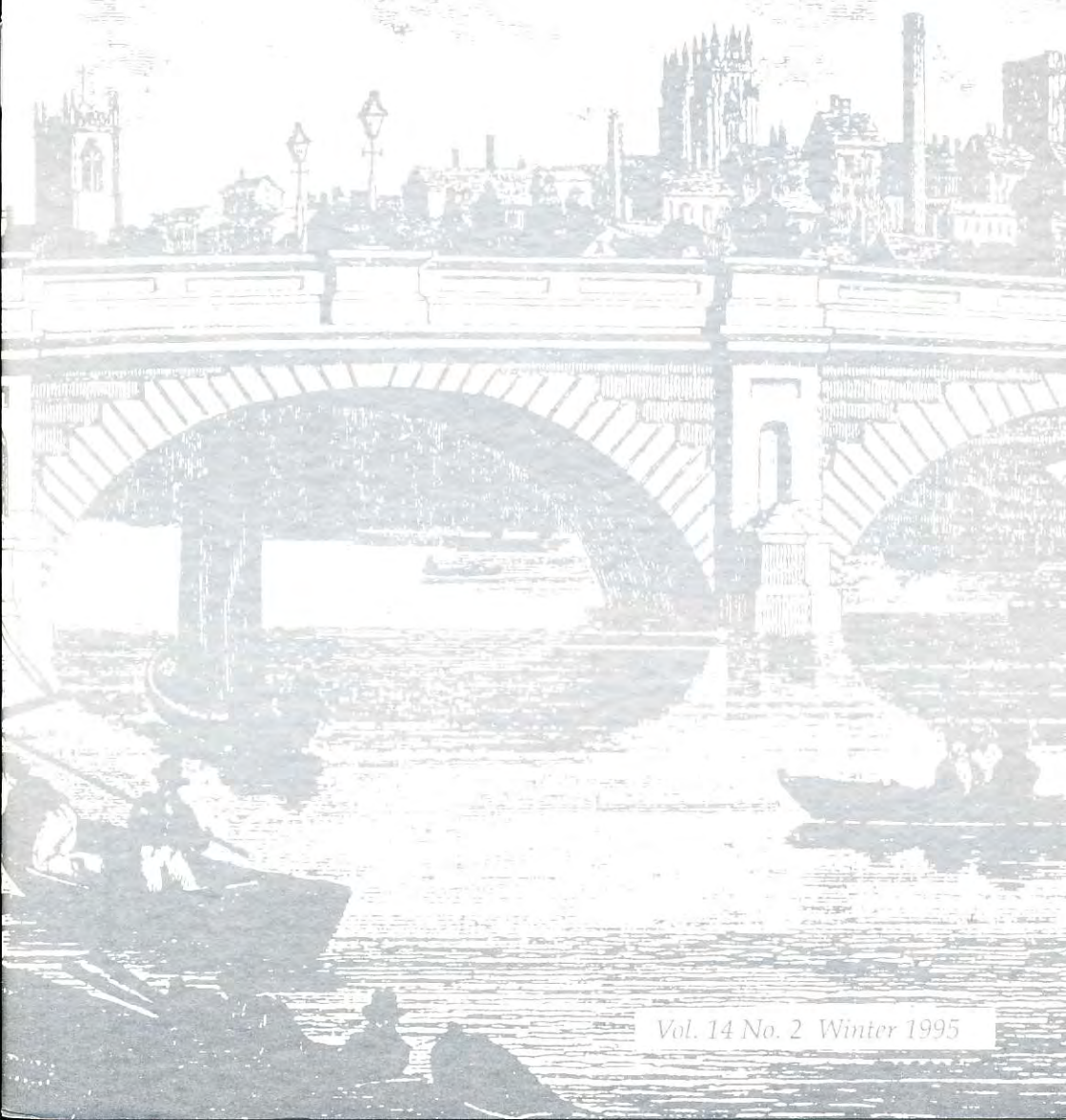
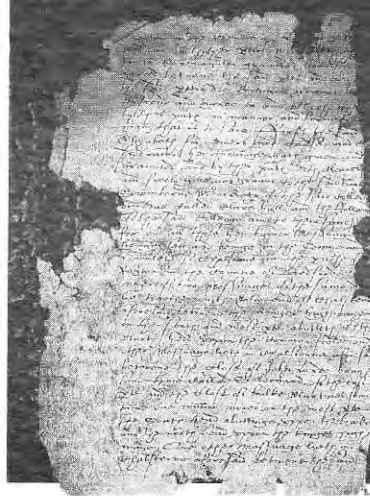


The Local Studies Librarian

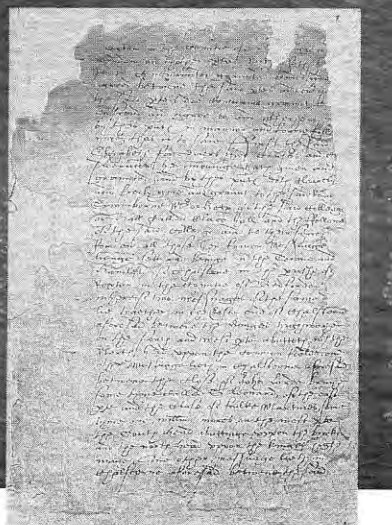


Vol. 14 No. 2 Winter 1995

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Cover Illustration

Ouse Bridge, York, 1829. Courtesy North Yorkshire County Library.

EDITORIAL

The Group has had a busy few months. We presented a well received programme at Umbrella 3 in Manchester and hope to publish some of the papers in the next issue. In September we held a seminar at Libtech which attracted 16 participants to a presentation of two multimedia programmes - Gateshead 1900 and the Durham Record - related to local studies. We have also been concerned with the ongoing discussions on the copying of Goad insurance plans and on problems related to the Ordnance Survey's new mapping systems and the problems of acquisition and archiving for libraries. Both of these are being dealt with by LA headquarters at present and we hope to hear results shortly. We are certainly making our feelings known, directly and through our Group Councillor, Neil Bruce. We hope that next year Neil will be appointed to the LA Public Libraries Committee, as this seems the most logical one for our members: at present we only have an observer.

Our international activities continue: in this issue we report on links with Hungary and Romania, and we had a Swedish speaker at Umbrella 3. As Ian Maxted points out in his article, while the Hungarians are very anxious to maintain links with us, there are also things which we can learn from them. The Committee wishes to maintain and expand the international dimension and would be pleased to hear from any local studies librarians with overseas contacts.

At home, one thing which deeply concerns the Committee are cuts in local studies services. As reported in this issue, our North West Branch has recently carried out a brief survey, with some interesting results. If anyone else has done similar work or has information on cuts (or even expansion!) please let us know. Restructuring as a result of boundary changes is bound to have effects on local studies and the Group would like to monitor these. Please help.

The Group exists in order to bring members in contact with each other, but what is needed is feedback - and contributions for LSL. Membership grew by about 100 in 1995 and it is raising its profile within the LA. Please stay with us when you renew your subscription.

And finally...**PLEASE** note the Editor's current address.

Apology. In the last issue the telephone and fax numbers for Cedric Chivers were shown wrongly in their advertisement.

Please note that the numbers are as follows:

Tel: 0117 935 2617. Fax: 0117 961 8446.

'HIS SINS WERE SCARLET BUT HIS BOOKS WERE READ' !:

The Work of West Sussex County Council's Special Events Group

The full quotation,

"When I am dead, I hope it may be said
His sins were scarlet, but his books were read"
comes from Hilaire Belloc's 1923 essay 'On His Books' cited in *The Path to Rome : the life and works of Hilaire Belloc 1870-1953* . An appropriate epitaph for an author and indeed for any librarian, although the less said about sins the better!

The basic message is that if your stock is not being read or referred to then there is little point in having it. We all promote our material in various ways through talks, displays, newspaper and periodical articles, occasional publications, radio and even TV interviews. But how planned and co-ordinated are these efforts?; how much of an impact on your county, borough or city's population at large do they have? With increasing pressures on library services, and especially those parts of the services which some would describe as not being part of the mainstream, there is an increasing need to publicise effectively what we have and what we do. The Green Paper, Compulsory Competitive Tendering, Local Government Review and Public Library Review, all may be seen as opportunities, or threats, to under used parts of library services.

Another recent trend in Local Studies services has been what is termed 'convergence'. The merging of Archives, Library and Museum departments into one department makes absolute sense from the point of view of most researchers. It has been achieved in recent years in Kent, Oxford and Suffolk for example. The initiative for this kind of fundamental restructuring has, however, to come from those at a very senior level, usually Chief Officers, even Chief Executives. An alternative for most of us in authorities where the prospect of convergence is unlikely for the foreseeable future is to foster closer links, both formal and informal, with record offices and museums.

This article describes an initiative to formalise links between several departments at West Sussex County Council. It reviews the resulting promotional activities over the last three years, looks at the advantages and disadvantages of this initiative and concludes with a few practical tips on how to create something similar in other authorities.

West Sussex County Council has created a Special Events Group consisting of representatives from the Library Service, County Record Office, Education, Planning (i.e. County Tourism Officer), Information (Press) Office and chaired by the County Secretariat. There is also an open invitation for representatives of any other departments to attend meetings if they wish to be involved in a particular project. It meets four or five times a year. The County Council does not currently make any museum provision.

The group and its activities

The establishment of the Group initially came about as a result of a wish to celebrate the bicentenary of the Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley who was born on 4th August 1792 at a house called Field Place in the parish of Warnham, about two miles west of Horsham. In 1992 Horsham District Council and other interested local parties formed a group to organise events to mark the occasion. At the invitation of John Godfrey, one of the Assistant County Secretaries, County Council departments sent representatives to a meeting to discuss the County's possible involvement. Our group met several times during 1991 and refined a few ideas

One of the earliest initiatives in 1992 was the publication of *Trumpet of Prophecy*. Primarily a booklist, it also has an account of Shelley's life and a summary of his local links. At the back is a list of events organised by WSCC during the year. Three thousand copies were printed.

Events organised by the Education Department included a schools' poetry competition, of which the best entries were published; two Adult Education courses; school performances of 'Frankenstein' (written by Mary Shelley, PB's second wife); a vegetarian school meals day; and the awarding of the Shelley Memorial Prize for Science and English. The Prize had been created during the Shelley Centenary celebrations in 1892 and had been forgotten about for decades.

Kim Leslie of the County Record Office researched a Shelley trail leaflet, organised a plaque on the site of the printers of the poet's earliest works (in Worthing) and two moonlight walks following a route originally taken by the poet, one of which was covered by local television.

Apart from the booklet, Library Service events included publication of Pastime Postcards, displays in two libraries, a Local Studies Information Pack and four evenings of talks including one by the internationally known author and broadcaster, Judith Chernaik. Some twenty events were presented by the staff of four departments and nine of these were organised by the Library Service.

Horsham Museum, managed by Horsham District Council, published three leaflets and held an exhibition of related material. Other events were also held in the local area.

The original intention had been that the Group would be a one-off for this important anniversary of a major figure with local links. However, the project proved so successful in terms of the way the Group gelled together, the variety of events and the publicity generated - some 88 articles covering the Bicentenary appeared in local newspapers and radio and television coverage was achieved - that it was decided to look at an anniversary for the following year, 1993, and the 40th anniversary of Hilaire Belloc's death was chosen.

Indeed, to identify future events it was eventually decided to research a file of famous people associated with the County. County Record Office and County Library Service staff suggested dozens of potential entries and Martin O'Neill of the County Information Office researched many more himself and eventually Published the results in the *West Sussex Literary/Historical/Artistic Links* . It is now used as a guide for possible future events.

The Belloc events were supposed to be on a smaller scale but there turned out to be 19 of them (just one less than Shelley). Learning from a mistake with Shelley, we published a separate programme of events early in the year. There was a similarly wide range of events: the booklist *The Path to Rome* , talks, a literary competition consisting of short stories this year, inspired by Belloc quotes and organised by Dr Irene Campbell, Head of Information Services, a Local Studies information pack, postcards and guided walks. New departures included children's story times based on Belloc's children's book *Beastly Tales*, an ecumenical service at Shipley Village Hall, and a coach tour of places associated with Belloc organised by John Godfrey, Assistant County Secretary. Perhaps the most memorable for me was the 12 mile guided walk and the two evenings at Slindon and the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum involving Bob Copper. Bob and family are well known in the south for recording unaccompanied Sussex folk songs handed down through his family and he performed a musical version of Belloc's novel *The Four Men* which concerns a journey on foot across the whole of Sussex. Indeed, later this was to lead to the publication of a book sponsored by the County Council, *Across Sussex with Belloc : in the steps of the Four Men*.

1994 was a watershed year in two respects. It saw the permanent cementing of the Special Events Group for the foreseeable future and an unwritten aim to obtain as much positive publicity as possible for the County Council during the period of the Local Government Review. Anniversaries marked included D-Day, Oscar Wilde, William Penn and Tickner Edwardes.

The key role in D-Day played by West Sussex has long been overlooked by official histories, in terms of a billeting area for several hundred thousand men, a supply base, in the construction of the Mulberry harbours and as the site of advanced landing fields. It led to the formation of a WSCC Publications Panel to commission an account of the local contribution to D-Day. The Panel consists of the County Archivist, Deputy County Archivist, Assistant County Secretary, Deputy County Information Officer and myself plus the author(s).

Library Service involvement in D-Day events included a booklist, venues for 10 talks and a display which toured nine libraries. A map of places associated with the event was published by colleagues at the West Sussex Record Office.

For the first time the events embraced smaller libraries across the County. This showed the possibilities of using almost any library as a venue for talks and displays. Out of a total of 35 libraries we have only one with a lecture theatre and three with meetings rooms suitable for talks.

The centenary of the writing of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, by Oscar Wilde, was celebrated in the summer. He wrote the play while on an extended stay at Worthing during August and September 1894. The usual talks, book displays and plaque unveiling took place. A literary competition was again organised by Dr. Campbell. Any kind of submissions were invited (short story, poem, play, diary, letters or essays) and cash prizes were awarded. Indeed, this has led to greater things as the winner, Lauretta Tomlinson, has since been commissioned to perform short dramatic pieces at every plaque unveiling since.

Celebrations of the 350th anniversary of the birth of William Penn, the Quaker and founder of Pennsylvania, happened in October. In the absence of anyone more competent, I rashly agreed to research (in my own time) and present a lecture on Penn's West Sussex links. Martin O'Neill of the County Information Office and I co-wrote the information leaflet. Guided walks, Pastime Postcards, plaque unveiling and display of schoolwork by the pupils of the William Penn School followed. The plaque unveiling at the Blue Idol Quaker Meeting House was accompanied by a short play written and acted by Lauretta Tomlinson, together with her daughter and John Watts, a West End actor.

The 50th anniversary of the Downland writer Tickner Edwardes came in December and was commemorated by a plaque unveiling and a talk. Another new idea was the showing at the Arundel Festival of the silent film *Tansy*, based on a novel written by Edwardes. Indeed, it proved one of the hits of the Festival with an audience of over 200 and a further 50 or so locked out leading to a repeat showing on the next night.

We also unveiled a plaque to James Starley, founder of the Coventry cycle industry and inventor of early bicycles.

Following the same format, this year's events celebrated the 50th anniversaries of VE and VJ Days and the 200th anniversary of Keats' birth and included the unveiling of a plaque to Ralph Ellis, the accomplished inn sign painter of Arundel.

Some Conclusions

What lessons, then, can be learned from the West Sussex experience? Perhaps it is best to point out first that there are some disadvantages in our approach:

1. If the situation is not carefully controlled, more promotional work can be generated than would be normally undertaken: a group of creative people spark many ideas which need to be controlled so as to keep them both realistic and relevant in the light of limited resources available in terms of staff and money.
2. Group meetings can take up time. Ours are held up to five times a year and, although only lasting about two hours, they involve in my case a special journey to Chichester from my base in Worthing. The number of

participants needs to be carefully controlled in order to avoid meetings becoming unwieldy.

The advantages, however, far outweigh the disadvantages:

1. A major advantage is that co-ordination of effort avoids duplication of research by library, record office and other departmental staff, saving time and money. In addition, expertise and knowledge in various subject fields can be combined, again to save time and to produce a comprehensive series of events.
2. It is not necessary to make large commitments of money and staff time - in West Sussex we have only 1½ professional and no designated support staff working in local studies. It is, however, essential to have an interest in the promotion of the service and a willingness to do some reading in one's own time. Booklists are often published by libraries within their existing promotion budget.
3. Better quality publicity for your local studies service is achieved: a series of events with a theme always has a better chance of getting more newspaper, radio and television coverage.
4. Closer co-operation between departments results. As long as personalities allow, the almost inevitable result of four or five formal meetings a year as well as more informal contact is that there is a better understanding of how other departments within your authority work and what information, expertise etc. they can offer you; this can improve the quality of your local studies service. In our case it led directly to the formation of the Publications Panel and to biannual meetings of Library and Record Office staff. These meetings have led to joint training sessions, a joint microfilming project of early OS maps and the publication of Local History Mini Guides to aid research.
5. Closer co-operation between organisations outside the authority often also happens. In our case this happened particularly with museums.

Finally, taking account of our experience in West Sussex it may be worth giving a few ideas on how to start a similar group in your own authority and some practical hints on organising a series of events:

1. Convince your Chief Officer of the benefits of such an initiative, probably via a short report.
2. Organise via your Chief Officer regular meetings of departmental representatives with an agenda and minutes. This should as large or as small as appropriate; it could be a fairly informal meeting of three or four people involving only librarians and/or archivists or a larger group embracing other departments as well. People with the right personalities are important: they should be easy going but energetic individuals who can

generate realistic ideas and carry them through.

- 3 It helps to involve a senior officer in a key department. In our case, for example, John Godfrey, West Sussex's Assistant County Secretary, is able to chair meetings effectively and commit some funds for plaques, refreshments at events and so on. Funds of this kind from the centre are useful but it is still possible to use departmental spending to fund most activities. However, such a colleague is also a key player because he knows and can get high profile people to attend events, thereby helping to generate good publicity.
4. It is a major advantage to have an in-house designer or at least easy access to one within your own authority who can produce professional-looking publications, and posters and tickets for events.
5. It is essential to plan as far ahead as possible. Look ahead at least a year and preferably have a three or four year plan. WSCC has already been working on events for 1996 - Cinema 100, the fiftieth anniversary of the death of H.G. Wells, the centenary of the first public library in West Sussex and the fiftieth anniversary of Crawley New Town.
6. Space out events so that you don't overload yourself with work over a short period.
7. Where possible find others to do the work! Colleges, museums and local history societies usually have specialists in different areas of local history and literature, and library colleagues may also have associated interests.
8. An energetic and imaginative Information or Press Office is essential. You need to publish a detailed programme at least several weeks before the first event and be sure that a press release flier goes out mentioning the anniversary. A press release should accompany every event and publication, preferably with photographs.
9. Make a charge for public events. Even a nominal sum encourages people to turn up and value the event more. It also helps, of course, to recoup at least some of the costs.
10. Invite guests to events. This is a chance to impress Chief Officers, local politicians and newspaper editors with the quality of your local studies service and hopefully give it a high profile.

This sort of co-ordinated approach seems to be a particularly effective way of marketing a local studies service, of educating existing library users about what is on offer and of reaching at least some people who did not previously use the library service. It also helps local studies librarians to develop much closer links with, and an understanding of, record offices, museums and other local government departments.

Martin Hayes is Principal Librarian - Local Studies, West Sussex County Council.

GATESHEAD 1900: A CD-I GUIDE

Eileen Carnaffin

Gateshead 1900 is a compact disc interactive (CD-i) guide to Tyneside in the period 1896 to 1914, produced by Gateshead M.B.C. Libraries and Arts Service.

The programme

The disc commences with a title sequence followed by a video showing modern Gateshead including the MetroCentre and rarely seen early twentieth century footage of civic, military and suffragette marches in Newcastle. This leads into a first selection screen offering four choices. *How to use this disc* explains the use of buttons, hotspots and the 'skip' command. *About Gateshead 1900* contains details of partners, grant and other credits. *Your guide to heritage* gives details of societies, exhibitions, archives and libraries for the Gateshead area. *Start* takes one into the main content of the disc.

The second selection screen offers a number of routes to take: *Family Stories*, *Photograph Album*, *Song Book* and *Reading Room*. *Family Stories* contains the stories of three families and individual members within those families. Each family section begins with a general introduction to the family, followed by the invitation to select a family member. At this point one may select either a fact about the family, or select a family member by using a 'hotspot', in this case a face. Individuals' stories begin with an introduction then offer the choice of selecting either a fact about that person's background or one of three further stories about that person's school, work or play. This section is illustrated with hundreds of still - mainly black and white - photographs. There are a total of 52 sequences, all with a rich audio dimension.

The *Photograph Album* contains hundreds of photographs of Tyneside arranged in nine categories.

The *Song Book* includes nine songs, either popular songs of the period 1896 to 1914 or local songs, and also has a section of children's playground chants.

The *Reading Room* contains five sections:

The Chronology gives one fact per year for the period 1896 to 1914, arranged in four sections using text screens and music.

The Encyclopaedia gives facts about Tyneside arranged in seven sections, each having five or six sub sections including facts and questions.

The Dictionary includes 21 words used only in the North East. Selecting a word produces both a definition and the spoken word.

'*My parents say*' includes eight sets of predictions about the future on subjects including prices, transport and medicine. It uses photographs and audio.

Vignettes presents six people with local connections, using QuickTime video plus audio and photographs. Their stories range from school meals to shipbuilding, and from education to politics.

Other sections of the disc include final credits and a carousel of photographs and text screens which plays if the disc is left unused for a few minutes.

Planning and Production

Gateshead 1900 was developed to fulfil a need for an illustrated introduction to both the history of Gateshead and the collection of Gateshead's local studies department. Requests for illustrated talks, teachers' requests for material for use in the classroom and the needs of those working and living in homes for the elderly showed that material was needed for use outside the library building. There was also a conservation aspect in that some of the collection could be used in the new format rather than producing original photographs.

As Gateshead Libraries and Arts Service had already produced one CD-i (*Into Work*) and were producing a second (*A guide to Gateshead Hospitals*), CD-i was chosen as the medium for the production of local history material.

CD-i is a technology developed by Philips. It consists of a CD that plays through a CD-i player connected to a domestic TV. The user controls the disc presentation. The technology is sufficiently advanced to attract the younger user, and the lack of an obvious computer interface means the older user is not deterred from using the system. In addition to playing CD-i the system can be used for audioCD, PhotoCD and, with the more expensive players, VideoCD. Although a televisual rather than a computer medium, there is an in-built computer, and extra services such as Internet access are available.

The main aim was to provide an entertaining introduction to the history of the area which would present history as interesting and enjoyable, show some of the material available, and encourage some users to carry out further research.

Before presenting our bid for a grant to the Department of National Heritage's Public Library Development Incentive Scheme, managed by the British Library, further work was done on the need for the disc, the possible content of the disc, the probable costs of production and the need for partners in the project.

The partners are two newspapers and a distribution company. The Newcastle Chronicle and Journal Ltd. produces regional morning, evening, and Sunday newspapers and also weekly local newspapers including the *Gateshead Post*. The *Northern Echo*, part of the North of England Newspapers Group is a regional morning paper. Both newspaper groups provided access to their photographic archive, advice on marketing and advertising. Our third partner, XDRA distribution, provided advice, disc production and national marketing and distribution. XDRA's links with Philips enabled special offers to be made to schools.

The bid made to the PLDIS scheme at the British Library resulted in a grant of 40% towards the estimated cost of producing a disc, granted over a two year period from April 1994 to February 1996. This time was divided into planning, collection, digitisation, scripting, production and marketing phases. Currently, in November 1995, we are in the marketing phase.

The planning phase involved two main decisions - the historical content and the format of this content. As a guide to the historical content, a story board was produced covering the main section of the disc (family stories). The historical content aimed to illustrate as many as possible of the trades and industries of Tyneside, the life of the Tyneside people, and facts and figures about the period through illustration, speech and text screens. The families were eventually planned as fictitious families in order to include as wide as possible a range of backgrounds and jobs. The decision was made to remove certain material from the main storyboard, placing it in three other sections in order to give some flow to the family stories. It was decided at a very early stage to restrict the amount of video (to a short introductory video of Tyneside present and past, and some 'QuickTime', that is partial screen / partial motion video) in order to include a large number of illustrations and a rich audio content. Looking back at the early planning decisions, very little was altered during the course of production, and the main sections are, as planned, Family Stories, Song Book, Photograph Album and Reading Room.

'Assets' collected for a CD-i production can be in a variety of forms, video, QuickTime video, audio, still images in colour and black and white, written facts for production as text screens and animated sequences. Still images were collected mainly from the Local Studies Department in Gateshead, but also through the collections of partners and Newcastle Central Library. Video and audio were produced in-house. Three audio sequences, music, spoken word and sound effects were recorded and edited onto one tape prior to digitisation. All spoken parts were taken by amateurs, the child voices supplied by members of local youth theatre groups. All music was supplied by local schoolchildren - The Gateshead Junior Festival Chorus, led by John Treherne. A concert of local songs and popular songs of the 1896 -1914 period was held in the library. The children returned the following day and were recorded by AIRS, a Gateshead Libraries and Arts Service department which produces a daily talking newspaper and large print, braille and audio transcription services. AIRS also produced the spoken word and sound effects recordings in their studio and mastered the tape ready for digitisation which was carried out in-house. Video of old film was purchased from the British Film Institute. Video of Gateshead for the introduction and QuickTime video for the vignettes section were shot mainly in-house. Collection and selection of relevant material was quite labour-intensive despite the fact that most of it was located in Gateshead. As the disc relies to a great extent on the still images, a great deal of our time was spent on this aspect of the work. Collection of material for text screens was carried out in Gateshead's local studies department. Assets were produced on or transferred into an Apple Macintosh using various software, but in particular Adobe Photoshop for still images. Assets were then converted into the Philips CD-i system through a Philips CD-i 605 development machine and scripted using Media Mogul 2.1 software. Scripting is the process by which one controls how the final product will appear on screen - for how long, when, in what order, and what type of

change from one image to the next - cut, wipe, fade, etc. It also controls what will happen each time a button or hotspot is selected. At the end of this process, all the information necessary for the production of a CD-i was stored on a hard disc (and on back-ups). A WORM disc was then produced for us (one of the few steps not carried out in-house) which became the master from which the final discs are being produced by XDRA distribution.

After initial testing certain changes were made. In contrast to the family stories where each of the 52 sections, once selected, plays through automatically unless interrupted by a 'skip' command, the photograph album must be accessed one illustration at a time, using a 'button' command. This is at the request of teachers, who wished to be able to leave any photograph on screen for long enough to discuss it with pupils. Teachers also suggested the removal of sound from another section, the carousel of photographs which cuts in if no 'command' has been given for a number of minutes - this would avoid any problem of music interrupting lessons. Each sub-section of the reading room includes either facts on text screens (sometimes a number of screens) or questions where the answer is selected from a list. The period for each screen was increased as a result of test sessions with children to allow for slow readers.

The marketing stage started early, as soon as we had decided the content of the disc, with mailings to Tyneside schools and to libraries and archives around the country. Follow-up mailings were made. Since the production of WORM discs presentations have been made within Gateshead to various interested groups, and outside Gateshead at the LIBTECH exhibition. Artwork for mailings and for the disc centre and disc cover was produced in-house by our publicity and marketing department. The disc has now been sold to a number of Gateshead schools.

Conclusion

Our main problems were caused by unexpected hardware failures at vital times, but the only effect of these in the end was to make us slightly behind schedule with production. In future an allowance for hardware failure may need to be written into proposed timetables!

The main asset was people. Without the co-operation of various library departments, other departments, and individuals this disc could never have been produced. The staff involved in *Gateshead 1900* were all part-time workers on the project, with other responsibilities. The project was managed by Ian Hunter, my own contribution was mainly research on the historical content but above all the disc is the work of John Hudson. When John started the project he was a librarian with a keen interest in computing, some experience of local studies work, an interest in acting, and no experience of CD-i. During the project, he brought together all these interests and at the same time gained great knowledge of CD-i technology. AIRS, mentioned earlier, also contributed to the disc, as did the multi-media assistant and the library's marketing department. For further information about the product, orders for *Gateshead 1900* (£24.99) or about the technical side of the production, please contact me at Gateshead Central Library, Prince Consort Road, Gateshead, NE8 4LN.

Eileen Carnaffin is Local Studies Librarian, Gateshead Libraries and Arts Service.

HUNGARY FOR MORE: Report of a study tour in July and August 1995

Ian Maxted

I was assured on more than one occasion that my capacity to speak Hungarian improved with my consumption of red wine. However, even if I had drunk the wine cellars of Baranya dry, I would not have been able to avoid depending almost entirely on a relay of hospitable and untiring translators who propelled me through a marathon thirteen days in Hungary which took me to a conference of local studies librarians, eight public libraries, four rare book collections, one national library, one trade union library, two archives, one museum library, two English language centres and a library school, not to mention a range of museums and galleries, churches and mosques, monuments and memorials.

To start with the conference: this was the second held by the recently established Local Studies Section of the Hungarian Library Association, to which I was invited as part of our Local Studies Group's international programme. It took place from 26 to 28 July in the beautiful town of Sopron near the Austrian border - in fact the inhabitants had voted to rejoin Hungary in a plebiscite in 1922. The plenary sessions were held in stifling heat in the magnificent assembly room of the town hall and were attended by some eighty participants, virtually the entire membership of the Group, most supported at least in part by their local authorities.

The general theme of the conference was co-operation between service providers and this was the subject of my talk, which opened the conference and was delivered with great confidence and an overhead projector which was completely invisible at the back of the vast hall. Erzsébet Gancs from Győr, who had spoken at the Umbrella2 conference translated my pearls of wisdom paragraph by paragraph.

The following speakers put me in my place. Far from being the organisational guru dragging a deprived and backward country into the enlightened ways of the West, I found that the local studies scene in Hungary was thriving even in economic adversity and had little to learn from us when it came to co-operation. The head of the history department at the museum in Szeged spoke on the role of the museum in co-ordinating local history research and launched into a formidable catalogue of projects which were being tackled locally or which were recognised as being desirable. Maintaining contacts was easy, everybody knew each other, and ownership of the materials was a minor problem; the important thing was to know in detail what each service possessed. This was echoed from the library side by the director of Zalaegerseg County Library who stressed that collections should build on historic strengths. In his county there were informal agreements on what was to be collected. For example the archives had passed files of early newspapers to the library.

There was much more to the conference than the lectures. Hungarians are most anxious to maintain contacts with the West and there were many discussions over meals. For example I learned from a delegate from Transylvania, the Hungarian speaking area of Romania, that in some countries in eastern Europe

which had ethnic diversity, local studies could be seen as subversive by the central authorities as they fostered too much interest in local traditions. There were excursions, to Lake Fertő, on the border with Austria, an area forbidden to Hungarians before the political change and now threatened with piecemeal holiday development, to the Storno Museum in Sopron, a house filled with nineteenth century bric-a-brac, and most interesting and moving of all, to Nagycenk, the country seat of the Széchenyi family. Ferencs had founded the National Library and National Museum from his own collections in the early 19th century and his son Istvan "the greatest Hungarian" was involved in a range of projects to develop his country, from clearing the navigation of the Danube to improving strains of livestock. A touching ceremony was the laying of a wreath on his tomb in the mausoleum, which was done jointly by Mandli Gyúia, the Chair of the Hungarian Group and Elizabeth Melrose, our own Chairman, who was attending the conference in a private capacity.

Another enjoyable experience was a tour of Sopron by the town's local studies librarian. He was greeted everywhere by passers-by - clearly he was a prominent member of the local community, and he led us into every courtyard, pointing out architectural details, from Italian style loggias to open-air pulpits constructed when the Lutherans were not allowed a church of their own. He was an enthusiastic collector of videos of historic World War 2 colour film and had also spent much time in the National Film Archive, extracting material on Sopron for a compilation video covering the years from the plebiscite in 1922 to the uprising in 1956. This was shown at the conference.

A study tour had been organised for me after the conference and I visited libraries mainly in the west of the country, in the counties of Győr-Moson-Sopron, Vas, Baranya, Pest and Budapest.

I found libraries to be accommodated in a wide variety of buildings, some of them very handsome. There had clearly been much money spent on libraries in the 1970s and 1980s and there were a number of modern buildings from that period, for example the city library of Győr, and the county libraries of Vas in Szombathely, and Pest in Szentendre, sometimes forming parts of a larger cultural centre. Other libraries in the same period were accommodated in converted older buildings. In the case of Győr County Library this was a bank and the library in Sarvar was located with the museum in a Renaissance castle. The libraries I was shown may have been showpieces but they had been well equipped, for example the music libraries had banks of listening posts and given the relatively small size of many of the towns they were often generously supplied with space, stock and staff. A very hot August may not have been a fair time to judge, but many of the public libraries did not seem to be heavily used, and this seemed to be borne out by examination of the national library statistics.

In computerisation most libraries lagged well behind their western counterparts in the application of information technology to the main catalogues, although computerised issue systems were in use in many libraries, sometimes run from PCs. There was more progress on smaller-scale projects. CD ROMs were beginning to make their appearances in public departments, including foreign

language items as well as the Hungarian national bibliography. The Internet was also making its presence felt although the modem link that was demonstrated to me in Pest County Library was very slow. Local studies were to the fore in adopting computers, unlike in Britain where they tended to lag behind. Indexes of periodical articles were being retrospectively converted into computerised form in Győr, Szombathely, Pécs and other places. In Szombathely 36,000 records had been entered on the Vas County local database in three years. Chronological diaries of local events also seemed to be a popular application and in Kőszeg Janos Kappel, who visited England earlier this year, was using PCs for community information and had produced a local directory of services with German as well as Hungarian subject headings.

This activity is building on a very strong tradition of bibliographical work in Hungary. Each area I visited had a county bibliography, usually compiled by the county library and typically extending back thirty years or more. In some cases it appeared annually, in other cases more frequently with cumulated indexes of authors, places and subjects. Foreign language material was also included.

Local studies collections were being built up in smaller centres, such as the district libraries in Budapest. Since the 1960s villages had kept a chronicle of local events, one copy of which was retained locally, another being passed to the county record office. Many villages had active libraries; one which I visited in Nagynyarad, a village of 930 souls with a substantial German speaking community in Baranya, received many foreign language books from Switzerland.

Archives also have a long history in Hungary. A law of 1723 had stipulated that archives should be preserved in the county seat and archivists had been employed since the late 18th century. In the 1970s some archives had been returned to the more historic towns as branches of the county record office, but at the branch archive in Kőszeg which I visited they were not well housed.

The history of a country determines the availability of historical sources. In Hungary there is a proud tradition of a distinctive people, clearly defined by their language which is related to no other in western Europe. However the availability of records has been affected by centuries of domination, first by the Turks, then by the Habsburgs and more recently by the Soviets. They look back to the medieval period as a golden age and take great care of the relatively few early documents which remain - for example of the mere sixty 11th and 12th century documents which survive in Hungary 29 are preserved in the magnificent Benedictine library at Pannonhalma. All surviving documents in the National Archives in Budapest have been microfilmed to the end of the 17th century. Many records relevant to Hungary are in Vienna or required transcription for confirmation by the Viennese chancery. The National Archives in Budapest is actively obtaining copies of such records.

Microfilming has also extended to parish registers with the assistance of the Mormons. Under central state directives all registers were borrowed from the parishes or the diocesan archives (which are separate from the county archives in Hungary) and filmed up to 1895. The master negative is in Salt Lake City, a

copy negative at Esztergom, where the National Archives store their own master negatives, and a positive print in the National Archives in Budapest. The printing press was slower to spread than in western Europe, largely because of Turkish domination. Thus the key date in Hungarian historical bibliography (equivalent to 1640, the eve of the Civil War, in England) is 1711, the departure of the Turks. Even the National Library only holds 8,500 Hungarica printed before that date. Such early items as survive locally are highly prized, the subject of much study and are exhibited as part of the national heritage.

Provincial newspapers too spread slowly. Although newspapers were published in Budapest from the 18th century, few newspapers made their appearance in the provinces until the revolution of 1848, and even then many early examples are in German. Today the location of files varies. In Kőszeg for example the newspapers are in the local museum, but microfilms have been acquired by the public library from 1890 when the newspaper started, until 1939.

Local trade directories are another source which is poorly represented. In the later 18th and early 19th centuries there were national directories, like Bottin in France, but these are not well represented in local studies collections. There is also nothing to rival the coverage of Ordnance Survey in the large-scale mapping of the country. I was shown large-scale military surveys dating from the mid 19th century in the archives at Kőszeg and at the conference a paper gave examples of a wide range of maps and plans in the national archives, but these were individual items and there are few extensive surveys at a scale of larger than 1:25,000.

The rising expense of books plagues libraries in Hungary, especially as much foreign language material is required to achieve full subject coverage. Many foreign titles are received by donation from such sources as the Soros Foundation. This problem does not affect local studies so much and there is some assistance from a source which British local studies librarians do not have: legal deposit. At present sixteen copies are deposited, a large number for a relatively small country, and a reduction to perhaps half this number is under consideration. The National Library receives two copies, one of which is an archival preservation copy. Others go to the regions where they are frequently distributed to specialist libraries. The legal deposit regulations extend widely, and perhaps this is one reason why local studies collections have long had such a wide collecting policy, covering ephemera, illustrations, radio broadcasts (sometimes in transcript) and videos. One of the most remarkable libraries I visited was the Szabo Ervin Municipal Library in Budapest. This was housed in a magnificently elaborate rococo palace in Budapest and contained the largest local studies collection in the country. It had published a seven volume bibliography of the capital and a two volume index of illustrations, but most remarkable of all was its collection of 100,000 posters, received on legal deposit.

This article can only record some of the impressions I gained during a very full visit. It cannot describe the handsome National Library building, located since 1985 in the Castle Palace in historic Buda, the Benedictine library at the monastery of Pannonhalma with its 350,000 volumes, the golden room in the

Bishop Klimo Library in Pecs lined with gleaming bindings, the diocesan library in Szombathely, the fascinating collection of early maps of Hungary in the museum in the Castle at Sarvar which had been donated by an expatriate now living in Oxford. The notes I took during the visit have been written up in a 25 page journal with illustrations which is available for loan to those who are interested.

All is not rosy for libraries under the new political system in Hungary. Libraries have been cut year on year. In the National Library when I visited they were facing a reduction of 125 in the staff of 800. Archives do seem to have found a new role with more records being publicly available and they are in a position of being able to develop their operations with a new national repository and two new county archive buildings. Nevertheless there is a determination to maintain standards among librarians in Hungary and in a few years time it may be we who are approaching them for advice - on how to survive the cutbacks which seem to be eating into our own services year by year.

Ian Maxted is County Local Studies Librarian, Devon County Council Libraries.

My sincere thanks are due to the Local Studies Group of the LA for nominating me as their representative, to their Hungarian counterpart for meeting my expenses in Hungary and for providing such a friendly and hospitable series of guides and to my employers in Devon County Council for funding my travel costs and allowing me time for the study tour.

SPENDING CUTS IN LOCAL STUDIES LIBRARIES: A survey in the North West

Alice Lock

We are all aware of the damage done by cuts in services and it sometimes seems that local studies libraries are particular targets in spite of their constantly increasing levels of use. Specialised local studies libraries are quite new in comparison with other areas of the library service and perhaps this makes them more vulnerable. At the North West Branch of the Local Studies Group we decided to try to measure the effect of cuts in our region.

The North West is made up of the two shire counties of Lancashire and Cheshire, ten metropolitan districts of Greater Manchester and five metropolitan districts of Merseyside. Obviously the different types of authorities, serving very different communities, have widely varying experiences and services. Devising a questionnaire to measure the effects of cuts in such a range of areas presented the first problem. Initially we intended to ask people to identify specific reductions in their services, but we decided that this was misleading as some local studies libraries could actually be expanding, but still operating at well below a standard which the librarian considered to be adequate. The result was a very subjective questionnaire which asked respondents if they felt the service was acceptable, if they felt they could keep up with demand and develop the services well as trying to establish where specific reductions had taken place.

Another problem with the survey is that no time scale was specified in the questions - we asked about cuts and reductions in general, not in a specific period. This was because there tend to be fluctuations; things may improve briefly as authorities take up opportunities which present themselves (perhaps involving funding from outside bodies over which they have no control), but they may not be in areas which the librarian considers a priority and they may mask an underlying trend. We therefore left the time scale to the judgement of the librarians who filled in the questionnaires.

As the survey was so small we were hoping for a good response and were very pleased that replies came from all over the region. We would like to express our gratitude to all the librarians who took the time to fill in the questionnaire, especially as their replies often showed how hard pressed they were.

We are well aware that the survey has many flaws - it is very small, it does not have full geographical coverage, it measures subjective responses and it concentrates on the centralised system which operates in metropolitan boroughs. We hope, however, that it gives a flavour of the position in the North West and can give us some idea of the state of local studies libraries in a time of dwindling resources.

Twelve replies (out of 17) were received. The following is a summary of responses:

At a general level 7 (58.3%) felt that they were operating at an acceptable level, 4 (33.3%) were happy with their staffing levels, 4 were happy with their level of finance and 4 were happy with their accommodation. Insofar as there were any common reasons for dissatisfaction in these areas they were that staffing levels were too low and storage was often cramped.

7 (58.3%) of libraries had suffered a reduction in staffing levels - in one case the post of Local Studies Librarian had disappeared.

4 (33.3%) reported that book funds had not been cut. It proved too difficult to specify what cuts had been made and some librarians commented that levels had been maintained but had not improved in line with increased demand.

8 (66.6%) reported no reductions in the budget for binding or conservation work, though in one case this budget had been scrapped altogether.

5 (41.6%) reported that budgets for equipment had not been reduced. One respondent, though, said that there was no budget for equipment.

7 (58.3%) reported that budgets for microfilming had not been cut, though three of these said that it had never been adequate, and 5 librarians (41.6%) reported no cuts in their budget for storage materials.

6 (50%) reported that opening hours had been reduced, in one case by 21.5 hours a week, and 6 said that Local Studies had been amalgamated with another collection or that their staff were shared.

5 (41.6%) of authorities have introduced new charges, in most cases research fees for postal enquiries. These are sometimes limited to genealogical enquiries or enquiries from outside the authority.

8 (66.6%) of respondents did not feel that they were keeping up with increased demand created by the growth of interest in local and family history. The response of one librarian was "of course not". Those who answered 'yes' to this question included some who felt that they were only just managing to keep up with demand. 8 librarians said that they could not keep up with demand created by the National Curriculum.

5 (41.6%) felt that they were able to develop the service, though three of these listed improvements that they were unable to carry out. The type of new developments which were felt to be necessary, but impossible to implement at present, included more work with schools, introduction of new technology, improvements in stock and finding aids, publishing programmes, conservation work and the need for more specialist staff.

7 (58.3%) of respondents reported a reduction in levels of service. In the majority of cases this meant less time spent on postal enquiries. One librarian reported less time spent on stock work and one less time on outreach and promotional work.

6 (50%) reported a reduction in the security and quality of storage areas. Problems included lack of cleaning, lack of shelving and reduced staffing, which created reduced security. One authority reported increased security.

3 (25%) reported a reduction in the type or scope of material they collected. In one case it was a voluntary decision to reduce the geographical area covered, while in the other two the collection of ephemera and news cuttings was reduced.

Exploitation was an area which concerned many respondents. Seven (58.3%) reported that the level of exploitation of their collection by talks, exhibitions, etc. had been reduced and others who reported no reduction in this kind of work felt that they were unable to increase it. Restrictions seemed to be placed on the number and type of talks undertaken. Seven of the twelve authorities had a publishing programme and, of these, two had reduced their programme. Two of the seven reported that the emphasis had changed to popular rather than more 'worthwhile' subjects. One librarian commented that there was increased emphasis on publications because they helped to generate income and that this created extra pressure on staff time.

The survey asked about the effect that local government reorganisation had had on the local studies service as the two shire counties seemed likely to be affected by the latest reorganisation. The general response to this was that 1974 had brought great improvements to local studies, but the disruption caused by numerous reorganisations and restructuring since then tended to have an adverse effect.

Respondents were asked to specify the kind of department they were in. Nine were in Leisure Service departments. Of the two respondents who seemed happiest one was in a Leisure Service Department and the other was not - it is not clear whether this tells us anything! It is perhaps disturbing that in response to two final questions only 3 (a quarter) of librarians felt that local studies had a high priority in their organisation, and that only one thought that staff morale had not suffered as a result of cuts.

The survey asked for general comments and found that there was a wide range of concerns about local studies services in the North West. They included:

- The effects of Compulsory Competitive Tendering
- Reduced staffing and its problems including reduced stock work, opportunities for external networking and lack of input at branches.
- Lack of support from management.
- An emphasis on libraries as leisure rather than educational services.
- The lack of resources for dealing with archival materials.

The biggest problem, from which many others stem, seems to be reduced staffing as local studies work is so labour intensive. The three main areas can be summarised as enquiry work, stock work and promotional work and all three seem to be suffering throughout the region.

Stock also seems to be suffering, both in the purchase of new materials and the repair and microfilming of existing materials: accommodation also seems to be a problem.

The responses to the questionnaire show that local studies librarians in the North West are concerned about the effects of cuts, are anxious to provide the best possible service in spite of the problems they face and re full of ideas for expansion and improvement. While it was discouraging to find that services obviously are suffering it was encouraging to find such high level of commitment among staff.

Although the survey had its weaknesses we feel that it establishes that there is cause for concern.

Alice Lock is Local Studies Librarian, Tameside Libraries.

CO-OPERATION WITH ROMANIA

Elizabeth Melrose

The Local Studies Group has extended its international links in Eastern Europe. After a three-day visit to Târgu-Mures in Romania at the invitation of the local studies librarian of the Mures County Library and her husband, the LSG Chairman successfully requested that the Group help to sponsor the first volume of *Bibliografii Muresene* a bibliography of the periodicals published in Mures, County 1989-1994.

Târgu-Mures has a long history. It is first documented in 1300 as the "Szekely capital". A century later the Diet of Transylvania was convened in the town. The nineteenth century mathematician Janos Bolyai and his equally distinguished father worked in Târgu-Mures. Included in the manuscripts of the Teleki-Bolyai Library is a letter from Janos Bolyai announcing his discovery of non-Euclidian geometry.

Until the First World War Transylvania had been a province of the Hungarian Empire. This changed after the 1920 Trianon Peace Treaty annexed the region to Romania. Later the Ceaucescu government forcibly encouraged Romanian migration into the region from the other side of the Carpathians and uprooted Transylvanian Hungarians to distant parts of the country. Today Târgu-Mures has a population of over 160,000, many working in the textile, chemical and natural gas industries. A public library had been opened in 1913 in rooms on the first floor of the imposing Palace of Culture in the town centre. At the end of the first year staff had registered 582 readers and accessioned 319 publications. Since then the library has expanded into the second floor of the building, been transformed into the County Library responsible for six former town libraries and all the district village libraries and recorded over 25000 readers.

Despite all this history within the two diverse communities, Romanian and Hungarian, the library local studies department was given a very low priority during the Ceaucescu regime. Though some enquiry and bibliographical work was undertaken and the Teleki Library, housing the rare book collections, was maintained, there was no designated local studies librarian in Mures County for nineteen years. Some staff working as librarians had come from the school system and were former language teachers. The resources that existed were diverted to the science and technology section and backlogs of local studies work to be processed visibly increased.

However, since the revolution of 1989, there have been changes. Under a new Director of the library service, Marika Fülöp was appointed as Local Studies Librarian in 1993. In the last two years she has compiled this very detailed Bibliography of the periodicals published in Mures County between the fall of the previous government in December 1989, when there were four titles, and December 1994 when the number had risen to nearly eighty. The periodicals have been indexed in separate sequences, by title, by subject, by the names of the editors and publishers, by place of publication. There is a chronological and a location listing. All the indexing was done in the traditional way on catalogue

cards since the library has no computers. The two introductions, by Dimitrie Poptarnas, Director of the Library Service, and by Marika Fülöp, are printed in Romanian and Hungarian, thus recognising both the main language groups in the area.

Marika Fülöp hopes that the bibliography will be the first in a series of future publications from the local studies department. She is collecting material for a Dictionary of local authors of literary works and publications 1900-1994 - an enterprise organised by the National Library in Bucharest. The Mures County entries are to be edited at the end of the year along with the returns from all the other Romanian county libraries. Other projects that she intends to complete are a Who's who in Mures County and a listing of the publications of local authors in the period after the revolution of 1989. This latter must include works written by local authors who now live in other parts of Europe or overseas.

Against a background of some difficulty, these advances could not have been achieved without the active support of the Director of Târgu-Mures Library. However there are severe financial restraints. Our Local Studies Group was pleased to make a small contribution towards the publication of the bibliography. It is not only a valuable index for Târgu-Mures County local studies, but it is an example of what our Group intended to promote through our international policy.

Elizabeth Melrose is Chairman of LSG

LSG MISSION STATEMENT

The Library association has recently asked for formal information about the structure, aims and objectives and activities of its Groups. The LSG Committee has recently agreed the following Mission Statement, which was incorporated into the submission made to the LA.

Definition

Local studies can be defined as studies relating to the local environment in all its aspects, including geology, palaeontology, climatology and natural history; also as studies relating to all types of human endeavour within that environment, past, present and future.

Mission Statement

The Local Studies Group of the Library Association embraces the terms of the Royal Charter where it states that the overall aim is "to unite all persons engaged in, or interested in library work at all levels and in all disciplines".

Aims

1. To act as a forum for all those interested in the field of local studies.

2. To improve awareness of the value and importance of local studies provision to all members of society and to enhance the profile of local studies librarianship.
3. To ensure best professional practice in local studies librarianship.
4. To promote guidelines for local studies collections.
5. To act as a focus for comment and to campaign on all issues affecting local studies.

Objectives

To encourage Continuing Professional Development among its members -:

1. By organising weekend schools, meetings, full and half day seminars, on matters of topical interest and relevance, throughout the country.
2. By producing guidelines and training standards to assist librarians to respond to the wide variety of approaches inherent in local studies work.
3. By producing quality journals, such as "Local Studies Librarian" and "Locscot", which disseminate relevant information and current concerns to our members.
4. By awarding the Dorothy McCulla prize each year to the person who has contributed most, in the eyes of the committee, to local studies librarianship.
5. By encouraging and supporting a regional structure, with active branches across the United Kingdom.
6. By stimulating the production of local studies publications in all media.
7. By encouraging and maintaining links with organisations of common interest, local, national and international.

THE SOCIETY OF INDEXERS GENEALOGICAL GROUP

Tony Rydings

Many people in the British Isles must be involved in the indexing of family history materials, whether they be family historians themselves, or those like librarians and archivists who hold material which can help. The majority have no formal training in the art of indexing, and many will never have heard of the Society of Indexers (SI). The Society was founded in 1958 as an autonomous professional body for anyone interested in any form of indexing. It provides training in indexing, maintains a register of indexers, holds meetings and produces the journal *The Indexer*. Many indexers tend to specialise in making indexes on particular subjects, and about three years ago the SI decided to encourage the formation of groups for those who share such interests; there are now groups for archaeology, earth sciences and genealogy.

The Society of Indexers Genealogical Group (SIGG) had its beginnings when the SI Newsletter for April 1993 carried a notice for members who were interested in forming such a group to get in touch with Tony Rydings, a retired librarian and long-time SI member. SIGG therefore started almost entirely with SI members, though it was envisaged from the start that membership would extend to those who did not belong to the SI, but were working on family history and genealogical indexes. By August 1995 SIGG had 49 members, of whom 17 were also members of the SI.

In general terms the Group aims to bring together those indexers who have specialist knowledge and those who are embarking on family history or local history projects in which indexing is an important part, so that a body of expertise may be formed, which may then be shared with others. When deciding on the scope of SIGG in the beginning it was suggested that the following kinds of indexing might be included: General books on genealogy; registers of births, deaths and marriages; court rolls; collections of (historical) documents; catalogues of books on genealogy and related subjects; works on local history; family histories, including individual biographies; periodicals on family history, including publications of family history societies; bibliography of works on family history; works on computers in family history; wills and administrations; ecclesiastical records, including tithes; monumental inscriptions; land records; and possibly heraldry; royalty, nobility, gentry; trades and occupations.

These are not listed in any particular order, and there is some over-lapping between headings. The last three headings are often included in general works on genealogy and family history, though they are really specialities on their own. It will be seen that a wide scope of materials was envisaged, and it would be possible to add other related items.

This Group aims to foster both improvement and co-operation in indexing among family historians and local historians. As a first step towards this, it is suggested that each affiliated society might appoint one of its members (perhaps their projects co-ordinator) to liaise with the SI Genealogical Group, and to correspond on any of the activities which have been mentioned above. It should be, emphasised that members of the Group hope to provide advice on any questions within their competence, but not usually any actual indexing - most of them have a full workload of indexing already.

From the interests of those who first joined SIGG it became apparent that many family historians were also involved in local history, which in turn has connections with other areas of similar interest such as local population studies, demography, oral history, heraldry, community history, social history and historical geography. It is to these that SIGG is now turning for a further injection of 'new blood', in the hope of widening our scope. It was evident at the start that our activities would be largely through correspondence, since with a small membership scattered throughout Britain there would be little opportunity for meetings. The SI of course hold meetings in various places, but so far few SIGG members have been together in one place at the same time. One of the advantages of a wider membership might be to encourage meetings.

Meanwhile, SIGG has issued a quarterly newsletter, starting with just two A4 pages in May 1993, and reaching eighteen A5 pages of text for no 10 in September 1995. The contents have been mostly news items but there have been articles on technical aspects of different kinds of index, including indexes to census returns and quarter sessions records. There have been descriptive notes on the indexes of the College of Arms, the indexes to the birth, marriage, and death announcements of a Kent newspaper, the Cornish Mining Index and some others. One of the SI advisers on computers has written an article on choosing a computer for indexing, and a member of a local history society has written on her experience of setting up an index of their local history material.

SIGG is involved in two projects which it is hoped will eventually result in publications of value to all. The first is to compile a list of subject headings for use in indexes of family history material, while the second, known as the West Project from its originator, involves the listing of places in Britain and allocating three-letter codes to each, as an extension to the Chapman county codes, for use in computerised records. This should be of use in work such as population studies and local history, as well as in family history. More projects are planned; it is hoped that the group will produce a short manual on how to compile an index, with the particular needs in mind of those working with genealogical and related materials.

It is realised that there are differences in techniques and problems between genealogical and local studies indexing, but it is also true that there is much overlap in personnel and material between family history and local history. Local studies librarians would have much to contribute to the Group, with their knowledge and their cataloguing and indexing skills. For information about the Group, contact Colin D J Mills, SIGG Convenor and Editor, 70 Chestnut Lane, Amersham, Buckinghamshire HP6 6EH; tel (01494) 726103

Tony Rydings was the founder of SIGG and is its Projects Organiser.

HELP WANTED

Michael Dewe, Lecturer, Department of Information And Library Studies, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, Llanbadarn Fawr, Aberystwyth, SY23 3AS (and formerly of the Mainline Skiffle Group, Putney), London, writes:

Some of you may have heard of, or even be old enough, like me, to have participated in the skiffle phenomenon of the 1950's. However, for those to whom it is a new (and slightly unusual) term, a word or two of explanation is in order.

Skiffle was one of the many strands of popular music of the 1950's. It was a music that young people performed themselves, typically using acoustic guitars, washboard and a tea chest bass to accompany a singer in a very rhythmic fashion. At the time the music was described by one commentator as "folk music

with a jazz beat" and indeed its repertoire was mainly taken from American blues, work and folk songs. The most famous professional exponent of skiffle, and the man who can be said to have started it all, was Lonnie Donegan whose recording of 'Rock Island Line' entered the British charts in January 1956, and whose skiffle group inspired the many amateur teenage groups that sprang up around the country.

A number of those who started out in skiffle groups went on to become pop stars and musicians, for example, Tommy Steele, Cliff Richard, Hank Marvin and the Beatles. The Beatles have their origins in a skiffle group called the Quarrymen.

I have been asked to write a book about the skiffle craze, and wish particularly to concentrate on it as part of the period's grassroots musical culture in Britain. The story of the commercial dimension, as exemplified by Donegan, the Vipers and Chas McDevitt skiffle groups, will, I suspect, be fairly easy to document. I would be interested, therefore, to hear from local studies librarians about any material or information they may have in their local collection on this topic. Photographs of local groups, ephemera (posters of leaflets advertising skiffle competitions, for example), and references in local newspapers (the key years are 1956 - 57) would all help to chronicle as thoroughly as possible a now largely forgotten but influential aspect of popular music-making. Personal reminiscences would also be welcomed.

THE DOROTHY MCCULLA MEMORIAL AWARD, 1996.

This award, of £50 and a certificate, is LSG's own award and is presented annually to the member who, in the opinion of the Committee, has contributed most to local studies librarianship. Nominations are therefore invited for this year's award from members, chief librarians and anyone else with a suitable nominee. Nominations should be accompanied by a short statement from the proposer. The award may be concerned with any aspect of local studies librarianship, examples being publication, an index, a new technique or good promotions work. Last year the Committee were pleased to receive a record number of nominations, and we hope for a substantial response for 1996. Nominations should be submitted by January 31st 1996, for consideration by the Committee at their meeting in March and should be sent to the Hon. Secretary, Patrick Baird, Local Studies and History, Central Library, Chamberlain Square, Birmingham B3 3HQ.



Ken Hinshalwood, winner of the 1995 McCulla Award receiving his certificate from LA President Melvyn Barnes at the Scottish Library Association Conference in Peebles.

HAVE YOU SEEN...?

Recent items of interest to local studies librarians.

Irish periodicals first published before 1901: a union list of Northern Ireland library holdings. Library Local Studies Panel [Northern Ireland], 1995. 95pp. £5.00. ISBN 095165 101 3.

This publication is the result of a co-operative venture by the Panel to facilitate the sharing of resources throughout the Province, the first steps of which were described in an article by Kate McAllister in LSL for Autumn 1990. The scope includes periodicals published in Ireland or with an Irish content published elsewhere. Journals are listed alphabetically by title, with references to changes, and the date of first publication is given, along with the journal's reference number in the Waterloo directory of Irish newspapers and periodicals, 1800-1900, and a detailed list of holdings. While this is no doubt sufficient for local library interlending purposes it would have been helpful for outsiders to have been given at least the closing date for periodicals which have not survived, rather than to have to look up an extra source which not everyone has access to. With this reservation, this is a useful locating tool, straightforwardly laid out, which will be useful for librarians outside Northern Ireland who need to trace these often esoteric journals.

A short bibliography of Victorian Manchester. 3 ed, The Victorian Society (Manchester Group), 1994. 12pp. £1.00 + £0.29 SAE from Linda Holdridge, 14 High Lane, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester M21 1DF.

A considerably revised version of this list. Intended for the general reader rather than the specialist, the 72 entries are arranged in subject groupings and are annotated. Publications now go up to 1993. For more detailed information on the subjects covered readers are referred to bibliographies in works in the list.

O'Neill, Julie. Think big Local History Magazine, 43, Mar/Apr 1994, p. 19.

While this is mainly an account of the experience of the Trent Valley Local History Group in producing large print versions of some of its publications, the author also uses the article to suggest that local societies should put back profits made on their publications into the community, for instance by making donations to local projects.

Creton, H. ed. Bibliography of printed works on London history to 1939. LAPL, 1994. 848 pp. £80.00. ISBN 1 85604 0747.

This is a major local bibliography. It contains nearly 22,000 selected references to books, articles and theses covering the period from the Dark Ages to the outbreak of World War 2, and includes material published up to 1990. Items included must have been formally published and, because material for the bibliography was collected from public and specialist libraries all over London, most of it should be reasonably accessible. Items must have been written from a

historical point of view, or, for instance in the case of collections of photographs, have a historical introduction. The bibliography is arranged by subject with a substantial analytical index and an author index, and should become a major starting point for anyone interested in studying aspects of London history as it is, surprisingly perhaps, the first bibliography of its kind to cover the capital. Even at the price of £80 a work of this scope, with all the labour entailed, cannot hope to cover its costs, and the editor acknowledges the bodies in Europe and Britain which have made grants towards its preparation. It should be noted that work has already started both on covering the period from 1939 and on recording publications issued since 1990. It is also worth recording that this work has been awarded the 1995 Besterman Medal for an outstanding bibliography.

Recent publications from the Federation of Family History Societies

For many years FFHS has been a prolific publisher of guides and bibliographies for family historians: many of these have also been of value to a much wider audience of local and national historians. These notes are to alert readers to some of the more recent publications. The *County Genealogical Bibliographies* by Stuart A. Raymond now cover sixteen English counties, the latest being for Cheshire (2 vols, 1995, £9.50 and £7.00). As well as family histories these bibliographies cover general histories and those related to specific places: the author states that as well as genealogists, he anticipates that they will be useful to historians including local historians, archivists and research students.

A new series just introduced supplies *Basic facts about...* (each 16 pages, 1995, £1.25), and seems to give a good basic introduction to the topics: they could be useful to beginning enquirers in libraries. The first five titles are *Heraldry for family historians*, *Latin for family historians*, *Sources for family history in the home*, *Family research in Yorkshire* and *Keeping your family records*.

FFHS also publishes more substantial volumes. *Was your father a railwayman* by Tom Richards (3 ed, 1995, 101pp, £4.95) is a directory of railway archive sources for family historians. While mostly concerned with records of people (paybill books, staff appointment lists etc.), more general material is also included, including trades union records and photographs and portraits. There is a brief section on railways overseas and a list of main collections of source material. *Dating old photographs* by Robert Pols (2 ed, 1995, £4.95) covers the identification and dating of early photographs. There is a section on types of photographs, and substantial chapters on photographers names, backgrounds and costume. Copying techniques and conservation are also briefly dealt with and there is a useful section of illustrations intended to help readers date photographs, together with a set of charts giving the main points of comparison. There is a selective annotated bibliography.

For full details of these and other FFHS publications, contact FFHS (Publications) Ltd, The Benson Room, Birmingham and Midland Institute, Margaret Street, Birmingham B3 3BS or the Publications Manager, FFHS (Publications) Ltd, 2-4 Killer Street, Ramsbottom, Bury, Lancashire, BLO 9BZ.

NOTES AND NEWS

The 1995 Tameside Family History Award, run by Tameside Leisure Services, was won by Mike and Stella Pavasovic. This year's competition asked for an oral history interview with someone who has come to Tameside from another country. Stella Pavasovic was born in Yugoslavia and came to Britain in 1948, later settling in Dukinfeld, and was interviewed about her experiences by her son. The pair received a cheque for £100 at a presentation at Portland Basin Heritage Centre, Ashton, on 2nd September. Two pairs of runners up received £50 cheques: Margaret Knott submitted an interview with June Hewis who has come to Tameside from Penang while Jayne Britton interviewed Maniben Patel from India. The tapes and transcripts can be consulted at Tameside Local Studies Library and staff here hope that others who have moved to the area from other countries will be encouraged to tape record their own reminiscences and deposit copies at the library: these kinds of experiences provide valuable sources of information for researchers in the future.

The Library Association is anxious to draw the attention of members to its Benevolent Fund. The Fund is administered by a Trust, and its main object is 'the relief of poverty, sickness and other kinds of suffering amongst librarians and librarians' dependants'. The kind of thing the Fund can do is to help meet any unusual or unexpected expenses which cause hardship, for instance urgent house repairs or extra heating bills arising because of illness. The help is in the form either of cash grants or interest-free loans: the Fund cannot provide a regular income for anyone. The Fund is always grateful for donations - you can make one, for instance, when paying your membership subscription - but on this occasion the trustees are particularly concerned that there may be members who are not aware of the Fund and what it can do to help them. If you are aware of any member in your area who may be in need of financial help, please tell them about the Benevolent Fund. The Secretary is Eric Winter, who may be contacted at LA Headquarters. For further information a newly revised leaflet is available.

In December Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre opened in Holborn library, replacing the existing sections at Swiss Cottage and Holborn. This is the first time since the formation of the London Borough of Camden in 1974 that local historians and others will be able to consult all relevant material in one place: previously users often had to use both Swiss Cottage and Holborn libraries to gain relevant information. The Centre includes a meeting room, shop and an exhibition area. Its address is Holborn Library, 32-38 Theobalds Road, London WC1X 8PA.

On 31st May the AAL's North East Division held a Continuing Professional Development meeting on local studies at North Tyneside Libraries. Nine people attended the session, at which the speaker was Eric Hollerton, North Tyneside's Local Studies Librarian. All were impressed by Eric's enthusiasm and relaxed manner of presentation. He covered several aspects of local studies and explained how he worked with members of the public. This was the first time that one of these CPD meetings has been held in the speaker's own library and it proved to be successful - several people had questions answered using the library's stock.

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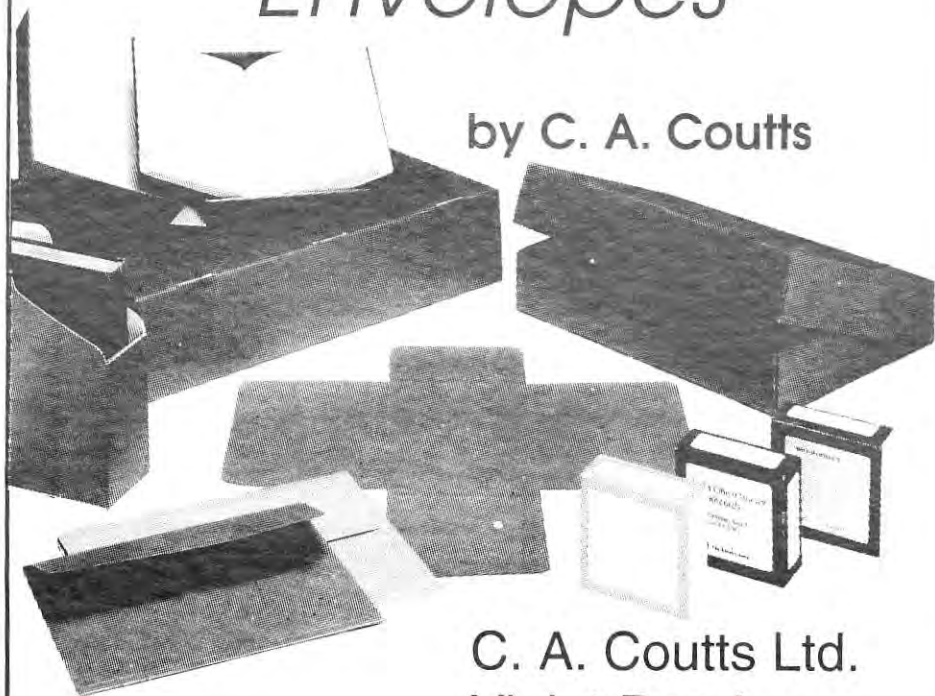
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