Jess Conway 0:01

Okay, so the date is the ninth of March 2020. I'm Jess Conway interviewing Chloe Anderson for the Department of Information Studies centenary project. The interview is being conducted over Skype with me in London and Chloe in the Falklands. [Unclear] start with with some kind of contextual information about you, so could you tell me when and where you were born and also where you live now?

Chloe Anderson 0:32

Yeah. So I was born on 23rd November in 1995. And due to medical reasons, I was actually born in Leeds. I was actually meant to be born in the Falkland Islands. Er, and I have lived the majority of my life in the Falkland Islands. And then I moved to the UK when I was 15 to continue further education. As we only have two schools here.

Jess Conway 1:05

Oh wow. And when you say further education was that for your undergrad degree that you moved to the UK?

Chloe Anderson 1:11

So that is for A levels, secondary school and it goes up to GCSE level. You go before your A Levels and then undergraduate and then I of course went on to the UCL Archives and Records Management master's degree.

Jess Conway 1:25

Yeah. And what did you study for your undergraduate degree?

Chloe Anderson 1:30

So I studied history and English at the University of Portsmouth.

Jess Conway 1:35

And was it during that time that you first, studying history I mean, that you first became interested in archives and records management as a potential career or did it happen after that point?

Chloe Anderson 1:46

So it actually happened before. I mean, I've always been interested in history. It's always been the subject at school that I've excelled at the most. And then when I went over to the UK when I was 15 to do my levels, we then come back home for like Easter breaks and Christmas and things like that. So it's actually the first Easter break. So that would have been in about, I don't know, March, April 2012. And I returned and I decided to contact the archives here and do some volunteering just to get some experience in a history related workplace and just try to see if I felt interested. And after the first day of actually volunteering, I kind of knew that it was something that I wanted to do. And then since then I've kind of got the bug if you like. Everything I've, everything I've done has been geared towards history, working in archives. So since then, I've volunteered in many different organisations, and well every time I came home to the Falkland Islands, I volunteer at the local archives here. Actually the National Archives here. And then when I went to University of Portsmouth, I then volunteered at an archives there whilst doing my undergraduate course for three years. And yeah, just made sure that all of my experience that I had was just geared towards there so that I had, you know, I was prepared to, that by the time I completed my undergraduate degree I could apply for the, the UCL course, immediately.

Jess Conway 3:28

So if like an interest in history and a sort of academic interest in history, was your motivation for getting interested in archives as a career, has that motivation changed at all? Or is that still kind of primary thing you're interested in? If you see what I mean?

Chloe Anderson 3:43

Yeah, erm, it's kind of not changed that that much. I mean, obviously working in archives, as I'm sure you know, you, it kind of just becomes a lot more than just a thing to do and something to fill your time with, it becomes something that's so much more interesting. And actually, I found that whether you're working in a small archives or a large archives, the feeling of satisfaction that you get of helping to preserve and provide access to these really important documents and preserve for future generations has been kind of a real motivation to, to do this work. Because it's not just for you or, you know, any current objectives that, you know, anyone may have, it's just for the future. And to think that some of the documents, you know, they date back hundreds and hundreds of years before you were even born, it's just fascinating and yeah, I just can't get enough [laughs].

Jess Conway 4:44

So, when you were studying for your undergrad and sort of volunteering and everything and thinking about studying the master's degree, were you, was there any particular factor that made you decide to pursue it at UCL specifically, as opposed to another UK institution?

Chloe Anderson 5:11

So, I probably looked at UCL because, I mean, it's a great institution, you know, already so it already had quite a good, erm, background and I heard quite a lot about it just through my own research. But then when it came to actually having the interview and having a look around the campus, just a short time I was there and looking at the course material, it was the, it's the subject matter that really interests me and all the different opportunities that came along with it. So the opportunity to do a preservation unit, a digitization unit which then had my master's focused on, well my dissertation focused on, was probably the, the the driving factor. I also just, you know, as you do you apply for lots of other courses, so I also applied for the archive, administrative course at Aberystwyth and also the similar one at Liverpool University. And even though I was accepted at all three, essentially, I started at UCL was, was just probably the best feeling, really. That was still very, a good decision, when I went there, so.

Jess Conway 6:19

Did you have any prior perceptions of UCL or maybe of the department before studying there that turned out to be maybe incorrect or something was unexpected or something about your learning experiences, not what you had anticipated, at all?

Chloe Anderson 6:35

I have to say I was probably a bit naive in that my perception was that, you obviously have to be super intelligent to get the best grades essentially, to get to UCL in the first place, and I think once I actually started, it kind of helped to grow my confidence in my own abilities, and actually the you know, I, I was expecting perhaps lecturers to be a certain kind of way. But actually, it was just a whole amazing experience and everyone was so, so nice. And obviously, you know, the lecturers are kind of, well, the best in their field. So it was a fantastic experience. And yeah, definitely just throw away any any previous negative perceptions that I may have had about the university. But yeah, it became completely positive and it was great.

Jess Conway 7:29

Great. And did when you were studying on course, did you sort of become aware of any interests within the profession that you hadn't previously had?

Chloe Anderson 7:40

I'd probably say digitization, only because I'd never done, had too much experience with it. I'd obviously had to scan some documents. But it was really the kind of that practical element that I wanted to get more of, because I'm not naturally perhaps a practical person. So I wanted to kind of push myself a bit more and get more involved in that type of element. But so by doing that unit, it kind of gave me an interest in, in a more digital side of archives, because previously I, you know, just primarily work with the, with the paper side and the hardcopy work so, so that was actually really interesting. And that's kind of given me a bit more, I don't know, options I guess, when it comes to the field of archives. I'm like, I'm actually interested in looking at that side of things rather than just, kind of, stepping away from it.

Jess Conway 8:37

Was there anything, sort of thinking maybe a bit more broadly, when you were studying that changed your perspective of the profession as a whole, you know, like any kind of view that you held about working in archives prior to studying the course that had changed upon completing the course?

Chloe Anderson 9:01

Erm, so it wasn't particularly in terms of archives but it terms of records management, previous to the course I had no experience in records management at all, it was all primarily based in archives. So, so records management side of the course kind of frightened me to begin with, I didn't really know what I was doing. But by the end of it, you know, doing various units, and coursework involved with that, it kind of made me a bit more aware of the records management side of things and just how important that element is. And how, because I've said, I had no experience prior, just how closely the records management link is with archives and how really can't have one without the other. And, and, yeah, I think that that kind of changed my perception of the field a bit more.

Jess Conway 9:48

Yeah, I noticed when I was looking at your, your LinkedIn prior to this interview that you had mainly experience prior to UCL with kind of, I don't know maybe what we say more sort of traditional archival work in a sense, or very much archive based, like you just said, but then after the degree, you've worked mainly in a records management capacity. Was this a conscious decision that you made at all? Or was it sort of just how it panned out after graduating?

Chloe Anderson 10:18

It's completely just how it panned out. I mean, once I finished the masters I was like, right, I should just get a job, erm, initially I was actually wanting to get a job in the UK, but due to my own personal circumstances, I thought I need to come home for a bit first. And so I've got this job and actually the job wasn't, wasn't titled or geared towards records management at all. I've actually found I've forced FIG to do this. So essentially FIG, Falkland Islands Government, had no kind of record management policies or any record management processes in place at all, with hardly, you know, like records retention schedules or policies, no policies, absolutely nothing, so alongside my normal day to day job, my line manager kind of agreed slash wanted me to work on this because we acknowledged it was a, you know, a problem, you know, essentially. So that's how I kind of got involved in that aspect. And then it just kind of grew from there into now having an actual position as Record Manager. And obviously, because I was, my own experience was really through the course that really helped, you know, writing a 4000 word business case actually really came in handy when having to, I had to write a business case for lots of various things to do with the records management element and and implementing a system. So it kind of just all fell into place. And then saying that, you know, I still have my interest in archives. So still, even though I'm working, you know, primarily as records manager in the government, the government, I'm still pursuing my archival work in terms of being a remote volunteer for some projects. And as you know, I volunteer once a week, also at the National Archives still here in the Falklands, just to keep up that archival skill base. But yeah, records management a lot more interesting than I first thought.

Jess Conway 12:18

And did you find that there is, or rather maybe what was the period of transition, like between full time learning and then full time, you know, working as a professional out in the field?

Chloe Anderson 12:31

Yeah, I mean, it was, I mean, it's a pretty big step for for anyone to take in and pretty daunting, but I think that the course set, I mean the theory and all the information that you learn, really does set you up very well for actually going into the workplace. Because with all the previous experience that you've had in order to get onto the course, you, you know what to expect. So actually getting into the workplace was easier, perhaps, then I thought it was going to be as a professional because actually, I did know what I was doing, and I could do all these, all these things. And yeah, even just writing a policy, which was probably one of the first things I did when I, when I actually, you know, wasn't employed, the tools that I developed through the course and in just being able to know the difference and being able to define a record, and all the theoretical concepts behind that really helped. So I didn't have any challenges or you know, have anything, barriers in the way for when I actually went into the work place. I felt completely at ease and like, okay, let's just get on with it.

Jess Conway 13:48

Is there any kind of education experience or thing that you learned or class that you took that you found has been particularly helpful in your job, maybe something that you've kept returning to or always held in your mind?

Chloe Anderson 14:00

Yeah, I mean, I mean, specifically because it's a records management focused role as opposed to archival, the recordkeeping unit was quite useful and the, Creation and Capture. That was a really, really helpful unit, because it gave you, well it gave me my first introduction to records management and what it is, what it means, and the various processes that come along with it. So I'll go back to an example, records retention schedules, we had a whole unit focused on that, and we had to go away and look at various other records retention schedules that are used in different institutions to see how they're laid out, and you know, the importance of them. And so from going from essentially knowing nothing to knowing quite a lot, that really helped for my current job role because it meant that when it came to explain to people the importance of implementing a records management system and having a records retention schedule, you know, people are like, oh, it's just a document, but just explain the importance of the document, and how it provides accountability and, you know, all, all of that kind of reasoning behind it that I learned myself enabled me to explain that to others. So that really helped, because that's brilliant, that you know, where most of my knowledge and, and everything came from, in order to do this job. But saying that each, each unit really gave me the confidence in my own abilities to just be able to just get on with it and do it. And that's probably the best thing, really.

Jess Conway 15:39

Yeah. Is there anything you learned that has been brought into question in your professional practice? Like, is there anything that maybe you learned whilst at UCL that has maybe turned out to not be your perception of something, or you have a different experience of that which you learned about.

Chloe Anderson 15:59

That's a good question. I don't think so. I don't think so. Um, and I mean, just prepping for this interview, I've had to go over all like to have a quick look at all my assessments I did, because it's hard to think that it's almost been three years and I thought, oh, yeah, I remember what I did, and actually, I, you know, my memories going I'm like, oh, what did I do for that unit? They all kind of merge into one, but no I don't actually think, think that anything has, has changed? And really, kind of, yeah, no it's all been fine, I've not thought any condemning thoughts [laughs].

Jess Conway 16:42

Great. Have you found, I mean, most of your professional experience has been on, in the Falklands, in the Falkland Islands. But have you found any differences between British approaches to recorkeeping or maybe other international approaches to recordkeeping that you might have learned about and those that are applied in the Falkland Islands?

Chloe Anderson 17:04

Well I think the Falkland Islands, it kind of wasn't, the National Archives is actually quite well established in terms of, well, the practices that it has, in terms of records management, it's a completely different area, essentially, because there's, there's nothing really, well previous to me [?] this work in the Falkland Islands or anything, at least formal. And so the practices in the UK are, well, they're a lot better. And it's a bit more like a better oiled, oiled machine compared to our which is like just, just starting off, it's just getting its nuts and bolts in really. So, but it's been fascinating. I mean, even just working for three years in a Portsmouth archive, it was great to see the different technologies and just the way, even cataloguing is a completely different experience because, we because we're such a small institution in the Falklands, and we don't use some national standards, even just, you know, ISAD(G), we don't necessarily follow the exact rules of that. We don't have Calm because we don't have any software that may need, well, because of just geographic where we are, in terms of support available, it's quite difficult. So, actually catalogue means based on Microsoft Access. So then coming over and having the experience in the UK, which is completely different. And you know, being able to use Calm, being able to digitise documents, and just seeing the, you know, the large institution, so working at the Royal College of Surgeons, you know, their archive is, is amazing, and it's massive, and even the British Library, it's, it, I mean, that was privileged to work in and it's completely different to the archive here because obviously we're so much smaller. And actually we don't have moveable racking. So, I mean, that was fascinating. And just the amount of researchers and you're dealing with requests and things like that. It's just a lot smaller in comparison. So it's a different way of working. Firstly, and so that was an interesting thing to look at and, and acknowledge. But then the different, the experiences in the UK are also completely different. So there's more opportunities to kind of try different things. Again, I'll go back to digitising and preservation and cataloguing and, yeah, but I mean, saying that they've all got fascinating collections. So you kind of just get lost in them eventually.

Jess Conway 19:55

Yeah. What's the kind of public perception of archives like in the Falkland Islands, like do you find it, it's maybe less thank over here where it's still, you know, maybe not recognised as a form of heritage as much as museums or other kind of forms.

Chloe Anderson 20:14

I think here it is kind of, it's a bit difficult. Because the archives here, in order to be able to access it, really, if you don't do any research, you've got to actually make an appointment. So already in comparison in terms of some UK based archival institutions where people just be able to just go in and have an open exhibition, things like that. It's already a bit more restricted, I guess, in terms of being able to access because it's almost that you have to have prior knowledge of, of an archival institution, you've got to know that it's there essentially, before you can use it, it's not something that you can just kind of stumble across, which is probably a good thing in all respects. But I think here you know, how, people know how important it is and they know how important it is to, why to preserve the documents and especially with our own political situation with Argentina and the fact that actually having all this information and being able to prove that you know, we are a self-determining country and that we've made all these achievements is, is a great, is a really great thing to preserve so people understand the importance of having the archives here and of preserving the information but I think in comparison to maybe like a museum or something I'm not sure they see it quite as a, something that they can easily access or information that they can you know, just go and see because as opposed to a museum where you know, exhibitions are everywhere and and it's probably a bit more open. The archives [unclear] here isn't potentially great in...I don't know, in probably, doing any advocacy, you know, opening up and presenting, you know that we are here and just closing the message of just how important archives are for, for society. And particularly for such a small community such as this where you know everybody and you're, you know the history and whether you're a ninth or fifth generation Falkland Islander is important. And knowing that your, your granddad was, you know, the harbormaster and then he went on to do this and then he went on to do that, it's fascinating to track your family history and how different families intertwine, and I think the perception, the perception is there, and people understand the importance of it, but I think potentially more could be done and it's a little bit less open, I would say here in the Falklands than perhaps in in the UK, certainly in terms of research and just learning your own history really.

Jess Conway 23:03

Yeah. Do you have any just personal ideas yourself of how you'd like to see openness and advocacy and accessibility towards archives and records improve in the Falklands?

Chloe Anderson 23:16

Well, I think a good step is just public awareness really. And maybe having an open day, you know, it doesn't even have to be [unclear], just having people come in and have a look at the collections that you hold. Obviously, not anything that's really fragile, but you know, things that you can take out, show them. I mean, the archivist just has some, she does have some exhibitions, but they're kind of mounted on the wall and they're not, you know, you've kind of obviously got to be invited or have an appointment in the building before you can actually enter and see these. Because, I mean, it is your facility and that's, you know, totally the correct process because just how small the archives is, but yeah, having an open day or something, you know a big exhibition or even just a small exhibition where people can come in and have a look or really, I think it'd be a good starting point to raise awareness and show people the importance and also get people interested, because then you'll have more people coming in doing research, finding out about their history, the Falklands. And then, you know, we have the SS Great Britain, here. So it could potentially have people interested in other topics or then go to other archival institutions to find out more, and just be a really educational source, really.

Jess Conway 24:35

You mentioned, you spoke a little bit earlier about your experience in volunteer roles, and that you had a number of volunteer roles before studying at UCL and also that you continue to volunteer now whilst working professionally. Have you found there's any, or maybe what kind of benefits have you found of working in a volunteer capacity whilst you're also you know, working professionally as a records manager?

Chloe Anderson 25:01

One of the great things about volunteering is you can kind of, [unclear] up when you want to. So it kind of, it works around your own schedule, which has always been been great when doing full time education. Because everyone's been kind of great as to when, when you can come in and what you can do, and also the range of opportunities. I mean, working in archives anyway, it's so, it's just a variable profession anyway, so you could be cataloguing one moment, as you know, and then, I don't know, preserving the document next, or or just talking to researchers, so there's all sorts of things that you can do in one day. I think with volunteering, it's, it's great because you just get to have an experience doing lots of different roles. Even if you're just there to do cataloguing, you could just become involved in another project. I mean, when I was at Portsmouth, I had so much experience I did cataloguing and then we had an archive store move from one location to another, and I was involved in that, which is, you know, you don't really get to do that very often. So I think we've volunteering I found that I can get involved with a lot more elements of the profession and of the field which has then been great for, you know, previous experience getting onto the course. But even now, you know, up keeping my archival skills and even though I'm in a primarily records management based role, or even just challenging myself, and just getting involved in different elements and, you know, digitising things, and it's, I think that's probably the best thing is just the variety. And then also the flexibility that you know, I can do it alongside a full time role.

Jess Conway 26:40

Yeah. Aside from your sort of personal experiences volunteering, do you have any thoughts on the role volunteers play within the profession, generally speaking?

Chloe Anderson 26:52

I think it's, it's so important, really, it's so important, I mean, from hearing archivists actually talk about volunteers themselves it just, it really emphasises just how important volunteers are to the sector really in, in, in, in helping the work. I mean, especially in terms of something like cataloguing, where there's, in some places a massive backlog of records that still need to be catalogued, and that the import contribution that volunteers make, you know, in terms of actually helping with that, but then just getting involved in different kinds of projects, you've got, you know, the actual work that they're doing in terms of helping in the field, but then the contributions that they have in terms of helping up with exhibitions, and then also how they impact on themselves as well because it helps them get into research and encourages them to use archival institutions. And of course, volunteers may consist of, you know, people like you and me, like students who then get encouraged to actually get into the field or have an interest in history and then that could, you know make them do an undergraduate course, a master's course, I think it's just so important genuinely. And then you've got the social factor that actually encourages people to get involved in local history, find out about their own area, or even just make friends. And, you know, it could have just so many other benefits rather than just helping, helping an archive catalogue a few documents. So it's, it's so important.

Jess Conway 28:33

You mentioned earlier that you wrote your master's dissertation whilst at UCL on digitization. Was that influenced by anything particularly you learned whilst studying?

Chloe Anderson 28:46

Yes, it was mainly from a mixture of what I learnt during the course but also through my own practices, was the emphasis that the field, archives and records management field, tends to have on the access impact of, of digitisation rather than the benefits that it might have towards preservation and the fact that lots of these initiatives or funding projects that may be undertaken for digitisation, the main reason or motivation behind it is really getting more information out there and making it more accessible and making people be able to come in and use it rather than or opposed to this document is very fragile so we need to digitise it in order to you know, kind of reduce the amount of footfall for people looking at the original and, you know, even in the British Library, the focus preservation, digitization projects, the EAD even that is very much motivated by access. So I think doing the course practically and, you know, seeing the actual benefits of digitization and reading all the theory behind it really motivated that topic for my master's dissertation.

Jess Conway 30:11

Has, working as a records manager now, have you been very much involved with, with digital records whether that's digitising records or born digital material, in your kind of professional experience post-UCL so far?

Chloe Anderson 30:25

So in the Falkland Islands government currently we are, well we're years behind the practices really. So a lot of it is still very much paper, very much paper-based though, of course, a lot more electronic records are growing. So it's been a mixture, definitely a hybrid of the both, of the two in terms of electronic records, because we don't have any formal management system for electronic records, it's kind of been a bit difficult, in a sense to manage them, and also because there's no centralised kind of repository, if you like, means that every FG department are kind of doing things by themselves and ad hoc, so even file name conventions, there's no file name conventions and they're currently, you know, doing things for themselves. And so my experience has currently been mainly raising people's awareness of the fact that you need to manage electronic records effectively and writing guidance documents, and performing training sessions for staff for how to manage electronic records. Same as you would, you know, with paper records. And raising awareness [unclear], you know, the growing reliance that we have on, on the electronic now rather than the paper and how even something as simple as auto archiving or, or, you know, having your folder, hierarchical systems set up correctly, on a shared drive is really important as accessing your material. And so that's kind of to the extent in terms of records management element, in terms of digitization, I'm currently writing a policy for digitization as to whether you should digitise records or not. And that's very much in draft stage. So it's kind of limited in, in that kind of sense. I have to say, just as an aside, in my work, most of my digitization experience right now comes from the volunteer work that I do at the archives. So it's still kind of very much paper based in my current role. But I mean, the importance of managing electronic records is still there, so I still do get involved with it in terms of training and providing guidance notes and trying to manage everything at once.

Jess Conway 32:53

How have you found people sort of within the government within your organisation respond to you, to this awareness raising about the management of digital records, have you found that people respond positively? Or is it sort of with trepidation at all?

Chloe Anderson 33:10

So people have responded really positively, obviously when you talk about records management, initially, everyone's like, Oh, it's such a boring subject, so one of the first things I did was create these little advocacy cards, so they're kind of like business-sized cards with just simple and helpful advice and tips for people managing electronic records and just records generally, that was kind of the first thing on that I did, and people find that a good way of just looking and saying, okay, so when I need to name a file, I should use this date format, for example. And then since then, I've conducted specific training sessions for managing electronic records, and I think that was really helpful. That was a, just to provide some context, it wasn't a compulsory thing, so I sent an email around to all 800 members of the government, and people then just, just attended the sessions when they were free and if they wanted to. But actually, the take up was much better than I thought and I had to put on extra, extra sessions, because more people were interested than I thought, which was great. And already, that's a positive thing, because it shows that staff are willing to raise awareness, you know, themselves, but also to learn about the importance of managing electronic records in the first place. And actually, the presentation, well it was a training session, which was mixture of presentation and actual exercises. So people having to tell me whether a file structure was good or bad and tell me you know, the justification like why is it bad and explain, that kind of thing, getting people involved. That was a good way of kind of re-emphasising the good practices in terms of managing records, and it made it more enjoyable for them because it wasn't just a boring presentation. It was kind of getting involved making it a bit more of a fun experience, as I said, because initially, the perception of records management in general can just, you know, oh, it's just about paper and filing, but actually, you know, it can be a bit, bit more fun than that. So through the training session, and the advocacy cards, that was those were probably the best way because people found that it was more fun and more positive to do it. And even just explaining to them because that was a great chance that also with the training sessions was that they got to tell me any immediate problems that they had. So if they had trouble finding a file, or if they had any questions they could directly ask me and they had, they had someone to ask because previously, there wasn't anyone in place, you kind of had the knowledge, if you like. So I think that was also a great way of showing, you know, showing me as a profession, professional, that actually there is someone here who can help you, I think provided that initial support that made people more open to attending, more open to asking questions and more open to actually looking at this as something that's not just, you know, a time consuming job that actually is really important. So that was a really, really positive thing. And since then people have been coming back to me with questions, and actually one department there kind of, because all of our electronic records in the government are maybe sort of are share drive based, so it's kind of specific to your Directorate. So following one of my, well my training session, and I also wrote a guidance document, and so that I could kind of distribute it at the same time. So that was great because it showed because they actually took and interest, because they took an interest they decided to restructure their entire share drive in order to make it more accessible in order to try to improve how they manage their records. And so that was fantastic because it showed that you've had an organisation that's gone from having absolutely nothing in place to having a guidance document or policy, having had a training session, and then think actually, we need to do something about this and actually changing, changing how they work in order to improve, prove their efficiency, improve how they carry out their day to day jobs in terms of managing records. So that's kind of how I've done it. And I think it's been quite, it's been quite positive, you know, initially, perceptions really were negative, but I think the work and the results have showed that actually, it's, it's much more exciting than filing, filing something in a cabinet, or something like that.

Jess Conway 37:38

Yeah. What are some of the most common problems that people come to you with in regards to their own records management within an organisation?

Chloe Anderson 37:46

Oh, probably the fact that there's nothing, there's nothing at all, really. That's pretty honestly the thing. So it's a range of different elements, file naming conventions is probably quite a good one. Because there's nothing held or that, you know, we follow across government, it's all very ad hoc. Going back to the example with shared drives, even just having a good structure in place, you know, having some core files, and that are maybe our process or function lead. I think [unclear] showing people the benefits of having, something as stupid as a well-named file is, has been really important, and records retention schedules. So that's currently a massive one that I'm doing at the moment. Mostly for a corporate side of things rather than what directorates actually want. So I'm currently doing a, going to do a workshop for lots of government departments specifically so that they can develop a records retention schedule, because there's only about three out 11 that do have one in place. So try to get that as a tool that's used and understood, you know, the importance of I think it's going to be a really good thing. So that's kind of been forced upon them. But then, I, because of any requests or any information that people ask me, I then kind of actively proactively, create guidance sessions. So, frequently, people come or have been coming to me more frequently with maybe data protection elements. So I have just finished last week doing some training sessions on data protection, which were more just saying this is what data protection is. This is the principles under the Data Protection Act, and this is what the Falkland Islands government currently has in place. So that's been, that's been worthwhile. So it's just a range of different things really, as I said we don't really have anything in place, so it's every, everything and anything.

Jess Conway 39:53

Has it been challenging for you to kind of build this role up essentially from scratch to be the first records professional within the organisation?

Chloe Anderson 40:03

Um, yes and no, I mean, I've been very fortunate because I've had the support of senior management. So from the very beginning, I've had the support from my line manager, but also the chief executive. So because it's such a small organisation, and actually, even the offices are so small, so I'm just down, I'm down the corridor from the chief executive. And because of the Falkland Islands government and the way it works, because you're only ever one person deep, people, you know, across teams work very well to cover any staff absences. So there's also been occasions where I've actually, and this is a kind of a tangent, but getting back to it been, been the executive assistant to the chief executive for maybe three weeks. So you know, I've had to drop everything to kind of handle this diary and things like that. So kind of having a good relationship with him, has then meant that when I come to going to CMT, which is a meeting where you've got the chief executive and all the directors from across government, so director of education, director of health, the Attorney General, things like that, they all meet, and that's where I then present my ideas. So that's where initially I presented the fact that we need a records management policy to begin with. And then from there, they were like, you know, yeah, we definitely need that. So actually, the chief executive following my presentation said, we really need to focus on this, we acknowledge that it's a problem within our organisation that we need to improve, so we're going to direct this amount of funding towards you for this project, in order to implement these procedures in order for you to, you know, make us have records management processes in the first place. So I think the support has been the most important thing because without people supporting you in the first place, you know, having specific funding and having the chief executive say yes, yes, yes, yes, yes to kind of essentially everything that you put in front of him has been, has been great because that's also given the different government departments a reason and kind of a motivation to, to then kind of have the time day for you to say, okay, let's, let's have a look at this. And then for them, to then communicate that to their staff to say this is an important issue, we are going to focus on it. Even if you have negative perceptions of it, it's an important thing for us to do, and we're going to, we're going to focus on it. So even something like developing a records retention schedule, if your government department is behind it, then the staff are going to attend and they're going to, you know, you're going to develop one whether they're whether they're happy about it or not. So, yeah, the support has been the greatest thing and I think the challenges has probably been me just trying to figure out what to do because obviously there's just so much to do. It's kind of getting a plan in place as to what's a priority, and, and then obviously, ah, I finished my undergrad degree in essentially August and then I started this job in September. Kind of the, the immediate hit the ground running, was really true. So, kind of developing my own confidence in my abilities, even just my ability to be able to present and, and talk to people and certainly in terms of advocacy, that that was not necessarily a challenge. I mean, it was it was just something that I've not really done before. So it's such a, so many different learning experiences that have come from this role. And just sharing, well emphasising just how important that profession is. So, yeah, long winded, but yeah. The support has been the best thing and has made everything less of a challenge then perhaps it might have been otherwise.

Jess Conway 43:56

Yeah. Do you have any thoughts on how the digital age, generally speaking, has affected the profession or professional landscape, maybe beyond of your own personal experiences or the way in which you work now, any kind of thoughts on how the profession has shifted in light of you know, for digital age, I suppose?

Chloe Anderson 44:22

I think it's shifting immensely. I think, you know, even if you just look back at the old theories of, of Jenkinson and Hillary you know, even though those, as I've kind of mentioned with my Masters [unclear] the debate between access and preservation is becoming way more centred towards access. Because because of the electronic age in which we live in and things are much more accessible and people, people expect it to be accessible as well. When you go on to, you know, an archival website, you kind of expect to be able to download copies of documents and be able to access things immediately. So I think because of that, we are definitely looking more into, you know, things like digitization and, and making, making our paper based records more electronic, and, but then also the technologies that we use to support it. So, you know, paper based records are, well they're still very much important. But, everything here in, in the current age in which we live is becoming way more electronically based. So we have to make sure that our storage capacities that we have in archival institutions and records management elements in, just in any way work can support that for long term preservation. Or even if you're just retaining it for a certain period of time, you're gonna make sure that you can, you can retain it and that you can then you know, put all those processes, you know, retention and destruction in place, and I think because of that, we're, we're having to rethink how we work, but then again, it's providing lots of opportunities, some people because they can access things electronically, they don't have to come to your buildings to do research. And then with any other technologies, it's just becoming easier for people to interact with material, which is great. And providing awareness. And the opportunities to come in technology provides us with, you know, I mean things that, opportunities that we could never have before. So even digitization, being able to scan something onto a computer, and then use a technology, editing software or whatever, to then see, you know, potentially a hidden message or, or something that you couldn't see before when it was paper based, and when it's on the computer, you see something, and then that's important, because we can, you know, we find that new information. So I think it's completely changing how we work as a profession. I'm not saying that it's in any way decreasing the importance of paper based records, but it's kind of pushing us, pushing us more towards electronic based records, and actually making that a primary focus and you see more and more job, jobs being advertised, which are for digital archivists or, you know, more digitally emphasised than, than just your traditional archivist.

Jess Conway 47:16

Where do you personally stand on the, the preservation versus access debate?

Chloe Anderson 47:25

Oh, I don't really know. I mean, from doing my, my dissertation I was kind of just like, 'oh my god', just exhausted by the whole thing [laughs] I don't know I think both are very, very, very important. I think probably more towards access, only again, because in terms of the digital world in which we live in today, it's becoming, people are expecting you to have things online. If I think from my own experience in terms of working in the Falkland Islands, people, actually, you know, they can't necessarily travel eight thousand miles, just to have a look at a paper based record, so actually having it electronically and having it accessible is really important. And it helps them because it means you know, they didn't have to travel, but it also means that we can have a much wider reach than we did before. Because obviously, we don't get a lot of visitors. So having, essentially the whole world being able to look at your archival collection is, is brilliant. But then at the same time preservation is equally important, if you've got a fragile document, you need to make sure that people don't want to keep coming and you know, handing the original. So you want to make sure that you can, you know, protect it. And then, but then of course it has access benefits. So and I think from doing this Master's dissertation, I found that a lot of the, in terms of measuring impacts, it's more focused on access rather than what it's done in terms of preserving the documents. So that's probably where I stand but to be fair, I kind of see both both elements of it.

Jess Conway 49:02

Sure. What do you think is the role of records in our society today?

Chloe Anderson 49:10

That's a good question.

Jess Conway 49:12

It's a big one.

Chloe Anderson 49:13

It is a big one. Yeah. I mean, I think it's just, it's very important. It doesn't matter what element of the record you're looking at, whether it's just from creation to, you know, retention, to being an archive, I think that they've, it's so important not only in providing accountability of decisions that governments and just organisations make, but, you know, in terms of in terms of archive material in terms of being able to preserve information for future generations so that they can see how a society has developed over time or how a particular thread of, of knowledge has developed and how perceptions have changed, really, so I think records are so, so important. And then if you look at it in terms of an organisation and the day to day level, you know, that's one of the things that I often say to people, when I'm trying to show them the importance of records management or, you know, essentially just records is that you use records in your everyday life, and you might not necessarily realise it, you know, in terms of, you know, having a passport in terms of just writing down something filling in a form, you know, it becomes an evidence of a transaction, it then becomes, you know, a record, you use records every day. And then even if you just file it away, you're going through some kind of process, you know, you're, you're storing it, and then you're deleting it. Records are always there, and, therefore, the importance of managing it is, is, you know, it's never gonna stop. And so I think it's, for society, it's a benefit in lots of different ways. And I think just trying to show people that it's so just a very important thing for us as a profession to do, and raise awareness. And of course, we've got the insight because we're already professionals, so we already like come on people, get with it. But yeah, I think it's, it's an, it's such an important part of society, wherever you look, whether it's your day to day life or, you know, in the long term future of preserving, preserving a record. So important that I'm probably just just rambling because there's so many different elements of it.

Jess Conway 51:24

Yeah. And when you spoke about the digital age impacting our perception of records, and and also just information, that's obviously a significant change from maybe 10, 20 years ago. Do you think that society's perception and needs for records will continue to change? And, if so, how do you think that might sort of alter in the future, if that makes sense?

Chloe Anderson 52:00

I think it will make a big difference on how people perceive records and, and essentially use them really. As I said, I think people are already now at the stage where they expect to be able to have access to everything. And I think as technology develops, and the opportunities and different things that we can do with technology, it'll just make people...greedy is definitely the wrong word but you know, a bit more, you know, they feel obliged, they feel that they should have these, you should have access to everything, everything all at once. And I think because of that, we're going to have to change, change with it. And we're going to have to kind of anticipate what people want from, from our records, anticipate how people are going to use them. You know, because I mean, they're using it differently because of the technologies now because things are electronically, you know, you can have optical character recognition, you know, which you didn't have before, so you can kind of search for documents a bit more easier. And then, you know, that comes with its own different set of, set of benefits. So I think the fact that we're becoming more electronic and so because of that our technology is developing and expectations for what we should be providing will change, and how we then move on and how we process things is also going to change even if you think about the UCL course, I mean, I haven't actually done any research, so I could just be making it all up, but, you know, even while I was there, it was almost becoming a bit more centred towards electronic records, looking more at the digital realm and the importance of that, you know, even just looking at something like coding, you know, that's normally an IT specific role or function, but it's becoming equally important to us now, as we head into, you know, having more electronic based records, and we're almost becoming a bit like IT professionals and archivists. So our role itself is developing as we go on.

Jess Conway 54:09

Do you think that record keepers are inherently active or passive in what they do?

Chloe Anderson 54:19

I don't know. I don't know. I think it's probably a mixture of both. I think it also depends partly on how you as a professional work, I think, because obviously sometimes it's, it's just, well, from my experience, it's just you. So I think that if you as a professional, are more of a reactive person, then your processes are going to be reactive. Whereas if you're someone who might be I don't know, again, maybe more outgoing or something, then you might be more proactive. So you might be the one implementing decisions where previously you might be reacting to things. It's such a good a question...it's very hard. As a whole, I think the profession is becoming, I think becoming a bit more proactive. I think Previously, we might have been a bit reactive like, oh, okay, records have become electronic, we should probably do something about it as opposed to now where we're like, okay, we've realised that it might be a problem, something that we actually have to deal with. So let's, let's kind of get on and and look at how we work and how we can improve and how we can kind of move on. So I think it's a mixture of both. That's a very good question.

Jess Conway 55:32

We've spoken a little bit about what people expect from records and a little bit on people's perception of archives and records. I'm curious as to whether you noticed a difference when you moved from studying at UCL, so i.e. being part of an environment in which recordkeeping is inherently deemed valuable, you know, into a role within a large organisation that may not understand or even be aware of this importance. If you noticed, if that was something that you noticed and felt was, was different at all?

Chloe Anderson 56:12

100, 100%, 100%. I mean, the whole environment, you know, being on the course, as you say you're surrounded by people who are aware and who are part of the profession. But then when you get into a workplace, I mean, I'm, of course talking from my own experience, but I mean, it's definitely, you know, people weren't accustomed to even looking at a record and thinking, oh yeah, that's important. Maybe I should, maybe I should think about how long I'm keeping it for or maybe I should think about what I'm gonna do with it once it's, that retention period is finished, or maybe I should think about how I'm naming it because I want someone in even two years time to be able to find it. It's been such a stark reminder really, because I, you know, essentially I did come here and people were like, what is records management? What is a record? And you know, what are you even talking about? It's just paper. So, I think, yeah, it was it, definitely people definitely here didn't understand the importance. And so being able to talk about it outside the profession, was really, really a good thing, and I think that was definitely what I noticed, as you say the most, from going straight from the course to the workplace was that you didn't have the people who were already there advocating records. You, you had to do that all yourself. But that's good. That's part of the challenge.

Jess Conway 57:35

Yeah [laughs]. You've spoken quite a lot about how it's an important part of your role for you to be an advocate for records management within your organisation. Do you think that archivists and record managers have the ability to advocate in a wider context, so, I'm thinking sort of beyond their place of employment and to the public, you know, like to become public figures that advocate for, for archives and records management?

Chloe Anderson 58:02

Definitely, definitely, I think with I mean, of course, we're in a digital age. You know, you've got things like your different social media platforms, you know, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, all these different things where you can you can show not only your workplace-based achievements, but also achievements and, and advocate for, as you say records management to show the importance of managing records or having the archival collections accessible. There's a lot more opportunities for people to be able to, to advocate for records management and to advocate for, for archives, and I think that's, that's a really great thing, and I think even from my own perspective, having something like a poster that you might put on LinkedIn, or just showing people the kind of different elements that are out there, it not only advocates records management's role, the importance for those people who don't know it, but it also, it helps other professionals who are maybe thinking about how to advocate themselves, because we're such a small, you know, field anyway supporting everyone and, and, you know, we're all going towards the same aims so, sharing tools and you know, sharing how we interact and engage with people and you know, the more positive platforms and the methods that work really is a really great thing, because we're trying to do the same thing at the end of the day. So yeah.

Jess Conway 59:39

Yeah. I feel like advocacy's something that sort of come up quite a lot when you've been talking, because it is obviously a really important part of your role. Do you remember learning about being a, being a records management advocate or being an advocate in that way whilst you were at UCL, was that something you remember being advised on at all?

Chloe Anderson 59:59

So, one of my biggest memories that I have, at the time I thought, I'm not gonna remember this or or this is really weird, but it was actually one of the lecturers actually, in the records management unit that said, did an exercise and people, I wasn't even one that had to stand up, but one of my peers were and you had stuff and you had to have a scenario where you were in a lift with someone, and maybe, maybe the chief executive, someone like that. And you had to say, maybe given in a scenario, your, your funding was being cut, and you had 30 seconds to put forward your view in order to increase your funding or get a specific thing across. And that was when we talked about advocacy. And honestly, I can't remember anything else other than that scenario, but that has stuck with me, and that really showed me the importance of even just how a 30 second conversation can really impact on how successful you are as a professional, and how people, and how people look at you and engage with you, and for me in such a small working environment, such as the Falkland Islands, and, you know, having that route, almost, in fact, same scenario where I'm in a corridor with the chief executive, and I'm essentially saying, oh, hello, how are you?By the way, we've not got a records retention policy in place. I'm just going to write one, is that okay? You know, something like that. And, yeah, so that really stuck with me because I actually ended up using that almost exact same scenario. Being able to, being able to prepare for that and thinking actually, we have we even though we're professionals, and we might think that people, you know, don't think that we're important, actually, we have a real voice and that we can make a real difference. Even 30 seconds was, was really great. But I don't remember, I don't remember anything else other than just that moment.

Jess Conway 1:01:59

What would you say motivates you as a record keeping professional?

Chloe Anderson 1:02:05

A mixture of different things really, I think, primarily just the importance of preserving documents and the fact that they could be used for future generations is pretty a big motivator. I think coming from such a small community where history is so important and looking at seeing how nations developed is so important, and has really made the preservation side of things a motivating factor for me, and even now working in records management and in the government, making sure that information is then available for, you know, future government workers to find out how a project has developed to find out why they made this decision this year to follow this particular process or, or you know, to approve this, specific funding is really important because people go back to historical information time and time and time again and actually, it's the historical information that's actually the most important, not what they're doing right now, people seem to be continuously asking for, or what did we do here? Can you find this paper, I need to find out what happened. So, I think seeing that, is just a fascinating thing, because I thought, oh, records management, they're all going to be about using the records now, and, you know, maintaining them, but actually, I think preserving them and making sure that they're accessible is probably the biggest motivating factor for me. And it's certainly the most enjoyable because it shows that all the work that we've all done for our various processes has actually, has come into, come into our room because we actually want, we're doing it for a reason and, and, you know, we're not just making record retention schedules, because we want to inflict pain and misery on our people, we're doing it for a reason. So it's really great, I think, and that's what motivates me.

Jess Conway 1:03:58

What are your future careers aspirations?

Chloe Anderson 1:04:03

So for me right now, I think it's just developing my volunteer and just work experience to make sure that I have these opportunities, and really just keep, keep in touch within the field, I think, because I'm in the Falklands and I'm kind of so far away, it's great to be able to know that I can keep up all of the skills and knowledge to still be a competent professional, and I think for my personal circumstances at the moment, in the near future, I'm looking to maybe go to the UK to maybe get some more experience so that eventually I can maybe come back in a different role or different capacity and keep doing important work in terms of preserving records. But yeah, so I think that that's currently my motivation, not my motivation sorry, my ambition.

Jess Conway 1:05:05

Is there anything you wish you knew before starting working prior to graduating from UCL?

Chloe Anderson 1:05:15

Not really, um, I act as a, as a peer mentor, so I have kind of given advice to new professionals before. But I don't think there's anything else of what I actually learned, but I think it's actually how I feel, I feel that we all need to have more confidence in our own abilities, because we are, you know, we are way better than what we actually think that we are and we can achieve so much, and even just speaking from my own experience, you know, I never thought that I would ever be in this position where I'd essentially have created a post for myself and develop a records management programme, and I would never have been able to do that if I hadn't had the UCL course, obviously, so I don't have all the confidence in my abilities because of doing that course. So yeah, I don't think I've specifically learned, I think it's just the feeling of being a competent professional.

Jess Conway 1:06:14

I think we're pretty much done, or nearing the end, before we wrap up, is there anything else you'd you'd like to add at all, any favourite memories or experiences or just anything else at all?

Chloe Anderson 1:06:25

Um, oh favourite memory because it's, it's always, it was my first interaction with an archive, and because it's quite funny, my first experience was when I'd been given a tour by the National archivists here in the Falklands of the archives, and we were going over the security protocol in place in the alarm system. And she was talking about how important it is obviously to protect the archives from, from any theft and you know, all that important thing, and then the intern while she was showing me around, she accidentally set off the alarm, and it was a very, very loud alarm and just seeing how quickly she went into, into action was was really, really impressive. And really my first kind of wake up call, quite literally, of to how important the archives is. And one more memory that I have with my mum, for one occasion had to come to the archives to do some kind of research, and she got a paper cut, so then she started bleeding, and my first priority was not her, and whether she was okay, but to get her away from the records so that she did not put any bloodstains on them, and at that point, I thought, yes, archives and this whole profession is now literally in my blood, and I care, I care so much about it. That was really the time that I thought yeah, okay, I like this, but that's that's kind of a favourite memory I have.

Jess Conway 1:06:56

Yeah. Um, okay, I think that's probably it if that's okay with you.

Chloe Anderson 1:08:08

Yeah, yeah.

Jess Conway 1:08:09

Great. Okay, I'm gonna stop recording