

Illustrations from the Wellcome Library

Wellcome Home to the Wellcome Foundation Archive

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The Wellcome Foundation Archive (WFA) comprises the surviving records of The Wellcome Foundation Ltd, the pharmaceutical company from which the fortunes of Henry Solomon Wellcome (1853–1936), and the Wellcome Trust, were derived.¹ The Wellcome Foundation Ltd was formed in 1924, as an amalgamation of Wellcome's business and other interests (including the Wellcome Bureau of Scientific Research—incorporating the Wellcome Physiological Research Laboratories and the Wellcome Chemical Research Laboratories, and also including the Wellcome Tropical Research Laboratories, and the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum) under one umbrella.² Before 1924 the business was known as Burroughs Wellcome & Company (BW&Co.), and it had its origins in the 1880 partnership between Wellcome and Silas Mainville Burroughs (1846–1895).³ The Burroughs Wellcome name continued to be used in some parts of the world—and indeed is still used as the name for the US equivalent of the Wellcome Trust today.⁴ The WFA was acquired by, or rather returned to, the Wellcome Trust in 2001, from the now-defunct GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) Heritage Archives at Greenford, Middlesex, and it is now part of the Wellcome Library's Archives and Manuscripts holdings.

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¹On the life of Henry (later Sir Henry) Wellcome, see Robert Rhodes James, *Henry Wellcome*, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1994. On the Wellcome Trust, see A R Hall and B A Bembridge, *Physic and philanthropy: a history of the Wellcome Trust 1936–1986*, Cambridge University Press, 1986.

²See Rhodes James, op. cit., note 1 above, pp. 395–9, for a glossary of selected Wellcome institutions. For more on Wellcome's tropical medicine

institutions, and the Chemical Research Laboratories, see L G Goodwin, E Beveridge, and J H Gorvin, *Wellcome's legacies*, London, The Wellcome Trust, 1998. On an aspect of the Physiological Research Laboratories, see E M Tansey, 'The Wellcome Physiological Research Laboratories, 1894–1904: the Home Office, pharmaceutical firms, and animal experiments', *Med. Hist.*, 1989, **33**: 1–41. See also E M Tansey and R C E Milligan, 'The early history of the Wellcome Research Laboratories 1894–1914', in Jonathan Liebenau, Gregory J Higby and Elaine C Stroud (eds), *Pill peddlers*, Madison, American Institute of the History of Pharmacy, 1990, pp. 91–106.

³BW&Co. will be used throughout the article to refer to Burroughs Wellcome & Co., although the firm was initially styled "Burroughs, Wellcome & Co.". The comma was removed at some point after Burroughs' death.

⁴See the website for the Burroughs Wellcome Fund, <http://www.bwfund.org/>.

Custodial History

Even before they were passed to what were then GlaxoWellcome Heritage Archives as a result of the 1995 Glaxo–Wellcome merger, the records that now form the WFA were well travelled, and they have a complex custodial history. For many years, the records remained with BW&Co. or The Wellcome Foundation Ltd at various sites, including: Snow Hill—their City of London headquarters; Dartford in Kent—site of their main manufacturing plant from 1889; Beckenham (also in Kent)—site of their British research laboratories from the 1920s; and later in the Euston area of Central London. The offices at Snow Hill were destroyed by enemy action in 1941, and exactly which records were lost in the bombing is unknown. Other records were sent for salvage during the war, something the company was not alone in doing.⁵ From the 1970s, a number of records were stored at Enfield in Middlesex, for a time. Some were held at Berkhamsted in Hertfordshire—principally those relating to Cooper McDougall & Robertson Ltd. Over time, many of the records were brought together at what had become the company’s Euston head offices, and the process was accelerated as the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the company in 1980 loomed large. Reminiscences of staff were collected too.

In 1980, Gilbert Macdonald’s company history *In pursuit of excellence* was published, to coincide with the centenary.⁶ Macdonald, retained by the firm as Company Historian after the publication of his work, inherited the records and reminiscences that had been gathered at Euston. He may also have inherited a “historic collection” of items from predecessors in the marketing and publicity departments. Combined, the records amounted to a good deal of material. A couple of years after *In pursuit of excellence* was published, a jubilee history of the Wellcome Trust (it would be fifty years old in 1986) was commissioned from Prof. A R Hall, and this led to further activity. An archivist was appointed to sort out the archives belonging to what had become the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine (WIHM), and was also to acquire any material more personal to Wellcome himself from the items in Macdonald’s care. All these records formed part of what has now been named the “Wellcome Archive” (WA).⁷ Fully catalogued and available for research in the Wellcome Library, the WA collection was accumulated over time, from the 1930s to 1997, from a variety of different sources, and not always as a result of a conscious effort to gather it together.⁸ It now primarily comprises personal papers of Henry Wellcome, the records of his Historical Medical Museum, and records from some of Wellcome’s other creations, such as the Wellcome Bureau of Scientific Research (though there are also items related to this in the WFA). The WFA now consists mostly of the business records of Wellcome and his companies. Silas Burroughs’ personal papers were not part of the collection, although

⁵ Wellcome Library (hereafter WL), WF/M/PB/01/01/01, *Foundation News* for Sept. 1942.

⁶ Gilbert Macdonald, *In pursuit of excellence: one hundred years Wellcome, 1880–1980*, London, The Wellcome Foundation, 1980.

⁷ ‘Report on the Contents of Room 1/10’, unpublished report on the care of the collection by Rosemary Milligan (née Hayes, now Dr Rosemary Hayes-Milligan).

⁸ On the history of the then Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, and predecessor bodies, see John Symons, *Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine: a short history*, London, The Wellcome Trust, 1993. A reading of the histories of the various bodies assists greatly in understanding the diverse nature of the records they have left behind. For full information on the WA please see the catalogues at the Wellcome Library.

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numerous items relating to him have crept into the WFA.⁹ Macdonald was to advise on any donation of records to what became the WA, but he died before the project could be started.¹⁰ In the end, nothing strictly of relevance to the WIHM was found in Macdonald's set of material, and the archivist appointed to deal with the WIHM material took up a post as the Wellcome Foundation's first company archivist.

Further accessions of material were acquired by the Wellcome Foundation archivist, and the company's Records Centre at their headquarters (established to concentrate on modern materials), and the WFA grew. Archivists working on it included Rosemary Milligan, Mary Williamson, John Davies and Sarah Westwood. The collection then moved to Greenford, following the 1995 merger, where Sarah Flynn worked on it for a time, until in 2001 an agreement between GSK and the Wellcome Trust saw the return of much material to the Wellcome Library, run by the Trust.¹¹ An inevitable result of all the moves of location and arrangement that the archive has suffered has been the frequent dislocation of original orders of material, and the use of numerous different reference numbers for the same items. This is something that the cataloguing project will have to deal with as best it can.

Cataloguing Project

A cataloguing project was proposed to accompany the return of the records to the Wellcome Trust, to be run under the auspices of the Wellcome Library's Archives and Manuscripts section. Two archivists were appointed for the project, Teresa Doherty and Adrian Steel. They were both experienced business archivists. The first task was to import existing finding aids into the cataloguing database used by the Wellcome Library Archives and Manuscripts section, CALM. The next task was to sort and arrange the records into order for cataloguing, whilst at the same time carrying out a conservation survey. Both these steps have been completed and there is now a clear idea of what the archive consists of, how it should be catalogued, and what conservation work is needed. The next stage is to catalogue specific series and make them available to researchers in the Wellcome Library, and to make the catalogues available via the web. This work is underway, and the first records catalogued became available for research in mid-2003.

Contents of the Wellcome Foundation Archive

The WFA is predominantly twentieth-century material, though it does cover c.1824 to c.1996. The majority of the operational records date from before 1945. It is a large archive, stored on about 350 linear metres of shelving, containing approximately 2000 boxes, 900

⁹There is a separate series of personal papers for Burroughs at the Wellcome Library, reference PP/SMB, but at present it is uncatalogued.

¹⁰See Milligan, *op. cit.*, note 7 above.

¹¹On the history of Glaxo, see Edgar Jones, *The business of medicine*, London, Profile Books,

2001. GSK retained almost all archive material related to Research and Development, and there is hardly any such material in the WFA now held by the Wellcome Library.

plans, 260 certificates, 340 guard books, 6500 photographs of various sorts, 60 rolls of film, 730 audio or video tapes, as well as 177 other items. There are many different types of records stored in a full range of media.

Notable elements of the archive include:

- Some records of the pre-partnership S M Burroughs & Co.
- Papers for the two founders of BW&Co. (Wellcome and Burroughs).
- Papers of senior managers from BW&Co./The Wellcome Foundation Ltd.
- Legal Papers, particularly concerned with trade-marks and stamp duty.
- Marketing records—including operational papers, a large collection of photographs and a substantial number of publications.
- Some financial records, mainly relating to salaries.
- Papers relating to the company's premises, such as the Wellcome Chemical Works at Dartford.

Many of these records will be dealt with in the remainder of this article.

The WFA also contains archives within archives, among them a substantial collection of records from Cooper McDougall & Robertson Ltd, a veterinary company acquired by The Wellcome Foundation Ltd in 1959. Coopers was particularly known for agricultural products such as sheep dips, and the collection of its records (reference: WF/C) includes material on its own world-wide subsidiary companies, the notebooks of its founder, William Cooper, dating from the mid-nineteenth century, and a strong set of administrative records. The WFA also contains archives of some related bodies, the British Insulin Manufacturers Association and the Therapeutic Research Corporation (references: WF/BIM and WF/TRC). The latter cover, for the most part, the Second World War period when major British pharmaceutical firms got together to advance the development and production of penicillin.¹² Although part of the WFA, these groups of records are significant holdings in their own right, and will not be dealt with in this article. Instead the focus will be on papers created directly by the Wellcome Foundation and its predecessors.¹³

Character

The WFA should be looked at alongside the WA, the collection of Wellcome material mentioned earlier.¹⁴ Because of the way in which they were assembled, the division between the WA and the WFA is blurred and there are many anomalies between the two. The clearest example of this overlap is the correspondence. Henry Wellcome's personal and business letter books are with the WFA—these are copies of letters made by the sender in a volume. Replies received are held in the WA, in bundles of correspondence arranged by the surname of the correspondent. To ensure that both sides of the correspondence are examined, the two collections must be consulted. At present, as has

¹² See, for example, Jonathan Liebenau, 'The British success with penicillin', *Soc. Stud. Sci.*, 1987, 17: 69–86. See also Jones, *op. cit.*, note 11 above, p. 66.

¹³ The Wellcome Trust has its own archivist/records manager, responsible for looking after its records. These are separate from the Wellcome Foundation Archive, and not covered in this article.

¹⁴ For more on the archival legacy of Sir Henry Wellcome, and on other records held by the Archives and Manuscripts section of the Wellcome Library, London, see Adrian Steel and Lesley A Hall, 'Sir Henry Wellcome's archival legacy and the contemporary historian', *Contemp. Br. Hist.*, 2003, 17 (3): 95–111.

been suggested, some of the Wellcome institutions, such as the Wellcome Bureau of Scientific Research, the Wellcome Chemical Research Laboratories, and the Wellcome Physiological Research Laboratories, have records in both the WA and the WFA.

The WA can illuminate parts of Henry Wellcome's life that the WFA cannot.¹⁵ It can also prove a boon for those interested in the non-business institutions he started, in particular his Historical Medical Museum. One set of correspondence, pertaining to Sir Henry Morton Stanley, was removed at an early date (1936) by the trustees of Wellcome's will. These papers were placed in the Royal Geographical Society where they are held as the "Stanley Archive".¹⁶ They are, in fact, Wellcome's copies of correspondence with Stanley, and other papers relating to Stanley that Wellcome had in his possession.

The way in which objects relating to The Wellcome Foundation Ltd have been scattered causes further confusion. The company held a collection of objects for marketing purposes as well as for historical interest. These included bottles and medical equipment, especially medicine chests used by famous adventurers or explorers, and returned to the firm when whatever the expedition was had been completed. At some stage, many of these were transferred to what became known as the Museum of the WIHM, and as such most were deposited on indefinite loan in the Science Museum, where they are now held as part of the Wellcome Collection.¹⁷ However, selected items remained with Gilbert Macdonald and, subsequently, with the Wellcome Foundation Archive. These included a few company signs, and some examples of products. Some objects remained with the company as they were still in use, mainly dating from the more recent period of the company's history. As a result of all this, objects relating to The Wellcome Foundation Ltd and its predecessors may be in the WFA, at the Science Museum, still with GSK, or elsewhere. Some of the objects held by the Science Museum overlap with marketing records in the WFA. In particular, product information, such as price lists, give descriptions and dates for the medicine chests and medicines the Science Museum holds. In the WFA there are also more specific instructions regarding individual products.

Marketing Records

As has been shown, the WFA contains a great variety of records. However, both in terms of size and number, the majority of surviving records now in the WFA have come from the various incarnations of the BW&Co. and Wellcome Foundation Ltd marketing departments. In addition, many of the other surviving records were created in support of the marketing function, in one way or another, including a good deal of the legal material, and some of the financial records. Even the founders' and senior managers' records often contain commentary on the marketing techniques employed.

¹⁵On one particular aspect of the collection see Amanda Engineer, 'Wellcome and "the great past"', *Med. Hist.*, 2000, **44**: 389–404.

¹⁶Royal Geographical Society, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR, UK. Access by written enquiry and appointment only.

¹⁷On the dispersal of the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum, see Georgina Russell, 'The Wellcome Historical Medical Museum's dispersal of non-medical material, 1936–1983', supplement to *Museums Journal*, 1986, **86**. See also Symons, *op. cit.*, note 8 above, pp. 48–50.

Amongst the marketing records are a substantial collection of photographs. These include sets of negatives, prints, lantern slides, rolls of film, 35 mm slides, transparencies, and microfilms. There is a separate audio-visual collection, comprising a set of videos (mainly relating to Wellcome Foundation Ltd products, or promoting the firm) and audio tapes (mainly oral history interviews with significant figures from the firm's past), as well as a small number of cine reels. This material originates from the main company sites at Dartford and Beckenham, but also includes photographs of overseas premises and staff. The photographic and audio-visual collections will not be dwelt upon in this article, but it should be remembered that these items exist, and support most of the other areas of research interest which are mentioned in this article.

It is not surprising that there are so many marketing records in the WFA, given the character of the firms of The Wellcome Foundation Ltd and BW&Co., and in particular the way that marketing was so central to their method of doing business. However, the number and variety that do survive are outstanding. Included in the series are:

- 340 Guard Books (scrap books) of organizational circulars, advertising literature, advertisements, product labels and other printed material (c.1880–1957).¹⁸
- Photographs, prints, negatives, microfilm and slides (c.1890–1990).
- Marketing and publicity operational files (1881–1988), detailing the work of the department.
- Publications by BW&Co. and its successors (including diaries and promotional booklets).
- Product literature for the firm's products (1900–1990).
- Papers for company histories, and a few objects.
- Press cuttings about the company (c.1880–1988).
- Some original artwork, for advertising purposes (c.1936–c.1992).
- Audio-visual material, films and oral histories (c.1963–1995).
- Certificates, diplomas and awards presented to the company by trade organizations, mostly for products (1881–c.1940).

Each of these “sub-collections” gives a detailed insight into corporate marketing strategies and techniques during the twentieth century, as well as being of historical interest in its own right. Each “sub-collection” contains several series of material—for instance there are 35 series of Guard books—and all cover a significant date range.

The main pillar of the BW&Co. business in the early days was the sale of American patented “over-the-counter” products. Indeed, Burroughs initially represented John Wyeth & Co.'s products, whilst Wellcome was an agent for the New York pharmaceutical firm, McKesson & Robbins.¹⁹ These American companies produced a range of medicines—many based upon the new “compressed tablets” that were being produced at the time. The companies Burroughs and Wellcome represented were as strict in their protection of their intellectual rights as BW&Co. were to become. BW&Co. were at the forefront of this

¹⁸ Unfortunately, these are very fragile and will require extensive remedial conservation work before they become available to the public.

¹⁹ For Burroughs and Wyeth's see WL, WF/E/02 *passim* (including correspondence on terms of

agreement). For Wellcome and McKesson & Robbins see WL, WA/HSW and WF/E/01 *passim* (such as WA/HSW/ED/B.5). See also Rhodes James, *op. cit.*, note 1 above, pp. 82–3.

American expansion into the British market, and soon added further products of their own to those they were agents for, manufactured at their own premises at Wandsworth, South London, and later at Dartford.²⁰

Many of these products were sold directly to consumers, and they proved to be especially lucrative.²¹ Marketing these products was very important in the early years as they became established, and continued to be so as BW&Co. branched out into prescription medicines. The prescription medicines and “pure drugs” which BW&Co. produced were sold only to medical personnel, and regulations (such as those under the 1868 Pharmacy Act) prevented advertising for these products to the general public. Both the drugs and patented products became influenced by the development of hard science: well-researched and clinically proven drugs and treatments, which were to prove important pharmaceutical products in the twentieth century. Sera and vaccines were among the earliest successes for the firm—for example, they were the first British company to produce the diphtheria antitoxin in 1894, and the first British company to launch production of insulin in 1922—and BW&Co. grew in stature.

However, the “over-the-counter” health-related goods, among them “Hazeline” (a beauty cream), “Calpol” (a children’s product with the tag “loving mother”), or the “Kepler” range of malt and cod liver oil products, became key to the commercial success of the company. Several of these products remained in production until the 1990s. The interest of the firm was widened to include the production of such items related to medicine as bandages, and photographic processing chemicals.

The series of product literature in the WFA is arranged by name or type of product. For example, a search for the product “Actifed” will uncover bundles of photographs, publications, and product literature. For Daraprim, an anti-malarial drug, the WFA contains a specific Guard Book of product literature, and a bundle of press cuttings as well as the photographs and product literature. In addition there are operational files on Daraprim from the marketing campaign. So, very often, an entire marketing strategy can be seen from inception through to delivery, by looking through the relevant parts of the WFA.

Looking across the marketing records in the WFA, there are ready comparisons to be made between marketing strategies and their execution at home and overseas. In the early years, roughly 1880–1940, records relating to overseas items were occasionally placed in the main “Circulars” series. However from about 1941 an “overseas circulars” series of Guard Books was begun, complemented by an “overseas advertisements” series. So, for example, one volume of ‘Overseas Advertising 1948–1952’ covers the territories of Jamaica, Trinidad, Barbados and British Guyana. Many of the Guard Books are arranged according to this division, which means that advertising campaigns in trade and/or general press for specific geographic areas can be highlighted, and compared.

²⁰WL, WF/M/GB/01, Circulars Guard Books (61 volumes) of product literature, 1885–1955, contain material for both products for which BW&Co. were agents, but also for BW&Co.’s own products such as Hazeline, and those made under the “Tabloid” and “Soloid” brands.

²¹Macdonald, *op. cit.*, note 6 above, p. 29, points out that “Wellcome’s best years in terms of business success were from 1895 to 1920. He was in the driving seat and the company prospered at home and abroad.”



Figure 1: Wellcome polio vaccine, dropped onto a sugar lump for a child patient, early 1980s (WFA: Acc89/43, Wellcome Library, London).

Trade-marks

The use of trade-marks—particularly “Tabloid” and “Soloid”—is evidence of the value Wellcome (and Burroughs) had placed on developing clear brands for themselves, to be associated with high quality products. The “Tabloid” mark was created and registered by Wellcome in 1884, and was used throughout the world for a range of medical and non-medical related goods.²² The word “Tabloid” later became part of common parlance, relating to a certain section of the British press. From the compressed pills that the name was first used to market, to medicine cases, bandages, tea and photographic chemicals, the “Tabloid” range was instantly recognized through its common and distinctive branding.

²²Rhodes James, *op. cit.*, note 1 above, pp. 112–13.



Figure 2: Wellcome banana flavoured “Septrin” bottle for children, 1988 (WFA: WPH/PR/130, Wellcome Library, London).

Wellcome’s personal correspondence contains plenty of evidence to show how much he himself participated in brand and trade-mark protection.²³ In a letter to Thomas Main, Wellcome stated,

... in our wide field of operations we have encountered a great many cunning devices but fortunately, we have been successful in every case we have taken up. We find it the best policy when the offence is deliberate and intentional to strike and strike hard.²⁴

So it is no surprise that the surviving records of the legal department’s work are also illuminating when it comes to the protection of patents and trade-marks. In the WFA there are some 60 boxes of legal records including trade-marks, stamp duty and legal agreements, all primarily concerned with the effective marketing of Wellcome products. During Wellcome’s lifetime there were several occasions when he and his firm vigorously defended his trade-marks with high profile legal cases against those who had, or were alleged to have, infringed the trade-mark. For example, in 1903 there was perhaps the best

²³ WL, WF/E/01, HSW papers; WA/HSW *passim*—HSW correspondence for outgoing and incoming letters on the subject.

²⁴ WL, WF/E/01 LB7, p. 7, letter to Thomas Main, 11 Aug. 1903.



Figure 3: “Tabloid” “Forced March” tonic to improve stamina, early 1900s (WFA: WPH/PR/130, Wellcome Library, London).

known of the legal challenges—a significant and successful “Tabloid Case” for BW&Co. versus Thompson and Capper, chemists of Liverpool and Manchester, which was widely reported in the press.²⁵ However there were earlier defences of the trade-mark, such as BW&Co. v. John Roger in 1897 over improperly manufactured “Tea Tabloids”.²⁶ Protection was not effected simply in England. There was a vigorous case against Dompe of Milan in the 1890s in order to defend the trade-mark in Italy.²⁷

²⁵ WL, WF/L, for various files on the Capper case, including contemporary newspaper cuttings (awaiting full catalogue reference).

²⁶ See WL, WF/L ‘John Roger’ (awaiting full catalogue reference).

²⁷ See WL, WF/L ‘Dompe’ (awaiting full catalogue reference).

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The WFA contains a series of records concerning the registration of trade-marks in countries across the world. The role of A E Warden was crucial in the protection of trade-marks. He worked for the firm for fifty years, retiring in 1942. At his retirement, the company news-sheet *Foundation News* emphasized his crucial role in protecting their “Tabloid” trade-mark:

In “Tabloid” we have, as everyone knows, one of the two most famous trade-marks in the world. It would be no exaggeration to say that it is due to Mr Warden’s constant action and watchfulness that we still possess the exclusive right to use that trade-mark today.²⁸

From its earliest point BW&Co. was an international firm which protected its international interests. Much of this was due to Wellcome’s personal diligence and persistence in this matter.

Patents

While there are some records specifically relating to patents in the WFA, these are best looked at in conjunction with patent records held at the British Library.²⁹ Here sets of the official patent records can be examined and, using a series of guides, information about those taken out by BW&Co. or individuals working for them can be found. In the WFA itself there are records relating to the protection of patents, similar to those for trade-marks. The most substantial sets are in the records of the Therapeutic Research Corporation, which this article is not dwelling upon.

Wellcome pursued the issue of “substitution of fraudulent goods” across the retail world. In 1902 he co-founded the “Imperial Industries Association” a retail trade association, with leading non-medical British firms such as Bovril and Schweppes, in order to protect branded goods. This organization had been preceded by the smaller, but similar, “Article Club”. Many of these contacts were “networking” and informal social relationships, but they give substance to Wellcome’s use of marketing as a key part of his broader business approach and acumen. Records relating to all these strands can also be found in Wellcome’s correspondence, both in the WA collection and the WFA.

In addition, as BW&Co. grew, it became more important that the products they made and sold were labelled precisely. This need arose not simply from the pharmaceutical “health and safety” requirements. There was also a need for precise labelling because wording on a label affected whether a product was considered “patented goods”, which incurred duty under the 1812 Medicines Stamp Act. This issue was not confined to Britain—in America the Internal Revenue Act was passed by Congress in July 1862, and similarly taxed patent medicines. Hence the final verdict on the wording on a label was not given by the chemists or the marketing division, but by the legal department.³⁰ A lot of the legal records in the WFA relate to this area of work, and they often

²⁸WL, WF/M/PB/01/01/01, *Foundation News* No. 4, Dec. 1942.

²⁹The British Library, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB. See also Stephen van Dulken, *British patents of invention, 1617–1977: a guide for researchers*, London, British Library, 1999.

³⁰See Museum of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain Information Sheet 10, *Patent and brandname medicines*, 2002.

contain working copies of labels for bottles, or cardboard packaging with annotations or queries as to how the information should be set out. Consequently, at first sight the files seem to be more of a marketing function than legal. However it is clear that the legal section took a strong lead in this aspect of the business, as the solicitors were the final signatories on the published versions of packaging.

An International Corporate Brand

Another important function of marketing at the company, which is reflected in the records to be found in the WFA, was the development of product branding. Products were developed and sold using distinctive names, rather than the chemical “compound” description. They also had their own brand identity, which was used in marketing materials. For example “Hazeline Snow” had an early floral or *art nouveau* design, which was later replaced with the snow-topped mountain that remained the predominant image associated with the brand. All literature for a particular product carried the same image, wording and typography. The layouts for labels, bottles, boxes and other packaging was all co-ordinated, with great attention to detail. Sales Agents were given detailed instructions as to how to market specific products, what to say to specific types of customers (“lay”, trade or medical). They were also given examples of how to create window displays, which are remarkably similar, whether they were meant for Argentina or Acton.

Often products were packaged with multi-lingual packaging. Alternatively, they could be given language specific packaging which was a direct translation of the original English version. But the look of the product, the feel of the product remained the same—recognizable across the globe. This can be seen throughout the marketing records, and the predominance of product-focused records is highly engaging.

Company Logos & Publications

The company initially used, by way of logo, its Burroughs Wellcome name, which was dominant on all its products. At first the company also sold the heavily branded products supplied by American drugs houses, but it gradually re-branded these by retaining the product name, but using it in conjunction with that of the company. The name was most often used in full, in capitals, in a clear typeface. It was positioned at the bottom of the printed area, justified to take “centre stage”, and sometimes underlined. This was soon joined by the unicorn, registered in 1908, which remained a key part of the branding process for the rest of the companies’ life. In packaging the unicorn was most often presented alongside the “Burroughs Wellcome”, or, later on, the “Wellcome Foundation Ltd” tag. It was primarily presented as a silhouette, and its design was changed in 1968, when a more streamlined version was agreed.³¹ Elsewhere the unicorn appeared in sketches, as “mock” photographs, in relief on company signage or even as sculpture.

³¹Macdonald, *op. cit.*, note 6 above, p. 116.

Research interest could be in the longevity of these brand components, their international use, and their use over a variety of products. They were successful aspects of a pharmaceutical business which had very strong commercial characteristics. The range of product literature and packaging surviving for a substantial time-span is also of value to researchers.

It is worth mentioning here the in-house publication *Foundation News*, and other related newsletters or magazines, published internally by the firm. This was another way in which Wellcome Foundation employees were made to feel that they belonged to one company with a laudable set of values: the magazine aimed to transmit this company ethic to its various offices. Though there are a few gaps in the run of *Foundation News* that survives in the WFA, it is a first-class source of information on the company from the Second World War to the 1980s.³² Mention is made in the publication of staff and their work, sales initiatives by the firm, the many offices operated in the UK and overseas, factories, products, and touches of personal information such as notices relating to the marriage of staff. This set of publications is well worth consulting if the post-war period of the firm's development is to be studied. It is also good for answering queries on specific individuals, though the lack of a thorough index means that often a pile of magazines have to be read through.

Sponsorship and Explorers

Henry Wellcome was a consummate salesman, always looking for a new angle or opportunity. As a young man he had travelled widely in South America, in particular in Ecuador, and this had given him an interest in and contacts with a range of professional Victorian explorers.³³ One of these, Stanley, became a good friend of Wellcome, and they had much in common, becoming expatriate Americans in London. It was this initial interest in the subject that spurred Wellcome to developing a major product range within the business.³⁴

Medicine cases, containing drugs and medical equipment tailored for a specific climate or environment, were developed. In the company's price lists, which were available to all—including the general public—and which have survived in reasonable numbers in the WFA, a range of medicine cases were advertised. Domestic and work medicine cases were available, as well as "holiday" cases for all destinations. In 1895 BW&Co. were advertising "The Cyclist" miniature case for the domestic market, "The Alpine" for Alpine Tourists" catered for those who travelled as far as the Continent, whilst "The Indian Medicine Case" was available for those more experienced or adventurous travellers.³⁵ These latter tropical medicine cases were, of course, marketed as being particularly useful for those who were travelling to far-flung parts of the British Empire.

³² A run of the magazine is also held separately in the Wellcome Library.

³³ WL, WF/E/01 *passim* (awaiting full catalogue references).

³⁴ Macdonald, *op. cit.*, note 6 above, p. 41.

³⁵ WL, WF/M/PB 'Trade price list 1895' (awaiting full catalogue reference).

Professional explorers were offered, free of charge, their own specialized medicine cases. These explorers were photographed *in situ* with the BW&Co. or “Tabloid” branded products clearly visible. These photographs, together with carefully selected quotations from letters of commendation received, were then used to market the products to the general public. A particularly good example of this is *The romance of exploration and emergency first-aid from Stanley to Byrd. Chicago Century of Progress Exposition 1934*.³⁶ Published by BW&Co. (USA) Inc., this small volume was provided free to those who visited the major Chicago Exposition, and contained a range of quotations from explorers such as Stanley, Shackleton, Emin Pasha, Etherton and Walter Wellman. All kinds of exploration, whether polar, Everest, the tropics, by air, or by missionaries were referred to—as were the more mundane uses for medicine cases such as “The Motor Cycle Kit” or “The School Kit”, all of which were advertised at the back of the volume.

Direct marketing to the army also assisted Wellcome’s cause. Free samples, provided by BW&Co., could be followed by substantial orders. Also, working with more formal organizations meant Wellcome could measure the efficacy of particular items in use. He repeatedly asked for reports from those who had used his products so that he could incorporate suggestions into later products. Hence the WFA contains correspondence with people such as Dr Saul Potter, the Major & Brigade Surgeon of the US Army, Manila. In an exchange with him, Wellcome thanked Potter for his comments about the “Feather-weight Medical Equipment” which had been supplied by BW&Co. to the US Army in the Philippines. Wellcome requested additional details and wanted suggested improvements from Potter—especially as to what was the most suitable packing for the tropics.³⁷

All of the medicine cases were marketed with the sponsorship aspect in mind. A consumer could gain personal satisfaction through using authentic goods, as used by the great explorers they knew much about. The quality of the product would be underlined, and its desirability increased by association. In the WFA there is a range of material associated with “explorers”, including correspondence, photographs, and product literature.³⁸ There are also four volumes of press cuttings dedicated to “explorers”.³⁹ The connection of the firm with exploration was one which continued beyond Wellcome’s lifetime, and remained a key aspect of the marketing strategy as long as the company continued in existence.

International Business History

The WFA also relates to the history of the development of international business, and parallels can be drawn with several different movements. The arrival of two American businessmen in London to sell American goods is part of that story. Burroughs and Wellcome established their business in London to be positioned to sell not simply in Britain but also to the European market. Being geographically close to Europe, but within a culture in which

³⁶ WL, WF/M/PB *The romance of exploration and emergency first-aid from Stanley to Byrd 1934* (awaiting full catalogue reference).

³⁷ WL, WF/E/01/01/05, pp. 236, 237.

³⁸ WL, WF/M/PR, Explorers press and publicity prints (awaiting full catalogue reference).

³⁹ WL, WF/M/GB/35, four volumes of explorers press cuttings (awaiting full catalogue reference).

there was already a strong American infrastructure and a common language, made business transactions easier. The existence of the American Society in London reflects the numbers of wealthy Americans, mostly businessmen, who like BW&Co. were pursuing this strategy. BW&Co. established links and agents across Europe and successfully opened an office in Milan as early as 1905.⁴⁰ Throughout the records there is correspondence with references to this growth.

Burroughs and Wellcome chose London for additional advantages that it had. Its vibrancy as an international port was not lost on the firm. Both of the company's factories—Wandsworth and Dartford—had easy access to the River Thames and the Pool of London. Their products were not simply to be sold to Europe, but were to be dispatched throughout the Empire. Melbourne was the earliest of the international offices to be established, earlier than that in Italy, being opened there in 1886.⁴¹ Products were also sent to the Far East and Asia, with an office opening in Shanghai in 1908, and a presence being established in India and parts of Africa. BW&Co. also sold their products “back” to North America with offices being set up first in New York, and later in Tuckahoe. Offices appeared further north in Canada, and further south in countries such as Argentina. The growth of BW&Co. was not limited to one particular region, but from the earliest years a truly global undertaking was embarked upon.

The records in the WFA reflect this. There is correspondence between the two founders as one or other travelled, finding new outlets and possibilities for the expansion of their business.⁴² There are also two volumes of ‘Travellers Records’, in which overseas agents sent short reports concerning the overseas operations—these include a few reports by Burroughs himself.⁴³ There is also correspondence between overseas concerns and the head office, one of the most complete sets of this being communication between the New York office and the company's head office in London.⁴⁴ In other parts of the WFA there are site plans for some of the offices, such as those in Sydney, Shanghai and Cape Town.⁴⁵

The marketing records also show the selling of products to other countries with different languages and cultures. Whilst the product literature—particularly the “diaries” given to medical professionals—were created in a number of editions, some for different medical staff, they were also amended according to the country or geographical area. Editions of *Wellcome's photographic exposure calculator handbook & diary* were created for “Australia & Tropics”, “Italy”, “Canada & Tropics” the “Northern Hemisphere”, “Northern Hemisphere & Tropics”, “Southern Hemisphere & Tropics”, “USA”, and “USA & Tropics”, for example.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ WL, WF/M/P, ‘Italy: Memoranda [23 Jan. 1907 and 25 Mar. 1912] about the establishment and premises of the Milan Depot, 1905–1911’ (awaiting full catalogue reference).

⁴¹ WL, WF/M/H, ‘Note of matters omitted from “The History of the Firm” 1910’ (awaiting full catalogue reference).

⁴² Such as WL, WF/E/02, ‘Correspondence 1882–1887’ (awaiting full catalogue reference).

⁴³ WL, WF/M/GB/32/01-02, ‘Records of travellers calls (home & abroad) 1881–1887’.

⁴⁴ WL, WF/E, ‘New York manager's papers (Nevin) 1914–1954’ (awaiting full catalogue reference).

⁴⁵ WL, WF/CA (awaiting full catalogue reference).

⁴⁶ WL, WF/M/PB, ‘Photographic diaries & handbooks 1902–1955’ (awaiting full catalogue reference).

Local and Staff History

Because of the way in which a large employer could (and still can) be linked closely with the development of an area, it is possible to use some records in the WFA to throw new light on the history of localities in which the firm established premises. The most material for this survives for Dartford, though there is some for other sites such as Beckenham and those taken over from Cooper McDougall & Robertson Ltd, especially Berkhamsted. For example, records survive relating to local events in which the firm participated, such as the inauguration of Dartford as a municipal borough in September 1933.⁴⁷ The photographs taken of sites and surrounding areas are also of particular interest here.

The records relating to Burroughs are also useful from a local historian's point of view, as well as in terms of the good employee relations that the BW&Co. firm had. Burroughs was politically active and had strong philanthropic views. He introduced an eight-hour day, and provided a staff library and gardens.⁴⁸ But he was also a great benefactor to Dartford, and had many local interests in his lifetime. For example, he was a founder of the Livingstone Hospital, opened just before his death.⁴⁹ Upon his death, his will included generous provision for BW&Co. staff.⁵⁰

After Burroughs' death, Wellcome continued to look after the staff of what was now his business. He established the Wellcome Club & Institute, which opened in 1899, building on facilities that Burroughs had already provided. This offered greater leisure opportunities for staff, including sports facilities, libraries, lectures and support for social clubs such as cricket and drama.⁵¹ As was the custom of the time, separate provision was made for men and women, with segregated buildings. Wellcome was probably less personally involved with his staff than Burroughs, but still maintained good relations. Regular features were the Christmas gift of a specially bound "classic" book to all staff (whether in London or Sydney), and also an annual outing or summer party.⁵² There are usually souvenir menus or programmes from these events surviving in the WFA.

Many photographs of staff, either at work or at social gatherings survive. Most of the photographs are indexed by name and there are occasionally additional details in the form of press releases. There are also many articles in the various staff publications, such as *Foundation News*, which give an insight into working conditions and employees' lives throughout the life of the company.

Conclusion

This article has, inevitably, been able to highlight only part of what can be found in the WFA. The material in the collection can be used for research on many subjects—some have been indicated, and others, such as gender studies, employment of ethnic minorities, industrial relations or genealogy, have not. Historians have had access to some of this

⁴⁷ WL, WFA Acc83/2/2; WGA253: *Souvenir of the incorporation of Dartford as a municipal borough*, 13 Sept. 1933.

⁴⁸ Macdonald, op. cit., note 6 above, p. 19.

⁴⁹ Macdonald, op. cit., note 6 above, p. 19. See also WL, WFA: Acc82/1 Box 16; WGA175.

⁵⁰ WL, WFA: Acc86/98/10; WGA327.

⁵¹ WL, WFA: PB/66 (1899).

⁵² Rhodes James, op. cit., note 1 above, p. 172.

Wellcome Home to the Wellcome Foundation Archive

archive before, but other parts have not been used and there is much in it awaiting discovery and further study. The first completed catalogues were produced, and the first blocks of archive material from the collection made available, in June 2003. As more material is made available to researchers, details will be posted on the Wellcome Library website.⁵³ By the time the cataloguing project is complete, access will have been provided to a valuable resource for the historical community.

⁵³<http://library.wellcome.ac.uk>