

# *The Local Studies Librarian*



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CONTENTS:

Editorial	1
The Social Impact of Local Studies services	2
The Dorothy McCulla Memorial Award	6
Local History Publishing at Newcastle Libraries & Information Service	7
Library publishing on a shoestring	10
Ethnic Minority Archives: report on the National Conference	13
Help Wanted	14
Vacancies and the Prospective Candidate	15
The Library Association Local Studies Group Annual Report	18
Round the Branches	20
Alan Ball Local History Awards 1999	21
Have You Seen...?	21
Notes and News	23
Local Studies Group Committee 1999-2000	26

## EDITORIAL

Due to unforeseen circumstances this journal is being issued somewhat later than intended. However, this does give us a chance to comment on UmbrellA 5, which has just taken place. As a whole it was very well organised and early feedback suggests that it was one of the best so far, with excellent speakers all round and lively social events including a choice of evening visits to a steam railway, the theatre or Wigan Pier, or a formal dinner. There was also a very successful disco and a quiz night - and this after four sessions of speakers each day! From LSG's point of view, however, we were somewhat disappointed at the numbers attending our sessions. The papers themselves were excellent, and drew praise from non-LSG members who came along, but why so few of our own? Is it lack of interest, inability to come because of staff shortages, or that Training Officers do not see your application as a priority? It takes a good deal of effort to organise a programme, so we feel that it is necessary to carry out an evaluation. This is why a brief questionnaire is included with this issue, so that the Committee can find out your views. Please spend a few minutes completing and returning it. It really will help! There is likely to be an UmbrellA 6 in two years time, so, if LSG participates as in the past, we can take account of your comments.

Meanwhile, LSG continues to flourish. The new Midlands and Anglia Branch has got off the ground with a successful and well attended day school in Nottingham, while the London and Home Counties Branch reports increased attendance at meetings. We know, however, that there are sometimes problems in finding time to attend these meetings, though where they cover new developments - day schools on digitisation for instance seem to have attracted excellent support - this does not seem to be so much of a problem. The Group and Branch committees are anxious to be of service to members by trying to make sure that they provide for your professional needs in serving the public, but they need feedback. Hence the questionnaire and this request for you to consider what you would find useful from the Group, and to pass this on to either your branch representative or to LSG secretary Patrick Baird.

The Chairman and Committee are enthusiastic about promoting the Group and its activities, and information is now available on our web page, with the intention of expanding it in the future. Take a look at what it includes and then let us know what else you think might be included which would be useful to you. The address is <http://www.la-hq.org.uk/lsg.htm>

## THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF LOCAL STUDIES SERVICES

Bob Usherwood

A recent piece of research, undertaken by the Department of Information Studies at the University of Sheffield, used a social audit technique to evaluate the social impact of library services in Newcastle and Somerset. The work provided some positive data regarding:

1. The social role of the public library
2. The sense of ownership that communities express for their library service
3. The educational role of the library
4. The economic impact of the library
5. Its impact on reading and literacy
6. The part played by the library in developing community identity and confidence
7. Equity in service delivery

The final report covers each of these areas in some detail, but suffice it to say that, on the basis of the data, it is reasonable to claim that public libraries help individuals and communities 'get started' and 'keep going' on a wide range of activities.<sup>1</sup> In addition, sometimes with the help of other agencies, libraries help advance and maintain individual and community development. The recognised and established functions of the public library in terms of education, information, culture, and leisure, remain important. The data also demonstrate that library use improves the life chances of individuals, in terms of education and job opportunities, and that the provision of public library services helps promote social cohesion and community confidence.

It will not come as a surprise to readers of this journal that local studies services play a significant part in all of this. Data were obtained through focus group discussions with local history groups in both authorities, and via interviews with library staff and local politicians. In addition a written response was provided by a local history society in Somerset.

### Developing social skills and confidence

The research demonstrates that local studies services help individuals develop new skills through supporting an interest in local history. Using the local studies library helped develop people's confidence. One staff member observed: *"a lot of people who aren't educated, who would never dream of doing ... academic research, and have taught themselves. I can think of a lot of regular customers, who you couldn't even imagine using the library in a regular way, who have not only found their way round Local Studies, but then found their way to the Archives Service and, you know, ended up doing research that's improved information about a particular aspect of Newcastle, or whatever"*, [Library staff, Newcastle]. She observed not just an increase in skills, but also increased confidence.

The public library was perceived as more welcoming than other services in the local history domain. Library staff stated that, *"A lot of the regular customers will say 'it's so much nicer here than the atmosphere at the Archives.' I think there's this feeling that certainly, public libraries are more approachable than [places] where you need to be a bit more academic"* [Library staff, Newcastle].



The library was perceived as a more accessible resource for those still building up their confidence for approaching 'official' institutions. It was also felt that staff working in the local studies field helped to develop networks of interested people: *"Quite a few people who are doing local studies work meet here and quite a few friendships have been formed that way. I've linked people who are doing research into [local] history... It's quite a good sort of meeting place of interest ... people who would otherwise never meet... There's a community of personal interest."* [Library staff Somerset].

The key part played by the local studies librarian in supporting such networks was re-emphasised by users. One respondent felt that, *"it helps to have librarians who know about the area really well. Like [local librarian]: he knows who's interested in what, and he puts you in touch with people who share an interest in the same places, so there's a lot of information that gets passed around that way,"* [Focus group, Somerset]. Other members of the group gave individual examples of such networking within and outside the local area. Another member said *"in a way, we use [the librarian] as the focus for any research because he'll know anyone else who can help any enquiry, and he'll pass on that enquiry."* Local studies groups provided further evidence of the library's role in sustaining social connections. For example one group, at the local librarian's suggestion, *"have a local historian in residence ... once a month in the lobby of the library,... and, for two years solid they've been doing that, and it's actually brought them a few new members"*. [Library staff, Somerset]. In Newcastle library staff acted as secretaries of local history societies.

It was noticeable that local history societies were often made up of a mixture of local people and incomers. This reflects Matarasso's view, that involvement with such projects is important in finding 'a way into community life.'<sup>2</sup> As one respondent said: *"People just like to understand where they are because we get a lot of new people moving into the village who tell me 'I've just been to Yeovil Library, to see if there's anything about my house or my village.'" [Focus group, Somerset].* Local history represented a 'common interest' and was: *"a way that the locals and the incomers can meet, especially where there is enough interest to form a local history society. And if there's a library with the resources to support that society, because obviously a society setting up from scratch isn't going to have a library of any worth... That would be a nucleus and a place for them to meet"*. [Library staff, Somerset]

An interest in local history was often mentioned as something which helped people dealing with life changes, such as retirement and bereavement. One respondent said *"I retired in 1983, and because I didn't have anything to do after working all my life, I came down to the library and found out what was going on ... When I came here there was a lot of women who used to do the same sort of thing as I'm doing now, which is writing the cards on the back of the pictures saying where it is and who, if there's any people on it, who they are."* [Focus group, Newcastle]. Coping with bereavement was also mentioned in the context of local studies services. A member of staff described the value of the service to *"People who've perhaps been bereaved recently and have got a lot of time on their hands. One particular gentleman... his partner died and he said the library really has filled a gap for him because he didn't really have that many other interests... It's opened a new world to him. It's filled a big void... and there are other examples like that."* [Library staff, Somerset]

## Community identity

The investigation of local studies services also yielded data relevant to the theme of local image and identity. Some commentators, as mentioned by Black and Muddiman, have been critical of the 'heritage turn' of some public library services<sup>3</sup> but data from the social audit study suggest that the impact of local studies services is, as Hall says, far 'more than just nostalgia.' There is *"an interest now in ... conservation, and a regeneration within that conservation... and finding out what [cities] were used for before, and seeing if they can be brought back to that use or whatever"*. [Elected member, Newcastle] The public library is relevant to these kinds of processes because *"It's the service which has primarily held information about its historical documents and so on. I think having libraries has provided people with a view of what things were like before, and how they operated before..."* [Elected member, Newcastle]

Focus group respondents reiterated the sense of historic significance referred to by this local politician. They argued that because Newcastle was an historically important place, having this sense 'of what things were like before' was especially significant. One respondent felt that: *"People are extremely interested in their roots and in their area and in their history. People are interested in just the industries of the area... People's lives have been woven in and out of these industries, families have risen and fallen by them..."* [Focus group, Newcastle]. These links with the past were important because of the massive post-war reconstruction of the area. A local history groups' photographic collection, housed at Benwell Library, represented a history of an area, documented by local people with the support of the library service. It was highly valued because, *"a lot of people, like my own family, they can come in and they can have a look and see the street where I was born which is [knocked] down now."* [Focus group, Newcastle]

Similarly positive views were found from the community focus groups recruited by Harris for his study. He concluded that:- "what was being talked about was more than just 'local history' - community identity might be a better term" and suggested that the library might be the key contributor to initiatives in this area. "Such initiatives can add greatly to the sense of coherence and integration of a community."<sup>5</sup>

Commentators on local studies have noted that people have an inherent interest in local history, particularly, as Hall remarks, "when the pace of change is so fast that people cannot help but notice their past disappearing before their eyes."<sup>4</sup> This was particularly the case in Newcastle, following the decline in traditional industries. As one respondent said: - *"The traditional employment and the pride in that, you know, has been lost... and you talk to people who live here, and they've all got families that have worked in pits or shipyards, or whatever. So the books about the river, and the photographs about the ships and the history of shipbuilding...I think its that local identity that's really important. I don't know about other parts of the country, but it's really important to people here."* [Library staff, Newcastle]

## Economic impact

The investigation also indicated ways in which the library service brought indirect benefits to the local economy. One member of local studies staff said that:- *"A lot of people use Local Studies as a resource. We've always had good relations with colleagues at the art gallery and the museum and, again, a lot of our photographs, a lot of information*

*- when they've had exhibitions they've used our collection". [Library staff, Newcastle] In Newcastle the local studies library had contributed to the leisure industry though providing material not available elsewhere. "Beamish Museum did some research... when they were developing another area of their museum, and the director wrote a letter saying ... [the engravings used] were absolutely of world-wide significance as far as the development of the railways were concerned "* [Library staff, Newcastle]

There were also examples of local businesses and organisations using local studies departments. *"Businesses will use the library. There's a firm of local architects, I think they are, who research using the old maps. So periodically, they'll come in and if they want the history of the site to redevelop it,... they look at old maps and often photographs as well. The redevelopment of Benwell ... the architects came in here and had a look at our photographic collection, I think so they could get a feel for what it used to be like- not to reproduce it, but something in keeping with people's memories of that area. The big Lottery bid for the Baltic Flour Mill on the Gateshead side of the river,... used our photographs."* [Library staff, Newcastle]

In Somerset, there was a conscious attempt to address the issue of local access: in an article about their solution to the problem, David Bromwich comments: "Local studies packs for individual parishes, or whatever else we may choose to call them, are designed to devolve information to the level of the smallest branch libraries, as close as possible to the places they describe and to people who live there and want to study them."<sup>6</sup> In delivering a service that reached the smallest and most isolated communities Somerset's library service was, in relation to geography, addressing the issue of equity in local studies service provision.

### **Evaluating services**

The social audit approach attempts to evaluate library services in a new way. It argues that qualitative data, properly gathered, are valid evidence. Many of the conclusions are based on qualitative, if you like anecdotal, evidence. These are real world data that have been obtained in a rigorous way. We make no apology for our approach, and if there is one message that we want readers to take away it is that qualitative data, properly gathered, are valid evidence and should be treated as such by politicians and professionals alike.

The use of participants' accounts to explain causes and consequences of actions has a long history in the social sciences. Today it is recognized that we need more sophisticated approaches to assessing the value of public libraries than simply counting book issues or library visits. The social audit technique reveals individual and community experiences in using the library service. Such statements of experience put flesh on the dry bones of statistical measures. Researchers in the social sciences often talk of the importance of looking at data and telling a story. The people of Newcastle and Somerset provided many stories. Just a few have been reported in this brief article but many more can be found in the final report.

Using this approach has enabled library managers to identify some of the matches, mismatches and differences between the social objectives of local authorities, and the intermediate and final outcomes of the library services they provide. Armed with this information, they can then take appropriate action to maximise the matches



and minimise the mismatches. Such managerial issues are discussed in the final report. There is no space to elaborate here, but in short, the social audit is a practical tool that can help local studies, or any other librarians, in their pursuit of social objectives.

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*Bob Usherwood is Professor of Librarianship at The University of Sheffield*

## THE DOROTHY McCULLA MEMORIAL AWARD

The Dorothy McCulla Memorial Award for 1999 has been won by Eileen Hume, Local Studies and Archives Librarian, Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council. The judges used the criteria of good overall service provision, excellent promotional activities, and innovation, and Eileen, along with the other nominees, met all of these: the final decision was a difficult one for the judges, who were very pleased with the high standard of those nominated. Eileen's nominator drew attention in particular to her use of the new technology in developing Knowsley's local history website so that it provides access to anyone wishing to find out about the Borough's history and also brings a dispersed resource together: she did the bulk of the research leading to its development. The website project was one of the 30 awards made by the Public Libraries Challenge Fund. Her nominator also drew attention to a series of local history workshops she is piloting in local schools and her work in partnership with Prescott Museum in the preparation of a major exhibition to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Knowsley Borough Council, her work on a digitisation project to construct an archive of the photographic collections of the Library service and the Museum, and the fact that her expertise has led to invitations to speak at various conferences.

## LOCAL HISTORY PUBLISHING AT NEWCASTLE LIBRARIES & INFORMATION SERVICE

Anna Flowers

Newcastle Libraries and Information Service have been publishing books for nearly fifteen years, and at present around eighty titles are in print. We produce about seven new titles a year including one or two major titles (longer or more complex books). The programme has been very successful, and aims to pay for itself and to make a profit to be ploughed back into future publications. We are a tiny outfit in comparison to 'real' publishers but we do make a reasonable sum from our turnover of around £70,000 a year because we operate from within the library service with all its facilities. The publications programme is run by one full-time manager and one indispensable half-time assistant. A Publications Panel meets once a month to discuss and select future titles, and to discuss any problems.

Why do we bother with a publications programme? Apart from the lure of making (we hope) vast sums of money, readers of *The Local Studies Librarian* will know that we wish to make Newcastle Libraries' local collection and large photographic archive more accessible to the public. We encourage local people to look at their environment with an informed eye. Over the last decade there has been an upswing in interest in genealogy and a corresponding demand for background knowledge about a city that has changed rapidly. We try also to reveal lesser-known aspects of local history such as children's experiences, literary connections, or forgotten industries. The downside of this popularity is that there are more local history books to compete with in the shops so each new publication must be well-produced and attractive.

Our first publication in 1984 was a booklet of 22 photographs produced to complement a City Guides' Tour concerning the transformation of the city since the 1960s. Immediately popular, the booklet had to be quickly reprinted. Other publications followed, including the very successful 'Bygone' series covering Newcastle's suburbs, thirty of which are in print to date, with several in their third editions. It was fortunate that the Local Studies Section staff and the City Guides were keen to turn their knowledge into prose and that the Libraries Promotion and Arts Officer was an imaginative designer with a graphics background. We also had a useful outlet in the City Library where the City and Tourist Information Service had become established as a point of sale. As the publications programme expanded books were also sold through local shops (with the usual trade discount of one third) but naturally the time involved to produce and distribute publications increased too. We were also approached by local authors who saw us as a way of getting into print, so a strict selection policy had to be introduced.

In 1987 as an ambitious leap of faith a full-colour, large format, book of photographs of Newcastle was published with a text by the Local Studies Librarian. *Newcastle Now* cost £38,000 to print in a run of 12,500. An expensive book at £9.95, it was eventually remaindered and finally sold out in 1994 at £1. It did cover all its costs and taught us valuable lessons. One of these was to section sew books that would need a spine. Another was never to store books in basements at risk of flooding! We learned that an attractive cover is vital, and that it is very hard work to keep up contacts with shops and ensure they are kept stocked.

At that time the books were put together by local printers with layout by the Promotion and Arts Officer. It was not until 1990 that a computer was brought into the department and the business of in-house design and desk-top publishing was embarked upon. Also in 1990 a part-time Publications Assistant (myself) and a Publications Marketing Assistant were employed. The salaries for these posts were to come out of profits from the publishing programme. By 1995, because of changes in the way the Promotion and Arts Section was run and staff movement, my part-time job became a full-time one. Now we do all design and typesetting in-house, sending our books on disk to the printers. We also handle marketing ourselves, trudging round or telephoning local shops, and producing a catalogue, with a growing number of customers that we regularly supply. We have developed a good relationship with the local media who are very supportive with publicity-if a good story can be made. We try to think of book launches with a visual angle-our very popular children's book *Tinseltoon* was launched with a golden fairy and a fur-clad human cat enacting scenes from the story in the city centre!

The Publications Panel has fairly strict criteria for the acceptance of a book for publication. It must be of local interest, be well written, be impeccably researched - and we will call upon experts to verify research - and be of enough general interest to be saleable. A time-scale is then devised, of necessity flexible, taking into account the optimum time of year for production, any special events or niche marketing opportunities to tie publication to, and so on. Some books will take longer to produce than others, and a rolling programme operates with some books only taking a few weeks, others up to two years. The author (hopefully) agrees to our decisions and signs a contract. He or she will receive either a fee, or royalties based on 7½ percent of the retail price on sales (they don't get rich, though sums can be quite acceptable).

When the paperwork is complete the prospective book becomes part of the publications programme. Then the hard work begins! Each title is designed individually but since 1995 we have attempted to create a recognisable and distinctive house style which engenders confidence in the product. We have several formats to suit different books. We have found that a horizontal format suits books which rely for their impact upon archival photographs. Although this can sometimes be limiting and can create problems for booksellers it does seem popular with the public who like 'bites' of information such as a detailed captioned illustration. Recently, to good effect, we have introduced an upright format, for example the highly successful *Diary of a Doctor: Surgeon's Assistant in Newcastle* (1998) which received very favourable reviews including one in the Times Literary Supplement.

Much to our surprise we have developed a very strong maritime history series, largely the work of two dedicated authors, which has sold very well, and shows the potential of niche publishing, though at the present time we have no plans to publish books for trainspotters!

In order to spread costs we have in recent years embarked on joint publication which seems to offer the advantage of guaranteed sales and allows us to diversify. For example *Basil Bunting, a Northern Life* which received funding from the Basil Bunting Poetry Centre at Durham University has found its way around the world to lovers of Bunting's poetry, picking up an Alan Ball award on its way. Another

advantage of this approach is that it enables us to be flexible in deciding a suitable print run. The larger the initial print run, the lower the unit cost, but if the books do not sell this is of little consolation. We tend to opt for runs of not less than 1000 and preferably 1500 or more. We have had to reprint some books quite quickly which is annoying: *Hidden Newcastle*, for instance, sold its first run of 1500 copies in three weeks, its second run of 1000 in another year, and is now into its third reprint. If we are sharing the printing costs with another organisation then a bigger print run is feasible. Some titles can be safely printed in larger quantities. *Tinseltoon* sold 3,500 copies in six weeks before Christmas last year and had to be reprinted immediately. If only we had printed 5000 to start with! It is a very unpredictable business.

We very rarely print a full-colour book. It is usually too expensive and because we use archival photographs it is not appropriate. A full-colour cover on the other hand does much for the appeal of a book. Where possible we will find an attractive colour illustration for the cover and often opt for a gloss laminate which has proved to be more durable.

Local printers are highly competitive and are keen to get our business. Reps can be very helpful, but you do need to know what you want them to do and insist that you get what you want. As we have become an established publisher we find that printers are much more supportive and offer advice and encouragement. It is very satisfying to see a product go into the market place and be a success and this reflects upon the printers who use examples of our books to get further business.

Our first publication of this year was *A Soldiers Life, the Story of Newcastle Barracks*, launched in May with TV coverage. This will be followed by *Bygone Jesmond Dene*, the latest in the long-running series. September sees the publication of a book that we hope will compete nationally. Our *Catherine Cookson Companion*, by best selling author Cliff Goodwin, moves us into mainstream publishing and has involved acquiring a national distributor. We fervently hope it will prove a great success as an inordinate amount of time and large printing costs will have been spent on it. The autumn also sees the production of another children's book, *Graingertoon*; a substantial book of essays on Newcastle's 20th century; and the intriguingly titled *A Fine and Private Place* which looks at the history and inhabitants of Newcastle's Jesmond Old Cemetery (not a macabre book in any way). Then we look forward to the next century.

Our new catalogue with full details of forthcoming books has just been issued.

*Anna Flowers is Publications Officer, Newcastle Libraries and Information Service.*

## **LIBRARY PUBLISHING ON A SHOESTRING**

*Philip M Adams*

What follows is a cautionary tale about trying to get a local history book published.<sup>1</sup>

### **The beginnings: February 1996**

In 1997 St. John's Library in Worcester would be celebrating the tenth anniversary of its move to the present premises. A festival was in the early planning stages and I thought it would be interesting to try to collect some of our borrowers' memories of the community. At the time I had no firm objective in mind - just a "wait and see" outlook. Some posters were designed requesting contributions and these were put up in the library and in local shops.

By the end of February I had received about fifteen items, ranging from a couple of paragraphs to ten A4 size pages, and word of the project was beginning to spread. People began calling in to see me, or telephoning to discuss what exactly I was doing. By now it had become apparent that I would gain more information by interviewing people and recording the information than from the written word. This, however, brought in the question of costs related to materials.

No official money was available, but fortunately I had recourse to the Coffee Pot Club - a 'Friends of St. John's Library' - which I had initiated when the library moved. This enabled me to pop down to the local Curry's Superstore and purchase a £20 tape recorder and ten C90 cassettes. It certainly wasn't state of the art equipment but beggars can't be choosers. And so on March 25th 1996 I conducted my first two interviews.

### **Interviewing and transcription**

The interviews began to pick up by the middle of May. As I spoke to more and more people they in turn recommended and referred me to others who I would otherwise never have met. Slowly but surely I was delving into the social and economic life of St. John's, going back to the turn of the century. Childhood, schooldays, market gardens, nurseries, farms, the gloving industry, shops, the orphanage, the local cinema, pubs and so forth. It was fascinating, and it was also priceless material.

By now I had decided to produce a book (just like that!!), and the County Libraries Department were very keen to publish it. The tapes themselves would be used to this end and were never intended for public use. I made this plain to the people I interviewed, and because of this I believe that I managed to elicit far more information. There was no form filling or anything like that, just a promise that no-one else would hear the tape, and gaining the person's permission to use their memories in the book. Quite often people would be very open once they had relaxed but there was always my assurance that I would never use anything that could cause any upset or embarrassment. It was all a matter of establishing trust - some sort of bond.

My final interview was on June 2nd. The bulk of them had been done by Christmas 1996 but a few people were still coming forward and I didn't want to turn them away. However, I knew that I would have to stop eventually.

In January I had begun to transcribe the tapes. Permission had been granted for me



to have the typing done by the secretary at Worcester City Library, and her word-processing skills proved invaluable. I had to write up each transcript properly, do a preliminary edit and then send it down for typing. Each one had to be proof-read - at which stage I would invariably make any necessary changes. The decision on whether to use letters or numerals for numbers drove me to distraction.

Another local author offered to help me transcribe some tapes and I gave her one interview to do, but in the end it didn't really help much. She was listening to it 'cold,' so to speak, and while her transcription was fine in itself it didn't really capture the flavour of the person speaking. Being there myself made all the difference.

I listened to the majority of the tapes in March, scribbling busily as I did so; and April was taken up with 'writing' them out. In total I had interviewed just over 200 people, which meant 145 hours of memories to listen to and transcribe.

### **Getting published**

By April I had approached a local publishing firm to see if they would be interested in the book. They had already produced a number of books on Worcester and were attracted to this project. It was apparent by now that the proposed book would be well over 400 pages, and they quoted me a figure in the region of £9,000. The main drawback - at this stage - was that the manuscript would have to be with them by the end of July.

As one can imagine, the preparation of the manuscript by the secretary was obviously secondary to the daily round of library administration. Holidays and illness played their parts also and it became apparent that a July deadline could not be met. By now though the project had been dealt a crushing blow. Due to financial cutbacks the Libraries Department would not be able to publish the book. I found this very hard to take at the time even though I was already somewhat dubious given the amount of that first quote. The publishing firm did say that if the timescale could have been met they would have considered paying the costs - but that would have meant slimming down the contents and I didn't really want to do this.

With no funding the whole thing seemed to stall. The only positive advantage was that more time was available to fine tune the manuscript and even that came to a halt as August and September passed. I approached other Publishers and printers and their quotes ranged from £7,000 to £10,000. The situation appeared bleak. People kept asking about the book and, while they were very sympathetic when told what had happened, it was still very disappointing. I had wanted the book to be ready by Christmas but this didn't now seem very likely. One printer could achieve it at a cost of £9,000, so working on that I advertised the book at £15. These figures were based on projected sales of 500, and I asked for a deposit of £10, the remainder to be paid on publication. The Coffee Pot Club could just afford to make up the remainder. One problem for interested buyers was that there was nothing to look at - no finished article. By the end of September seventy people had paid their deposit - only 430 to go!

Then I was asked by one of my colleagues if I would like to see the written quote given to her mother (another local author) by a printing firm in London. I said yes - and didn't really take in what it said on first reading. In October I picked up the letter again, re-read it and telephoned the firm immediately. Their written quotation was £2,400 for 500 copies of the book at 256 pages each. The amount also included

cover costs, scanning 80 black and white photographs and two book blocks: and they could have the books ready in three weeks.

At a stroke the book became a reality again. Advance sales had now reached 100 - at £10 each, and the Club could meet the remaining costs, so I gave the company the go-ahead. I also took the precaution of writing to them and confirming that the quote was indeed for 500 copies of 256 pages each: that 256 being the equivalent of 512 sides. I had explained the length of the book during the initial telephone conversation and wanted to be absolutely certain on that point. The same letter also included technical details of the word-processing system used to prepare and store the manuscript.

I received a phone call the next day to say that our system was not compatible with theirs. Eventually, however, the technical details were sorted out. This, though was nothing compared with the next call I received. The person in charge of my book had not realised that it would have so many pages! I had been given the wrong quote - and the importance of my confirming letter became apparent: the printers had assumed that 256 pages meant 128 leaves.

The result of this confusion was that I could not have 500 copies for the quoted price. Instead 250 could be done for that, plus another 50 as goodwill. I asked for a further hundred to be added at the run-on price and things got moving again. Another week had gone by and the end of November was approaching. I needed to decide on a launch date and chose Friday 20th December, to give the firm enough time in case of any more unforeseen problems, and to allow time for publicity.

A fortnight later I rang for a progress report and to ensure that all 400 copies would be ready for collection at the same time. The date for this would be Thursday 19th! It was a nerve-wracking time. I did not feel like trusting any of the delivery services, given my deadline and the festive season, so - courtesy once more of the Coffee Pot Club - I hired a transit van and drove down to London on the Thursday to pick up the consignment myself. To at last be able to hold the finished book in my hands was a marvellous feeling, and well compensated for the strain of the last few months.

### **Success at last!**

The launch night itself exceeded all expectations. The queue was literally round the building by 7.15pm - 'opening time' - and by 8.30 the book was sold out and my wrist sore from signing. The printers had given me a two week window over Christmas to decide on ordering any more copies, with costs being kept down to the run-on rate, instead of reverting back to the full price for the first 100. More orders were taken on the night, and over the fortnight, and I was able to order another 400 copies. I fetched those in the middle of January and by the end of the month they had all been sold. Eventually by Spring 1999 we had sold 1200 copies.

After the launch someone asked me if I would do it all again. I replied that yes, I would, but not just yet! However, interest continued and a year later I was interviewing again and a second volume is in preparation.

*Philip M Adams is Librarian, St. John's Library, Worcester.*

I. Adams, Philip M, *ed and comp.* Memories of St. John's, Worcester, St. John's Library Coffee Pot Club, 1997.

## **ETHNIC MINORITY ARCHIVES: REPORT ON THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

*Marika Sherwood*

The National Conference on Ethnic Minority Archives was held on January 23, 1999 at the University of London, with sponsorship from the Paul Hamlyn Trust, and attracted 120 delegates. It was organised by the Black and Asian Studies Association, which was formed in 1991 to foster research and the dissemination of information on the history of Black peoples in Britain.

The planning of the conference was undertaken by a group of archivists, librarians and researchers. With the aid of the Society of Archivists a questionnaire was circulated to the Society's members, and 112 were completed. From these, as well as from published reports from other bodies, a list of 'issues for discussion' was compiled.

The 'list of issues', the report on the questionnaire on archival holdings related to Black peoples in the UK, and a summary of the pertinent archival reports were circulated to all participants before the conference. The fundamental findings of the questionnaire were that most archives have insufficient staff, that most do not know what is in their holdings related to Black peoples and that very few archives produce a guide or leaflet of their known relevant holdings- almost no public archives have been able to (or have tried to) make a meaningful effort to collect material from local Black organisations/people.

The conference was opened by Diane Abbott, MP, who in her opening remarks said that Britain was still a society which was not prepared to acknowledge the input of Black and Asian people into its history. It is still possible to be born in this country, go to school, and graduate with very little knowledge of this contribution. She thought that this conference was an important stage in helping to make this history available to all.

The morning sessions of the conference were devoted to brief presentations on examples of good practice by representatives from Shropshire Local Studies, the Essex Record Office, NMGM, Bedfordshire Archives and Birmingham City Archives. The George Padmore Institute and the Black Cultural Archives, two private organisations, then outlined their plans for the future; finally a teacher and a researcher spoke on the needs of historians. The afternoon was spent in workshops: six groups discussed the 'issues' related to written archives identified by the planning group, while the seventh focused on audiovisual archives. The workshop groups were mixed, in the sense that each included archivists, historians, researchers, teachers and others interested in archives as we wanted to ensure the sharing of ideas and information.,

The main points which came from the workshops were:

- a) the need to seek the help of genealogists and family/local history societies and other special interest groups who have many members working on parish and other local records;
- b) the need to attempt to have an outline of and an awareness of the history of the Black presence in the UK included in the training of archivists;

- c) the need to investigate the reasons for the paucity of Black archivists and to find ways of attracting Black peoples to the profession;
- d) the need to co-ordinate those working on subject headings/keywords in order to attempt to arrive at an acceptable, if flexible, terminology for archival lists/databases;
- e) the importance of putting the issue of 'ethnic minority' archives on the agenda of the Society of Archivists, the National Council on Archives and the Royal Commission on Historic Manuscripts;
- f) the need for a guide to existing records, perhaps through both electronic and printed media;
- g) the need to investigate how to approach the re-listing of collections, perhaps beginning with those known to be rich in relevant material;
- h) the recognition that the most difficult issue is the collecting of material from Black organisations/peoples. Some issues integral to this are the known distrust between mainstream institutions and many Black peoples; the need for outreach workers; whether original materials be collected, or should owners be trained in preservation with only copies being deposited; where such deposits should be held - locally, regionally or nationally; is there any possibility of a national Black archive?; the need for free access including Sundays; the point that, given the backlog of work in most archives, how could immediate listing of new deposits be ensured?

The Conference decided that a Working Party be set up to deal with these matters, and the first meeting has already been held.

*Marika Sherwood is the Secretary of the Black and Asian Studies Association.*

## **HELP WANTED**

### **Unseen history project**

The National Library for the Blind is delighted to have been awarded £12,000 by the Heritage Lottery Fund. This will enable it to produce around 100 local history books - material that has not been available previously in braille. The books will be short and therefore also suitable for braille learners and will have a regional local history focus, such as the story of a Lancashire cotton mill worker. If anybody has any ideas for suitable material the Library would be most grateful for your suggestions.

Please contact:

Jackie Frith,  
 Stock Manager, National Library for the Blind,  
 Far Cromwell Road, Bredbury, Stockport, SK6 2SG,  
 telephone: 0161 355 2049,  
 e-mail: [jackie.frith@nlbuk.org](mailto:jackie.frith@nlbuk.org)

## **VACANCIES AND THE PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATE:**

### **some personal observations.**

*Morris Garratt*

This paper is based on a study of advertisements from the Library Association's Vacancies Supplement over a three year period (1995-1997) which involved local studies posts. Admittedly over time a few issues were mislaid, but this is not, I think, too significant: for example, of the 24 issues I retained from the 26 issued in 1997, only 11 had relevant advertisements. I included advertisements for joint posts - Local Studies and Archives - but excluded Archives-only posts (with one exception mentioned later). I also excluded one or two institutional advertisements, confining myself to public libraries. There were 32 advertisements, therefore, in my survey (covering 33 posts): of these 32, 13 were from county councils and 19 from metropolitan or borough councils. Geographically they ranged from northern Scotland to the south coast of England; somewhat surprisingly, unless any were in the missing issues, there were no advertisements from Wales or Northern Ireland. Taking a line roughly drawn from Liverpool to Hull, there were seven advertisements north of this line, the remainder being south of it. I give this purely as a statistic, for what it's worth- I make no comment on the relative wealth of authorities in the south against those further north!

An overwhelming number of these advertisements used the term 'local studies' rather than 'local history' in the job title, indicating the widening range of topics studied arising from the influence on libraries of the new curriculum; the term 'local history' in a job title only occurred three times, and two of these were from the same authority. Another post was for a Heritage Officer (job share) which asked for a library, museum or archive qualification; in four cases, the previous association of local studies/ local history within the reference service was still evident. One of these, advertised as 'Senior Librarian, Reference, Information and Local Studies', asked for 'some previous experience of reference and information work', but with no mention of local studies.

Mention of the influence on local studies libraries of the new curriculum, with its emphasis on using or handling original material wherever possible, is seen in the relationship between 'librarians' and 'archivists'. Some jobs seek 'previous experience of local studies and archive work' or 'experience of, and interest in, archive work would be an advantage'. Occasionally, and perhaps surprisingly, one meets statements such as: 'An interest or previous experience in this area of work is desirable to carry out the special responsibilities of the post': surely the word should be 'essential' rather than 'desirable'? Another advertisement asked that the candidates should have an 'interest in Local studies and Archives and enjoy working with the researching public'. Certainly they should enjoy their work, but why highlight 'the researching public': surely that is precisely why people go to the local studies library - to find an answer to their particular problem, however simple or complex it may be. In one or two cases, also, the qualification for posts with this dual responsibility asked for a degree or diploma in archive work or a chartered librarian - one case asked for both qualifications, but they were 'and/or' - so there's some hope!



The size of the local studies department, its use, and any other services other than the basic one of collecting and disseminating information, can sometimes be gauged from an advertisement. One such department had '8000 visitors and a staff of 17', while in another the prospective appointee would 'lead a small dedicated team in collecting, managing and disseminating an active publications programme which needs further development'. Another appointee would be 'working with a team of five people', while a colleague would find himself (or herself, of course!), 'part of a subject team, taking a lead responsibility for Local Studies'. Another department had a 'small team', and dealt with 15,000 enquiries and had 100,000 items; another service included 'a Family History section of regional significance, a world-wide-web site' and had a staff of four. In all the advertisements I studied, this was the only one which mentioned this group of 'the researching public': are there really local studies libraries out there which are *not* used by genealogists? Not surprisingly, experience with computers, and an awareness of information technology, were mentioned in some of the advertisements, but not by any means in all of them. One such advertisement specifically mentioned 'some work computer based ... familiarity with P.Cs ... create and maintain databases'.

I was more than a little surprised to see, in four of the advertisements studied (two from the same authority), variations on the phrase 'a knowledge of the area and its history will be an advantage'. This may not be downright discriminatory, but it is a positive disincentive to a prospective candidate from another part of the country, no matter how well qualified and experienced, and seems to be saying. 'We have a suitable internal candidate'. Equal opportunities?

In general the relationship between the job title and the duties listed were as one would expect, but I was somewhat perturbed by an advertisement for a 'Stock and Local Studies Librarian', a temporary post in charge of seven libraries and one mobile, where the appointee would 'develop and manage adult book stock and other media, and to implement county policy for local studies in a local studies centre and other libraries within the Group'. I would have thought the eight service points were more than enough to be going on with. Again, at first glance the post of 'Library Group Manager (Group 5)' might not attract a second glance from a local studies librarian (apart from the salary offered!), but your second glance would reveal: 'you will be responsible for the management and performance of an important group of services [not specified], including the second busiest library in the borough and the Local Studies and Archives Centre...' - and that wasn't all! One advertisement even said that 'public speaking [was] an advantage'!

Again, the only advertisement I have included in this survey which was for an Archivist only, said that 'Archive Services and access to local studies materials are being developed ... an experienced archivist is required to lead this service development ... and liaise with the existing Information Service and the [ ] Museum's Community History Service'. I can understand the Museum's activities, but where are these local studies materials' - are they part of Information Services, the old-fashioned or traditional reference library including local history - and how are they currently accessed: card catalogue and closed cupboards? The impression I am left with, hopefully an incorrect one, is of an authority (which shall remain nameless) at last admitting that its archive service needs modernising, and is now doing something about it, but the relationship with local studies is somewhat unclear.

Most local studies libraries, even the smaller ones, have a special collection of some kind - perhaps a locally-born author. Here in the north west we have an excellent and comprehensive guide to our local studies libraries and their special collections<sup>1</sup> while each issue of the *Manchester Region History Review* contains an article on one of the area's libraries which highlights its special collections, for which the present writer is the commissioning editor.<sup>2</sup> Given this wealth of such collections in our libraries, I was surprised to find little mention of them in these advertisements. I have not, so far in this paper, mentioned individual libraries by name, as my survey is not a comparative review but rather some general impressions, but to highlight such collections I shall mention two examples. Within Southampton Reference Library there is a post of 'Special Collections Librarian', and the advertisement helpfully gave this detail: 'Its special collections comprise local studies, a maritime collection of national significance and the Pitt collection, a "gentleman's library" of historical significance'. Finally, to Northamptonshire, who advertised for a 'Subject Specialist Librarian (Local Studies)'. When first advertised prospective candidates read: 'The library houses the largest collection of materials in the county including the John Clare collection which is of national significance'. No complaint about that, but when the post was advertised again three months later (there was no mention of its being a re-advertisement: why not?), in addition to fuller information on the post itself, the advertisement highlighted four special collections: manuscripts and the library of the poet, John Clare; drawings and illustrations by Sir Henry Dryden; over 8,500 illustrations of local buildings and locations; over 1,500 portraits of notable local individuals. Further, 'recent developments include the launch of a digital mapping system (GIS) to complement collections of historic maps' and plans for computerisation of the stock. Why wasn't this additional information in the original advertisement, or alternatively, why place the original advertisement if this reappraisal was to be undertaken? Did anyone respond to the original advertisement, I wonder?

Those of you who have changed jobs during the review period might recognise some of the above quotations from individual advertisements. I hope I haven't given offence to, or embarrassed, any individual librarian or library authority in this paper, but I equally hope that advertisements in the future might be more informative. The whole point of a job advertisement is to attract the right candidate, and he/she is surely entitled to be given as much initial information as is practical, to enable them to form a view as to whether a particular job sounds attractive and interesting even before they write off 'for further details from...', or accept the invitation for an informal discussion from a designated contact.

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

## References

1. Wyke, Terry, and Rudyard, Nigel, *Compilers. Directory of local studies in North West England*. Manchester, Bibliography of North West England, 1993.
2. *The Manchester Region History Review* is now published annually by Manchester Metropolitan University. See Garratt, Morris: 'Local studies in Middleton' vol.5, no.2 (Autumn/Winter 1991-2) , pp. 35-40, for a typical article.

## **THE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION LOCAL STUDIES GROUP ANNUAL REPORT 1998**

In this year of its twenty first birthday the Group continued with a steady membership of some 2,000, five branches (including one inaugurated in 1998) and a representative from Northern Ireland. The new branch - Midlands and Anglia - was formed following a very successful day school in Nottingham.

The Annual General Meeting was held at Library Association Headquarters at which Martin Hayes gave a comprehensive overview of 'FAMILIA', the EARL initiative that has put listings of UK library family history resources on the Internet.

The Group has continued to maintain international relations with local studies librarians in Eastern Europe, particularly with Hungary. Ten Hungarian librarians visited London for a six-day study tour which was partially subsidised by the Group and included their attendance at the A.G.M. This was reciprocated later in the year when Diana Dixon represented the Group at the 5th Conference of the Hungarian Association of Local Studies Librarians in Kiskunhalas. Efforts have also been made in applying for a grant to assist the continuation of this friendship.

The Dorothy McCulla Award was granted to Martin Hayes, Principal Librarian, Local Studies, West Sussex County Library Service.

The compilation of a bibliography of local studies librarianship is continuing as is the production of the revised guidelines for local studies libraries.

Congratulations must go to eleven members of the Group, including our Chair, Elizabeth Melrose, who were each awarded a Library Association Centenary Medal this year.

Finally our thanks must go to all members of the Committee for their hard work and in particular to our Chair and other Officers.

*Patrick Baird, Hon Secretary, Local Studies Group*

### **TREASURER'S REPORT 1998**

Our Group has had a very active and a financially satisfactory year.

I would highlight the Hungarian Librarians' Visit in March, generously supported by the Library Services Trust and the International Group of the L.A., whose contributions covered more than half of the cost.

It is good that the hitherto moribund Eastern Sub-Group has been revitalised as the Midlands & Anglia, covering a much wider area, and our new Sub-Group commenced their financial activities with their very successful One-Day School at Nottingham. We have been glad to support our other Sub-Groups to a greater or lesser degree as necessary.

Our Group continues in a healthy financial state, and considerable amounts of our accumulated reserve are earmarked for current and future projects.

*Philip Thomas, Hon. Treasurer;  
G. M. Underwood, Hon. Auditor*

## BALANCE SHEET as at 31st December 1998

### Assets

Sundry Debtors				432.25
Balances in hand:				
Bank Current Account		568.02		
COIF Charities Deposit Fund:				
Main Group	6347.52			
Midlands & Anglia Sub-Group	165.89	6513.41	7081.43	
			<u>£7513.68</u>	

### Liabilities

Creditors :	L.A. - Nett V.A.T. Due	64.59		
	Imprint Services (Printing Winter '98			
	LOCAL STUDIES LIBRARIAN)	1111.00	1175.59	
	Accumulated Surplus as at 31/12/97,			
	brought forward	5737.30		
	PLUS Surplus for 1998, brought forward			
	from PROFIT & LOSS Account	600.79	6338.09	
			<u>£7513.68</u>	

## INCOME & EXPENDITURE A/C for the year ended 31st December 1998

### Expenditure

Nett V.A.T. on Goods & Services	36.09	
LOCAL STUDIES LIBRARIAN:		
Printing & Distribution	2779.39	
LESS Advertising and		
Subscriptions	<u>261.50</u>	2517.89
Committee Expenses		1269.02
Officers Expenses.		44.50
Annual General Meeting		92.91
FAMILIA Seminar		16.60
McCULLA AWARD		201.05
Post, Telephone, Fax & e-mail		211.18
Stationery, copying & Printing		323.30
Membership Services		51.41
Local Studies Bibliography		4.35
Guidelines Working Party		152.75
Midlands & Anglia Sub-Group		
Set-up Expenses	64.97	
Payments to/on behalf of Sub-Groups:		
Midlands & Anglia	200.62	
LESS Surplus on Nottingham		
One Day School	<u>133.39</u>	
	67.23	
North-Western	247.43	
Scottish	8.80	
Welsh	<u>3.60</u>	327.06
LSL INDEX	20.34	
LESS Receipts	<u>8.33</u>	12.01
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS:		
Hungarian Librarians Visit:	452.33	
LESS Contributions from		
Library Services Trust	150.00	
International Group	<u>100.00</u>	202.23
Other International Relations Expenses	63.90	
	<u>£5591.22</u>	
SURPLUS for year carried forward		
to PROFIT & LOSS Account	446.14	
	<u>£6037.36</u>	

### Income

Capitation from LA	4675.00
Affiliated Members	17.00
Balance of Surplus	
on UmbrellA 4	885.00
Bank Interest	23.25
COIF Charities	
Deposit Interest:	
Main Group	425.87
Eastern ( now	
Midlands & Anglia)	
Sub-Group	<u>11.24</u>
	437.11

£6037.36

## PROFIT and LOSS ACCOUNT for the year ended 31st December 1998

Working Surplus for 1998, brought forward from above	446.14
ADD Consolidation of Balance as at 31/12/97 due on COIF Charities Deposit	
Fund to Eastern (now Midlands & Anglia) Sub-Group	<u>154.65</u>
GROSS SURPLUS for 1998, carried forward to the Balance Sheet	<u>£600.79</u>

## ROUND THE BRANCHES

Our Scottish Branch, **LOCSCOT**, again organised Local Studies Week, the dates this year being 17th - 24th April. This year the theme was 'Health and Welfare' and libraries large and small from all over Scotland took part by arranging exhibitions, talks and other activities - examples included reminiscence sessions and quizzes as well as a co-ordinated series of exhibitions on the 1832 and 1849 cholera epidemics in libraries in the Highland Region. A national Programme of events was once again issued. In conjunction with the Week, LOCSCOT's annual Day School and AGM had the same theme. LOCSCOT also provided a speaker on 'digitisation' at the Scottish Branch/Group Day in May.

The **North West Branch** continues to organise meetings and day schools. Over 50 people attended one on digital imaging at Crewe on 12 May. Delegates included librarians, archivists and museums staff from outside the region as well as from all over the North West. The morning programme included two software suppliers, House of Images of Blackburn and iBase from Leeds. Both have set up imaging systems in libraries and it was useful to see two different systems together and to be able to make comparisons. The afternoon dealt with two systems already in use in libraries - Iain Watson described the Durham Record and Peter Kelly demonstrated Leeds Library's use of the internet. In view of the interest in the subject the North West branch is now hoping to set up a users group for digital technology.

The new **Midlands and Anglia Branch** held its first day school, on the subject of marketing local studies. Elizabeth Melrose presented the keynote paper on the need for marketing and Patrick Baird described the work he did at Birmingham, mainly in the field of publishing. All the delegates then discussed the barriers and solutions to exploiting local studies with groups who find accessing our materials difficult - ethnic minorities, children and young people, housebound and the visually and physically impaired. In the afternoon representatives from Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and Derbyshire described their publications programmes - all were very different in approach and style of productions, but all saw their role as exploiting their collections. Lastly, Sandy Norman gave a detailed but basic introduction to the complex topic of copyright. One problem for the Branch is the large geographical area it covers, and this is a problem the committee will address when planning future meetings. The Branch hopes to produce a Newsletter but this will take time to get off the ground.

In April the **London and Home Counties Branch** held a Study Day on Local Studies and the New Technology which was oversubscribed: it was organised by their two new young committee members. Other meetings at the Guildhall and the British Library Newspaper Library at Colindale were also well supported and future meetings are being planned at present.

In Northern Ireland, the LISC **Local History Panel** has been active. The Union List of Belfast Maps to 1900 was launched in February and discussions are ongoing on the bibliographical control of local publications, in the light of the fact that only 40% of Northern Ireland publications are recorded by the British Library. The Panel plans to hold another Local History Week in 2000.

The **Welsh Branch** is restructuring following the retirement of all the Branch Officers at the same time. New Officers have now been appointed and future plans are being made.



## ALAN BALL LOCAL HISTORY AWARDS 1999

The winners of the Alan Ball Awards for 1999 have recently been announced. Established to encourage local history publishing by public libraries and local authorities, this is the fifteenth year they have been awarded.

The judges decided to make three Awards, the maximum number permitted. In addition, two other entries were Commended.

The Award Winners for 1999 are-

**London Borough of Southwark** for *Southwark: an illustrated history*, by Leonard Reilly. Although the judges have commented adversely in previous years about the often unnecessary use of "landscape" format, this is a rare example of how it works well, with its highly professional design and production enhancing the well-written and informative contents;

**City of Westminster** for *Westminster History Review*, 2, an excellent example of a local history journal.

**Lancashire County Council** for *Leading the way: a history of Lancashire's roads*, edited by Dr. Alan Crosby. This is a thorough and well-edited volume that is also good value for money.

The Commended entries are:

**Leicester City Council** for *The story of the Saff: a history of the Saffron Lane Estate, Leicester*, compiled by a local community group and edited by Cynthia Brown.

**Somerset County Council** for *Somerset parks and gardens: a landscape history*, by James Bond.

Was your authority one of those who entered this year? If not, and you produce publications of a good standard, why not think about it for next year? For information get in touch with Eric Winter at the Library Services Trust, 7 Ridgmount Street, London WC1E 7AE (tel) 0171 580 8290 or 0171 636 7543, (fax) 0171 436 7218, (E-mail) [eric.winter@la-hq.org.uk](mailto:eric.winter@la-hq.org.uk)

## HAVE YOU SEEN ... ? some recent items of interest to local studies librarians

Creton, H. *Sources for the history of London 1939-45: a guide and bibliography.*

British Records Association, 1998. 196pp. £12.50.

ISBN 0 900222 12 3. [Archives and the User no. 9].

The aim of this Guide is to point out to the reader the enormous range of primary sources available for the period. The main section, in narrative form, consists of a series of sections dealing with aspects of the subject, for instance civil defence, evacuation, rationing and health. Various types of records are covered, together with the places where they may be found: these encompass a wide range of institutions from the PRO and the London Metropolitan Archives to Institutions' own collections, the Guildhall Library and various London Borough local studies collections. One of the virtues of this work, apart from its wide range, are the fascinating quotations

and illustrations given throughout. The second part of the book consists of a Bibliography of 962 printed sources, again arranged by topic: they range from academic studies to personal accounts of life in wartime London. Almost all have been seen by the author. To improve access for the reader there is an author index to the Bibliography and a combined subject index to both the Bibliography and Guide. To help the reader further there is a list of 'Useful Addresses' which includes many specialist repositories as well as details of the present London Boroughs local studies collections- the latter list indicates the constituent former authorities and this can be linked to the map of the 1939 London local government boundaries. The author's previous *Bibliography of printed works on London history to 1939* was awarded the 1995 Besterman medal for an outstanding bibliography. This equally expert work should help all types of researchers in their quest for information about London during the second world war.

*Winterbotham, D and Crosby, A. The local studies library: a handbook for historians. British Association for Local History, 1998. 119pp. £10.00.*  
ISBN 1 86077 094 0.

For many local historians beginning a project the local studies collection of the public library is the first port of call and for those just beginning to study local history it can seem a daunting place, despite the presence of welcoming and helpful staff. This book is intended in particular to provide for these newcomers an introduction to the use of local studies libraries and the type of material they hold. Diana Winterbotham is an immensely experienced local studies librarian, having been the County Local Studies Librarian for Lancashire for over 20 years, and is also well known as a local historian, while Alan Crosby is one of the leading local historians in North West England, both as a writer and a lecturer- their combined expertise has produced a very helpful and readable work. The first section deals with the local studies library itself, with helpful information on access to materials via catalogues and indexes, bibliographies and guides, with a comment on audio and visual equipment. There is also a short section on how to get started, including taking full notes and references, and a reminder that when the research is finished the librarian should be told, so that a copy might be added to stock - preferably donated. The rest of the work is devoted to sources to found in a library, with comments on their value and use, and plenty of examples and illustrations. These cover the standard stock - published local histories, serials and newspapers, maps and plans, audio and visual resources and ephemera. In addition, attention is paid to the use of Census records and to the importance of other official records such as parliamentary papers, acts of Parliament and local government records. Because of the amount of local history work in schools there is also a chapter intended for teachers, dealing with choice of topic and the use of specific types of sources by children. Finally there is a section on copyright, a continuing bugbear these days for local historians and librarians alike, which explains the situation briefly, including the implications for classroom teaching and the use of material in publications. There is a short bibliography.

Over recent years there have been various books on 'doing local history', though some of them are rather too detailed for the lay beginner with their guidance on original sources to be found in record offices. This work is a well written and readable introduction emphasising the important role of the library and its material at the beginning of research and it will be a useful book for librarians to recommend to new users.

## NOTES AND NEWS

The Cornish Studies Library has organised a photographic competition for amateur photographers. The subject is *Science, engineering and technology in Cornwall today*. Any aspect of the topic may be chosen, illustrating, for instance, a principle, a process or an activity, and credit will be given to those pictures demonstrating most effectively the ways in which science, engineering and technology are part of our daily lives and environment. All entries will be added to the stock of the Cornish Studies Library. The competition is sponsored by a local firm, which hopes to use some of the entries in its Calendar for 2000.

Lancashire County Library's Local Studies Collection, formerly housed at County Library Headquarters, Corporation Street, Preston, has now been transferred to a new home at Lancashire Record Office, Bow Lane, Preston PR1 2RE, tel. (01772) 264021/4020. This relocation has resulted from the local government reorganisation of 1998 in which Blackburn and Blackpool became unitary authorities and necessitated a review of services provided by Lancashire County Council. One third of the Local Studies Collection, approximately 4000 books, has been shelved in the Record Office's Search Room, replacing a Probate Index series for which a microfiche copy has been purchased; the original volumes have been transferred to Colne Library. The remainder of the book and pamphlet reference collection is housed in an office, formerly occupied by the County Archivist, which is also the new workplace for the local studies staff. Enquiries are answered by staff on the Search Room enquiry desk, who have access to the library's computerised catalogue, but for any complex queries help is requested from library staff. The task of merging the two collections, which has involved handling every book during a stock checking process to enable location codes to be altered has been, as readers can imagine, a considerable challenge. Now that staff are settled in their new home, their work will continue in adding the Record Office's often unique material to the library catalogue and it is hoped that both library and Record Office customers will benefit from the siting of two such fine collections in one building.

A voluntary Code of Due Diligence which aims to reduce art theft has been launched. This follows three years work by a committee formed by the Council for the Prevention of Art Theft (COPAT), which included representatives from the LA Rare Books Group as well as the art trade, the police and booksellers. Rare books, including of course local works, are vulnerable to theft, as many local studies librarians have found to their cost, and the Code covers good practice for both dealers and auctioneers. Adherence to the Code will provide guidelines to dealers and auctioneers which should reduce the sale of stolen items into the legitimate market, and provide a benchmark against which dealers and auctioneers can measure their own practices should the title to any item come into question. For further information or a copy of the Code, please contact COPAT on 0171 377 0282, or visit the COPAT website at [www.copat.freemove.co.uk](http://www.copat.freemove.co.uk)

A large collection of material documenting the history of Ayton near Scarborough in North Yorkshire has recently been donated to the village library by Philip Drury, an 81 year old former lecturer at Chesterfield College of Technology, who moved to Ayton on his retirement. During the next twelve years he scoured every source he could think of to compile the archive. These included the Borthwick Institute in York where he found various church records and the will of a man who lived at Ayton Castle in 1492, and the County Hall at Northallerton where he discovered

various property deeds. He also trawled through documents in Scarborough library and at the record office in Beverley, making copies of everything pertaining to his home area. The collection includes over 600 slides of pictures old and new of Ayton, and is kept in a filing cabinet which was paid for by Ayton Parish Council. Mr. Drury, who has also given numerous talks on the history of Ayton said that his research was a wonderful, satisfying hobby, but as he hadn't touched the collection for a few years he thought he would give it to the library so that everyone could see it. Bryan Berryman of Scarborough library, the area Information Librarian, in accepting the collection for the library, paid tribute to Mr. Drury's painstaking labours in bringing the material together.

The National Monuments Record is about to embark on a major programme to create an Internet home for England's listed buildings, thanks to a £3.09 million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This grant will allow, between now and 2002, the production of around 360,000 new photographs covering every listed building in England. These photographs will be taken by an army of amateur photographers, co-ordinated by the Royal Photographic Society, and the results will be posted on the internet to create one of the world's largest, free, on-line picture libraries. The aim of the 'Images of England' project is to create a 'point in time' archive of England's rich and varied heritage, as it is at the dawn of the new millennium. It will provide, for the first time, a single route of access to images and information about every one of England's listed sites. One thing it will do, perhaps, is to dispel the myth that listed buildings are 'all churches and castles' by demonstrating the wide range of listed structures, from country houses and palaces to telephone boxes and lavatories, and even a racing pigeon loft. Further information can be found on the Images of England website at [www.imagesofengland.org.uk](http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk) or by contacting the National Monuments Record Centre, Kemble Drive, Swindon SN2 2GZ.

Newsplan has also become the beneficiary of a large Heritage Lottery Fund grant, in this case £5 million. Along with a further £2.5 million to be raised from the newspaper industry, suppliers and the library sector, the award is to allow the preservation of 3,500 fragile local and regional newspapers dating from 1800 to 1950. The newspapers concerned will be microfilmed to conservation standards - preservation microfilming is the recognised international standard for the archiving of newspapers - and the programme is expected to take between three and four years to complete. The 3,500 titles were identified as those most at risk by the ten Newsplan regional panels during their work in listing every local and regional newspaper published in the UK and Ireland: the results of their work have been published in a series of directories. In addition the project will install 800 microfilm readers, with disability access, in libraries throughout the United Kingdom, for the benefit of schoolchildren, teachers, students and researchers. It also aims to make available, via the Internet, information on library newspaper holdings, and to encourage studies into the digitisation of newspapers from microfilm.

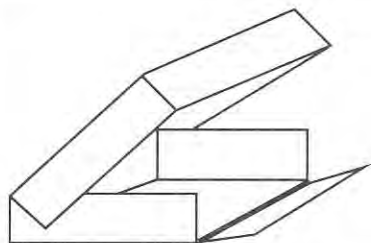
This is not local history as such, but you may know someone who can help. Fort Hare University in South Africa is building up the ANC (African National Congress) Archive, and ANC records from all over the world, including Britain, are being centralised there. When the organisation was banned in South Africa it moved its headquarters to Zambia and established subsidiary organisations all over the globe. After the 1994 elections these were closed and documents were transferred to Fort Hare. The collection also includes the private papers of ANC activists and the records of the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College, set up in Tanzania to cater for exiles leaving South Africa after the Soweto uprising. The Fort Hare collection covers the

whole range of archival and printed material. The University Library also includes a large collection of books on the history of South Africa, but suffers from the fact that many books relevant to the history of resistance were banned and could not be collected. The library is therefore appealing for unwanted copies of banned books and other anti-apartheid material which may turn up in British libraries or in donations of material. Please contact the Deputy Librarian, Yolisa Soul - the best way is by email at [Yolisa@ufhcc.ufh.ac.za](mailto:Yolisa@ufhcc.ufh.ac.za)

### People

Congratulations to Ian Dewhirst, formerly Reference Librarian at Keighley, on the award of an MBE in the New Year Honours List. This was for services to local history. He is well known as an author and a speaker and has made many television appearances. His output includes books, articles and a weekly newspaper column. He still gives about eighty talks a year, and these get over-subscribed! Every one of his talks contain two phrases - "you will find this information in Keighley Reference Library" and "please donate any letters or papers to the Reference Library as they form part of the social history of the town". During his 24 years as Reference Librarian before his retirement in 1991 he was responsible for building up the town's excellent Local History and Archive collections and his inspiration has encouraged and provided resources for others in their research. Pauline Barfield, the present Keighley Reference Librarian, comments that if he follows his own advice and donates his own papers to the library it will be one of the most important archives any library could own.

We are sorry to report the sudden death of David Cousins, Heritage Services Officer at Canterbury for Kent Arts and Libraries. David was a founder member of the Local Studies Group committee and served in that capacity for some years. He was always a supporter of Group activities and always came to see us when he was at UmbrelLA conferences. He was also involved with the *Kent Bibliography*.



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Welsh:	Malcolm Ranson, Cardiff
Northern Ireland:	Linda Greenwood, representing the Lib and Inf Services Council (Northern Ireland), Local History Panel

The Group also has a Liaison Officer at LA headquarters to keep us in touch with items of concern. At present this is Jill Martin, who is therefore an ex-officio member of the Committee.

As the number of candidates did not exceed the number of vacancies, no election was necessary this year.

As can be seen from the foregoing list, the Group has committee members in most parts of the country. If you have any ideas or suggestions for meetings etc - or indeed anything that you wish to bring to the attention of the Committee - please do not hesitate to contact your nearest committee member or the Hon. Secretary.

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