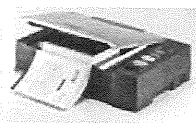


The Local Studies Librarian



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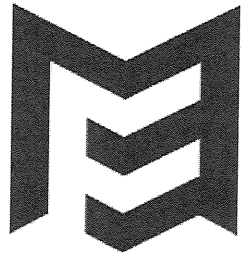
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EDITORIAL

Once again, the Group presented papers at Umbrella. This time, because of Umbrella's slightly different format, we were responsible for two, one of which, Elizabeth Melrose's important paper on our relationships with the press, appears in this issue. In the other, Sophie Duncan from the BBC dealt with the People's History project: we hope that this will appear next time. Both were well received. Also in this issue is a paper from the always successful Midlands and Anglia sub group's annual Day School.

One topic which has concerned the Group Committee recently has been the move toward centralised purchasing of material. The PKF report on library supply recommended that centralised purchasing be used through library suppliers, with only a minimal amount be retained for local purchasing. The main question for local studies librarians is what "minimal" means and what amount of "petty cash" is likely to be allowed for what might be an expensive local studies item – after all, many local publications are no longer cheap. The other question is how efficient a library supplier is likely to be in obtaining locally and privately published publications where there may be no discount. These factors could affect the efficiency of the local studies service. If anyone has any comments please let the Committee know.

Another topic concerning us is the apparent reduction in the number of specifically designated local studies librarians, due in part at least to the number of smaller authorities which came into being in 1996. This could affect our membership if, for instance, as a result of the Review of Special Interest Groups, the number of "free" group memberships within the CILIP subscription is reduced or abolished.

Finally, the Review mentioned above is, at the time of writing, close to completion. Whatever the result, it is true that the stronger Special Interest Groups are likely to remain in one form or another, although some amalgamations may be suggested. That means that, if you have an interest or involvement in local studies, you should make sure that you continue to opt for LSG membership when you pay your subscription. The committee does work hard for you! Even if there is not a local subgroup (this is mainly where there is insufficient population to sustain one) you do receive the Local Studies Librarian and the Committee and its members are there to help you when necessary. Remember, too, that LSG became an independent Group because the original parent group could not afford to sustain our activities sufficiently.

LOCAL STUDIES AND THE PRESS

Elizabeth Melrose

There is a question in the CILIP questionnaire on the Corporate Plan 2006 – 2009: *Should CILIP more actively seek to promote the library and information sector (for example by work with the media and with relevant influential bodies)?*

The answer of course is 'yes'. All librarians know the time that they put into selecting their stock, book or electronic media, caring for these and using every means to ensure that they are expert in using this material. But however good the service is - and as suppliers of that service, we have a stake in seeing that it is good - it has to be promoted. Local studies librarians do not need convincing that imaginative publicity of their collections can provide a unique link between libraries and local communities. But how do we get your work into the local news and keep it there? Local studies events need advertising to attract the public, journalists need to supply original scripts to fill their columns or the airwaves - a good working relationship with the local media makes elementary sense.

There is a section of the community who regularly come to listen to talks, look at old photographs, or look up the information in historic newspapers. Many more people, fired by programmes on television, are using our genealogical resources. By promoting our work and activities we can appeal, not just to our regular customers, but to many others who do not know about our services. We have constantly to raise the profile of our service and promote the material that we have, and the press is one of our important partners in doing this. In the past it may have been a little easier to hit the front pages of the local press. Was this because we had more time to build up relationships with the local media? Reporters were known to come into the library to look up facts and figures, or telephone to ask us for advice on local topics. Today we may all be too busy adapting information taken from electronic screens.

Another factor affecting us is the establishment of departments concentrating on Communications - the aggrandisement of what was once the Press Office - with regimented publication styles and cautious delivery. This is part of the continuing change within many organisations, alongside an emphasis on a corporate style of presentation. Items that could claim to be a quick and bright press release have to survive many hurdles. Each person in the chain will have an opinion and a red pencil, and it can take days to get agreement on any public arena message, however worthy it may be. This can result in items missing newspaper deadlines or being too dull to be used by the press. Often there is no time to supply any visual material. Promotion in the Press can be neutralised or miss copy dates and staff can be disappointed.

But sometimes we make difficulties for ourselves:

- Local studies staff often have little contact with news reporters and we may be inhibited by the idea of a communications department to which press releases are directed after departmental vetting
- Relations with the media can wither in the effort to keep up with day-to-day departmental duties. Contacts with the Press need to be nurtured
- We tend to offer up very worthy items rather than those that will immediately catch the eye of a picture editor
- We act arbitrarily, only thinking of press promotion at those times when we are running a special event or a specific project We find it difficult to make the first move, often being re-active, waiting for ideas to show themselves or the unexpected call from a reporter. Then we have to say that we are not the departmental spokesperson, hoping we can alert that person fast enough to give them a briefing on the particular topic
- While we have scheduled meetings and structured days, reporters, running to tight printing schedules, are used to reacting very quickly - usually the day before yesterday.
- We may forget that a continuous supply of appropriate and lively stories identifies us and sets up an expectation amongst our readers, who could begin to look for that particular series in the press
- There is rarely a departmental budget for media activities.

Local studies staff are obliged to establish consistency in an inconsistent environment. We can be part of an extremely hard-working department. We can be working constantly using the most professional standards and guidelines. We can be setting up the most innovative local studies events.... But, in an era of competing attractions, if no-one knows about us or about the unique collections that our libraries hold, what we are accomplishing...

One answer is to accept the existing ground rules and to work with them in whatever way we can to achieve the results we want. We must learn to adapt. If we are agreed that promotion through the press, that getting the message across for local studies is important, any organisational obstacles that there are must be overcome. We know that effective promotion can reach those sections of the community who do not use the service. It can sell our service and raise our profile, and counter all the outside influences competing for the attention of the public. There are opportunities here and we should seize them.

We and the local press can have a mutually co-operative understanding. We wish to tell the public about our collections and how they can be used and reporters need to fill their columns while satisfying their editors that they are reflecting the mood of the local community. So how do we ensure that the achievements of the local studies department hit the front pages? Dealing effectively with the media requires an understanding of how reporters think and how newsdesks operate. This is crucial. Not only are the newspaper reporters, journal editors,

and web editors in charge of the medium but they consider that they are the authorities. So if you have a direct link to contacts in the local press, take care of them and learn from them. They have the experience and the influence. It serves no purpose supplying a script that could not be referred to a copy-editor. We must say what we need to say, say it well and say it in the tone of the publication that we are using as a mouthpiece.

However, even if you do not have a direct link to a press desk, or cannot engineer a friendly connection, do not give up, as many of us tend to do. Treat management and your Communications Unit as your first port of call - as the next best thing. Accept the inevitable and direct this towards the same end. We can turn everything around. If we cannot send stories direct to our friendly links at newspaper offices, instead of quitting and blotting out any calls for 'stories' on the basis that 'they will never get in', we must think strategically. We should become adept at getting our message across. We need to cultivate the Communications Unit, or its equivalent, within our organisation - listening for calls for ideas and constantly sending in news items illustrating the best of our Service. Publicity stories are needed and local studies librarians can learn how to work with management, their Corporate Units, and the press in order to move forward together to the benefit of all:

- We should clarify what we are trying to achieve and when - there must be some kind of plan with specific aims. We need to know what we are promoting and we must target our efforts rather than using a scattergun approach. Do we need to promote the service to specific groups rather than preaching to everyone or even to those customers who already use the local studies department?
- What kind of press publicity are we envisaging and can we argue for its validity? At the same time we need to know what the media wants and we need to be able to react swiftly
- We should try to build a 'reputation for success' with a constant drip of possible news-feeds to management. This may lead towards some autonomy, since Communication Unit staff, as stressed as the rest of us, are often pleased to use useful scripts about the local area.

Walter Lippmann said in the 1920s, *'The Press...is like the beam of a searchlight that moves restlessly about, bringing one episode and then another out of darkness into vision'*. The specific phrase here is 'moves restlessly...'. News coverage can be very unpredictable but a good local story can get the message across. Local newspapers and radio have to identify with their audience, so we can help ourselves by helping the press, even if this has to be at several removes from the press desk, by supplying a continual and regular stream of feature material, possibly attached to historic photographs. This is what the local media want because this is of interest to the local community. Press Units and newsdesks need and thrive on news stories. We can remind ourselves and our Press Unit about the newspapers which were receptive to a certain storyline or way of exploiting a local studies announcement.

Local and regional news sells newspapers. There are all kinds of 'local' stories, news items and notices about specific events or launches, a talk given by a local personality at a function, or even the introduction of new material into the local studies department. Interest in local events is high on the agenda, especially if celebrities are involved. In North Yorkshire events including William Hague, and Janet Street-Porter in her persona as a dedicated Rambler, are popular not only with the public but also with local journalists.

Feature articles are more difficult to place. However a series of contemporary local studies themes could be proposed, since most of these will contain a distinctive story of human interest. One such in our county tied the photographs and description of the church where a Yorkshire couple were married on the very day of the wedding of the Queen in Westminster Abbey. Another, suggested by the presenter Luke Casey, turned into one of his *'Dales Diary'* series on television using images of the Dales from the Unnetie Digital Archive. But did we follow up these successes with other features - and if not, why not?

We need a long-term strategy that distinguishes, on each occasion, whether we need publicity, quick and ephemeral, or the continuous coverage of a more important issue. Good promotion through the media is a direct channel, conveying our invitation or our message, and thus having an influence on local groups. Continuous, interesting and consistent media coverage can raise awareness and can create a climate of support for the library service and for local studies in particular.

Advance publicity

The publicity for a specific event, a launch or a local history coffee morning, such as those that have taken place in the World War 2 anniversary year, need not be left totally in the hands of the corporate print department - this is material over which we have influence and which could be produced within the Library Service. We could provide publicity material such as notices and posters, pamphlets and brochures, and bookmarks; promotional letters and flyers for posting or emailing to contact groups; messages on authority websites; and announcements in newsletters, internal and external. We must look at what other organisations do to create successful publicity - and not just in the field of libraries and local studies. We should, for example, take advice from designers, examine commercial posters in the High Street and look at eye-catching book-jackets. What designs are effective and hold the attention? We should plan ahead by involving the local media in events and initiatives and by making use of launches or events as a platform for more precise targeting. Once we have the time and date for the event, we need to find out the deadlines for submitting details by contacting the media well in advance.

We should satisfy ourselves that advance publicity reaches as many people as possible. Within any events-plan enough time and sufficient resources should

be costed in to ensure that this original publicity is of a high standard and distributed far enough in advance to create a buzz in the expected audience - enough of a ripple of interest that details of the event are noticed and spread more widely by word of mouth.

Follow-up publicity

We should not forget follow-up coverage of an event in the press, on the radio or on the organisation's website. If there was no reporter on hand on the day, we could ask to send in a report. This will reach even more of the public, those who may not have been able to attend the function and even those who may not have been immediately interested in what we have to offer.

Knowing your local media.

Even if, as local studies librarians, we cannot talk directly to reporters, we should become familiar with the local press. We ought to have a clear idea of the relevant media covering our town and county, our locality, our readers from all backgrounds, perhaps deprived or from ethnic minorities. We should know which publications have been sympathetic in the past, for instance by including local studies features in its issues. Each treats news-items in a different way. *The Scarborough Evening News*, for example, is a great supporter of the local history of the North-East coastal area and its treatment of features contrasts with *Down your way*, a free magazine that features country articles written by volunteers. We also need to learn which publications work best for different ages and target group audiences.

We ought also to consider the smaller community presses apart from the main local newspapers and periodicals distributed in our local areas. These are the printed community networks that are constantly looking for individual and local copy - Council broadsheets, parish newsletters, residents' bulletins, church magazines and community free-sheets. We should remember that these are also read and we should offer to contribute notes and views about our collections and any interesting local studies projects. Websites also give us another opportunity for uploading notices and information about local studies, showcasing a section for breaking news that can be quickly updated. And if there are those media outlets about which your colleagues claim, 'Nothing helpful is ever published', we should ask why that is. Has the approach in the past been misdirected? Here we should examine the appropriate publications to give us an idea of the their culture and find out details about their circulation and area coverage and target audiences.

Each publication has a specific editorial way of working. We should examine this approach if we hope to have anything of influence published. Featuring in local newspapers gives local studies a very direct way into the living rooms of ordinary people. Articles in the press can persuade them to consider other subjects for a moment, something outside themselves - stimulated by a descriptive paragraph

in an evening paper, they might abandon the reality TV show for a session on family history promoted by the local studies department. All this creates an atmosphere of support for the department that can be called upon at other times, and could lead to the formation of a public support system.

Each publication, too, has a target audience. Does this match the specific audience that we are trying to reach? For every news item we put out we must think of the section of the community we are trying to engage. But is that publication's audience going to be impressed with your specific story? After all, we are competing for promotional space. We should anticipate the work flow and the priorities of journalists and editors. When trying to speak to a reporter about the ideas for my talk my telephone call by chance hit the very day of the North Yorkshire floods. Why did I not think!? However the Press are constantly on the lookout for that piece of news that will hijack the attention of both the editor and the reader. They are in the business of selling news and advertising.

There are, of course, protocols that we have to follow when working within a local authority and these differ in each organisation. Nevertheless much can be achieved if we collaborate with assurance and energy:

- We should make a list of the media contacts in our area and try to make personal contacts and we need, of course, to keep an up-to-date record of these contacts and the way in which they would like the information presented. We need to know the right person to approach, even if for an off-the-record discussion. We ought to be prepared to spend time with the Press, on the phone or in person at a function, even if there is no immediate outcome or a resulting paragraph is less than splendid. We must treat our Press contacts and our Press Offices with respect. Every journalist and media officer is an individual and each will have their sphere of professional interest.
- We should be adaptable but, even more so, we should be dependable and friendly. The journalist needing a scan of a photograph in the next hour is only doing his job. If we are reliable, the journalist will come back to us.
- A page on the library website giving the official contacts for the media would be useful.

The press release

These days, corporate press scripts are commonly verified by management before being released to the Press, and this can be a slow process. However if we gain a reputation of writing scripts that pass muster and also catch the eye of the local media, we are likely to have greater latitude in the future. Another way forward, if the event is being organised by partner organisations, is to decide which partner has the best relationship with the press and to delegate the press promotional work to them. A press release must be carefully thought about:

- We must be relevant: information should be chosen, not only for its bearing on library policies and programmes, but so that the local press will see that

it conforms to their output and will interest their readers. Our press releases are competing with main features, other reports and advertisements, and breaking news, so the presentation and the timing is crucial

- In the heading we must state clearly what the story is about. We can put in a catchy headline, but should not try to be too clever. Various people in our organisation will be looking at it, as will the reporters and the sub-editors, so clarity is paramount
- The essence of the press release should be in the first paragraph – not the last. If the article has to be shortened, and it probably will be, it will be cut from the bottom up. We must always write the piece as it should appear in the news columns. Journalists are usually too busy for re-writes. So the main facts must be clearly presented at the start of the script and certainly no library or local studies catch words or acronyms that no one will understand should be included. If we use quotes from a real person we should state who that person is
- A contact name and telephone number should be included so that a reporter can phone for more information – and the contact must be fully aware of the aims of the promotion.
- A local studies year planner would give advance notice for possible press liaison.

Photo opportunities

While facts and information are essential, the selection of visual material is also important in gaining attention. For a positive response we must think creatively – we need to discover which newsdesks would prefer departmental illustrations and which will prefer to send their staff photographers to a function. When we are inviting press photographers to record our projects, we must give the newspaper enough time to plan for this. Alternatively we can include a photograph with a press release or indicate that we can supply a picture. Meanwhile our staff should be asked about visually interesting photo opportunities – the press is too full of officials looking at computers!

After any successful press coverage we must also follow through, and keep in touch, making sure that our list of press contacts is current and that our named staff officially designated as departmental spokesmen are briefed about any impending local studies advances. They need to be knowledgeable enough so that a call from a journalist does not take them unawares, thus losing a fine opportunity to promote the Service. A record of media enquiries and a collection of the resultant press cuttings are both helpful as these give an insight to the questions that the particular newsdesk feels are relevant to their readership.

Good promotion does not end at the conclusion of a local history month or when a talk or presentation is over and everyone has gone home. It needs to be worked at and it needs to be continuous. We must stand up and assert our confidence in the efforts of our department. We must be bold in our efforts to persuade

journalists that we are the best source of information on our subject area: if we can persuade them of this, they will then be a vital channel of communication with the public on our behalf. Working with the local media makes sense.

Elizabeth Melrose is Research Officer, Local Studies and Information, North Yorkshire Libraries. This is an abbreviated and truncated version of a talk given at the Umbrella Conference 2005 in Manchester for the Local Studies Group open session.

“WORD OF MOUTH”: The 2005 Midlands and Anglia Day School

This well-attended Day School certainly packed in an exciting group of speakers to highlight the value of recording oral history and their experiences of embarking on oral history projects. Most librarians understand the meaning of “oral history”, but clear definitions are given on the Oral History Society’s webpage (www.ohs.org.uk)

The papers

Cynthia Brown from EMMILAC gave an excellent presentation, covering lots of useful information, on “Doing Oral History”. This paper is printed elsewhere in this issue.

Jan Edgar from Derbyshire County Council talked about her two-year project, funded at £27,000, which enabled her to do the following:

- To write a book about “Trains and Trails”
- To capture some of the stories from the book as an oral history project
- To produce an interactive Trains and Trails CD Rom for schoolchildren to use
- To produce Trains and Trails drama
- To tour an exhibition of the completed project
- To produce a Trains and Trails CD with images and memorabilia

This was a fascinating project which demonstrated how a simple oral history idea can be expanded into different facets.

Rachel Orme of Lincolnshire County Council then gave a demonstration showing how Lincolnshire is using ICT to record and share local history knowledge and memories, and finally Jenni Waugh from BBC West Midlands gave an account of valuable lessons learned from the BBC People’s War project. As well as her talk she gave us the news that at the end of December 2005 the site would stop taking contributions from the public, so that by now it is too late to capture further memories. The site, however, remains active so that people can view stories which it has collected.

Mukesh Nagar, Information Development Librarian, Leicestershire Library Services

DOING ORAL HISTORY – a short practical guide

Cynthia Brown

Oral history can be broadly defined as historical information based on personal memories, experiences and opinions. It has great potential to support and extend the work of libraries, providing access to information unavailable from other sources, giving people a 'voice' and an opportunity to contribute to the historical record, and helping to achieve objectives around social inclusion, community engagement and cultural diversity. However, the prospect of setting up an oral history project can be quite daunting if you have never done it before. Some basic advice at an early stage, and some signposting to more detailed guidance, can help you make the most of your time and other resources.

Oral histories need to be subject to the same critical analysis and cross-checking as documentary historical sources, but they are not just concerned with collecting 'facts'. They can also offer insights into people's feelings and the meaning that events had for them. In the words of the Italian oral historian Alessandro Portelli, oral history 'tells us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did'.

So they have a lot to offer – but you do need to be realistic at the outset about what is achievable within the resources that you have available. The work neither begins nor ends with the interview itself! It will also involve publicising the project, recruiting interviewees, producing summaries or transcripts of the interviews and other basic records, plus the work involved in producing a book, audio resource, display or the other outputs. Don't be overambitious, and always aim for quality over quantity.

What equipment will you need? There is no simple answer, as much will depend on what you can actually afford. It is best to avoid cheap audio cassette recorders, particularly if you intend to reproduce the sound on a CD or website. While it is possible to enhance sound with computer software, it can be extremely time-consuming, and investing in good quality equipment to begin with can be much more cost-effective. However, it is now difficult to buy high quality audio cassette recorders like the Marantz or Sony Professional Walkman as they have been overtaken by newer digital technology.

Minidisc recorders are currently the cheapest alternative. Their 'menus' can initially be a little confusing, but once you have set the defaults they are very simple to use. Other forms of digital recording equipment, like solid state recorders, are becoming more widely available, but are as yet significantly more expensive. Whatever you use, you will need an external microphone – and don't forget to budget for consumables like tapes or minidisks (use a separate tape or disc for each interview), including extra ones for making copies of your recordings. You can find more detailed advice about equipment on the website of the East Midlands Oral History Archive (EMOHA) at: <http://www.le.ac.uk/emoha/training/equipment.html>

You could also use video to record interviews. Much depends here on your interviewees' preferences, and the expertise available to you. Some people love the idea, others find it intimidating; and it is much more difficult to improve a bad video recording than a poor audio interview. Whatever equipment you use, you do need to be confident about it before you start your interviews. There is nothing like a display of technical incompetence to get things off to a bad start! This includes arriving without crucial pieces of equipment like the adaptor for the microphone or a blank audio cassette or disc on which to record the interview. A checklist on a postcard stored with your equipment is a simple way of ensuring you do have everything you need.

Having a clear focus for your project is also crucial in terms of recruiting interviewees and targeting your publicity. Be as precise as you can about your aims and how people can help, and avoid issuing 'blanket' appeals for interviewees that might result in an unmanageable volume of responses. You might want to start with your existing contacts, but you will need to look at ways of broadening the range. For instance, it is always tempting to go to recognised 'community leaders', and there are real advantages in enlisting their support in terms of credibility and trust; but they may not be as representative of others as their position suggests. Word of mouth is an effective way of getting people involved, but you can also target local organisations, and channel publicity through schools, libraries, doctors' surgeries and other places likely to be visited by those you want to involve. A press release or a small exhibition to engage people's interest are other possibilities.

The next step is to prepare for the interview itself. Where will you record this? People often prefer to be interviewed at home where they feel most comfortable, but some will prefer a different venue. Offer them the choice. You need a relatively quiet environment, but complete silence is neither achievable nor really desirable. The chiming clock, the budgerigar, the buses trundling down the road outside, are all part of the context of the interviewee's everyday life and are arguably worth capturing along with their words.

Many oral historians prefer one-to-one interviews, but there is no hard and fast rule. The presence of another person, particularly another member of the family, will change the nature of an interview, though not inevitably to its detriment. Some people may be less willing to speak frankly in these circumstances, others more so. In a group situation, one person's memory may well spark others, and it can be an enjoyable and stimulating experience for those involved. In terms of the audibility of the recording, however, it can be problematic if half a dozen or more people are talking at once!

It is good practice to confirm interview arrangements in writing. This is an opportunity to remind your interviewee of the topics you would like to cover, and ask if they have photographs or other relevant items. Do give a thought to your safety or that of your staff or volunteers when making these arrangements. Oral history is not a high risk occupation, but you will often be visiting someone you

have never met, in an unfamiliar location, and need to assess the possible risks. Your organisation may have a policy covering this, but some basic precautions include telling colleagues where you are going and when to expect you to return; deciding what action they will take if they are concerned; and ensuring that you carry a mobile phone.

You need to give some thought in advance to the questions you want to ask your interviewee. On the whole, it is better to avoid a 'questionnaire' approach, or providing a list of questions in advance unless the interviewee specifically requests it. Leave some flexibility in terms of what you cover and when. However, making some notes about what you want to ask can be very useful and help you feel more confident about the whole process.

Some interviewees may feel rather nervous themselves, so take time to put them at ease while you set up your equipment and make sure it is working. Asking them to give their name and date of birth at the start of the recording is a good way of doing this (and of identifying the recording should the labels drop off in the future). Try not to talk about the things you want to cover in the interview before you start recording, though. Otherwise you will have to ask them to repeat what they have said, and it will never be as spontaneous the second time around. For the same reason, I would personally not make a pre-interview visit to discuss what the interview itself will cover.

Conducting interviews becomes easier with practice, but there are some basic guidelines that may be helpful. Open ended questions are more effective than those that simply invite a 'yes' or 'no' response – like asking 'What did you enjoy most about school?' rather than 'Did you like school?' Show that you are interested in what is said by nodding and making eye contact now and again; and do listen carefully so that you can ask other questions based on what your interviewee is saying. Don't worry unduly about them going 'off the point'. What they tell you in the process may well be illuminating, and you can always return to the main topics of the interview later on, with a simple 'Could you tell me something about...' type of question. If someone becomes upset while recalling a particular memory, ask them if they want to stop the recording and be guided by their response. More often than not they are happy to continue, but may want a short break.

There is more detailed guidance on interview technique on the Oral History Society website at <http://www.ohs.org.uk/advice> and the EMOHA site at <http://www.le.ac.uk/emoha/training/session.html>

Even the most experienced oral historians won't always get it right, but one of the best ways of improving your technique is to listen to your own interviews and think about what you might have done differently. You could get a colleague to do this as well, but don't be too harsh on yourself. It may be easy in retrospect to spot that over-hasty interruption, or the missed cue for an interesting question, but it is rarely so obvious at the time!

Do accept any hospitality offered at the end of the interview. This is not only polite, as is offering a copy of the recording, and inviting interviewees to the launch of a book or similar event. It is also a chance to talk them through the copyright consent form that you now need them to sign. There are two copyrights in an oral history recording. One belongs to the person (or people) whose words have been recorded; the other to the individual who made the recording, or the organisation by which s/he is employed. There is very little you can do with an interview without your interviewee's 'informed consent', and the simplest way of securing this is by getting them to sign a form that clearly states the purposes for which the recording can be used. It is best to do this at the end of the interview, but occasionally people may want to listen to what they have said before signing.

There are examples of copyright clearance forms on the EMOHA website and that of the Oral History Society, which has detailed guidance on all aspects of copyright at <http://www.ohs.org.uk/ethics/> along with the Society's Ethical Guidelines. Interviewees also have certain 'moral rights' in law, including the right to be named as the 'author' of their words, and not to have these subjected to 'derogatory treatment' – by being quoted out of context, for example.

You will need to make a working copy of recordings for the purpose of summarising or transcribing them, and store the original in a safe place. Transcribing an interview word for word can be very time-consuming and tiring, so think carefully about whether you really need to do it. A detailed summary may be sufficient as a record of the interview content, enabling you (and members of the public) to locate specific sections that are relevant to your project or their interests. Again, you can find more guidance on summaries and interviews - and caring for your recordings - on the Training section of the EMOHA website.

Members of the Oral History Society's Regional Network will also be pleased to help you with any queries as you go along, and you can find their contact details at <http://ohs.org.uk/network/>. Once you have good quality oral history recordings with copyright clearance, then you can use them in a whole variety of ways: print and audio publications, educational materials, exhibitions, audio or text extracts on a website, or as the basis for storytelling or drama. Properly documented, preserved and placed on public access, they will also be an invaluable resource for generations to come.

Cynthia Brown is Workforce Development Officer at the East Midlands Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (EMMLAC) and Co-Ordinator of the Oral History Society Regional Network. This paper was originally given at the LSG Midlands and Anglla Day School at Nottingham in September 2005

VACANCIES AND THE PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATE: some further observations

Morris Garratt

Six years ago this journal published a paper of mine in which I commented on various aspects of advertisements for Local Studies Librarians based upon a survey of a three-year period (1995-1997) of such advertisements from the (then) Library Association's Vacancies Supplements. Recently the journal's editor suggested to me that a follow-up survey might be of interest: this paper is the result. It differs from the earlier one in that it only covers a single year's advertisements, in this case the 25 issues from 10 September 2004 to 26 August 2005. Consequently the number of advertisements is much smaller, but the criteria I used then equally apply now, so I won't repeat them here.

Reflecting changes in the structure of organisations, the single largest category was for Records Managers, but as these are mainly aimed at archivists, I have excluded them from the present survey: I noted, however, that salaries offered ranged from £28,500 to a maximum, of £47,795, though a northern County Council offered a maximum of £25,407 for its records manager. Also excluded were posts for archivists only, and those which included 'an approved archival qualification'.

The working relationship between librarians and archives officers within the same department or building generally works well, so that in some authorities we have 'Local Studies and Archives' while in others it is 'Archives and Local Studies': this co-operation is seen in some of the advertisements. A well-known northern university wanted a 'Special collections and Archives Librarian' who would work 'under the direction of the Head of Liaison and Academic Services'. He or she 'should have an honours degree and be (or be working towards being) a chartered member of either CILIP or the Society of Archivists'. A Scottish Council sought a 'Library and Archive Manager', but before you all rushed off to apply for the post, did you notice that 'complementing the main archive resource are the photographic, sound and bio-diversity sections'. What on earth is the latter?

Before considering in some detail those purely Local Studies Librarian posts I have seen, a word about posts which at first reading do not mention local studies. These I think reflect the position which obtained when I joined the profession fifty years ago, when apart from such separate departments in the major city and some county libraries, if you wanted to work in local studies you had to become a reference librarian. Local studies in those days was part of the reference service, and to some extent that is still the case. 'A permanent Reference and Information Services Librarian is required ... [for the] development of reference, information and local studies services'.

But what about qualifications? An advertisement for a 'Librarian (Reference and Information Services)' stated that 'Experience of Reference and Local Studies provision is desirable', but in fairness, notice that the experience is in 'provision' rather than knowledge – a quite different thing. Another advertisement for a

Reference & Local Studies post (job share) said that 'considerable local studies and reference knowledge and experience are essential'. At first that sounds good, but an intending candidate from outside the area, while being able to take with him 'considerable reference knowledge' (the same reference books are common to most libraries), would have difficulty in showing 'considerable local studies knowledge' – that only comes over time. I appreciate that that is not quite what was intended; the advertisement is unclear in its intentions and should have said something like: 'considerable knowledge and experience of reference and local studies materials'. In this case it seems that the emphasis is on local studies rather than on reference work, for the same advertisement goes on to say that, having got someone with considerable local studies knowledge, 'You will undertake an accredited local studies qualification', without being more specific. That could mean anything from a Certificate in Local History to an M.A. or a Ph.D.! Another advertisement, headed 'Assistant Librarian or Archivist', put it quite succinctly: 'You will be required to possess an Archive or Library degree level qualification or have considerable relevant experience': notice the word 'relevant'. It goes on to state that 'This is an active role and some lifting will be required'(!). And finally on this question of qualifications, what do you make of this: 'Essential requirements [other than the stipulated good honours degree, preferably in history, [and] a qualification in librarianship] include a good knowledge of English church history, Latin, and historical bibliography, and experience of cataloguing (including rare books) and of working with DYNIX or similar automated systems'. Now that's not too much to ask, is it? To be fair, in the context of the library in question, that is not unreasonable!

This brings us to the advertisements for purely local studies posts. In the period under review there were 8 of these: 3 designated 'Local Studies Librarian', 2 asked for a 'Local Studies Officer', there was one 'Head of ... Library and History Centre', one was part-time, and one was cover for maternity leave. Of these, six were from County Councils and two from [metropolitan] Borough Councils. Bearing in mind the salary ranges quoted earlier in this paper, the maximum salaries in these six posts ranged from £19,029 to £27,411. Not over-generous, but I suspect that most local studies librarians would say that the interest of the job takes second place to its monetary rewards: among my contacts job satisfaction is an important feature.

Job descriptions, though, are not always very clear. The 'Head of ...' post referred to above, which specifically mentioned 'Library' in its title would require 'a postgraduate qualification in archives, heritage, education or information...' in order to 'take a leading role in running our innovative and successful Library and History Centre, home to a wealth of family and local history sources, from books and newspapers to microform, photographs and audio'. Where and what archives does this Centre hold? When you read advertisements like this you really wonder who writes them, and whether they actually understand the nature of the post. The description in the part-time post was very general and could have referred to any post apart from its phrase 'With an interest in local studies...', and a similar comment might be made about another of these six.

So, what information do you look for in an advertisement? If you have access to it, read again the final paragraph of my previous paper. Remember that the employer should be trying to attract your attention and interest by giving some indication as to the size and importance of the collection and how busy it is: in short, does it attract you? We still have four advertisements to consider. One of these says practically nothing about the collection, other than that it attracts 'annually over 20,000 visits in person plus virtual visits'; there is no indication, for example, of the range of materials available, or of its publishing programme, which would indicate that this is an active and lively service. Although at first glance, then, this is not encouraging, but a possible reason for this, and the main thrust of the advertisement, is in the forthcoming developments. 'The Local Studies and Archives service will play a key part in Phase 3 of the Cultural Quarter: the refurbishment of a Grade 2 listed building and the development of an integrated museum, local studies and archives service [and] you will be involved in this exciting project [and] in the selection and introduction of a new collections management system, outreach initiatives and the sourcing of funding for other service developments'. That's more like it!

In my previous paper I commented on 'variations of the phrase "a knowledge of the area and its history"...', saying that this 'may not be downright discriminatory, but it is a positive disincentive to a prospective candidate from another part of the country ... and seems to be saying "We have a suitable internal candidate"'. Regrettably, it seems, very little has changed, for two of the remaining three advertisements carry similar statements remarking on the desirability of local knowledge. This may certainly be so, but neither adds 'but not essential', which would go some way to avoiding the discriminatory tag. One of them, from Scotland, also talks about planning and preparing displays, organising user education visits and working closely with the Records Officer: surely most local studies librarians did that as a matter of course.

The remaining advertisement is better, though this does not fully meet the criteria I outlined in my previous paper. From this one we have some indication of its size - 26,000 volumes - and of its scope: 'The collection also holds mapping, illustrations, newspapers and ephemera', and it will be the appointee's job to 'promote [the collection] to a wider range of users and potential users across the county'. There is clearly scope for initiative and the opportunity to make one's mark. But the advertisement also says that 'you will be dealing with local studies and family history enquiries...' So that's what a local studies librarian does - I'd never have guessed!!

So, it would seem that precious little has been learned from my previous paper. '...I equally hope that advertisements in the future might be more informative. The whole point of a job advertisement is to attract the right candidate...'. Clearer advertisements can help candidates decide whether to enquire further.

Morris Garratt is a founder member of the Local Studies Group North West Branch (1982), being Hon. Treasurer 1982-1992 and Chairman since 1992.

1. Garratt, Morris, 'Vacancies and the prospective candidate: some personal observations', *Local Studies Librarian*, 18(1), Summer 1999, pp.15-17.

IFLA 2005 OSLO – a report

Elizabeth Melrose

I took part in the WLIC Congress 2005 in Oslo as a member of the Standing Committee of the Genealogy and Local History Section of IFLA and as a representative of the Local Studies Group. I was indebted to the Local Studies Group for the grant that supported my attendance at this invigorating conference.

Pre-conference work

Much of the more complex work for Oslo had been accomplished by our Standing Committee members some weeks before the opening of the Conference. Our Section Committee, which includes two other officials from the UK, works as a team and conducts email committee meetings. We are all involved in every aspect of Conference planning.

We were collaborating with the Geography and Map Libraries Section in showcasing two full sessions, on the subject of 'Navigating the world of our ancestors'. Through our Section list-serv, we had discussed about twenty abstracts, sent in response to our call for papers. We required presentations that would be interesting and that, at the same time, would illuminate the connections between family history and geographical mapping. After jointly choosing the most appropriate abstracts, we later read and commented on nine papers. I am happy to admit that the most interesting presentation, and I realised this immediately I read the full paper, was one that I had rejected at the earlier stage, thus showing the advantages of group consultation.

Meanwhile, I had edited my second IFLA Section Newsletter, which we published on IFLAnet in June, see: <http://www.ifla.org/VII/s37/news/genloc-Newsletter6-05.pdf> promoting the Oslo sessions and including other articles relating to genealogical studies world-wide. I had also persuaded a close friend to translate the Section Introductory leaflet into Norwegian so that this could join the clutch of leaflets in languages other than English.

The Oslo Conference Section Programme

In Oslo, the Committee members and associate attendees discussed the immediate programme arrangements, including the Section tour organised by our Secretary to the Archives of the Norwegian Museum of Cultural History at Bygdøy and to Oslo City Archives. The notes from these Committee meetings are to be used to complete our Section Review as required this year by IFLA.

The two joint Open Sessions went well with around 211 attendees. One of our speakers was unable to attend, leaving us with eight varied papers from leaders in their specific fields

- the Map Librarian from Western Carolina University, USA, introduced the hardware, the Geographic Information System (GIS) software and the expertise required to map genealogical data

- the Deputy Director of the Family History Library, Salt Lake City, USA, summarised his organisation's "English Jurisdictions mapping project"
- the Head Archivist of the National Survey and Cadastre in Denmark presented an outline of their programme which, in co-operation with the National Archives of Denmark, scans old maps and turns these into geocoded internet images, allowing searches on persons, placenames, relevant government officials and so on
- the Map Librarian from the University of Connecticut, USA, talked about building a globally distributed historical sheet map set
- the Genealogy Librarian from the Vancouver Public Library described the resources and the difficulties of tracing immigrant Chinese – Canadian ancestors
- the Director of the Sorensen Molecular Genealogy Foundation in Utah, USA, showed how DNA analysis techniques are helping genealogical research
- a research assistant from the Strossmayer University in Croatia considered the advantages of collaboration between heritage institutions and computer scientists
- a research assistant from the Norwegian Institute of Local History described her Institute's project "Local History World Wide: an international internet inventory" which aims to raise awareness about the international perspectives of local history, and to establish a network for knowledge sharing

The number of people who came to these sessions and the topics covered illustrated how the study of geography, maps, genealogy, emigration, and DNA are interlinked and how much can be investigated via the internet. All the papers, including the one from the non-attender (on Irish Travellers) have been published on IFLAnet at: [http:// www.ifla.org/IV/ifla71/Programme.htm](http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla71/Programme.htm) On the following day there was an afternoon workshop organised at Oslo University by our partners, the Geography and Map Libraries Section on Basic Geographic Systems (GIS mapping) which complemented a couple of the presentations. It was stimulating at the workshop to have the practice in using the actual GIS data and to learn how useful it could be.

Other Sessions

As a reference librarian leading a small local team involved with the People's Network *Enquire* Virtual Reference Service in England, I also attended the Reference and Information Services session to hear about similar initiatives in Switzerland, Canada, Sweden and Singapore. Many genealogical questions are received through this global internet service and more are expected as *Enquire* becomes better known. Those present both at this session and at a breakfast meeting run by OCLC, the system provider, underlined the wish of everyone to improve the delivery of enquiry services to the public. Since returning home I have taken part in a virtual 'webinar' (admittedly without the sound, since our authority does not permit transatlantic telephone calls, albeit free) with other US librarians in the OCLC circuit.

At the Conference many sessions that I would have liked to have attended conflicted with each other, and we have informed the IFLA secretariat that this was a problem. One particular instance of this was that our Section was due to man the IFLA Booth to promote genealogy and local history at the time that we were conducting our Study Tour. We would also have liked to have found an easy way of publicising our activities in the conference news-sheet.

However these were small irritations. Despite the high cost of living, Oslo is a beautiful city, especially in the sun, and a trip on the Oslo fjord was a delightful experience – as was the evening at the Bygdøy Folk Museum. An off-site late evening performance by Nordic book artists showing the work of two Icelandic children's authors and illustrators was a propitious addition to my programme. Each gave a presentation showing their drawings and spoke about their work. I was only sorry that I could not stay for the whole evening but I needed to run for a tube train to reach my out of town accommodation.

I revived friendships with colleagues from previous IFLA conferences and had many coffees mulling over news, professional and otherwise, from other countries. I returned to the UK quite enthused and hoping to continue my connection with the Genealogy and Local History Section and the international work of IFLA.

Anyone wanting to learn more about the Genealogy and Local History Section of IFLA is welcome to contact me at eam@freeuk.com

Elizabeth Melrose, CILIP Councillor representing the Local Studies Group

LOCAL STUDIES LIBRARIAN OF THE YEAR

The Dorothy McCulla Memorial Prize for 2005 has been awarded to Alan Hankin, Local Studies Specialist, Reading Central Library and to Philippa Stevens, formerly Local Studies Librarian, Hampshire County Library. This is the first time the Group has made two awards in one year. Both were made in recognition of outstanding work in developing their respective local studies collections over a long period of time.

Sadly, both recipients have now died. Alan Hankin continued his sterling work despite suffering from motor neurone disease, while Philippa Stevens had to retire after a long fight against cancer. A further note about Philippa, who was a long-time member of the LSG Committee, appears in Notes and News.

THE NEW TAMESIDE LOCAL STUDIES CENTRE

Alice Lock

The local studies collection in Tameside was brought together from the materials held in nine different local authorities in 1974. From the start we operated as a combined local studies and archive service. Space was found at Stalybridge Library in 1976 where a large reading room was available along with the library cellars for archive storage.

Like all local studies and archives services we soon found that building up the collection and increased use brought problems. The reading room which had, at first, seemed so spacious was crammed with more and more bookshelves, microfilm and fiche readers and, finally, computers. Eventually we had no table space for readers to consult maps and large documents. While we were very keen to keep as much bookstock as possible on open access we found that the shelves created many unsupervised corners.

From 1986 we employed a qualified archivist and so were able to improve the finding aids and service to archive users. But it became obvious that the library cellars were not suitable for archive storage and the Public Record Office, who licensed us to hold certain types of records, were becoming concerned. There were no temperature and humidity controls and no room for expansion. We soon found ourselves operating an overflow store, also in unsuitable conditions, but, at least, above ground.

A flood in Stalybridge Library cellars in the summer of 2002 highlighted how critical the situation had become and Tameside Council was quick to set in motion the plans for a new building.

Planning the building and preparing for the move while keeping the existing service going was quite a challenge. The council decided on a "design and build" process which meant close working with the architect and contractors. We were lucky to find a site next to the Central Library in Ashton-under-Lyne. When the building was up and running this allowed us to share some services such as cleaning and caretaking and allowed for easy referral to lending and central reference libraries.

Planning a new building today involves a lot of input from a wide range of people – health and safety requirements and the need to make the building as accessible as possible – called for expertise from many areas. Balancing these considerations with the needs of researchers and the preservation requirements for the collection was often difficult.

The move itself took us five months. Preparing to move the archive collection took up most of this time. It was complicated by the fact that it was on two sites and some collections had been split – the less well used Ashton and Hyde borough records were in the outstore while the more heavily used documents remained

at Stalybridge. We wanted to marry collections like this back together – in the right order. A further difficulty was that the new mobile racking had shelves which were longer than our old ones so that it was not a simple shelf to shelf transfer. Michael Keane, our archivist, not only did the meticulous shelf plans to allow us to move and re-unite collections, but he also managed to create an alphabetical sequence for the twelve or so pre Tameside local authority collections (a librarian's dream). Although we had the services of a removal company for the move itself the packing and labelling was hard physical and dirty work, but well worth it when we saw the neat rows of boxes in the new clean stores. It made me realise how lucky we were to have such a good team in Local Studies and Archives as everybody threw themselves into the move.

A much larger reading room has given us the luxury of arranging furniture and equipment in a logical order – microfilm cabinets next to the readers, the archive users table next to the counter and so forth. We have clear sight lines and the opportunity to display a wide range of publications for sale. We also benefited from all new furniture and equipment (apart from a couple of film and fiche readers). Every day was like Christmas as delivery men arrived with their boxes.

We opened to the public on 14 March 2005 and the first few weeks were quite a struggle as about 150 visitors a day came through the doors. Most of these were new users, not our regulars (who seemed to wait till we had been open for some time), so this meant that they often needed a lot of help. We also had a backlog of email enquiries as they had continued to arrive while we were closed. These first few weeks seemed to pass in a blur so it was quite a while before we were able to feel settled in the new building and to start to evaluate the new service.

Perhaps the first benefit we noticed was the improvement to our working conditions. No more dragging heavy Victorian volumes off shelves while perched at the top of a ladder in a cramped aisle between shelving. No more bending to put documents into a dumb waiter style lift - or carrying them up two flights of stairs. Instead the mobile racking is easily opened and a trolley can be wheeled down the aisle. We still need ladders or kickstools but there is room for a proper ladder with a support at the top. The most heavily used material is on the same floor as the reading room, but anything stored upstairs is reached by a lift which has plenty of space for trolleys.

Not only are the stores easier to access but the extra space allows us to keep material in a logical sequence instead of in nooks and crannies all over the building. It makes documents much easier to find even in unfamiliar surroundings. We are sure our readers welcome the speedy production of documents. And the materials themselves are benefiting from being stored in proper conditions, to BS5454 levels. We are confident that future generations will be able to access these documents thanks to our temperature and humidity controls, and the fire and intruder precautions. Shelving capacity has increased from approximately 2,500 to 3,500 linear metres providing us with about 30% expansion space.

The bigger reading room allowed us to introduce new facilities – extra microfilm readers, public toilets, tables with power sockets to allow use of laptops, lockers and a refreshment area. For the first time we have proper disabled access and we have the loop system for deaf people and a CCTV video magnifier for people with a visual impairment. We have more public access PCs and one has been set up with aids such as a large keyboard and rollerball mouse to help people who have problems using computers.

We also took the opportunity to improve our holdings and have bought our first instalment of GRO indexes (1900 – 1930). We have invested in more census CD Roms and some material, such as the VCH volumes for the whole country, has been transferred from the Central Reference Library.

Our busy first few weeks were also marked by the need to set up new procedures. As part of Stalybridge Library and Art Gallery building we never had to deal with fire alarm and security systems, building maintenance, financial procedures etc. As a new build with almost all new equipment everything happens at once – all contracts and warranties run out at the same time.

We realise that we are very lucky to have this new facility especially in the current climate. It is a tribute to the many staff who have worked with us over the years and who have tried to highlight the problems of our old accommodation and to Tameside's commitment to preserving its records. We would like to extend an invitation to any LSG member who finds themselves in our area to come for a tour round – it is a pleasure for us to show off our new building

Alice Lock is Local Studies Librarian, Tameside. This article represents her personal views.

FROM OUR SUBGROUPS

Our **North West** subgroup reports that its Family History day school was so successful that it had to be re-run in November to cater for those who were turned away the first time. Held at the Manchester and Lancashire Family History Centre, the day schools gave delegates the chance to look round the library and facilities at the Centre and to take part in sessions from experts from the Society on various topics. The subgroup's AGM was held at the November School and produced several changes in the committee. The subgroup is already planning a day at Stonyhurst in the spring, and is considering doing something on minority communities in Autumn 2006.

Midlands and Anglia held their annual Day School at Nottingham in September, the subject being oral history. Over 35 members attended and replies to the feedback questionnaire showed that the course was greatly valued – 26 of the 33 replies rated the course "excellent" overall, the others rating it "good", and one respondent commented that it was the best Day School yet. A report of the

course and one of the papers appear elsewhere in this issue. The subgroup's AGM was also held at this meeting, and all the committee members were re-elected. Earlier in the year a group of members enjoyed a visit to the Mining Heritage Centre at Mansfield, where the archives include over 100,000 plans of workings, colliery notebooks and 26,500 Coal Commission registration files (mine owners registering interests just prior to Nationalisation). A new issue of the newsletter was published during the summer.

LOCSCOT. Our Scottish subgroup continues to flourish. The subject for the 2006 Scottish Local History Week, which LOCSCOT organises, will be "Housing, Health and the Poor", and will run from 22-29 April. The autumn LOCSCOT day school was devoted to this topic to give some ideas for exhibitions, displays, events etc, and arrangements across Scotland will be co-ordinated by David Catto of Aberdeenshire Libraries. The AGM was held at the Day School and there were several changes in the committee – in particular Don Martin stepped down after many years as Secretary, as he has been elected Chairman of LSG. He will continue to represent Scotland on the LSG Committee.

From Wales comes the news that the **Welsh subgroup** is to be re-launched. It has been dormant for a while, yet there are many Cilip members running local collections for their library services. Several of these members are new to the field, eager to share ideas and concerns and would welcome the support and experience of more established practitioners. The inaugural meeting will be a Day School to be held in the new National Waterfront Museum in Swansea. There will be an opportunity to tour the new museum, and the speakers will include Don Martin, Chairman of the national Local Studies Group. The Day School will be sponsored by CILIP Cymru/Wales, so there will be no cost to delegates. For more information, contact Sue Armour, Reference and Local Studies Department, County Library, Dew Street, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire SA61 1SU or email Sue at: Sue.Armour@pembrokeshire.gov.uk

Not a subgroup, but representing **Northern Ireland**, the LISC(NI) Local Studies Panel reports that the Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded £42,000 to the "Celebrating Local History" project. This project is to be administered by LISC(NI) and the aim is to further local history activity across Northern Ireland by increasing access, encouraging inclusion and establishing new partnerships. The hope is that various groups and individuals will see the value of running events under the banner of "Celebrating Local History 2006". While there will be no funding to hold individual events, it is felt that groups will see the value of "buying into" the promotion and publicity which will be generated by the project. Libraries will develop projects as they already do and they will be presented under the Year's brand and be promoted on electronic and paper calendars produced by the Project Officer. Other activities in Northern Ireland have included a major Local History and Family History Fair in which, among others, Local Studies libraries, PRONI, museums and the National Archive took part. The Panel will continue to be represented on the LSG committee by Yvonne Hirst.

HAVE YOU SEEN...?

Some recent items of interest to local studies librarians

East Lothian, 1945-2000: East Lothian Fourth Statistical Account, ed. Sonia Baker. Vol 3: the Parishes of Bolton, Gladsmuir, East Lothian Council Library Service for the East Lothian Fourth Statistical Account Society, 2005. 176pp. £14.95 + p&p. ISBN 1 897857 31 4.

This volume is one of five in the *Account* devoted to individual parishes. As were the original *Statistical Accounts*, the parish accounts are written by local people (though not the minister) and attempt to provide a picture of the parish since World War 2 using sources such as statistics, parish records and oral history and reminiscences: the contents vary slightly according to the material available. These accounts contribute to the economic and social history of the County, though they do not, of course, provide a complete history of the period, as much research still needs to be done. Nevertheless, this attempt to continue the work of the previous *Accounts* will be very valuable to communities and historians in the future. There is a substantial and detailed index to the volume.

Recipes and Remedies 1784-1809: collected by Martin Brooke, No 50 Red Lion Street Holborn. Camden Local Studies and Archives, 2005. 28pp. £3.95 + £1.00 p&p. ISBN 1 900846 15 2.

This is one of those quirky little items which libraries hold, and which, in addition to their intrinsic value to historians, reproductions like this make inexpensive gifts. This neatly produced little book contains eighteenth century recipes for such things as Damson Cheese, New College Puddings and Pickled Cucumber, together with various household recipes, for instance for black ink, or to get rid of bugs. There is a short but interesting introduction and a warning about some of the ingredients recommended which would be considered dangerous today.

NOTES AND NEWS

We are sorry to report that Philippa Stevens, a very long-serving and active member of the LSG Committee, died in early December after a long fight against cancer. Until her retirement in October 2005 she was County Local Studies Librarian for Hampshire and throughout her career she worked tirelessly to raise the profile of local studies in the county, including guidelines for the collection of material and in particular of disaster planning. Her enthusiasm and professionalism was shown in the high standard of service her Department provided. She was delighted to receive, in November, the Local Studies Group's McCulla Award for her outstanding work in developing the Hampshire Local Studies service. Within the LSG Committee her expertise, enthusiasm and friendly personality came through in many ways including her support for Umbrella and in drawing up the "Manifesto for Local Studies". As a colleague said of her "There are not many people I thought I could hug before and after a meeting". She will be sadly missed.

A note in the October *Update* records that the UK Atomic Energy Authority has chosen paper rather than digital storage for permanent retention of records about radioactive waste stored at Windscale in Cumbria. This is because of paper's known ability to withstand the ravages of time, whereas electronic storage is prone to corruption and equipment and systems can rapidly become obsolete. UKAEA says that it carried out a thorough study of all the options before deciding on the permanent paper solution. For much the same concerns about digital permanence, of course, NEWSPLAN is using microfilm in its programme to preserve newspapers.

In the course of a fascinating article about the voluntary work done during the second World War by the now defunct Malpas Women's Institute, based on its records, (*Local History Magazine*, 103, July/Aug 2005), David Hayns comments that, on its closure, he persuaded the WI committee to deposit its records, covering 1919 to 1995, in the Cheshire Record Office. He then highlights the value of encouraging voluntary organisations to deposit their archives in a local record office – otherwise, when an organisation closes, they may languish in the attic of the final honorary secretary, only to be consigned to the bonfire or the dustbin when the secretary moves away or 'passes on'. Much source material of this kind has already been lost: local studies librarians and archivists should try to ensure that this does not happen in the future.

Dorset Local History Collection and Dorset Record Office recently merged to form the Dorset History Centre, where the Dorset local collection occupies two rooms of the Centre. A leaflet for users of the local studies library has recently been published, as well as a glossy Events programme leaflet. This covers various local and family history courses and workshops such as Family History on the Internet, identification and caring for old photographs and house history: lengths vary from eight weekly sessions to one-day workshops. They take place in various venues in the county and are delivered by History Centre staff or local family historians. Also available is 'Dorset History and Heritage: a guide to resources in Dorchester': this leaflet includes information about the Dorset History Centre, Dorset County Museum – which is owned by the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society – and Dorchester Reference Library, all of which are in easy reach of each other.

Tyne Bridge Publishing, the publishing arm of Newcastle Libraries and Information Service, has recently issued its Winter 2005-6 catalogue. This now includes over 70 titles in print. While there is a series of pamphlets of photographs of areas of the city, there are also many substantial and well researched volumes on subjects such as shipbuilding, cemeteries and cinemas. Newcastle must now be one of Britain's largest library publishers and has won several Alan Ball awards. Further information at www.tynebridgepublishing.co.uk

Mark Aston, Local Studies Librarian at Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre has recently written *Foul Deeds and Suspicious Deaths in Hampstead, Holborn and St. Pancras* [Wharncliffe Books, 2005, 176pp, £10.99], one of a long

series covering the country. The advantage of a local studies librarian writing this kind of work is that most of the source material is to hand, as are plenty of illustrations to choose from. As befits a work by a librarian there are source references, a bibliography and a substantial index.

South Tyneside Council, like many others, has a Heritage Trail – in this case about 26 miles in length, with 32 interpretation panels along the way. Now the Council has produced a companion audio CD tour round the Trail which links in with the information panels. It is intended for walkers or cyclists, whether they be visitors or local people. It includes history, description, music and dramatised events. It should interest a wide range of people, though some of the dramatised pieces seem a little forced. The most surprising thing about it is that it is free - it has been funded by ONE North East, the Regional Development Agency. For further information contact South Tyneside Council Cultural Development Department on 0191 424 6638.

There was a special meeting of the United Kingdom and Ireland Newsplan Panel and the Newsplan Trustees in October to discuss the end of Newsplan 2000 and to consider a way forward. Newsplan phase 1 was completed in July 2005 and the permanent staff have moved on. Despite some problems, inevitable in such a large undertaking, Newsplan 2000 had achieved a great deal, and local historians must be grateful for the preservation of so many of the UK's older newspapers. The next move is to go forward with a new proposal for the preservation of remaining newspapers in the regions, taking into account the HLF's changed priorities: for instance grants were likely to be smaller and emphasis is placed on access rather than preservation. Colleagues in the regions will be asked to provide information about how newspapers could be used more in each region; a report on filmed newspapers in each region; details of projects using newspapers; and ideas on how new HLF requirements could be met. Regions were also asked to send to BL a list of high priority unfiled titles pre-1950 and a list of titles of titles which needed re-filming due to old or poor quality originals.

CILIP is in the final stages of its review of Special Interest Groups, of which there are now 26: Council had already agreed that the present structure of support was unsustainable. The Working Party included Elizabeth Melrose, our CILIP Councillor. It looked at such things as the value and sustainability of the Groups and their subgroups, gaps and overlaps in Group coverage, how to attract more members, the future role and responsibilities of Groups, and a funding model. Unfortunately the questionnaire sent to all members of CILIP only achieved a response rate of 11%, but there was also a chance for Branch and Group committees to send responses, an open meeting for Group representatives before the CILIP AGM and the chance for comments at the AGM itself. There has thus been a great deal of consideration given to the question of Special Interest Groups and Council will shortly be making its decision.

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