

Museums n'That Episode 2 Transcript

Meg: Welcome to the Museums n'That podcast, where each episode we have a chinwag and serve you the steaming hot tea on the things museum people love the most. We're your hosts, Meg and Sara, and we get to know the people behind the objects by asking them the questions that you really want to know.

Meg: Hello Smez.

Sara: Hi Meg, how are you? What's been good, what's been going on in your week?

Meg: It's been good actually, as I'm sure you'll find out in a minute I had a big mezze platter today.

Sara: Ooft!

Meg: Feeling garlicky. But yeah, main thing from my week I reckon is obviously you know like working in museums and stuff but also... Boyzone.

Sara: Yeah, I do remember that day.

Meg: So basically, I've rediscovered Boyzone and I literally just can't, it's like a disease. Stephen Gateley was my first ever crush and I feel like young Meg is just loving it. What about you?

Sara: Well, it was non-work related - so we had a 'ye olde' Victorian fair in Otley at the weekend which was...

Meg: ...that is so Otley of you.

Sara: I know, there was mulled cider with extra stuff in it which was really good.

Meg: Eggnog? Bleurgh, what even is eggnog?

Sara: I don't know but it wasn't in the cider. But anyway that's been trumped by a new thing that happened today where Meg couldn't pronounce Pearl Jam correctly. So that's now my favourite thing that's happened in the past week.

Meg: Pearl Jam (*pronounced wrong*)

Sara: Wrong.

Meg: But it's got a gap in it!

Sara: You're saying it wrong!

Meg: How do you say it?

Sara: Pearl Jam.

Meg: Pearl Jam. (*pronounced wrong*)

Sara: No! It's not a question!

Meg: Nmm delicious pearl jam.

Sara: Not made out of pearls... so that's the best thing that's happened in my week which is kind of sad.

Meg: Yeah that's a sad week for you mate. Although to be fair, I am the best part of most people's weeks.

Sara: I'm going to change it up next week.

Meg: So who did we have on today?

Sara: We had Errin Hussey on today who is our Archivist.

Meg: Flippin' 'eck I love her so much. God she's so good isn't she.

Sara: She's very good. She's going to give us a little bit of an insight into all things archive from Leeds Museums & Galleries but also the Henry Moore Institute because she works across both of them doesn't she?

Meg: Yeah she splits her time, she's kind of like Hermione Granger in... the Prisoner of Azkaban? No. Yeah? Yeah! When she's got that little necklace. And then Sirius Black, aka. Gary Oldman

Sara: Ah, Gary Oldman.

Meg: Baby. Before we begin, a little disclaimer: no caterpillars, no disgusting stuff, but basically Smez was really annoying and kept banging the table throughout this.

Sara: I don't think it was me!

Meg: It was you. It was 100% you. It wouldn't be Errin, she's too much of an angel.

Sara: Fine.

Meg: Um so if there's an annoying banging sound...

Sara (laughing) it's me. Sorry about that.

Meg: (laughing) it's Smez. Say sorry to the people.

Sara: Sorry to the people.

Meg: Oh, also, in our last episode we said this would be 2 weeks, and we made a big song and dance about it. 2 weeks. It's literally a week and a day because you were all so nice about the first episode. So we thought we'd treat you.

Sara: Yeah. We got giddy.

Meg: Literally 8 days.

Sara: Yeah that is the perfect amount of time. It's not a week, it's not 2 weeks, it is literally 8 days.

Meg: Literally no rhyme or reason there is there.

Sara: There's not really any logic that goes on behind-the-scenes in this generally.

Meg: Oh 100% not. Yeah so anyway - ignore the banging, but enjoy.

Meg: I'll start off by saying: oh my god I'm dead. Because Errin Hussey is in the research room.

Errin: My second home.

Meg: Your second home! It is your second home.

Errin: Yes it is.

Meg: We're a little bit late to the research room because we all just shared a Mezze.

Sara: We did, it was beautiful.

Errin: and very garlicky.

Meg: Very garlicky yeah. So we've all got chewing gum so if you hear this (*chewing sound*) it's chewing gum. Did that sound nice?

Sara: (*laughing*) that's disgusting.

Meg: It's because we're sharing a microphone today.

Sara: I thought you were going to say we're sharing a chewing gum...

Meg: No, but we could if you want.

Sara: No, I'm ok.

Meg: So yeah, Errin Hussey's here! Errin, how are you doing?

Errin: I'm doing good.

Meg: Did you enjoy your mezze?

Errin: I did, I loved my mezze.

Meg: What was your best bit?

Errin: I've got to say, the bread. Both garlic and rosemary.

Meg: Errin Hussey loves garlic bread.

Sara: And it had a bit of salt on.

Errin: A bit of visible salt. Beautiful. BEAUTIFUL.

Meg: Errin who are you? Who the flip are you?

Errin: Who am I?! I am Archivist for Leeds Museums & Galleries.

(all start whooping)

Errin: and I cover all bases. I'm very lucky with my job that I cover all of the Henry Moore Institute of Sculptors Papers, which I manage in the Henry Moore Institute, which belongs to Leeds Museums & Galleries and I also look after all of the archives of Leeds Museums & Galleries itself, so all of it's institutional treasures.

Sara: Institutional is a hard word isn't it.

Meg: You're a hard word. Right so first things first, what is an archive? What do you mean?

Errin: Well. An archive, compared to a museum, is where we store paper based material. That's usually what we say but sometimes there's a lot of crossover. So what archives are are more about information. So they're information based stores of things. Yep.

Meg: So what can it be other than paper then?

Errin: Well so in the Henry Moore Institute archive where we...

Meg: ...oh my God sorry but is this going to be an information based... is this going to be an archive?

Errin: This podcast? Yes!

Meg: Are we making history?

Errin: We are making history. That's the thing, anything can be in an archive. So it's information that's passed between people and throughout the world so that's what we want to capture. It's not about objects it's about what things can tell us.

Meg: So if it's not paper then what's the weirdest format you've had an archive in? Do you know what I mean like... I don't know... like has someone left a code somewhere or...

(Sara laughs)

Sara: Sorry I thought you were going to say something more exciting than a code.

Meg: Sorry but what's more exciting than a code? Tell me.

Sara: I can't.

Meg: Like if you have plasticine and someone's inscribed something on plasticine or something.

Errin: Yeah it could be! So in our archive of sculptor's papers, the things that exist outside of paperwork there's a lot of tools - so we will have all different tools that were used by sculptors. Nothing as interesting as codes.

Meg: So why is that not an object? Why is that not an object in a museum?

Errin: Interesting - I don't really know.

(laughing)

Errin: So the archive of Sculptor's papers really covers the context behind a sculptor making their artwork. So the actual artwork will end up in the collection of Leeds Art Gallery in their sculpture collection, but anything that came before that and helped inform what they created will be in the archive. So it's all the background to how it made it work. So tools can end up in our archive because they helped create the piece of work - they were part of the sculptor's lives. Basically.

Sara: Wow.

Errin: But equally, that could be in museum. So this is where like the archive and the museum really cross over. And sometimes there are debates when things come into us whether they should sit within the archive or the museum.

Meg: Who would win in a fight, a museum or an archive?

Errin: *(gasps)* Depends who's fighting.

Meg: If you were fighting Smez.

Sara: I think we'd be evenly matched.

Errin: I think we'd apologise until one of us just took it.

Sara: And then we'd just go for a drink and it would be fine.

Errin: The one good thing about the archive is that I always say that the archive might make it more accessible. So the Archive of Sculptor's Papers is open 5 days a week, and we encourage people to be coming into us all the time and sit in our lovely wooden reading room and get to see all of our treasures, which the curators do as well.

Sara: I didn't know about it and I think it's a really interesting place to go and just have a bit of time because it's right bang in the city centre and you just don't know about it otherwise.

Errin: Exactly yeah! So it's right next to Leeds Art Gallery and it has galleries itself downstairs and the library is free for anyone to use. So it's a really good centre for art students but also anyone who wants to think about sculpture and think about art in Britain and abroad and have a lovely relaxing time.

Meg: Has anyone famous ever been in there?

Errin: Oooh interesting. It depends what you think of as famous.

Meg: Has Ariana Grande ever been into the archives?

Errin: No.

Meg: I would die.

Errin: I would also die. I did think though because we keep doing little tweets about, well, band t-shirt day will Idles come in next week...

Meg: For context, last week - in fact for the last 2 years - you've been retweeted by BBC Radio 6 for t-shirt day. And Idles!

Errin: And Idles, the very lovely band, have liked my post.

Meg: I literally feel like I've got so many questions to ask.

Errin: Just keep 'em going.

Meg: I've known you for how many years now and I'm literally just like...

Sara: Well. I want to know why...

Meg: *(laughing)* Sara's got her hands out flat in front of her...

Sara: What's on my hands and why can't I touch stuff?

Errin: Ah, yeah, right! Yes, so people always think this about archives, and they think you have to go in fully kitted out with a jacket, like a white lab coat and gloves.

Meg: Like in Monsters Inc.

Errin: And it's purely not true. I kind of blame all of those programmes where they try and trace your family tree, what are those called where they get the celebrities on?

Meg: Who do you think you are.

Errin: Who do you think you are! They'll go to archives and they'll all be decked out. When really there are some damaging things on our hands - we have a lot of bacteria, we have a lot of oils...

Meg: ...I do like to put scented oils on my hands...

Errin: Just not before you come into an archive. So we usually say have your hands fully washed and then you're free to touch everything apart from photographs. So photographs have a pretty delicate balance of chemicals and that's what the oil on your hands will really damage. So you'll see it with your own photographs they'll have fingerprints on them and it's just not good. It messes with everything. But when it comes to paper we actually find that the white gloves that you wear, even the plastic ones, actually could do more damage to the paper.

Sara: Wow, I didn't know that.

Errin: Because you can manhandle them when you think you have all the protection on your hands and you shuffle them.

Meg: Have you ever accidentally manhandled something?

Errin: Oooh. I couldn't possibly say.

Meg: You aren't going to tell me are you. You'll get sacked.

Errin: I'd have my archivist badge revoked.

Sara: Your hands chopped off.

Errin: But it does always happen. Because, you know, we try and make it not happen, but paper is very delicate when it's in your possession and it's very delicate when it comes into ours.

Meg: I've got a question right. You know when... imagine you're going into a library. Is a library an archive?

Errin: No, so the big difference between a library and an archive is the uniqueness of the material. So a library is usually books that there's a whole run of so they aren't unique basically.

Meg: Oh, that's a burn isn't it.

Sara: Is this museums vs libraries, like Parks and Recreation?

Errin: Actually, like the lines between archives and museums, there's also a big blur of libraries and archives. So for example there's a library within the Henry Moore Institute and they have both books that are not unique and are secondary material, but they also have special collections which are more unique books.

Meg: So a special collection is not the same thing as an archive?

Errin: No. So a special collection would be say a book from 100 years ago that there was a run of them, they're not unique, they were mass produced but there might be 10 left in the world. So they're very special, they need to be protected, but they're not unique. But what we deal with is one offs - there's only one photograph, there's only one drawing from an artist.

Meg: This is like in America's Next Top Model when they're like, 'there's a lot of your face'. Like 'we're looking for the special someone'. So the special someone is the archives.

Sara: I don't think it's strictly the same. But, I understand where you're going?

Meg: It is the same. Do you remember Naima? Did you ever watch it?

Errin: No, I watched all the series but I can't remember Naima...

Meg: I would say that archives in this respect are Naima.

Errin: Unique. With a smize.

Meg: Sorry, that wasn't even my question. Right so basically, you know when you go into a library, if it's like a really old tatty book, and you open it up, and it smells. It's got a little bit of a smell to it. Then you're flicking through a page and then someone's picked their nose and smeared (*beep*) on it. What do you do, have you ever come across that?

Sara: What? Who picks their nose and smears (*beep*) on a book?

Meg: There's no way that you've never picked up a book and found a weird stain in it. Like in a charity shop and you flick through some pages, some of them stick together.

Errin: So there's different circumstances. We do brush cleaning on books, that's what we tend to do. But then also that's where our lovely conservators come in to do their brilliant job. Because they know more about what makes up the material, so they know exactly what is on something, how to clean it and how to make it so that that thing, if there's something on a page, doesn't damage it forever.

Meg: Have you ever found anything really gross. Like have you ever been like 'that is a bogey'.

Errin: Do you know what, no. So I've found weird bugs, I've had silver fish in archives.

Sara: Those are disgusting.

Meg: I had those in my uni room once. I say once. It was many times.

Errin: Luckily, I think we do it really well here. So at Leeds Discovery Centre, as soon as things come in we have the freezer which freezes every bug that could possibly be living on the material. Other archives I've worked in haven't had that. So again it's a really beneficial connection between archives and museums. Other archive services I've worked in before don't have that facility, so you'll get a fresh archive in and you'll just have to do that exact thing: go through everything and you might find horrible things but in house, you'll just have to do that yourself to the best of your ability. But we have in house conservators here who know everything there is to know. And also do you know what the weirdest thing I've ever had is just tea and coffee stains. Because the majority of my working life I've worked on modern archives. So a lot of it is just tea and coffee.

Meg: God isn't it nice just having a little read and a coffee.

Sara: Yeah but you can't take drinks into the archive room. So they've snuck them in.

Errin: Ah, no it's from artists originally.

Sara: Is that not part of the archival thing? That it's part of the process?

Errin: Exactly yeah. So it's an interesting concept actually, how far do you think those stains and those rips and those different things make up the part of the object itself.

Sara: So what object would you say has been your most interesting, slash, difficult to look after or conserve?

Errin: Well. I always refer to an object that was collected in an old job of mine. So before I worked here I worked in the British Stand Up Comedy Archive.

Sara: What! I did not know that.

Errin: Did you not? So this was based at the University of Kent, and we collected some objects from the comedian Josie Long. A big part of one of her comedy tours was she used to collect gifts from the audience themselves and they could give her anything - I think it was about a moment of happiness or a moment of joy. And one person gave an orange, so she had it in a plastic box and it came to us. We had a whole collection of things that give people joy, and it was an orange and we had no idea what to do with it, which was a tough one. So it still remains in the archive.

Meg: Is it mouldy?

Errin: Do you know what it hadn't gone mouldy by the time I'd left. So...

Sara: Had it dried out like when you do, what are they called...

Meg: When you make a little elephant out of the skin?

Sara: No that was just one time that you told me about that.

Meg: Have you ever done that? I'll do it for you.

Errin: I think with oranges, sometimes they go mouldy but this one was quite good.

Meg: Did it go hard?

Sara: Yeah like when you make a pomander. Like when you get a clementine or an orange and you stud it with cloves. It's like a traditional Christmas thing.

Meg: I did it once at the gallery, I had loads of limes because I went through a phase of having avocado and lime on toast for breakfast and I had loads of limes in the bottom of my drawer and I forgot about them for like a year and I went in it and then it was like a rock. It was harder than a rock.

Errin: Yeah so I thought it would go soggy because of all the juice but it went rock hard, and as far as I'm aware it's still in the archive. On it's own - we kept it on it's own so it doesn't spread anything.

Sara: Do you think Josie Long will still care for that orange?

Meg: Josie Long if you're listening - Errin's got your orange.

Errin: Yeah I think it's a great story, I think the key thing with those types of objects is to tell the story now and capture a photograph now so everyone knows what it was and what it looks like because these things do change.

Sara: My Dad would be like 'it's just a bloody orange, no one cares'.

Errin: I know, but it's the meaning behind that. And also, I think that's the whole thing with all museums and archives material in general. Everything is just a piece of paper or just a piece of ceramic or a piece of object until people put meaning on it.

Sara: Exactly, it captures a moment in time or a story or a piece of history. You go to museums and you see things at face value and what goes on behind-the-scenes is just as important because that influences everything going on at the front.

Meg: So now things are physical - we were talking about people putting smudges on photographs with their fingers and stuff - what's going to happen now? My camera roll is basically just full of pictures of myself... what if they're going to go? What's the world going to do?

Sara: What's the world going to do if your selfies disappear?

Meg: Yeah because they're not physical things, and obviously you work in a physical archive now so how are we dealing with that?

Errin: Yeah! So we are currently trying to really think about how best to capture this. So like I said before, archives are all based on information, and the information that we are creating and collecting now is all digital, so we've got to think about how we're going to take it all in in the future, and how people - specifically in the archive of sculptor's papers - how are sculptors using digital technology and how will they deposit with us in the future. So we're looking into all the ways of how to capture everything digital.

Meg: So what's your favourite thing you've ever found in the archive? Is it the orange? Or if you've been looking through a box... like that time you came over to me and you said 'look at this little note that that kid had written' and a little kid had been naughty at Leeds City Museum.

Errin: I think that's 100% my favourite thing from the Leeds institutional archive.

Meg: Tell everyone about that.

Errin: Right so the Leeds Museums institutional archive is all based on the history of the museum service, which is really interesting, it's been going for 200 years, but a lot of it can be very day-to-day, day-to-day workings.

Meg: What you were saying right then was 'boring'.

Errin: *(laughs)* We found a letter from...

Meg: ...No no! I didn't mean what you were saying was boring! I meant like the day-to-day was boring.

Errin: *(laughing)* Oh! I thought you meant like my whole monologue... I thought you meant like 'speed it up'.

Meg: God imagine if with everyone that comes on I was like 'stop, that was boring'. No I meant like what you were trying to say about the institutional archive was boring.

Errin: Yeah, so it can be very day-to-day and very... I mean it's brilliant and it tells our story, but the glimpses of other things are brilliant. So what we found was a letter from a child who had come to Leeds City Museum on their school trip.

Meg: What year? When?

Errin: 1960 I believe. And what was his name?

Meg: What happened in 1960?

Sara: Errrrr. No.

Meg: It was 6 years before England won the World Cup.

Sara: What about man on the moon? Let's not worry about what happened in 1960 because none of us know.

Meg: If anyone's got a good thing that happened in 1960, do please let us know.

Errin: So he came on his school trip and he was a little bit naughty, and he was obviously told off while he was on the trip and probably when he got back to school. And so he wrote a very apologetic letter to one of the curators and he sent some biscuits to the curator to apologise.

Sara: That's so cute.

Errin: And the curator very sensibly wrote back and said thank you very much, we love our biscuits and don't be naughty again.

Meg: Do you know what biscuits they were?

Errin: I do not.

Meg: Would the biscuits belong in the archive?

Errin: I don't think a curator would let them get to the point where they'd let them get in the archive, because they'd scoff them all. I'm imagining custard creams.

Meg: Mmm. I always imagine custard creams. What's your best biscuit?

Sara: I like chocolate hobnobs (*pronounced wrong*)

Meg: *(laughing)* chocolate hobnobs *(pronounced wrong)*. That was mad mate.

Sara: I also really like bourbons and everyone moans because they're boring.

Errin: I love bourbons.

Meg: I used to dip bourbons in ribena.

Sara: Urgh that is minging!

Meg: It's like putting chips in milkshakes. Mmm mm mm.

Sara: Neither of those things are like each other, they're both just disgusting.

Meg: Actually putting chips in milkshakes is a real thing.

Sara: It's not like putting bourbons in ribena though.

(laughing)

Errin: Controversially I think my favourite biscuits that I could literally just eat one million of in a row, is Jaffa Cakes.

Meg: Yeah. Do you feel upset that you can't eat biscuits when you're at work in the archive?

Errin: Yes I feel awful about it. But it is there to protect the archive.

Meg: Do you ever feel like just having a little bit of a biscuit and then wrapping it up in some clingfilm so it doesn't hurt the book and then just sliding it into the book so in 100 years someone can open it up and have a little snick snack of a Jaffa Cake like a little present.

Sara: A time capsule.

Errin: Maybe I'll do that on my final ever day as an archivist.

Meg: Have you ever found anything rude? So when I was at uni and I did English Literature, someone was like 'oh have you read James Joyce's love letters'. Do you know about this? Did you do English?

Sara: Um yeah but I didn't read James Joyce's love letters.

Meg: Basically James Joyce of 'Ulysses' fame *(laughing)*

Sara: The guy off of 'Ulysses'?

Errin: That Irish fella.

Meg: Yeah. Filthy little monkey. Filthy monkey. So yeah everyone was like his love letters - filth. Have you ever found any filth? You know like in The Crown? Actually they're not love letters, they're hate letters.

(laughing)

Errin: I literally have not watched that show.

Meg: I've literally just talked for 2 minutes about god knows what. No but have you ever found any filth? Or like little cute baby notes to people saying 'read this you'll like this'.

Errin: No, that is really sad I have not found any filth or love letters.

Sara: That's because they were really professional and that only happens to people that don't get into archives because they're not good enough.

Meg: No but the whole point is that the archives are from people's homes aren't they?

Errin: To be fair, no filth, but there are quite a few lovely letters in our HMI archive. So one of them that's really nice to read through is Hamo Thornycroft.

Meg: What a name.

Errin: What a name. So Hamo used to write to his wife and tell her about all the trips that he was on. So he'd be like 'I'm over here somewhere and I've been commissioned for this and I'm just painting a portrait today and I'll be making a sculpture' and he always says that he misses her and he loves her and you can just tell that they were best friends. That's the nicest thing to find in archives, just like the humanity of people and just how nice they were. And letter writing...

Meg: Le-er! From Luton!

Errin: Le-er! Letter writing is a dying art I think.

Meg: Oh my God, should we write everyone letters?

Sara: No.

Meg: Do you notice how I'm saying le-ers now like Errin is.

Sara: Who's everyone and why are we writing them letters?

Meg: Right ok so I actually have another question. So um right. You love Bruce Springsteen. We love Bruce Springsteen. But you LOVE Bruce Springsteen. First of all, what's your favourite Bruce Springsteen song?

Errin: I would say Darkness on the Edge of Town. Darkness on the Edge of Town (*different voice*). Darkness on the Edge of Town (*different voice again*).

Meg: Sorry, was that Darkness on the Edge of Town?

Errin: In all of the different ways, Darkness on the Edge of Town. Plus that album.

Meg: And how many times have you been to see Bruce Springsteen live?

Errin: Oooh I think it's 8. 8 whole times. I want to get above 10.

Meg: So does Bruce Springsteen have an archive?

Errin: He does!

Meg: Have you been?

Errin: No sadly I have not. So he deposited his life's archive with Monmouth University in New Jersey.

Meg: Oh did that just piss you right off?

Errin: That did. Because I am not going to live there. They had an advert for the archivist and everything.

Sara: Sad!

Errin: I know, but one day I might go see it. Yeah.

Meg: We should take Errin there. That happened to... That happened to me? Imagine if that happened to me! Imagine if I was like 'yeah I was going to go for that job'. Literally not qualified in any way. No but a job came up - disclaimer, I love my job - but a job came up to be David Byrne's social media manager in New York.

Sara: Wow, that would be intense.

Meg: Wouldn't it. And I was like... do I though? Should I? But then I realised that I probably wouldn't even get to meet David Byrne. I don't know.

Errin: No I know. I've had this a few times in my life: 3 jobs that I would have considered going to America for. First, Beyonce's archivist.

Meg: Second, Destiny's Child?

Errin: Second, Bruce. Third was just a couple of years ago, Prince. So his Paisley Park archive after he died. Just sorting all that out - basically just being in Paisley Park all the time.

Meg: That would have been amazing.

Errin: Alas. Did not go for them.

Sara: Chose Leeds.

Meg: Greatest city in the world.

Errin: Greatest city in the world.

Sara: That's going to be in every single podcast isn't it.

Meg: Yeah it is yeah because Leeds is the greatest city in the world do you have a problem with it?

Sara: No. Nope.

Meg: Right, follow up question. So is there like an archive that is the holy grail of all archives that every archivist just wants that for their collection? You know like how the Mona Lisa is the artwork that everyone wants to have in their collection. Is there an archive that you would want? And then I have a follow up question after that, but I'm going to let you answer that one first.

Errin: Um I think ultimately no is the answer to the general question because I think unlike art, archives aren't something that are prestigious or aren't sought after or kind of valued. No, it is valued but what do you call the word for like why something is so popular?

Sara: Revered.

Errin: Revered, yep. So I think that the value of archives is based on the information that it holds, and information is quite subjective I would say. So an archive would be important to the person that is viewing that archive. And the same can be said for art, but I think there are certain

artworks that are more valuable in money and in other ways, but I think archives are unlike that. Having said that, there are some really cool archives across the world.

Meg: Like what?

Errin: Um, my personal favourite is the Bishopsgate Institute Archive in London which collects loads of archives about protests and like current history in London, and basically they are like rebel archives.

Sara: That's cool.

Errin: So I've always been interested in archiving the underdog and archiving things that aren't archived yet, so coming into this job was really interesting because the history of our museum service that's been going for 200 years hasn't been archived yet, so it's really exciting to get your hands on all of those things. And that's what I love about certain archives, they're going for the things that we want to tell the history of in the future but not necessarily that have value on them so far.

Sara: Yeah, they haven't been put on a pedestal.

Errin: Exactly yeah.

Meg: So my follow up question is: would you rather get the entire Bishopsgate Institutional Archive, or, would you rather go on a date with Bruce Springsteen.

Errin: *(gasps)*

Meg: And you can pick the date. He'll take you wherever you want to go. He'll sing you - what did you say?

Errin: Darkness on the edge of town.

(laughing)

Meg: You just said it like 5 times.

Errin: I said it in all the different ways.

Meg: It's because I've had that mezze platter I'm a bit sleepy.

Errin: I would 100% go on a date with Bruce Springsteen.

Sara: Excellent answer.

Errin: Because I can admire the Bishopsgate Institutional Archive any time because they are publically accessible and I can just wander in and view all of their delights. I cannot go on a date with Bruce Springsteen every day of the week.

Meg: Bruce if you're listening. So, when you collect an archive - someone says 'here's all my books'? 'Here you go'? You're like yep great cheers mate, I'll have them. What do you do with them then?

Errin: Right so we're always excited to get new archives in. And what we try and do right from the start is gather as much information that we can from the depositer at the time, so whether it's from the artist themselves or...

Meg: Do you record them or write them down?

Errin: We write them down. So we get all the information - any context that they can provide that us looking at the archive itself on it's own we wouldn't get. So if they're family members, if it's the artist themselves, we want all of that information so we're constantly writing down all of that when we're having those discussions. And then everything will come in and our priority is first to box list them. So often things will come in in say, 5 boxes, and they'll be in their boxes. So what we do is create a list of everything in all of those boxes, and then we will try to figure out a way of ordering them that will make the most sense to researchers. We try and keep a lot of original order, because especially in an artist's archive the way they give it to us might be the way they have worked in the past. So they might have sketchbooks all together, or they might have everything from a decade all together. So we try and keep that order so that it reflects their working life. But then we also want to put an order on it if we need to that is most useful for researchers. So if someone comes in and says 'I'm interested in this sculptor and I want to see all their sketchbooks' or 'I want to see all of their drawings' or 'I want to see everything from the 1970s', we can put our hands on it and get it out for them.

Meg: Smart.

Sara: Big question. What's been your favourite day at work?

Meg: If it doesn't involve both of us...

Errin: God, what have we done in the last 3 years...

Meg: Was it that time you went to the Dales and had that lettuce soup?

Sara: Lettuce soup?

Errin: *(laughing)* I did!

Meg: I was like 'Errin what have you been doing today' and she was like 'Well I got on the bus or the train or whatever to the Yorkshire Dales and this woman made me a lettuce soup and it was work'.

Errin: Yeah, that was a great day. Yes. So some of my favourite days are meeting potential people relating to potential new acquisitions. So this year I got to go to the Dales, to a place near Skipton, and I met with a depositor who is depositing the archive of Judith Bluck. And it's so lovely because we get to go and meet people and see all the material, sometimes in their home, and yeah. She made me lettuce soup.

Sara: What does it taste like?

Errin: I've gotta say, it works. It's just great.

Sara: Does it taste of green?

Meg: Did you feel like a tortoise?

Errin: I did a little bit apart from I didn't chew the lettuce, the lettuce was already in it.

Sara: Do tortoises drink soup?

Meg: No but they eat lettuce mate.

Sara: Yeah I know, that isn't what I asked.

Errin: I felt a bit like a tortoise afterwards.

Sara: Healthy.

Meg: Fair.

Errin: But yeah that was a great day. What was another good day?

Sara: I know, I'd struggle with this question too. So these are the final questions. What's the big takeaway for our listeners from what we've talked about today?

Errin: Ooft.

Meg: And then. By natural extension Errin. What is your favourite takeaway?

Errin: *(laughing)* So apart from the fact that if anyone knows any way of getting into contact with Bruce Springsteen and organising my date that would be perfect...

Meg: I reckon someone somewhere listening to this might be able to do that you know. Do you reckon?

Errin: How far is this going to stretch? I really hope so.

Meg: Well, soon we'll be famous surely.

Sara: So yeah we can organise the date with Bruce that's fine no problem.

Errin: Yep. And then I think the big takeaway is: I love archives. I love my job, I get to work with so many interesting things, and the HMI archive of sculptor's papers and the institutional archive is always there for you. Everyone. You can come along.

Meg: It's always there for you. That is so cute. Like that song off of Friends.

Errin: Yes. We'll be there for you, when the rain starts to fall.

Meg: Which it does often in Leeds. Great. Takeaway. What's your favourite takeaway? And try and guess what Rebecca Machin said to this by the way...

Errin: Ooooh.

Sara: We were gobsmacked.

Errin: Turkish?

Sara: No.

Meg: Ready? Tibetan.

Errin: God you can tell she's from Hebden Bridge can't you.

(laughing)

Errin: Um, ooh. Interesting. I would initially go for an Indian curry. But also my favourite food in the world is pizza.

Meg: That's a lie. It's garlic bread.

Errin: It is garlic bread but I feel like my main favourite meal in the world is pizza.

Sara: I don't think you can have a takeaway of just garlic bread.

Errin: Exactly!

Meg: You blimmin' can mate, I tell ya.

Errin: Deliveroo that garlic bread. Um but takeaway...

Meg: By the way, do you reckon that we're going to get to the point where we've said this enough that like, someone who makes garlic bread for a living will be like 'oh we'll send them' - you know how people get free stuff? - garlic bread.

Errin: I think garlic bread is the most favoured food of Leeds Museums & Galleries. So.

Meg: And in fact we are tonight going out for garlic bread.

Errin: We are.

Meg: Off of the man at the Christmas Market who just sells garlic bread.

Errin: Oh yes, the garlic man. So I would either go a paneer curry, or, a margarita pizza.

Sara: Mmm, classic.

Errin: And why can't they both be at the same time.

Sara: Absolutely.

Meg: I respect that so much.

Sara: That's incredible. Thanks ever so much Errin.

Errin: You're welcome, thanks for having me on Museums n'that.

Meg: I'm sure we'll get you back. Yeah.

Errin: Yeah, I'm sure I'll have more things to say. I'll let you know when I'm going on my date with Bruce.

Meg: Oh actually yeah we could do a podcast special on what happened with Errin and Bruce!

Errin: I'll record live from the private jet.

Meg: Keep it PG. Don't keep it PG... Right let's go get some garlic bread then mate.

(wooping)

Sara: That was Huss.

Meg: That was Huss. Very good.

Sara: So many learns.

Meg: How many?

Sara: At least 6.

Meg: 7. What was your best one? What was your best learn?

Sara: That actually when you're looking through archives, it's sometimes better to just use your natural born skin over gloves.

Meg: Ooooh, skin.

Sara: Mmmm. Gotta wash those hands.

Meg: Tell you what, washing your hands is very important if only to know that you're not going to destroy archives.

Sara: Absolutely. But put those gloves aside. Just be careful. With your hands.

Meg: In all ways.

Sara: What was your best learn Meg?

Meg: Um my best learn was that Bruce Springsteen has his own archive.

Sara: That was incredible. I didn't know that.

Meg: I know. It's hard to really understand what an archive is I think. That sounds stupid because we work in museums but like, Errin's one of my best friends and I work with her every day but I'm still finding things out that I didn't think about. Like obviously Bruce Springsteen
(pronounced wrong)

(laughing)

Meg: I love him so much I just can't get it out of my mouth. Obviously Bruce Springsteen has an archive and obviously Prince has an archive.

Sara: Yeah and Beyonce. Queen B!

Meg: Imagine working on Beyonce's archive.

Sara: Incredible. But I agree, I didn't know that such a thing would exist in a physical form where a person had to have a job to therefore manage that. That's incredible.

Meg: And does Bruce Springsteen's archivist get to just hang out with Bruce?

Sara: I don't know, because at what point does it go from being an archive to blurring with real life? Do they catch them up? What happens? I don't know.

Meg: Yeah I know. Do they become best friends? Guess we'll have to get her back on and find out. But yeah that was lovely. Good old Huss. So thank you very much to everyone for listening. As always a huge thank you to ma boi Tim Bentley for doing... that was lame.

Sara: Yep.

(laughing)

Meg: Big thank you to Tim Bentley for doing our wonderful theme tune. And Alex Finney as always who is wonderful and did our cover artwork for us, which we love by the way.

Sara: Oh, it's incredible.

Meg: Yeah. Good boy. Who's a good boy.

Sara: He's not a dog.

Meg: He's not a dog no he's a lovely big man. So yeah if you've got any follow up questions, be it about oranges, er, Bruce, my mezze platter, do please get in touch on the social medias. So you can tweet us @LeedsMuseums, but also me and Smez have our own social media.

Sara: Oh, I've forgotten what it is again.

Meg: Yeah you've forgotten what it is. You've literally had like a whole week. And you've been on it, I can see, you've been tweeting.

Sara: I did a tweet today about a dog cartoon.

Meg: It should be @AbsolutePlonker.

Sara: I might change it to that because then I'd remember it every week.

Meg: @SaraLMerritt I reckon. Sara L Merritt.

Sara: I don't know.

Meg: Anyway. And I'm @MuseumMeg. Nice and easy to remember that isn't it Sara.

Sara: Yes. Smug.

Meg: Who have we got coming up next time?

Sara: We have Chris Sharp.

Meg: So he works with communities at Leeds Industrial Museum.

Sara: From my neck of the woods originally.

Meg: No. Is he?

Sara: Yep, he's from the midlands. He absolutely is.

Meg: He's very tall.

Sara: He is very tall. He's called @TallMr on the socials actually.

Meg: I want to ask him how tall is Tall Mr.

Sara: Yeah that should be a key leading question.

Meg: God this is just making you all wanna listen isn't it: how tall is this man that we don't know?

(laughing)

Meg: Yeah so have a good week one and all. And... see you later? We haven't quite worked out our sign off yet have we.

Sara: No...

Meg: I think it's going to be this, right ready.... Ok byyyyyeee!

Sara: Bye!

(laughing)