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Around the Archives

The Harris Tweed Authority Archive Collection: Archiving an Industry

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Harris Tweed is a name, and a material, that many people recognise. The distinctive Orb logo and label have long been the mark of a very specific cloth; indeed, the Orb Mark is the United Kingdom's oldest continuously registered certification mark.[1] The Mark was registered in 1910 by a body that had been set up the previous year: the Harris Tweed Association. This body, which 25 years ago became the Harris Tweed Authority, has been the guardian of the Harris Tweed name throughout the twentieth, and now the 21st, century. During that time, it has produced and collected a wide range of records – some of which now form the Harris Tweed Authority archive collection.

The Harris Tweed story is a long and tumultuous one which will be explored in detail below, but first how the HTA archive collection came to be officially created will be explained.[2] For over 50 years the Harris Tweed Association, later Authority, had an office at 6 Garden Road, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis. Stornoway is the 'capital' of the Western Isles, or Outer Hebrides, of which the Isle of Harris is also a part. Lewis and Harris are in fact one land mass, but have always been described as two distinct entities. As a significant, and historic, organisation, the HTA attracted the attention of the Tasglann nan Eilean Siar (TnES) project, as described by David Powell in volume 17 of this publication.[3] The project's aim was to survey archive collections across the Western Isles, with the ambition of making them more visible and accessible, and to lay the foundations for a permanent archive service in the islands, rather than to physically collect material. Nonetheless, as the endeavour progressed, accessions took place. Records held by the HTA in its Garden Road office were surveyed early on in the 2010–14 project.[4] Shortly afterwards, in 2012,

1 https://www.harristweed.org/wp-content/uploads/hta_guidelines_en.pdf

2 The abbreviation 'HTA' is used throughout to refer to both the Harris Tweed Association (1909–93) and the Harris Tweed Authority (1993–present).

3 D. Powell, 'Tasglann nan Eilean Siar: A'fosgladh dorsan gu ulaidhean Tasglann anns na h'Eileanan Siar – Hebridean Archive: Opening up Access to Archives in the Western Isles', *Scottish Archives*, 17 (2011), 97–111.

4 'Trade associations, including the Harris Tweed Authority, have also been surveyed' (ibid., 104).

Plate 1 Lews Castle, with the modern extension of Museum and Tasglann nan Eilean visible to the left. © Victoria Woodcock.

the HTA decided to move its premises from 6 Garden Road to Stornoway Town Hall, and used this opportunity to deposit its newly surveyed records with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles Council), under the aegis of the TnES project located at Stornoway Library. Thus, this portion of the HTA archive collection became A2012/001 – the first accession of 2012.[5]

Though Tasglann nan Eilean Siar as a project came to an end in 2014, Tasglann nan Eilean (note the subtly different name) was born in 2015 as the new local authority archive service for the Western Isles. As well as inheriting the surveying, accessioning and website of TnES, Tasglann nan Eilean benefited from a new purpose-built reading room and store created as part of the Lews Castle Project. This capital project located Tasglann nan Eilean and Museum nan Eilean (a service that had existed since 1983) in a modern extension to Lews Castle, which was also refurbished as part of the scheme (Plate 1). After A2012/001 and the other records accessioned during the TnES project had been moved from Stornoway Library to the modern, secure store at Lews Castle, the new heritage facilities opened to the public in July 2016. As a key industry in the Western Isles, and one of the largest deposited collections in the archive, it was recognised that the HTA material would benefit from full cataloguing. The HTA itself actively supported this idea: this would allow researchers to be pointed in the direction of an accessible archive resource. Previously, the only extensive use of the material by anyone external to the organisation had been by Janet Hunter, who was commissioned by the HTA to write a history of the industry, published in 2001. The resulting book, *The Islanders and the Orb: The History of the Harris Tweed Industry, 1835–1995*, is an extremely thorough examination of the industry's development, and was an invaluable aid to the cataloguing process. Seonaid McDonald, the Archivist, was successful in obtaining a grant of

[5] Ibid., 109.

c.£30,000 from The National Archives under their National Cataloguing Grants Programme, and in March 2017 the HTA archive cataloguing project began, as the responsibility of the Project Cataloguing Archivist, Victoria Woodcock.

One of the remits of the project was to incorporate other material, currently outwith the Tasglann, into the archive collection. The Harris Tweed Association had had an Inverness office between 1962 and 1992, and as a result, a group of HTA records had come to be held by Highland Archives. These records, A2017/033 after their transfer, were almost all created or gathered in the course of a 1961–64 court case at the Court of Session in Edinburgh. At the time, it was one of the longest cases in Scottish legal history, and it had a suitably enduring effect on the Harris Tweed industry, of which more later.[6] These particular records are not just of interest for those investigating the legal history of Harris Tweed, or this specific case: as a result of the need to provide evidence going back decades of the public's perception of Harris Tweed and the way in which companies were advertising Harris Tweed garments, this section contains some of the oldest records in the collection. Scrapbooks made up of copies of advertising from around the world and newspaper cuttings painting a picture of Harris Tweed production in the quaintest possible terms, with evocative descriptions such as:

> Near the door sat a white-haired woman at a spinning wheel, and through the complicated strings of a loom I caught a glimpse of a woman, singing as she worked. An elderly woman baked scones on a girdle which swung over a peat fire. Two children played on the floor.[7]

show how the fabric was promoted to its middle-class buyers.

A third accession, A2017/015, came from the HTA's current office in Stornoway Town Hall. It comprised a number of boxes of material that HTA staff had put aside since the original survey and deposit, and was appraised by the Project Cataloguing Archivist. This portion of the collection includes some of the most visually interesting records – promotional leaflets and photographic material make up a large proportion of the accession – as well as records linked to islanders on a personal basis, such as a handwritten notebook dating from the 1930s listing weavers by village.[8]

These three accessions have been brought together physically and intellectually over the past year, being professionally sorted and catalogued to create a working, accessible archive collection. Much like the origins of the collection, the story of the Harris Tweed industry is a disparate one. It is also frequently a story

[6] J. Hunter, *The Islanders and the Orb: The History of the Harris Tweed Industry, 1835–1995* (Stornoway, 2001), 261.

[7] P. A. Grimley, 'How Harris Tweed is Made in Island Homes', *The Scottish Daily Express*, 22 Jun 193*, part of Tasglann nan Eilean (hereafter TnE), GD014/4/1/12/4, No. 336 of Process [1910–1960s].

[8] TnE, GD014/5/2/1/1, Notebook of weavers, 1930s–1950s.

of conflict between the different parts that make up the industry as a whole, and of an industry inextricably tied to a place and its people. The HTA is in a remarkable position, in that it is essentially a regulatory body for an industry, while being completely tied up in the history of that industry and the place in which it is situated. The industry itself has an unusual structure – there is no centralised ownership, and 'Harris Tweed' is not a company, it's the fabric and the brand – but given that it must be made in the Western Isles, the different parts of the industry have a very close, and historically often fraught, relationship. The fallacy that Harris Tweed is a company in and of itself has sometimes been perpetuated by the media, not helped by the fact that in recent years one or other of the mills has usually had a vast monopoly over the others, evidence of which can be found in the archive's extensive collection of press cuttings.[9] The industry today is made up variously of the weavers, who weave yarn into tweed using looms at their own homes, usually in a shed or outbuilding; the mills, who card, dye and spin the wool into yarn, deliver this to the weavers, and then pick the fabric up and 'finish' the tweed; the HTA, which inspects and stamps the finished material, provides the labels that must be affixed to Harris Tweed products, and safeguards and promotes its origins; producers, who make clothing and other products from Harris Tweed; and retailers, who sell those products. A person or organisation can fulfil more than one of these roles – there are weavers, for example, who are also producers and retailers – the exception being the HTA, which must remain independent. The HTA records are therefore no ordinary business archive: the HTA does not sell the product it promotes, but must oversee the industry and is closely connected with its constituent parts.

As mentioned above, the HTA was formed in 1909. To locate the beginnings of the industry, however, one has to go back more than 60 years. Unsurprisingly, the precise dates and facts surrounding the industry's origins are disputed. Nonetheless, most accounts attribute it to the actions of the Countess of Dunmore, Lady Catherine, and her husband the 6th Earl of Dunmore, who was the estate owner of much of the Isle of Harris at the time. The islanders had been making a form of tweed for their own use for many years, but in 1844, so the story goes, the Earl had his family tartan copied in the fabric, and was so pleased with the result that he went on to have clothing made for his gamekeepers and other estate workers. The Earl died the following year, and it seems to be around this time that Lady Catherine started taking an interest in the high-quality cloth. To improve the finish of the material, she paid for several islanders to go to Paisley – and/or Alloa, accounts differ – to receive training, including a pair of sisters, Marion and Christine Macleod, who became known as the Paisley Sisters.[10] This was a time when Highland estate ownership was

[9] TnE, GD014/7/1–4, 1957–2010s.

[10] The Harris Tweed 'origin story' and the Dunmores' involvement, including the vexing question of when exactly the Paisley Sisters went to Paisley (if it was to Paisley that they went) is dealt with in the second chapter of Hunter, *The Islanders and the Orb*, 27–46.

booming among the Victorian elite, and Lady Catherine successfully promoted the cloth to her aristocratic friends, soon creating a London market.

Hunter, in *The Islanders and the Orb*, comments that the Countess of Dunmore's business correspondence, which could have helped to sort the facts of the early years of the industry from fiction, 'perished when the repository containing the archives of Messrs Mackenna & Co., the Dunmores' London solicitors, was destroyed in the Second World War blitz'.[11] In an interesting coincidence, the HTA attributes the loss of some of the Association's early documents to that same fire – McKenna & Co. were the HTA's solicitors from its very inception to the late 1980s. In fact, in writing about the first century or so of the industry, Hunter often refers to a memorandum written by a McKenna & Co. lawyer, J. S. Gwatkin, for the aforementioned 1961–64 court case.[12] In turn, he, and consequently Hunter, relied upon the 'Report to the Board of Agriculture for Scotland on Home Industries in the Highlands and Islands in 1914', colloquially known as 'the Scott Report'. As Gwatkin puts it, the Scott Report 'deal[s] inter alia, with the state of the Harris Tweed industry up to the beginning of the First World War'.[13]

This textile from the Isle of Harris promoted by Lady Catherine came to be known as Harris Tweed, and increased in popularity throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. A Mrs Thomas also had a significant role in its early promotion, notably by acting as a wholesaler in Edinburgh from 1857 onwards, before opening a depot in London in 1888. Organisations such as the Scottish Home Industries Association and the Crofters' Agency came into being, as a means for middle-class women such as Mrs Thomas to carry out charitable work by creating a market for home-made products from the Highlands and Islands. Although at the industry's inception it was only cloth woven in Harris that was being sold outwith the islands, by the 1880s the residents of Lewis, and other islands in the Outer Hebrides, had become part of the burgeoning industry.[14]

Two highly significant innovations occurred around the turn of the century, one of which had to do with the processes required to produce Harris Tweed. To give a brief explanation of the steps involved, reference will be made to an item in the collection called 'Wool and Weaving', a college project by Barbara D. Macdonald complete with real wool samples (Plate 2). As can be seen in the image, each sample is numbered. The raw ingredient is, of course, wool sheared from sheep, as in number 1, and then washed, as in number 2. The next process is dyeing: Harris Tweed is dyed in the wool, meaning the wool is dyed before being spun. This is a distinctive part of the process as dyeing at this

[11] Ibid., 42.

[12] TnE, GD014/4/2/2, History of the industry [1934–1964], Notes on the Historical Development of the Harris Tweed Industry and the part played by the Harris Tweed Association Ltd. – 1844–1959, J. S. Gwatkin, 10 Mar 1961.

[13] Ibid., 1.

[14] Ibid., 3.

Plate 2 A page from 'Wool and Weaving', a college project by Barbara D. Macdonald, illustrating the different stages of the tweed-making process (Tasglann nan Eilean, GD014/8/1/1, Wool and Weaving [1970s–1980s?]). Image reproduced courtesy of Tasglann nan Eilean and the Harris Tweed Authority.

point rather than later on means that the colour is less likely to alter or fade. It also enables a wide variety of colours to appear in a finished piece of cloth, by spinning multiple dyed wools together – a close examination of a piece of Harris Tweed usually reveals many more colours than are seen at first glance. At number 3, you can see several different dyed wools, ready for the next step. After dyeing, the wool is blended and then carded, which involves teasing out the naturally tangled wool until it is soft and smooth, as shown in 4(a) and 4(b). This soft yarn is then spun, during which it is twisted to give it strength, as in number 5, and finally wound on bobbins. There are two types of thread: the weft, which goes left to right, and the warp, which is vertical. Warping is the process of arranging those vertical threads ready for weaving. The yarn is then woven into tweed, as at number 6, after which the cloth is 'finished' by being washed and beaten, and ends looking like number 7, bottom right.

Plate 3 A postcard from a set of thirteen showing the traditional steps of the tweed-making process, with handwritten captions on the reverse (Tasglann nan Eilean, GD014/9/5/1/6, Drying crotal wool, early 20th cent). Image reproduced courtesy of Tasglann nan Eilean and the Harris Tweed Authority.

Originally, all these steps would have been undertaken by hand, as can be seen in a set of postcards (Plate 3).[15] But towards the end of the nineteenth century, demand for Harris Tweed had increased to such an extent that some of the processes started to be mechanised. Carding – the detangling of the original wool – was the first process to be carried out by machinery, because it took an extremely long time to do by hand: the carding step alone could take as long as all the other processes put together. Mills began to be built on the islands at Direcleit, outside Tarbert (Harris), and in Stornoway. Following on from carding, spinning machinery was also introduced; this was a little more controversial, as discussed below.

The other innovation was the establishment of the Harris Tweed Association, the forerunner of the Harris Tweed Authority. The industry had got to the point where it was a victim of its own success and, like any popular product, imitations were being made. It was decided that Harris Tweed should

[15] TnE, GD014/9/5/1, Postcards of tweed-making process, early 20th cent.

be defined and protected. Various groups came together, and eventually in 1909 the HTA was formed, and a trademark was applied for. The Memorandum and Articles of Association for the organisation stated that it would have its 'registered office' in England, and London is where it stayed for many decades thereafter.[16] The two original aims of the Harris Tweed Association were the same as those of the Harris Tweed Authority now: defending the trademark, expressed in founding documentation as 'the protection of the interests of manufacturers and merchants of and dealers in tweed made in the Islands of Harris, Lewis and Uist in Scotland', and secondly 'to promote the manufacture and sale of such tweed'.[17] The trademark came into use in 1911, when Harris Tweed began to be stamped with the famous Orb device.

The Scottish Home Industries Association and the Crofters' Agency, two of the selling agencies mentioned above, played a part in the formation of the Association. There are two female signatures on the HTA's Memorandum and Articles: Millicent, Duchess of Sutherland, and Mary Stewart-Mackenzie. The duchess was president of the Scottish Home Industries and Stewart-Mackenzie president of the Crofters' Agency. In fact, it seems as if there may have been a rivalry between the two women – or at least a competitiveness on behalf of their respective organisations, who were initially involved in separate trademark discussions.[18] They joined forces, however, and together contributed £300 to the trademark application fees, with the remaining £30 coming from Harris.[19]

Up until this point, weavers had been using wooden looms to weave their tweed. The 1920s brought the popularisation of the Hattersley loom as a modern alternative, encouraged by the landowner of Lewis and Harris at the time, Lord Leverhulme – he of Sunlight soap and Unilever. One of its benefits was that it was largely foot-operated, so it made it possible for men who had lost hands or arms in the First World War to earn a living through weaving. This loom continued, with only minor changes, to be what every Harris Tweed weaver used up until the 1990s. Some are even still in use today. The collection includes a spare parts booklet for a Hattersley machine, as well as advertising literature for connected equipment.[20] Anecdotal evidence suggests that these were publications that would be kept in shops rather than at weavers' homes.[21]

While being the backbone of the industry, there are proportionally few records in the collection relating directly to the weavers themselves. The item that has been of most interest to the public in the course of community

16 TnE, GD014/1/1/1/1, Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Harris Tweed Association, Limited, 1909, 1.

17 Ibid.

18 Hunter, *The Islanders and the Orb*, 58–63.

19 Ibid., 59–60.

20 TnE, GD014/5/2/2/1, Hattersley Hand Loom Spare Part Catalogue [1950s–1970s]. Other equipment in TnE, GD014/5/2/2, Looms and machinery, 1930s–[1970s].

21 From discussion at Clann an Là an-dè meeting ('Yesterday's Children', a seniors group in Shawbost, Isle of Lewis), Ionad na Sean Sgoile, 13 March 2018.

Plate 4 A page listing weavers in the village of South Shawbost, Barvas Parish, Isle of Lewis (Tasglann nan Eilean, GD014/5/2/1/1, Notebook of weavers, 1930s–1950s). 'W.L.' probably means 'wooden loom'. Image reproduced courtesy of Tasglann nan Eilean and the Harris Tweed Authority.

engagement events is one of the small number of records that do contain weavers' names – the notebook listing weavers in each village in Lewis in the 1930s, mentioned above.[22] It clearly illustrates just how ubiquitous weaving was at the time in many parts of the island, with some villages having one or more weavers in almost every household (Plate 4). This does not mean, however, that the individuals listed were weaving full-time; most would have combined it with croft work, and some would have spent the majority of the time fishing, only using the loom during slack periods.[23] In addition to this notebook, there are

[22] TnE, GD014/5/2/1/1, Notebook of weavers, 1930s–1950s.

[23] Information re. fishermen weaving during slack periods supplied by Margaret Nicolson in an email to the author, 18 May 2018, and based on family evidence.

two others, created in the 1930s and 1950s, also listing weavers from villages across Lewis.[24] Further evidence of weavers' names can be found in the HTA's stamping books, some of which list the weavers who presented their Harris Tweed for stamping in various locations across the islands, including Berneray (also covering North Uist), Tarbert and Stornoway.[25]

The majority of the weavers listed in the notebooks created in the 1930s would have been using mill-spun yarn by this time, although hand-spinning was still more prevalent on the Isle of Harris. This was problematic for the HTA, as when it had registered its trademark, it had decided to stamp only tweed that was entirely handmade, with the exception of the carding part of the process. The original definition was: '"Harris Tweed" means a tweed handspun and hand-woven and dyed by the crofters and cottars in the Outer Hebrides'. This meant that the rates of official, HTA-stamped Harris Tweed were dwindling, as more people began to use yarn spun at a mill. So, in 1934, the Association decided to go to the Board of Trade and change the official definition to permit tweed made with mill-spun yarn to be stamped and sold as Harris Tweed. The amended definition was:

> Harris Tweed means a tweed made from pure virgin wool produced in Scotland, spun, dyed and finished in the Outer Hebrides and handwoven by the islanders at their own homes in the Islands of Lewis, Harris, Uist and Barra and their several purtenences and all known as the Outer Hebrides.[26]

Though the alteration made in 1934 was a very important one, 30 years later an arguably much more significant judgment took place. By the 1950s, the definition was being twisted to such an extent that some producers were carrying out almost the entire process in mainland Scotland, only sending it to the Outer Hebrides to be woven or finished. Others were sourcing wool from England. Still others were setting up weaving sheds, where multiple people would weave together, contravening the 'at their own homes' part of the definition. If this had been allowed to continue, it would not have been long before Harris Tweed became a generic name, losing its island exclusivity and individuality. In the early 1960s, a court case began which became one of the biggest lawsuits of its day.[27] There were 49 days of evidence, between January and June 1963, and transcripts of every single one of those days are present in the collection.[28] The

[24] TnE, GD014/5/2/1/2, Notebook of weavers visited, 1938; TnE, GD014/5/2/1/4, Notebook of weavers from declaration forms, 1958.

[25] TnE, GD014/5/1/1/1, Berneray stamping book, Jan 1935–Jun 1960; TnE, GD014/5/1/1/2, Tarbert stamping book, Dec 1960–Oct 1990; TnE, GD014/5/1/1/3, Stamping book, Jan 1936–Dec 1953.

[26] Part of TnE, GD014/3/2/3, Trademark regulations, 1934–2007.

[27] Hunter, *The Islanders and the Orb*, 261.

[28] TnE, GD014/4/1/1, Proof in the Case of Argyllshire Weavers Ltd. and Others v. A. Macaulay (Tweeds) Ltd., & Others, Jan–Jun 1963.

archive is particularly strong in records from this period, due to the inclusion of the Inverness accession, mentioned above. As far as can be ascertained, all of the evidence from the case is present, including copies of vast numbers of letters, invoices and promotional material dating back to the 1910s.[29] Original material was also gathered in evidence, such as invoice books from Kenneth Mackenzie's mill, and yarn ledgers.[30] Eventually, in July 1964, Lord Hunter decreed that the 1934 definition stood, and that for material to be Harris Tweed it had to be entirely made in the Outer Hebrides, hand-woven by weavers at their homes.

Following the 1964 case, and the reaffirmation of the definition, Harris Tweed reached its highest ever volume in 1966, with over seven million metres produced. These numbers were impossible to sustain, and Harris Tweed experienced massive sales slumps in the mid-1970s, as well as in the late 1980s. During this time, a problem reared its head time and time again: weavers illicitly using motors on their looms. Local men were employed by the HTA as inspectors and they knew that weavers were using motors, but it proved very difficult to catch them at it. In a 1979 report for the HTA, an inspector called Mr Macaulay writes:

> In the past couple of months I have visited about 25 weavers. One of these had a motor when visited, five refused entry to their sheds and seven others were not exactly pleased to see me although no evidence of power weaving could be seen.[31]

At this point, there would have been around 700 weavers. He suspected collusion between them – he says, 'On various occasions while out in the country areas I have been aware that the weavers knew of my coming even before I had reached the area' – but he also thought that the mills were turning a blind eye:

> One point which has been made by many of the weavers is that the millowners do not mind how the tweed has been woven as long as they are returned in good time. Some weavers have even hinted that they have been encouraged to use power.[32]

Mr Macaulay suggested that all weavers should sign a declaration stating that they were adhering to the rules and agreeing that inspectors could have entry to their weaving shed at any time, which was what happened. This did not put an end to the problem though, and there is a whole folder's worth of letters from weavers suspended from weaving, requesting to be readmitted.[33]

In the early 1980s, the industry was doing relatively well, and had plenty of money to spend on advertising. There are quite a number of promotional

[29] All of the Inverness accession can be found in TnE, GD014/4, Harris Tweed court case (1961–1964), 1898–1963.

[30] TnE, GD014/4/1/12/3, Nos. 331–334 of Process, 1921–1960; TnE, GD014/4/5/1, Harris Tweed Association: Yarn Declared and Received Ledgers, 1949–1962.

[31] Part of TnE, GD014/3/3/3, Weavers inspections, 1970s–1980s.

[32] Ibid.

[33] TnE, GD014/3/3/3, Weavers inspections, 1970s–1980s.

Plate 5 Examples of leaflets produced by the Harris Tweed Association (Tasglann nan Eilean, GD014/6/1/1, Leaflets, 1970s–2010s). Image reproduced courtesy of Tasglann nan Eilean and the Harris Tweed Authority.

leaflets from this period in the collection (Plate 5), some focusing on the story and the background of the material, and some on its prestige and luxury status.[34] They come in a number of different languages: English, French, German, Japanese, and even Dutch. Another promotional activity that the HTA decided to embark on was competitions. From March to September 1982, it held a limerick competition, advertised in four magazines – *Horse and Hound*, *The Listener*, *Punch* and *The Times Educational Supplement* – and each month five people were chosen to win a Harris Tweed deerstalker hat.[35] The only rule was that the words 'Harris Tweed(s)' had to be in the last line. Among the many predictably hilarious entries, the most interesting is from the Royal Navy vessel HMS *Sheffield*. It was sent in by three of its officers, who wanted to win the hat for their captain, Captain Salt, and reads as follows: 'On the Falklands the Argentines sat / Said Maggie 'We cannot have that' / When the fleet hove in sight / They were all put to flight / By Sam Salt in his Harris Tweed hat!'[36]

[34] TnE, GD014/6/1/1, Leaflets, 1970s–2010s.
[35] TnE, GD014/6/2/3, Competitions, 1981–1982.
[36] Part of ibid.

They continue, 'if by good fortune this should be judged a winning entry, it would be appreciated if the hat could be dispatched as soon as possible so that the intentions expressed in the limerick may be carried out'.[37] However, less than a month after this letter was sent, HMS *Sheffield* was attacked and sunk during the Falklands conflict, and two of the three officers who wrote the poem were killed. This is mentioned in the HTA board minutes for 11 May 1982 – only a couple of days after the ship sank – where it is recorded that 'The local newspaper was featuring an article on H.M.S. Sheffield and they telephoned the Association to ask if they would be making a contribution to the Lord Mayor's Appeal Fund. It was decided that a donation of £100 should be sent and that no publicity must be sought.'[38] It has not been possible to establish if the hat was ever sent to the captain; the only evidence so far is a mysterious note in the board minutes of 27 September 1984, stating, 'The H.M.S. Sheffield correspondence about the award of hats was to be confirmed to Mr C. Scott MacKenzie.'[39]

That competition happened at a time when sales were up, but as the industry moved into the late 1980s and early 1990s, sales reached new lows. The relationship between production and promotional activity was challenging. There was a stamping levy, which was the charge that the mills paid to have the tweed stamped with the official Orb, and the marketing budget came directly from that, so if less tweed was being made and stamped, there was less money to advertise the product. This was complicated by the fact that in the early 1990s the HTA was spending a lot of money in two areas: legal fees and loom development. This was the point at which the Harris Tweed Association had decided to go through the process of putting the definition of Harris Tweed into law and becoming a statutory body – the Harris Tweed Authority – which involved a lot of legal work. An Act would give Harris Tweed stronger legal protection than relying on trademark law. The possibility of an Act of Parliament first appears in the board minutes in 1987, but due to a referral to the European Commission and a general election in 1992, the Harris Tweed Act was not given Royal Assent until 1993.[40] Thus 1993 saw the replacement of the Association with the Authority and the legal definition of Harris Tweed as tweed which 'has been handwoven by the islanders at their homes in the Outer Hebrides, finished in the Outer Hebrides, and made from pure virgin wool dyed and spun in the Outer Hebrides'. A series of correspondence charts the progress of the Bill, with a large volume of letters between legal representatives, the HTA and parliamentary agents, among others.[41]

[37] Ibid.

[38] TnE, GD014/1/2/2/1, Board of Directors minutes, 1980–1993, 11 May 1982.

[39] Ibid., 27 September 1984.

[40] Ibid., 1 Oct 1987; TnE, GD014/3/1/2/16, Progress of Harris Tweed Bill, Oct 1992–Sep 1993.

[41] TnE, GD014/3/1/2, Harris Tweed Act, 1990–1994.

In tandem with the Act of Parliament, the HTA was involved in developing a new loom. The Hattersley loom was still being used, but it had got to the point where it was very difficult to find spare parts and, more importantly, the size of material produced on it was too small for modern manufacturing processes. Hattersley looms produce single-width cloth, *c.*75 cm wide, whereas the modern commercial garment industry predominantly uses double-width cloth, *c.*150 cm wide. Discussions about a new loom for the Harris Tweed industry went as far back as the 1970s, with the HTA making a serious start on commissioning research in 1984. In the late 1980s the Development Working Party (DWP) was set up, whose remit covered the introduction of the Harris Tweed Bill, the development of a new loom, encouraging new weavers and a new marketing strategy. The collection contains the minutes of every DWP meeting from 1989 to 1995, as well as associated papers.[42] It took a long time and a lot of research and training, but weavers first started using the new Bonas Griffiths double-width looms in the mid-1990s. Despite these looms being easier to use, there were some initial difficulties, particularly with training and financing, but eventually most active weavers switched to using the new machines.

Though the industry continued to struggle in the 1990s, the double-width looms were definitely a turning point, showing that people were willing to invest in the industry, and in the 2000s sales started to recover. Often credited with reviving sales and bringing Harris Tweed to a new audience is the order that Nike placed in 2004 for almost 10,000m of cloth for a limited-edition footwear line.[43] This novel use for tweed demonstrates the way that the industry has managed to diversify from its original use as a men's formalwear material into womenswear and accessories. Another example in the collection is a box from a pair of Harris Tweed headphones.[44] Currently there are around 190 weavers using double-width looms, and around 30 still using Hattersley single-width looms. There are three mills in operation in the islands, and every length of tweed is still stamped with the Orb trademark by an HTA employee (Plate 6). Among the more modern records in the collection is an invitation card for an event in Stornoway to celebrate 100 years of the Orb in 2011.[45] As mentioned earlier, the HTA was originally based in London before moving its main office to Inverness in 1962, and then finally being based full-time in Stornoway from the establishment of the Authority in 1993. This has allowed it to be more in touch with the weavers and the mills, to foster a more trusting relationship than in previous years, and to hold more local events such as this.

42 TnE, GD014/1/3/3, Development Working Party, 1986–1995.

43 TnE, GD014/7/3/146, 'Nike Deal Offers Tweed Industry a Foothold in the Fashion Market', *West Highland Free Press* [Jun 2004].

44 TnE, GD014/5/7/3, Urbanears Harris Tweed headphones box, 2012.

45 Part of TnE, GD014/6/2/1, Promotional events, 2009–2016.

Plate 6 The Harris Tweed Orb Mark and name: strict guidelines apply to the way in which these can be used. © Harris Tweed Authority.

It is hoped that this summary has given the reader an overview of the kinds of record within the HTA collection, as well as the history of the industry. What may not have been accurately conveyed is the organisation or the proportion of different types of record. The collection is divided into nine sections: administrative; financial; correspondence and reports; Harris Tweed court case (1961–64); industry; marketing and promotion; media; education, art and research; photographic material. Around 40 per cent of the material is correspondence, primarily with legal representatives, highlighting the importance of the trademark protection side of the HTA's role. There are a number of boxes of photographic material; these are not only prints but also transparencies, negatives and slides. Many of the images are of finished clothing on models rather than the manufacturing process or the activities of the HTA, though these subjects also appear. Other items range from account books to records of the activities of various mills, marketing research studies, artistic projects, and advertising by retailers. Transcriptions are available of several of the notebooks and ledgers listing weavers. There is even a small quantity of textiles and labels in the collection, including samples of wool at different stages of the manufacturing process gathered for the 1961–64 court case.[46]

The cataloguing of the HTA archive collection has offered further opportunities to engage the local community with the history of an industry that is so integral to island life that almost everyone has a personal or family connection, from filling bobbins as a child to hearing the distinctive sound of the Hattersley looms on a summer's evening. In March 2018, Tasglann nan Eilean hosted a well-attended Harris Tweed archive open day, giving islanders the chance to see archive material relating to their own history up close and to contribute to the catalogue by identifying people pictured in photographs from

[46] TnE, GD014/4/9/3, Tweed production process samples, early-mid 20th cent.

the collection. Other engagement activities have been held with seniors' groups and schoolchildren.

The collection has also been utilised by several researchers over the course of the cataloguing project, from a V&A employee looking for 1930s material to a magazine writer wanting old advertisements. It is hoped that future researchers will now find it much easier to discover and access the archive. Staff at the HTA themselves have already benefited from having a more organised collection of records in order to support their work and respond accurately to historical queries. Although the Project Cataloguing Archivist's role has come to an end, the comprehensive catalogue that has been produced will provide a far easier way in to the collection than was previously possible. The catalogue was published on the Archives Hub website in July 2018 and is available at https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/search/archives/ca4b016b-2457-34cf-ab9d-079a1e41b563, or by going to https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk and searching for 'Harris Tweed Authority'. A press release was produced to mark the event, resulting in the project completion being picked up by media outlets including BBC Radio Scotland and *The Press and Journal*.[47] Images of some of the records in the collection can be found on the project Twitter account @HTAarchive. Potential users should contact the Archivist at Tasglann nan Eilean in the first instance, via email (archives@cne-siar.gov.uk) or telephone (01851 822750).

[47] Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, 'HTA Archive Project', 10 Jul 2018, https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/news/2018/july/hta-archive-project/; Lorna Macaulay (Chief Executive of the HTA) interviewed by Bill Whiteford (Presenter), *Newsdrive*, 11 July 2018, BBC Radio Scotland, 16:00–18:30 (interview at 2hr 19m 02s–2hr 24m 16s); C. MacLennan, 'Archive of Harris Tweed industry documented by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar', *The Press and Journal*, 11 Jul 2018, https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/islands/western-isles/1517397/archive-of-harris-tweed-industry-documented-by-comhairle-nan-eilean-siar/.