach the practices of Record Keeping in an age where 'truth' feels increasingly under fire?

We've seen Heads of State alter, deny, and destroy archival records. If history is determined by the victor, how do we work with integrity and preserve the full truth when those in power may seek to quash it? Conversely, as Record keepers we have been described as 'Custodians of the Truth', but who's truth? How do we ensure fair and balanced representation, especially when some views feel so alien to us?

How do we manage the legality of digitising records for Records Management purposes, when – for example - the digitised records supersede the 'original' items as the 'legal' copies? When original formats have a limited lifespan, either because of their inherent instability or technological obsolescence – how do we give people an authentic experience when accessing born-digital records? Is authenticity in fact the priority, or does access trump truth?

There are also discussions to be had around the ethics of AI and machine-learning and its use – can it simplify tasks like metadata capture or transcription, increasing efficiency; or will it impact on data quality, dilute understanding, and lead to de-skilling of record keepers?

The authenticity of the physical record can be viewed through conservation decision-making lens, but what are the implications of the treatments we undertake and the materials we use? Are we compromising authenticity, or broadening the narrative of what can be perceived as authentic?

In an era marked by disinformation, contested histories, and rapid technological change, the concept of authenticity in recordkeeping has never been more complex—or more critical. How do we navigate truth, ethics, and recordkeeping in a Post-Truth World?

SUGGESTED IDEAS FOR EXPLORATION MIGHT BE:

- What is the authentic experience within the archive? Is there a "hierarchy of authenticity" when prioritising or foregrounding the experience of different individuals or groups?
- Does authenticity matter? Are we in danger of trying to create a static and immobile template that ignores interpretation and varied opinion?
- How is authenticity changing in response to AI? In an ongoing age of disinformation, what does authenticity really mean?
- How does the choice of AI source material contribute to perpetuating stereotypes around subjects such as race, gender and religion?
- "Truth, trust, provenance and overcoming the 'age of stupidity'". As record keepers, should this be our mission statement?
- Archives are socially constructed - how do changing social perspectives affect authenticity?
- Record keeping establishments are places of destruction as much as preservation. What narratives control retention choices? Where does the burden of authenticity rest?
- Contested histories - what is the place of an archive to challenge or uphold certain narratives?
- Archival and record-keeping theory – if apparently minor issues such as page order are compromised, is this conscious dissociation? What is the impact on perceived authenticity?
- When archives are used within other systems of governance and authority, what does this mean for authentic narratives of major events? Presidential elections, the UK newspaper hacking scandals and the UK Post Office enquiry, have all laid bare flaws in documentation and decision-making. The use and misuse of records that have a dramatic impact on 'real life'
- The digital record vs. the original record - what is the reader seeking to experience? Is one 'more' authentic than the other?
- Who wields tools of authentication such as heritage science? What role does material analysis play in understanding collections? How can new technologies deepen this understanding?
- Does interventive conservation treatment compromise authenticity? Best practice dictates use of sympathetic materials, emphasising reversibility, but what does it mean for treatment integrity when manufacturing processes of materials are changed, or accessibility is affected by external factors such as climate change?
- What of inevitable changes to the item to preserve them and/or make them accessible? Is accessibility the enemy of authenticity? Do these treatments change the fundamental nature of collection material?

And of course, we are open to many more ideas than this!

All we need at this stage is a 500 word (max) abstract for your presentation, panel or workshop. We expect that all presentations will be made in-person in Glasgow.

When you submit your proposal on-line you can let us know if your presentation is particularly aimed at a specific area of the record-keeping sector:

- Archives
- Records Management
- Conservation
- Digital (Preservation, AI, etc)
- Information Governance (including Data Protection, copyright, freedom of information, etc)

TYPE OF PROPOSAL OPPORTUNITIES

We are looking for proposals that fit one of the formats listed below. We expect that all speakers deliver their presentations in person.

If you are unsure what category your submission would fit under, please do contact us for an informal discussion by emailing conference@archives.org.uk.

- **Individual contributions** – presentations of 20 minutes, and if successful your proposal will be combined into a session with other speakers.
- **Panel session** – 60 to 90 minutes stand-alone session; three to five speakers presenting related papers on a specific theme or topic.
- **Workshop** – 60 minutes stand-alone session; includes a practical/workshop element

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES PER PROPOSAL TYPE

1. Individual Contributions

- Presentation type: In-person oral presentation
- Time allocation: max 20 minutes including Q&A
- Abstract content: Title, abstract (summary) and all contributing authors (even if not presenting) complete with first and last name, organisation (affiliation), city and country.
- Word count: Abstract text limited to 500 words.
- Biography & photo: we ask you to provide a short biography (150 words) and a profile photo; to avoid delays later, we encourage you to provide these details on submission.

- Additional requirements: please confirm if you plan to use any aids during your presentation, such as digital/online audience engagement tools, or if you will require any other technical support beyond the standard that will be available in all presentation rooms.
 - *Note: the standard AV setup will include screen, projector, lectern, top table, laptop, microphone; we anticipate all the rooms to be set up in cabaret style (round tables of 8); a flipchart and table stationary will be available in each conference room; any additions are the responsibility of the presenters*
- If selected, the author will be expected to present in person during the conference days and submit PowerPoint slides, in wide-screen format, in advance of the conference.

2. Panel Sessions

- Panels can consist of **three to five presenters**; we encourage panels to nominate a chair/moderator from within the group, otherwise one will be allocated by the programme committee
- **Format:** a structured session where several speakers discuss a common topic/theme; this can take the form of short prepared statements or talks from each panellist followed by discussion among panellists and Q&A with the audience
- **Purpose:** present multiple perspectives on a topic and encourage debate, comparison, or reflection; share insights rather than teach specific skills; limited hands-on participation from the audience
- **Time allocation:** 60 to 90 minutes (based on approximately 20mins per speaker including Q&A allocation)
- **Abstract content:** one submission/abstract per panel is required, with the convenor becoming the main point of contact; should include title, abstract (summary) and a list of all panellists with their roles, full names, organisation and email address.
- **Word count:** Abstract text limited to 500 words.
- **Biography & photo:** all selected presenters will be asked to provide a short biography (150 words each) and a profile photo; to avoid delays later, we encourage you to provide these details on submission.
- **Additional requirements:** please confirm if you plan to use any aids during your presentation, such as digital/online audience engagement tools, or if you will require any other technical support beyond the standard that will be available in all presentation rooms.

- *Note: the standard AV setup will include screen, projector, lectern, top table, laptop, microphone; we anticipate all the rooms to be set up in cabaret style (round tables of 8); a flipchart and table stationary will be available in each conference room; any additions are the responsibility of the presenters*
- If selected, the panellists will be expected to present in person during the conference days and if relevant, submit PowerPoint slides, in wide-screen format, in advance of the conference.

3. Workshop

- **Workshops can consist of between one and three presenters**
- **Format:** These are longer sessions aimed at including a practical and/or workshopping element as well as presentation. Typical formats include:
 - A presentation on a particular topic followed by group work
 - A demonstration of a particular technique followed by practical workshop on that technique
- **Purpose:**
 - Teach how to do something
 - Engage participants in applying concepts or tools
 - Produce takeaways (skills, plans, materials)
- **Time allocation:** 60 minutes
- **Abstract content:** one submission for the workshop is expected; we request that you include:
 - Learning objectives
 - Description of activities and timing
 - Explanation of participant engagement
- **Word count:** Abstract text limited to 500 words.
- **Biography & photo:** all selected presenters will be asked to provide a short biography (150 words) and a profile photo; to avoid delays later, we encourage you to provide these details on submission.
- **Additional requirements and room set-up:**
 - *Note: the standard AV setup will include screen, projector, lectern, top table, laptop, microphone; we anticipate all the rooms to be set up in cabaret style (round tables of 8); a flipchart and table stationary will be available in each conference room; we expect workshop convenors to supply their own materials and tools; any additions are the responsibility of the presenters*
 - Please confirm if you plan to use any digital aids/online audience engagement tools during your presentation, that may require the assistance of AV technicians.

- Materials or tools (if any) – please be clear and descriptive with any items that you plan to bring to the venue; items that will be plugged into venue sockets will need to be recently PAT tested for the conference and, depending on venue requirements, a risk assessment form may be requested ahead of your session
 - ARA may be able to provide an over-head Lumens document camera to project detailed, close-up work onto the main screen. Please confirm if this is required on submission.
 - If selected, the presenters will be expected to deliver the workshop in person during the conference days and if relevant, submit PowerPoint slides, in wide-screen format, in advance of the conference
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ACCESSIBILITY AWARENESS:

- Any audio/video that is part of a presentation must include close captions
 - Please pay attention to the size of font and colour contrast on your presentation. You can test colour contrast on [WebAIM: Contrast Checker](#)
 - The conference plans to use a text to speech software system that is available to all delegates for all sessions and presentations.
 - Where feasible, please make your practical workshops as accessible as possible.
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PLEASE REMEMBER:

- We aim to devise a coherent programme, so please connect your proposal to the theme
- We would like proposals that will stimulate debate
- We want diverse panels of speakers. If you have particular requirements (e.g. accessibility, interpretation, etc.) please let us know and we will make every effort to accommodate you.
- Abstracts and presentations must be non-commercial and free of marketing or sales content. Deliberate product placement, brand promotion, or endorsements are not permitted; any references to specific products or services must be strictly incidental and relevant to the subject matter.

Anyone who has experience or expertise in working with records can submit a paper. Contributions are welcomed from across the UK and Ireland, and from colleagues in the global record-keeping community. And of course we welcome submissions from other sectors too.

If you submit a proposal and this is accepted, you will be expected to attend in person in Glasgow in August 2026 to make your contribution.

HOW DO I SUBMIT A PROPOSAL?

All submissions must be made via the official website:

<https://openingdoors-ara2026.eventsair.site/call-for-papers>

All submissions will receive a confirmation email. If you do not receive your confirmation email please:

- Check your spam folder
- If you have still not received a confirmation relog into the portal to check it has been submitted.
- If you need further assistance, please email the organisers araconference@openingdoors.org.uk. The organisers cannot access your incomplete submission.

KEY DATES

1. The submissions system will open on Monday 19 January and close on Friday 13 February 2026, midnight UK time.
2. Notification of invitations to speak are expected to be issued from 2 March 2026.
3. The programme will be published by the end of March
4. Early Bird booking will close on 20 May

EXPENSES

All speakers will receive free conference registration for the day on which they are presenting. We are unable to pay accommodation costs, but speakers will be reimbursed travel expenses up to a maximum of £100.

In addition, please note that speakers are eligible to apply for the regular Conference bursaries to support attendance at the wider conference. These are usually advertised in May. If invited, you will be asked to confirm your attendance as a speaker for the day you are asked to speak prior to the bursary round taking place, so please take this into account when planning.