

The Local Studies Librarian



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Cover Illustration

Chudleigh, Devonshire, 1817. Courtesy Devon County Libraries

Editorial

One of the main matters of comment in the library world at the moment (apart from the long-delayed opening of the new British Library at St. Pancras) is the Library and Information Commission report calling for a UK public library network. For once, in a major report, local history matters get special attention, being identified as one of the principal strands of content and service which will pervade the networked public library. Here called 'community history', the authors point out the public libraries' long tradition of collecting and storing material relating to the community and that use of these resources is already an area of expansion in libraries. The list of contents and services which can be provided is given in an article elsewhere in this issue. It is very welcome for an important report to recognise the vital worth of local studies and that IT can play a major part in this: the question is whether it will happen and if so how soon - the Public Library Network will be a very large and costly venture. Local studies librarians are not always very good in arguing their case for priority, but if we want our importance to be recognised and facilities provided, we must do so. There will be the need for provision of equipment, for digitisation, and for enough staff to organise our part of the network for use by the public, and this will also involve staff training. We *must* make our presence felt if we are to take a full part in the Peoples Network.

The report lists various nonbook materials as part of our stock, and *The visual image* was our theme at UmbrellA 4. Three of the papers presented there appear in this issue, and others will be printed later, as they deserve a wider audience. An article based on the successful presentation from Gloucestershire at LIBTECH should also appear in the next issue. And, finally, UmbrellA 5 is coming in 1999, as announced on page 24.

Advance notice

The 1998 Annual General Meeting of the Local Studies Group will be held at LA Headquarters on the afternoon of **Monday 23 March 1998**. There will be an outside speaker and we hope that members of a group of Hungarian local studies librarians on a study tour will be able to attend. There will be a buffet lunch before the meeting, for which advance booking will be necessary. Put the date in your diary and look out for further details in the LA Record.

PRETTY PIXELS:

Digital Imaging in Kirkcaldy

Janet Klak

This paper describes the development of FOTOFILE, a digital image processing system designed to meet the needs of public libraries and other organisations with large collections of images.

East Fife Central Library, Kirkcaldy, has approximately 10,000 photographs, postcards, slides etc. with all the problems of storage, conservation and exploitation that such collections have. Unfortunately, very little had been done with the collection over the years because of lack of staff and resources. Each photograph had been stored in an archivally safe, clear wallet, negatives listed and numbered and image numbers assigned, but that was about all. The collection was arranged by place, i.e. town or village, and in traditional librarianship fashion, we worked from the general to the specific, using alphabetical order where possible. Photos were grouped by subject, e.g. schools, churches etc., but their actual placing depended on staff members' individual interpretation of the main subject content of the image. Where, for instance, do you file a picture showing both a church and a school? There was no index, which meant that people wishing to access the collection had to rely on the knowledge and expertise of the library staff or just browse through the images until they found what they wanted.

This was not too arduous if you were looking for a photo of "Kirkcaldy High Street". However, it became more difficult when the enquiry was subject based - for instance an enquiry on fishing boats would mean searching many place files (e.g. every harbour), and with a coast line of about 120 miles it sometimes seems as if Fife has a harbour every few yards! One particular enquiry for "factory chimneys" sticks in my mind as our area had linen mills, flax mills, roperies, linoleum factories, coal mines and maltings - just about every other photograph had a factory chimney in it.

This way of working also had inherent dangers for the collection, apart from the obvious dangers of missing a relevant photo: accidental damage to the photographs; wear and tear from constant handling; misfiling; and theft. It was also very time consuming for staff to carry out searches and check and refile folders after members of the public had been browsing.

When we started this project about four years ago there were few systems available, especially on a relatively small scale. We had looked at various commercial electronic copying systems but they mostly required the photograph to pass through the machine or were restricted by the size of image they could cope with: others did not allow the text or image to be altered or amended once it had been input, and some systems only copied black and white prints. Others could put only comparatively few images on a cd rom :- this would have meant that our collection would have been on about twelve cd roms, which would have been as inconvenient as checking files.

Other systems for arranging and indexing images all had disadvantages - for

instance they might be too restrictive, too time-consuming, or too complex. We had tried to use the same system as our local museum, but it became clear we were using our photograph collections for different reasons, and seeing different things in the images!

The main problem, in fact, that we found with all the systems that we looked at was inflexibility.

One of our aims has been to make our collections of photographs more accessible in the areas to which they refer but as it was very expensive to copy them for branch collections we had to be selective. Human nature being what is, the photos we copied were never the ones the public asked for!

Our needs

In order to try to find answers to these problems my colleague and I were invited to discuss the problems and needs of the photographic collection with Bob Bailey of Optical Solutions, who was visiting the library, to see if we could find a solution to the problems. We came up with a list of our needs, which were:

- A system which did not require specialist photographic or computer skills - neither my colleague nor I had either.
- A system that was easy for the public to use with minimum help or instruction from the staff. No matter how brilliant a system, if it was time consuming to explain to the public or required a degree in computer studies to operate it, it was no good for us.
- A system that allowed for fast, detailed, efficient, accurate searches:
 - Both input and retrieval had to be easy
 - It had to be able to capture a variety of media e.g. photos, slides negatives, glass plates
 - It had to take a variety of sizes
 - It had to support black and white, colour and sepia equally successfully
 - It had to allow for very detailed indexing
 - It had to allow us to amend, add or remove images and information
 - It had to produce prints on demand
 - It had to allow for growth of the collection
 - It had to aid decentralisation of the collection
 - It had to allow input to be done over a considerable period of time - this is important because we had no extra staff or funding for input and it had to be fitted into the usual work of the department.

A solution

The result of these discussions was FOTOFIL, a user friendly system for the storage, retrieval and reproduction of images. It can be used with any IBM compatible PC, 386 or better, 8mb memory, 500k base memory and running at 50mhz. Those of you with experience of computers will know that this is a very basic system. If

you use the Holt-Jackson approval system on cd rom you may recognise the basis of FOTOFIL. When we started it was state of the art, now it's old hat and we are looking at upgrading the system. We were the test site for FOTOFIL and I have to say there were very few hiccups.

It consists basically of a PC, a video camera and a video printer. It was decided to use a video camera for a number of reasons:

- it allows for greater depth of image
- it is both quicker and more flexible than a scanner
- it allows capture of 3D items
- it can be taken to photograph large images in situ, e.g. paintings in an art gallery, special features in a factory, statues etc.
- it can home in on certain parts of an image quickly and with minimal manipulation, e.g. a particular person, an architectural feature.

The system

FOTOFIL operates on two levels - data input and public access

Data input

We bought the system piecemeal - the PC and software for text input, then the imaging software and compressor card, then the printer: the latter is capable of producing both A4 and A5 images, colour and black and white on video paper.

A video camera is connected to the PC. To begin to capture and index an image all that is required is to enter a record number. The image to be captured is displayed on the monitor via the camera. At this stage the operator can make any changes to the image required e.g. lighten or darken, reduce or enlarge, record only part of the photo etc. When the optimum image has been obtained the photograph is captured by a key stroke, "save image". It takes eight seconds to capture and reproduce a vignette in the corner to show that the image has been saved. Once the image has been captured it cannot be manipulated. However, it is quick and easy to delete the image and enter it again. This can be done as often as required without any storage implications.

We have gone for a good quality working image. Anyone using our images for publication, for example, would require a photographic print, not a printout from FOTOFIL. However, if the original is poor quality, the copy image will be poor quality.

FOTOFIL captures black and white, sepia and colour without any difference in speed of capture. The system we have at present, at maximum compression, produces file sizes of 30k.

There are a number of input fields. We have printed sheets which mirror the record input screen. We use these for doing the indexing. This means text can be entered by anyone with keyboarding skills. The fields are as follows:

- Headings: Any number of indexing terms can be used, in any order. The system indexes any word in any field. The terms are based on the terms used in our local studies collection. We try to use popular terms, e.g. prams, not perambulators.
- Title: Many photographs, postcards etc. which have been commercially published have titles. One of these caused us a few problems in the test - "Looking over the red pantiled roofs of Culross to the hills beyond the Forth". Never having expected a title of these dimensions, the field was too small!
- Date
- Photographer
- Commercial publisher
- Colour, B/W or sepia
- Size
- Number of copies
- Added notes: This field is infinite and can be used to list names of all people in a photo e.g. a band or school class; tell the story behind the image or describe the physical characteristics of the print e.g. tear on left corner. We also use it to record copyright. Once all the relevant fields have been filled in *Update* records it. There is then the option either to add an image or to go on to enter another text record.

For ease of use the system allows text and image to be added separately and by means of the record number married up. We usually input a number of text records and then input the images, having found this to be the most time-effective method. There is a facility to "browse the records without images" so you can always check what text records have still to have their associated images entered.

The system is flexible, so information can be changed, added to or removed as required - for instance if we find out the name of someone on the photograph it can be added. If we discover a mistake, e.g. dating or spelling, it can be changed easily and the record updated.

The system also supports text records alone. It is possible therefore to use this system to record other items in the local studies collection and connect them with the image indexing. We plan to input our press cuttings collection eventually.

Images are stored on the hard disk. A back up is made to magnetic tape after

every session. When we had input a significant number they were written to cd rom. When sufficient changes or additions have accrued another cd rom is written.

Public access

As mentioned earlier, we wanted a system which members of the public could use easily, with very little help from the staff. No text or image manipulation can be done from the public access side. However, because of its speed and flexibility we could very easily recapture an image for a particular request and delete it again after printing.

FOTOFIL allows for very flexible, detailed searches:

- anyword search - this allows any field to be searched. Any number of indexing terms can be entered to allow for very detailed searches. The system also has both left and right hand truncation depending on whether you are using single word searching or a string of search words. There is a facility for Boolean searches, with "and", "or", "but not", but it is not necessary and is too difficult a concept for members of the public to cope with. The same results can be achieved by typing in the list of search terms.

- title
- photographer
- media

When the search is entered the indexing terms appear on the screen showing the number of entries for each term and the combined result of the search. If only one word has been used in the search it takes you into the index which displays the number of images with this index term. The option is there to display the images. The search works on the principle of closest match. If your search term does not appear in the index you will be placed at the closest match - the system is designed so that the searcher is always given a result. If one of the terms input does not have a match in the index the searcher will be shown this but it will not affect the search, which will continue with the other terms. There is no limit to the size of the search except the size of the database.

A typical time for search and extraction from a database of 12,000 images is 2 seconds. Our system is set for 12,000 images to allow for expansion: however, FOTOFIL can take up to 1 million images without reduction in speed.

The results of the search are displayed on the monitor on a series of screens consisting of 12 vignettes each. The enquirer can then look at each of these individually using the select option. This shows the image full screen size. There is a further choice which allows him to see the text associated with that image, and he can then return to the screen and make a further selection or exit from the enquiry. If there are fewer than 12 images in the set this information appears on the screen and the user is asked to acknowledge the message. This is to indicate

that the vignettes are blank by design, not accident. If there are more than 12 vignettes the *page up* and *page down* options allow easy movement to view all images. One can move between pages, vignettes, full screen and text option as often as required.

Escape takes you back to the search set and allows either for clearing the search or refining it. If the set is not cleared then the result of the next search will include this set.

There is also an option which allows the enquirer to browse all the images on the database. All images are again displayed on a series of screens of vignettes which allow the enquirer to move freely between screens, selecting images for full screen view and then back to the vignettes. This is very popular with the public and allows a service we could never give when we had to take original images out of cabinets and files.

For security and copyright reasons copies cannot be made from the public access side of the system. This is to prevent unlawful and unauthorised copying. To obtain copies the searcher is asked for the record number they require. Copies are made via a video printer using special coated paper and copies can be made A4 or A5, black and white or coloured. FOTOFIL can now print copies using a postscript printer.

Evaluation

The project as it developed created various problems, but there were also many advantages.

Problems

These were mainly related to resources:

- There was no additional funding or staff for this project and therefore it is taking a long time to get the collection copied. There is an agency which will do both the data input and image capturing for you but it is costly and you lose a certain amount of control over the inputting.
- We were unable to get any grants to help us. This may have been because at that time the system was new and untried. It was also because we were committed to the project before we applied for funding and the grantmaking bodies may well have taken the attitude that this project would go ahead even without their help and so passed it over in favour of other, less fully committed schemes.
- We tried to get partners from local museums and libraries, but again, the concept was too new. The idea of computers and local studies also was a difficult concept for some to take in. Whereas they would think nothing of spending thousands on automated systems for libraries, they could not see the application of computers to local collections. Now, however, they do realise the value of the system.

Advantages

- the system is quick and easy to use for both staff and public
- It is economical of staff time: there is no more searching for photos, getting out files and refiling.
- There is reduced handling of originals and therefore reduced wear and tear on the collection
- Photographs can be copied and the originals returned to lenders immediately
- The system is user friendly. The public have little difficulty using it and it allows unrestricted browsing which we could not allow before.
- The system enables us to generate income, as FOTOFILE allows us to provide instant copies. This is particularly important to overseas visitors, who want to take prints away with them. It is important, too, because we can no longer rely on the services of the council photographer. The cost of a print is £2.50 - cheaper than the photographer can do it.
- The system is easy to use by the visually impaired - simple key strokes access the collection and images can be seen full screen size.
- There is added security as backups in different formats are kept in different buildings. The original collection is kept out of the public area, the negatives are filed separately, the magnetic tape is held in Library HQ, and the system designer has a copy of the cd rom.
- The flexibility of the system will allow us to put other items from the local collection on to the system e.g. press cuttings.
- When finances permit it will be possible to decentralise the collection by providing copies at other service points.

Conclusion

The technical backup is first class and includes a maintenance contract. Optical Solutions has a mirror image of our system, so if any problems arise they can be replicated on the other system if necessary. However, I have to say that any small problems were ironed out in the initial stages and we have had no further problems.

The system continues to be developed. Using FOTOFILE you can produce your own ID cards - for instance if you run concession schemes etc. and want to be sure of your clientele.

A touch screen version is in development which will allow continuous viewing, outside the library and library opening hours.

A Windows version has just been produced which we will instal when we update the system.

I am aware that I have been able to give you only a glimpse of FOTOFIL and its potential. Should anyone wish to have a demonstration, we would be happy to see you in Fife, or you may wish to contact the designer, Bob Bailey of Optical Solutions, York, who is always happy to talk to people about their requirements.

Our photograph collections are unique and invaluable, but unless the public have access to them there is no point in having them. We have the technology to both preserve and exploit them. Use it!

Janet Klak is Local Studies Librarian, Fife Council Central Area Libraries

This paper was originally presented at Umbrella 4, Manchester, June 1997.

THE HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND AND LOCAL LIBRARY PROJECTS

As reported in previous issues of LSL, libraries involved with care of historical documents and other items have been able to receive funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Fund has now issued a booklet giving information about its purpose. It points out that the preservation of historical archives is one of the most effective ways in which the Fund can serve the needs of the future by supporting projects ranging from major historical collections of international importance to documents or photographs of purely local significance. Heritage Lottery Fund grants are given to projects that show clearly that they are contributing to our national, regional or local heritage and that they are adding to the public's enjoyment and awareness of archives and special libraries.

There are some limitations. The Fund is only able to support capital projects which have a clear beginning and end and which will result in direct improvements to specific collections, archives and individual manuscripts. The hope is that libraries will concentrate on significant projects, though small ones will be considered - however, for projects costing under £10,000 their very special importance will have to be shown. Libraries are reminded, too, that the whole costs of projects will not be covered - there must also be some 'partnership funding', which may be in various forms. Various examples of projects, large and small, are given in the booklet, and libraries are invited to find out if their project can be funded by sending for a full Guidelines and Application pack to the Heritage Lottery Fund, 7 Holbein Place, London SW1W 8NR (tel. 0171 591 6000).

If you have any pet projects which are looking for funding, and which are not simply routine repairs and maintenance, it could be worth finding out more.

VIEWS OF THE PAST:

locating topographical drawings

Bernard Nurse

Not many local studies libraries collect original drawings, but they do collect copies, use them in publications and slide talks, and as a source for answering queries about what a place, building or monument for example looked like. Drawings can be difficult to find as they are often widely scattered in many different institutions, and librarians do not have the time to search for them.

From the user's point of view the situation is a complete maze; and to save time picture researchers tend to go for views that have already been published. Some idea of the scale of the problem can be seen from a study of Sussex which is in progress. Some 4500 topographical illustrations of the county before 1850 have been recorded so far in the main 16 institutions. Of these about 2300 are inside the county and 2200 outside, although one large collection in the British Library accounts for much of the latter. There are good reasons why illustrations are so widely dispersed. They were often the result of commissions by wealthy collectors, and so have ended up wherever the private collection ended up, or they were kept by the artist for engraving or making copies. In either case many would eventually be sold at auction and divided up in numerous lots.

Sir Howard Colvin, the architectural historian, made the initial suggestion in 1958 to the Council for British Archaeology that they compile a guide to topographical collections in British libraries, art galleries and museums. The inevitable questionnaire followed, and the returns were as usual incomplete and varying in quality. Nobody had time to follow them up until Maurice Barley took on the task in 1969. He was prompted by the discovery of drawings by Sir Henry Dryden, the Victorian antiquary, at St. Magnus Cathedral in the Orkneys as well as others in the British Library, the Isle of Man and Northampton public library, and by the fact that none of these bodies was aware of the collections held by the others.

Apart from the largest collections in the British Library and the Bodleian, Barley surveyed them all personally in a series of itineraries around the country over a period of 4 years. The *Guide to British Topographical Collections* that he wrote and the Council for British Archaeology published in 1974, therefore has a consistency and comprehensiveness which directories edited from questionnaires rarely show. Originally he hoped to name the parishes to which all the drawings related, but he soon realised that this was an impossible task and in the end listed only the counties. He also suggested to the National Monuments Record that they should adopt a long term policy of photographing every item in each collection. Only part of one collection, the Petrie collection, was in fact copied, with the help of the auction house that was selling it. Twenty years later in his autobiography, Barley said a second edition had been intended, with additions and corrections, but other tasks intervened.

A second edition would be extremely useful: local authorities have changed boundaries, collections have moved location, and new acquisitions have been made since the first edition. Realising that his earlier suggestion of the National

Monuments Record copying everything was impracticable, he later proposed that the county Sites and Monuments Records in local authority Planning departments should include drawings. Obtaining the funding for this marginal activity in planning terms is likely to be difficult, but it could happen for a few historic towns.

Barley recognised that his guide was only a starting point. It recorded the collections, the artists represented and the counties covered. His notes and the responses to the questionnaire are deposited in the Society of Antiquaries' Library, and add a little to what was published. A national initiative to photograph or list all individual topographical drawings would be welcome, but the scale of the undertaking makes it unlikely ever to be financed. Future developments are more likely at the level of collections or local areas. A large number of local exhibitions have been organised and books written which have drawn attention to selected items: one of the best, *Picturesque Chester: the City in Art* opened in June at the Grosvenor Museum. However, in this article I shall concentrate on some work in progress which is more wide ranging in nature.

The largest national collection of drawings is in the Department of Manuscripts of the British Library. However, as there is no general place name index since Madden's catalogue which was published in 1844, the searcher has to visit the department or look through the volumes of catalogues to the additional manuscripts which cover roughly each five year's accessions. This should change in future, as lottery funding has been granted to automate the catalogues, with the prospect eventually of remote access via the British Library OPAC.

Also starting soon with the help of the Getty Grant Program is the Society of Antiquaries' project to catalogue the drawings collection. A full time cataloguer will start this autumn on a three year contract; some part time work has already been carried out on collections of archaeological drawings. After considering various databases the French museum software, Micromusee, has been selected as the most appropriate for this particular purpose and the best value for money. The priority is to catalogue those items which are not catalogued and to enhance the quality of the record for those that are inadequately catalogued (which is most of them), before considering the use of imaging. Eventually, like the British Library, the intention is to allow free remote access. The Society's current library catalogue, using OLIB software, should be on the Internet by the end of 1997, hosted by the Archaeology Data Service at York University, and the two catalogues will be linked later. The Society has also applied for lottery funding to retrospectively convert the printed books catalogue and subject index, and to extend the catalogue to the topographical prints.

The most ambitious programme in this field in progress at the moment, and one that includes imaging, is the Corporation of London's Data Imaging Project, or COLDIP for short. This is a remarkable initiative of the Libraries and Art Galleries Department developed to coincide with the opening of the new Guildhall Art Gallery in 1998. The intention is to digitize images of all 4000 oil paintings in the Permanent Art Collection as well as over 30,000 prints and drawings from the main London topography collections in the Guildhall Library Print Room. Every item included is being photographed in house onto 35mm or larger colour slides, digitized

commercially onto Photo-CDs and inserted into a database. The judgement was made that at present digital cameras cannot provide as good a quality image as conventional film. The Corporation will also end up with an extremely valuable bank of images on long lasting film, which can always be drawn upon as digital technology changes.

The Guildhall Library already has adequate scholarly catalogue records of each item, which are being converted into electronic format as part of the general retrospective conversion for all collections, i.e. Printed Books, Manuscripts and Prints and Drawings. Those records which are available can be used for the COLDIP project, but much of the production team's work (employing four out of eight staff) is in subject indexing and creating records which can be retrieved via a new visual information system. The effort will make the collections accessible in a way which only new technology can offer. The quality of image is quite remarkable, so that there will be no need to consult the originals for most purposes.

The Sussex project, which has already been mentioned, is a pioneering enterprise of the Sussex Record Society which is planning a centenary volume in 2001 entitled *Sussex Depict'd: topographical illustrations before 1850*. The end date was chosen to coincide with the development of photography. I am grateful to John Farrant, one of the two compilers, for some advance information. An inventory of pictures, i.e. paintings and drawings, but not prints, will be published on computer disc with a printed guide. The guide will contain chapters on patronage, major themes and subjects, and biographical accounts of the top 130 or so artists responsible for more than 50 pictures, with the locations of their works.

So far the compilers have identified 560 artists by name or monogram who are responsible for 85% of the pictures, the remaining ones being unsigned or unattributed. One artist, S. H. Grimm, was responsible for more than 1000, dating from the 1770's and 80's, which are in the British Library. Not unsurprisingly the localities depicted are the top tourist sites. The most popular scenes were of Hastings beach, castle and churches (736); Hastings was home to Sussex's largest artistic community. Brighton beach, seafront and Pavilion comes next with 713, followed by Lewes with 264. This shows up one of the problems with dealing with drawings, the repetitive nature of many of the subjects and the difficulty of identifying what is of value to any particular researcher. There is still much to do in Sussex especially in locating private collections, and searching other collections. However a remarkable amount has been achieved already and when published the volume and disc should provide an invaluable starting point for researchers and a useful model for other areas.

So, despite the difficulties of dispersal, limited progress is being made in recording drawings and making them better known. I should be interested to hear of any other initiatives to catalogue collections, any views on producing a revised edition of Barley's *Guide* or any local attempts to compile a comprehensive guide similar to Sussex. Other county historical or record societies could be encouraged to consider this.

Bernard Nurse is the Librarian. Society of Antiquaries of London.

YORKSHIRE TELEVISION VIDEO HISTORY PROJECT

Michael Scarborough with Frank Harris, Yorkshire Television: ed Tony Thompson

Queen Victoria was still on the throne, Gladstone was Prime Minister, wireless was in its infancy and the Boer War had yet to be fought when Mrs. Kay Sharp was a girl. And when the centenarian from Scarborough recorded on video tape her childhood memories of what life was like at the North Yorkshire resort, she painted as vivid a picture as any illustrated history book could possibly contain. "She was absolutely incredible for 104 years old - so alert and quite staggering in her knowledge of local history" declared Frank Harris, Coordinator of Yorkshire Television's Video History Project. "We recorded her for more than an hour. The World War One bombardment of Scarborough was amongst her recollections - also described by two or three other elderly Scarborians, but none so lucidly."

Many elderly people have good tales to tell and they tell them well. It's not just that significant experiences are remembered vividly but, in retelling these to children, grandchildren, friends and even strangers, they will have honed their choice of words and sense of timing to a fine art. But there is, of course, more to it than that for they are not just telling stories but preserving history - and a history which, too frequently, has been inadequately recorded by archives, books, documents and traditional research. Sadly, much of it has not been recorded at all.

That's where the Yorkshire Television Video Project has come in. Seven years ago, three of us at Yorkshire Television saw excitement and value in recording the memories of ordinary Yorkshire people, not in order to make programmes, but so that we could build up an archive that in twenty, thirty or fifty years time would give historians a fuller picture of the twentieth century. "Do you remember the war, grandma?" is an important question, but so is "What was a doffer?" or "What was childbirth like in the 1930s?" or "How did you plough a furrow with horses?"

There is no end to such questions and over six years of recording, some of them have been answered, but many more have been suggested. Philip of Knaresborough told us what it was like to deliver ammunition to First World War trenches from a biplane. Brian of Mount Tabor talked of the hardships and excitements of a small boy's first days in a West Riding wool mill. Ivy remembered being in service and recalled the tyranny of the Head Butler. When we set up our cameras at the Great Yorkshire Show, we got moving accounts of East Riding and dales farming from the men who ploughed the land and the women who ran the farmhouses. The history is all there, it's just a matter of going out and getting it.

"Just a matter of getting it" makes it sound easy, but when the Video History Project started in 1989, there were important questions to ask about how it should be done. It might seem too obvious now, but we had to ask what seeing a person's face added to the understanding a historian might get from listening to a taped voice - to well-established oral history. Six hundred and fifty hours of recording later we've got our answer - watch Herbert Pickle's face when he talks about being left-handed in a 1920s school and you grasp vividly what he went through. Watch the eyes of the women talking about early health experiences or working in the mills and you gather more than the voice alone can tell. Watch sadness and stoicism in the expressions of those who battled the years of the Depression and you'll learn more than the statistics and Parliamentary reports can ever tell.

The Video History Project was the idea of John Fairley, then Director of Programmes at YTV and now the Company's Managing Director. He had seen something similar in New York. The Project was set up by Frank Harris, who was just retiring as Head of the Audio Visual and TV Centre at the University of York, and YTV's Senior Education Officer Michael Scarborough - now retired but still actively involved.

We didn't want to make this project a massive production exercise - making programmes would not have been the right approach - but we did want it to be something of a community venture. We have equipped the project with three camera units (each unit has a SVHS camera, a light, a tripod and a microphone) and these are available to community groups who identify local people with experiences which should not be lost to time. With a little training in handling a camera and in interview techniques, most groups could record good material. One group recorded valuable accounts of Grimsby fishermen, another brought together new information about farming in Lincolnshire and about wartime bomber stations. In Sheffield a group focused on the city's well established Somali population and in Bradford, Asian children recorded their parents' first impressions of the black and sooty streets of Bradford half a century ago. Amongst all these there are unexpected gems - you can't get better Yorkshire dialect than when veteran cyclists Bill and Donald talked about trips to Ma Braithwaites "whose cakes were rightly famous."

Little of what we have recorded is about great events and famous people, but then neither is history only about that. Future historians, if they want to get anything like a true picture, will need to know about the thoughts, experiences, hopes and disappointments of those who might, on the face of it, seem nobodies, but in fact are far from that.

Of course, the project can't record everybody; there isn't time. We can't always find community groups to do the recording and must, the two of us now involved, meet individuals in their homes. But in the six years we have archived copies of 650 hours of recording in the West Yorkshire Archives strong room on Canal Road in Bradford. We've also set up a viewing room there and a computer programme (STRIX) which gives an easy search for anything on tape - if you want to know about schooldays, you'll find something; if you are interested in prefabs or building reservoirs in Nidderdale, there's information, and even something as recent as reactions to the building of Sheffield's Supertram will become the history of the future.

So how do people react when confronted with a camera lens? Some of the elderly are a bit perturbed initially, Frank admits. But he gets round the problem by sitting in a chair facing elderly interviewees, with the camera on a tripod behind him. He also tries to avoid using bright lights and, once they start talking, people soon tend to become oblivious of the equipment. A high quality microphone is also used, so it doesn't have to be pushed under their noses. On the other hand, Frank finds that children become remarkably professional in front of a camera and are quite uninhibited compared with older generations.

The project needs to know about people whose experiences should be caught before they are lost. We can't always know where these people are; we can't assess the significance of memories for that is properly the business of historians, but there

is always someone in a community who has a hunch that someone is worth recording. Someone who knows that "Mrs. Harker can tell a good few tales about the corner shop she ran," or "Bill Feather will keep you going for hours." If you know someone like that, the project needs to know.

For further information contact Frank Harris, The Coordinator. Video History Project, telephone (01904)412444 or write to him at the Video History Project, Yorkshire Television Ltd. The Television Centre. Leeds LS3 1JS.

This article is based on the paper Frank Harris gave at a joint session at UmbrellA 4 in Manchester in June and on two articles, both the copyright of Yorkshire Television, to whom many thanks. Tony Thompson is editor of the Audiovisual Librarian, in which this article also appears, and to whom acknowledgment is made.

ARCHIVING OF ORDNANCE SURVEY MAPS

One of the Group papers at UmbrellA 4 was presented by Peter Ingham of the Ordnance Survey. It was very well received and the speaker answered many questions from the floor: there was particular concern about the OS archiving policy. Coincidentally, as a result of concern expressed at a day school organised by LSG's London and Home Counties Branch, the Branch Chairman wrote to the Ordnance Survey for information. The following helpful reply was received from Don Snowhill, Local Government Account Manager. Our thanks to the L & HC Branch for taking this up.

Ordnance Survey has a single national agreement with all local authorities which provides for all their core mapping needs. Each authority is entitled to receive full cover and regular updates of our Land-Line, 1:10,000 raster, ADDRESS-POINT, OSCAR and Boundary-Line data products. Authorities may if they wish receive paper Superplan maps in lieu of Land-Line data and 1:10,000 paper maps in lieu of 1:10,000 raster data.

The Copyright licence which is also provided as part of the national agreement allows use of all Ordnance Survey information in all departments of the authority. Thus all local authority libraries can in theory access and use all this information although they too are bound by the terms of the standard Local Authority Copyright Licence. In each local authority the agreement is administered by a nominated Ordnance Survey Liaison Officer, and he or she would be the obvious point of contact for any local authority library wishing to access Ordnance Survey information.

In theory, then, local authority libraries could create and maintain an archive of Ordnance Survey information. In practice I know that it is not always possible to establish the necessary arrangements with the parent authorities and there may well be difficulties in obtaining from them paper plots of the required quality for library archives. On the other hand, some libraries have looked to the future and provided terminals linked to the computer system of the parent authority to provide access to the full data archive stored by the authority.

I should point out that non-local authority libraries cannot benefit from the national Local Authority agreement and cannot access information in this way. As far as I am aware there are no comparable arrangements for non-local authority libraries.

THE PEOPLES NETWORK AND LOCAL STUDIES

A good deal of comment has already appeared since the publication, by the Library and Information Commission, of *New library: the People's network*. This report is concerned with the need to harness information technology to help serve the needs of the library user in the future, and urges the setting up of a Public Library Network to provide access to the general public's information needs, whether it be for education and lifelong learning, for business purposes, or as a gateway for citizen communication.

One of the main possibilities it envisages is what it calls community history - an area in which libraries support both the acquisition of knowledge and a sense of community - and it is recognised that through a unique tradition of storing archives, records, maps, photographs and film, public libraries have long been custodians of the people's identity and the community's self-image, and the fact that use of these resources is already an area of expansion in library usage is clearly stated. The report goes on to say that in local history, public libraries house unique collections, and that digital technologies will allow such collections - which are largely paper-based - to be converted into new formats: these will make the material more widely accessible and will also facilitate security and conservation of the original documents. The report then details what local and family historians can expect to be able to access via the proposed network:

- unique local collections networked nationally
- digitised collections of archives such as records of births, marriages and deaths, and local newspapers
- digitised collections of maps and photographs of streets, villages, towns and cities
- catalogues of local history libraries across the world
- catalogues of public record offices
- Visits to virtual social history exhibitions created by libraries, museums and galleries

Examples of all of these things can already be found on the Internet, but the report proposes that they shall be available for access in *all* libraries and archives. Thus this information will need to be supported by a range of services in support of community history, which will include:

- interactive communications with specialist librarians and archivists
- use of networked learning packages related to genealogy and family history
- access to genealogy research services
- community publishing of personal stories and local histories
- the capacity to contact and participate in community history societies
- e-mail links to newspapers

New Library: the People's Network, then, clearly identifies local history as an important area of service in the network, and in the Summary of Recommendations calls for a programme to digitise local/special collections in public libraries and the delivery of other digitised collections from the national libraries, museums and galleries, and from other partners.

There are, of course, many other subjects considered in this report, including the setting up of a Public Library Networking Agency. This would need to be at least partly government-funded, and a period of seven years for the creation of an infrastructure is suggested. Some estimated costings are given, and problems of management and copyright are also considered. If you are interested in the development of information networks in the public sector generally, this report is well worth looking at.

This report, then, within its general remit, includes local history sources as an important part of any library network. There seem to be two main concerns for local studies librarians. The first is the level of priority given in libraries to the digitisation of local history materials compared with, for instance, the provision of a service for business, while the second is that of providing sufficient trained staff to help users get full benefit from the network. It is up to local studies librarians to make sure, in the future planning and implementation of a network, that library managers are made (and kept!) aware of the need for the local studies collection to be given access as an integral part of the system. After all, the report's authors see community history as a 'principal strand' of the network.

New Library: the people's network. Library and Information Commission, 1997. 142 pp. £25.00. This report is also available on-line at <http://www.ukoln.ac.uk/services/lic/newlibrary>

THE DOROTHY McCULLA MEMORIAL AWARD, 1998

This is the Local Studies Group's own award and is presented annually to the member who, in the opinion of the Committee, has contributed most to local studies librarianship. This year the Award consists of £100 and a certificate, and nominations are invited from members, chief librarians and anyone else with a suitable nominee. Last years nominations were of a high standard and all of them met the judges' criteria of good overall service provision, excellent promotional work and innovation: we hope for a substantial response again this year. For information about the Award, and a nomination form, please write to Patrick Baird, Hon. Secretary, Local Studies Group, Local Studies and History, Birmingham Central Library, Chamberlain Square, Birmingham B3 3HQ. Nominations should be submitted by March 31, 1998.



The 1997 McCulla Award winner Ian Maxted being presented with the award by Diana Winterbotham, who was the first recipient.

FRENCH LOCAL STUDIES CATALOGUE ON CD-ROM

The fruits of several years cooperation between libraries in the Lower Normandy region have just appeared on CD-ROM. It is the end-product of a project in which Alain Girard, our colleague in Caen Libraries was closely involved in the years before his recent untimely death.

A union card catalogue of local history titles in a number of collections in the region was distributed on microfiche some time ago. Now, digitised and enlarged, it forms a database of some 55,000 titles which can be searched by title keywords, author, place of publication, date of publication and library. Boolean operators and wildcards can be used, searches can be saved and combined and indexes of terms can be browsed. The contents cover the holdings of some twenty libraries in the departments which make up the region, including public, university and ecclesiastical libraries, archives, museums and documentation centres. Subject searching is limited, being confined to title words but nevertheless this is an impressive example of cooperation at a regional level which Britain could well use as an inspiration for similar projects.

Beside the catalogue there is information on individual collections including a history of each institution and a total of about 100 images of treasures from many of the libraries, although the local significance of some of the images is not always clear, perhaps because they were taken from the publication *Patrimoine des bibliothèques de France*, vol.9 (1995).

A second edition of the CD-ROM is planned, extending the database with references to almost 30,000 periodical articles which have been included in the annual *Bibliographie normande* since 1950. There will also be a second database of more than 100,000 pre-1901 titles held in six municipal libraries in the region.

Details: *Livres anciens et documentation régionale en Basse-Normandie: catalogue collectif des ouvrages conservés dans les bibliothèques*. Edition 1997.

Centre Régionale des Lettres de Basse-Normandie, 14 rue des Croisiers, 14000 CAEN, France. Internet <http://www.info.unicaen.fr/bnum/CRL/>.

Price 250Fr + 11.50Fr p&p within France.

Minimum requirements: Windows 3.1 or 95, PC486SX33, 8Mb RAM, 20Mb free hard disc space.

Ian Maxted is local Studies Librarian, Devon Library Services

HAVE YOU SEEN ... ?

Some recent items of interest to local studies librarians

Aston, M. *Cinemas of Camden. Camden Leisure and Community Services, 1997. 79pp. £6.50 (£8.25 by post) - ISBN—0 901389 88 9.*

The history of Camden's cinemas, past and present. After a short historical introduction each cinema is dealt with individually, giving as much information as can be traced. The arrangement is chronological by date of opening, starting with the Dara (later the Fan), which opened in 1908 and closed in 1917: the last in the list is the Curzon Phoenix, which opened in 1987. The amount of information varies, but includes changes of name and usually a photograph and/or a poster. There is an index to cinemas and a list of references and further reading. There is also a useful location map which helps readers see where the main clusters of cinemas are or have been located. Altogether 51 cinemas are described. In recent years a number of surveys of cinemas in various parts of the country have been issued: this one, as usual with Camden's publications, is well produced and is good value.

Maxted, I, compiler. *In pursuit of Devon's history: a guide for local historians in Devon. Devon Books, 1997. 120pp. £7.95. ISBN 086114 917 3.*

This is a wide-ranging guide for local historians in Devon. As the compiler notes, as Local Studies Librarian for Devon he has for some years been compiling leaflet guides on local studies resources in libraries in the county and felt that it was time to expand and improve these: this volume is the result. Clearly the result of much thought, it has become a cooperative venture, though the work clearly owes much to Ian Maxted's own expertise. The intention is to guide historians in where to look and what to look for in the millions of records that exist in libraries, archives and record offices both inside Devon and further afield. To this end the book starts with a brief summary of such useful sources of information as libraries, bookshops and courses, and this leads on to a section on 'Resource Providers', which includes addresses of libraries. The main section is, however, that on 'Historical Sources' which as well as dealing with the usual printed, archival and visual sources also reminds users of the importance of national records such as Hansard: this section takes up the major part of the volume. There is then a section on sources for particular topics such as the history of buildings and family and population history. Section 5 deals briefly with such techniques as indexing and the use of computers, while Section 6 covers the work of local history societies, and includes guidance on setting one up. The final chapter gives sound advice on writing local history, and forms of publication. This work is a guide to sources for historians, not a bibliography, but there are copious references to sources of further information. It has been prepared in conjunction with the Devon History Society and is an essential aid for anyone researching the history of Devon. It is well produced on good paper with a substantial card cover and is excellent value - the kind of publication which many other libraries might consider for their area.

Local History Mini - Guides to sources. Nos 1 - 6. West Sussex County Council, 1994-7. £1.00 each.

The first six in what is intended to be a continuing series, these are jointly prepared by West Sussex County Library Service and West Sussex Record Office. The subjects are wide-ranging in scope - these six titles include three on towns (Bognor Regis, Crawley and East Grinstead), Railways, Family history and West Sussex at War, 1939-45. Intended for the general public most of them present their section headings in the form of questions. Each gives a useful list of sources on the topic. These attractively produced leaflets, eight or twelve pages in length, should appeal to enquirers and are a good example of increasing cooperation for the benefit of users. With a different aim from the Devon volume reviewed above, they are a no less valid approach to reader service.

Evans, E. J and Crosby. A.G. Tithes: Maps, Apportionments and the 1936 Act: a guide for local historians. 3rd rev ed, British Association for Local History, 1997. 70pp. £8.00 (BALH members £5.50). ISBN 0 85033 741 0.

This is a much enlarged edition of a standard work. Tithes were a contentious subject in rural society over many years until in 1836, with the Tithe Redemption Act, tithes were converted into rent charge payments based on the prevailing price of grain. The Act, therefore, was of major importance and this work attempts to provide a straightforward explanation of the Act and its effects. It is clearly written with the layman in mind. The first part of the book, in fact, - the historical introduction to the pre - 1836 period, the section on the provisions of the act and on how it worked in practice, and the chapter on tithe maps as source materials - are repeated from the previous edition. The major change is the addition of a long chapter (occupying nearly half the book, in fact) on the practical value to local historians of tithe maps and apportionments. This includes the practical considerations of looking at and comparing maps and their accompanying documents, and examples of different types of studies in which they can be used. Topics covered include field names and field patterns, land use information and land ownership and occupancy. There is also a short new appendix on tithe barns. The work as a whole is in a different format and is more clearly laid out and easier to read, with some additional illustrations. With its new chapter it is an even more useful work for the many local historians who need to use tithe maps and schedules - and to librarians who may need to advise them.

Cornish, GP. Copyright: interpreting the law for libraries, archives and information services. 2 ed, LAPL, 1997. 189pp. £19.95 (20% discount for LA Personal members). ISBN 1 85604 168 9.

With local studies librarians becoming increasingly active in the fields of publication, oral history and photographs, as well as acquiring so much current material, it is essential to keep up to date with current legislation. This new edition thoroughly updates the previous one in regard to 'traditional' formats and

also adds a section on databases and electronic material. The section on licensing schemes has been much enlarged to take into account recent developments, and the 'extracts from legislation' appendix now includes the 1996 copyright regulations (SI 96/2967). As in the previous edition the author sets out to explain the somewhat complex legal situation in quick and easy question-and-answer form. The scale of the revision is shown in the increase in questions from 418 to 586, and often the language has been made clearer. The book is intended to give reasonable guidance on what is likely to be an acceptable course of action when faced with a reader's immediate needs: while a good deal of it will not be directly relevant to local studies collections, much of it undoubtedly is, and it therefore will be a useful deskbook for quick reference.

Library Association. Local Studies Group, London and Home Counties Branch. Newsletter, 1996- 7.

The latest issue of the Branch's annual publication. It includes Penny Ward's paper on the history of local history monograph writing in Britain, originally delivered at a conference of Hungarian local history librarians, and the Branch's comments on the Smethurst Review. With news items and a report on a Branch study day, this simply produced bulletin serves to keep its members in touch with the Branch and LSG.

Ansell, R and Barnes, M. Around Yeovil. Chalford, 1995. 128pp. £9.99. ISBN 0 7524 0 178 5. [Archive Photographs Series].

This is a well-produced, and to judge by the extended captions to the photographs, a well-researched volume: the authors are respectively Reference Librarian and Museum Curator at Yeovil. It covers communities within a ten mile radius of the town. There are about two hundred photographs in all which, together with the full captions, give an interesting glimpse of these communities' past. This volume is one of a series which now numbers well over 100 volumes.

The Bonsall Village Map. Bonsall Map Project 1997. Folded map (full sheet size 99x59 cm). £3.50 + £0.50 p&p from Map Sales, 7 Ember Lane, Bonsall, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 2AF. Also available in a poster version at £4.50 + £1.00 p&p. ISBN 0 907758 95 9.

A beautifully produced coloured pictorial map giving lots of historical information. The back of the sheet carries text and illustration on specific topics such as geology and mining, the manor of Bonsall, natural history, architecture and building and business. There is also a brief description of the project and a directory of current businesses and local facilities and organisations. Overall, a great deal of information is provided in an interesting and unusual way. The project was created and researched by the villagers, who also raised enough funds to distribute a copy free to each of its 500 households.

Norman, S. *Copyright in the electronic environment*. *Audiovisual Librarian*, 23(4), November 1997, pp 254-8.

A discussion of problems created by the new EU Directive on Databases in the form of a document which highlights the issues raised by the implementation of this directive, in particular the need for exceptions to the copyright and the new database rights. This article is well worth reading.

Sitzia, L. *QueenSpark Books - publishing life histories for the local community*. *Local Historian*, 27(4), November 1997 pp 218-24.

Description of a volunteer-run, non-profitmaking community publishing venture set up to publish manuscripts by local people in Brighton. Most are the life stories of ordinary people, either written or collected by interview, while wider oral history projects, such as one with the Brighton fishing community before it completely disappears, have also been undertaken. Prices are kept low (for the main series £1.50 for up to 64 pages). The tapes and transcripts from the fishing community project are stored in the Brighton Fishing Museum, Brighton Reference Library and in the local history collection in Brighton Museum, while the published works obviously add to the knowledge we have about the day to day life of ordinary people in the community - the type of information which cannot be obtained via commercial publishers for economic reasons.

Chandler, J *Venerable Compendium needs Help*. *Local History News*, 44, Autumn 1997, pp 4-5.

The author argues that it is essential to assure the future of the Victoria County History. He deals with present financial problems and some current initiatives. It is now possible, in some circumstances, to apply for Heritage Lottery grants, but it will be necessary to persuade local authorities to make matching commitments over a period of time. This is something which historians (and librarians) can attempt.

NOTES AND NEWS

The revised *Guidelines* for local studies libraries came before the LA Public Libraries Committee in July. After discussion they were referred back to the Working Party for revision. The Working Party is reconvening and we hope for a swift conclusion, with publication in 1998.

Your editor, Ian Jamieson, has been awarded a Certificate of Merit by the Library Association, for services to local studies librarianship and to the Group. The presentation was made at the LA AGM and Members Day at the British Library in October by LA President Joe Hendry. Only a small number of these Certificates are awarded so this reflects well on the activities of the Group itself.

The British Library Humanities reading room opened at St. Pancras on November 24th. The successor to the Round Reading Room in Bloomsbury, this room offers access to the general Humanities collection, the library and information science collection and the library of the National Sound Archive. There are approximately 500 reader seats and the BL expects the majority of material to be delivered within 30 minutes of the order. To obtain access to this material a Readers Pass is needed. Members of the LA are entitled to one on production of proof of membership: two colour passport size photographs are also required. For further details on obtaining a Pass please contact the Reader Admissions Office, The British Library, 96 Euston Road, London NW 1 2DB.

Tameside Local Studies Library has recently produced a revised edition of the *Tameside Bibliography*, last issued in 1992. It lists books and articles relating to the history of the towns in Tameside, and is arranged under subject headings. The new edition both updates entries from the previous edition and adds new subject areas such as The Blanketeers and the World Wars. While this revised edition was originally intended only to be used for consultation at all Tameside libraries, public demand has meant that copies have now been made available for sale. The price is £4.50: for copies or further details contact Tameside Local Studies Library, Trinity Street, Stalybridge SK1 2 BN.

Tameside Libraries have also recently gone on to the Internet. The information available includes details of the main collections and services available to users (the *Bibliography* is not at present available in this form). Contact: <http://dspace.dial.pipex.com/town/street/xx81>.

The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) is the official place of record for all public records in the Province and holds millions of records open to the public. Information about PRONI has been available on the Internet since 1995. Its website has recently been greatly expanded to include descriptions of many of its collections and all its reader services leaflets, so that genealogical researchers, academics and local historians can now browse a wide range of material about PRONI and its archives at home or at their place of study. While it is not a substitute for visiting the archives, the website is helpful, particularly to those travelling a long distance, in planning a visit and making it more effective. The address is <http://proni.nics.gov.uk/index.htm>

In order to improve its service PRONI is also proposing to set up Outreach centres, initially in Ireland, where researchers will be able to access PRONI's home page on the Internet; view its interactive video; see hard copies of the Deputy Keepers Annual Reports; see guides to particular collections and access the Ulster American Folk Park Emigration Database. For further details contact PRONI, 66 Balmoral Avenue, Belfast BT9 6NY.

The LA's Professional Development Department has issued its 1998 programme of workshops. While one would not expect dedicated local studies courses in this list, a number of them, including perhaps those on the Internet and on promotion and fund-raising - there is one on producing a newsletter and one on sponsorship - may be of interest to LSG members. For further information or a copy of the Training Directory contact the Professional Development Department at LA Headquarters.

The Local History Panel of the Library and Information Services Council (Northern Ireland) has recently issued a set of *Guidelines for indexing newspapers*. They are an attempt to set out both a strategy for and a method of newspaper indexing, drawing on existing experience. The pamphlet covers mainly the fundamental decisions which need to be made, including the question of who is going to use the index, the extent of indexing, physical form (e.g. manual or computerised) and whether it should be published and in what form. The need for an editor to take responsibility is also addressed, and the practical decisions on scope of index, choice of terms and structure of entries are discussed. A series of examples of indexes is given. This 16 page booklet is being distributed to local history societies and other agencies as well as to libraries.

After the success of UmbrellA 4 there WILL be an UmbrellA 5! At a recent meeting of the planning subcommittee it was agreed to continue with the series in 1999. However, it was decided to change the arrangements slightly, so that next time it will take place from Thursday to Saturday, leaving delegates at least part of their weekend free. LSG will be there, along with most other LA Groups, and we hope that you will be too. It will be quite a while before details are published, but do make a note somewhere in your diary and start thinking about asking for study leave. The dates are **Thursday 1st to Saturday 3rd July 1999.**

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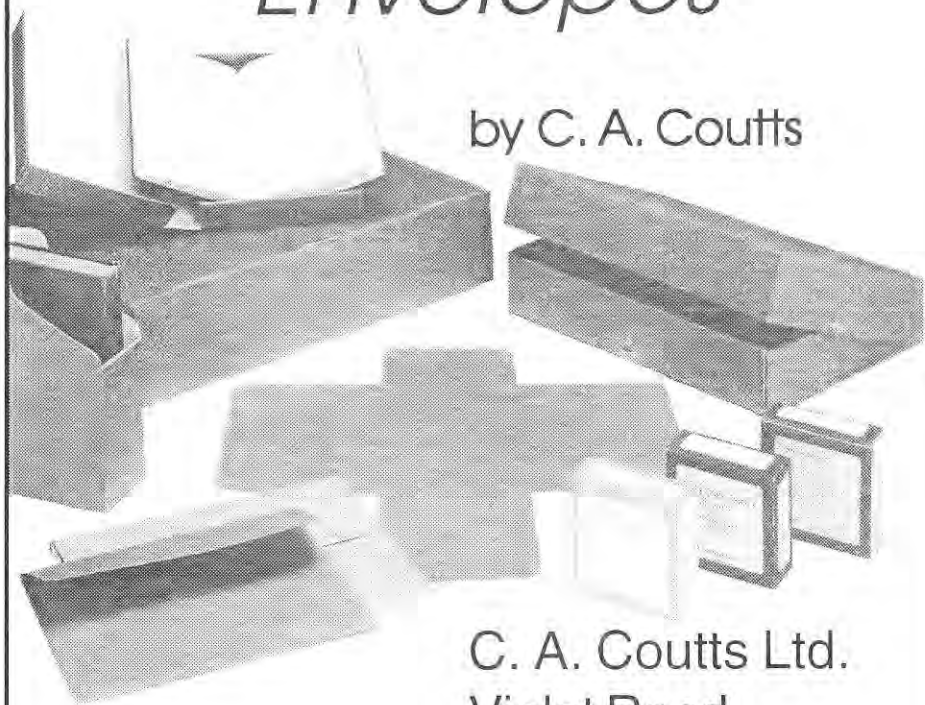
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