

The Local Studies Librarian

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Editorial

The Local Studies Group is now five years old, the inaugural meeting having been held at the Guildhall Library on 1st December 1977. How has the Group fared in its first five years?

We have some solid achievements to report. We have built up a membership of about 1400, with two local groups and a third proposed. We have provided papers of a high standard at several LA conferences and have been active in promoting meetings and one-day schools, often in conjunction with other groups, in various parts of the country. We are now consulted by the Library Association in conjunction with many (though regrettably not all) topics which concern local studies. We have presented evidence to the Blake Committee and to the British Library on local newspapers. We have liaised with the Standing Conference for Local History in establishing the Advisory Committee on Ephemerata and Minor Publications (ADCEMP), with the BBC during the preparation of 'History on your Doorstep', and with Granada TV over the collection of old photographs. We have set up a working party to draw up a set of guidelines for local studies libraries. Our main channel of communication with members, which started as a short Newsletter, has been transformed into the Local Studies Librarian.

An active start, but what of the future? The main problem here is certainly going to be resources. Following recent events at the Library Association, our capitation was cut back and this, of course, hit particularly hard at a comparatively small group of members spread over a wide area, where our main means of communication must be by post. It means that small groups must be self-supporting, and that as well as meetings there should be more use of day schools, where fees received make the operation self-financing. Financial considerations, too, have forced a change in the pattern of publication of the Local Studies Librarian. At its November meeting, the LSG committee decided reluctantly that there will only be two issues of LSL next year. One problem is the cost of distribution and obviously the reduction on frequency will save money: we hope, however, to increase the size of each issue so that the amount of editorial content will not be reduced. After its successful launch, this is a matter to be regretted, but outside considerations have forced this upon us. One thing which would help would be an increase in subscription income. Does *your* library subscribe? Now that we are no longer simply a newsletter but carry articles of more permanent worth, the LSL is of value to more than the individual member. Do you know of any other potential subscribers?

The Local Studies Group in its first five years has proved itself an active force in librarianship. We must continue and expand this activity for one thing that has not diminished in these times of cutback has been the demand for our services. Local history as a subject is flourishing: librarians must show, therefore, that they are active in promoting and providing information services to the increasing number of local historians.



Ordnance Survey Photographs

Many people may not be aware of the fact that some of the regional Ordnance Survey offices have collections of photographs from the immediate post-war years. These were taken in connection with the chain surveys that were being undertaken at that time and were taken to establish the various chain points. Consequently, the main item on the photograph is the board and the reference point, but sometimes there is useful background information on the photograph. This can consist of road vehicles, parts of buildings, housing and even people's washing on the line.

Although they might not make a significant contribution to the local history of the area, these photographs, taken in the late 1940s, can be very important as they cover a period for which few photographs are to be found in libraries. It may be possible to obtain copies of the more interesting ones. However, the importance of knowing of such collections and their whereabouts can be extremely useful when trying to ensure that as comprehensive a coverage as possible is maintained by the local studies library. To discover whether there is any material relating to an area it will be necessary to contact the local O.S. office and *not* the O.S.'s main office in Southampton.

Chris E. Makepeace

Patents and the Local Historian

Patent specifications and literature are probably the most neglected of primary sources for research workers. This applies even in the fields of scientific and technological information where it would be thought that chemists, physicists and engineers, of both the practising and academic varieties, would use them intensively all the time. As patents are one of the most detailed and up to date forms of technical information, providing a continuous record of the progress of every facet of industry, this may seem surprising, but it is a fact borne out by many surveys. It is not so surprising, therefore, that local historians often ignore them, even if they know of their existence. What then is a patent and how can it be of value except to the inventors themselves?

In simple terms, a patent specification is a legal document sealing a bargain between the inventor and the community. In return for informing the community about the details of his invention through publication he is granted a monopoly to exploit it for a limited number of years, subject to payment of the relevant fees. After this period the patent expires and the details which then form part of published knowledge are freely available to the community. This is a gross simplification of the position but you do not need to have mastered the complexities of Patent Law to make use of this rich store of information.

Rich store it is indeed, as the British patent system goes back to the Statute of Monopolies of 1623, and the royal letters patent from which the name is derived preceded even this date. The name merely means an open, as opposed to a sealed, letter from the sovereign to all his subjects announcing the grant of some privilege, in this case a monopoly. The Statute of 1623 provided the legal basis for the granting of patents. About the mechanics of how they were to be granted it was silent, and for the next 200 years or so the lawyers and judges set up a legal obstacle course which proved both irrelevant and unreal in the ferment of scientific and technical knowledge which created the Industrial Revolution of the early 1800s. The system was satirised by Charles Dickens in "Household Words" in "A Poor Man's Tale of a Patent", highlighting the 35 stages then necessary to obtain a patent via such archaic officials as Hanapers and Chaffwaxes, and the time was ripe for reform.

As so often happens in this country, the need produced the man in the shape of Bennet Woodcroft. Born in Stockport in 1803, he studied chemistry under John Dalton, learnt weaving at Failsworth and was made Professor of Machinery at University College, London. During his years in the Manchester area in his father's business of dyeing and velvet finishing he

was friendly with eminent engineers of the day such as Nasmyth, Whitworth and Fairbairn, to whom his inventive skill was well known. He was granted 13 patents for inventions of which two were technically important, namely a tappet loom from which he made a fair amount of money and a variable pitch marine propellor which was to be used by Brunel in his trans-Atlantic steamships. It was because of the obstacles he faced during the patenting of his ideas that he became a fervent advocate of reform, leading him to be a principal witness before the Select Committee of 1851 whose deliberations resulted in the Patent Law Amendment Act of 1852. Among the provisions of this Act was a direction that all patents subsequently granted should be printed, thus providing us with the corpus of information we have today. In his battles with authority over the years he had somehow obtained from the Lord Chancellor's clerk a complete list of patents granted from 1617 and had produced privately three indexes to them which form the basis of the indexing to the present day, namely a Chronological Index, a Subject Index and a Name Index.

His enthusiasm and common sense had not been lost on the Select Committee. Bennet Woodcroft was appointed Superintendent of the Specifications to the newly established Office of the Commissioners of Patents for Invention in 1852 and began his task with a will. He not only published the 3,000 odd specifications being granted annually at the time by the Patent Office but all the 14,359 specifications and his three indexes covering 1617-1852! Further innovations in 1857 were the publication of abridgments of specifications classified into subject groups, which has continued almost unaltered save for the classification groups to this day, the continued publication of the three indexes on a regular basis, and the start of the system of examiners who vet the applications for uniqueness, practicality and the other criteria laid down for the granting of a patent, thus ensuring the accuracy of the contents.

The patent specification itself must describe in precise detail the process or device, with drawings where necessary, the claims made for the invention and the full details of the name and address of the inventor either individual or corporate. It is these details in the specification, together with the sophisticated classification, abridgment and indexing of them, that renders them so valuable to the local historian among others. Through the Name Indexes it is possible to trace the products of local inventors, as it is with local firms. Specific industries are often either confined to, or concentrated in one locality, and the progress of these can be traced by recourse to the Classified Abridgments. This was brought home to me quite forcibly at the time of the preparation of the monumental, ICI sponsored multi-volume "History of Technology" of Singer and Holmyard, when the chapters dealing with many aspects of the textile and other Manchester based industries was researched in our patents library from the Bennet Woodcroft

series of abridgments and their successors. This is a simple if laborious, procedure as the classification scheme has been changed from time to time over the years.

Another valuable source for local firms is their archives, where it is a widespread practice to preserve a file of all the patents they have ever taken out, often with valuable extra material by the individuals who worked on them, and any models prepared at the time.

Having established, I hope, that patents do constitute a resource which can be approached from the angles of inventor, firm, subject or industry, how then does the local historian get access to collections of them? Again we have to thank the 1852 Act and Bennet Woodcroft, who proposed in his evidence, and carried out in practice, the deposit of collections of the published material in public libraries in the provinces. Consider the climate of the time. The 1850 Public Libraries Act had just been passed, which allowed buildings to be erected but not the provision of money from the rates for books and other material. Patents often formed the first printed material in many libraries and by 1857 a large number of such collections were deposited widely throughout the kingdom, so much so that local pride often resulted in collections in very close proximity. Over the years, and as the cost and complexity of the publications increased, these deposit collections have been whittled down. The current United Kingdom Patent Information Network was set up as recently as 1980, following an EEC investigation throughout the European Community, and consists of 6 major collections (British, United States, European Patent Specifications and their supporting literature) at Birmingham, Liverpool, Leeds, Manchester, Newcastle and Glasgow with a further 20 referral centres in other provincial centres holding only the journals, abridgments and indexes. All constituent libraries of the network are linked to each other, and to the Science Reference Library, Holborn (the former Patent Office Library) by telephone, Telex and hopefully in the future by facsimile transmission equipment, and a speedy response for information, photocopies and the like can be had at any of its nodal service points. The staff at any of them, and particularly at the Patent Office and the six major centres, will be glad to expand the necessarily brief details of this article. They will also give practical tuition in how to do searches of the material from any of the directions mentioned above. The only way for a local historian to test the truth of what I have said is to put it to the practical test. I'll wager he will be amazed at some of the new facets disclosed by a collection of relevant patent specifications about areas he thought he knew everything about.

The late Frank Taylor MBE, FLA, MI Inf Sc., formerly Scientific & Technical Librarian and Information Officer, Manchester Public Libraries.

Frank R Taylor 1923-1982

It is with regret that I must draw the attention of members of LSG to the sudden death of Frank Taylor, Technical Librarian at Manchester Central Library, on 12th November 1982. Frank, through his chairmanship of the RSIS, chaired the original meeting in Birmingham which resulted in the LSG being established as a sub-section of RSIS and was later keen to ensure that it became a fully fledged group in its own right.

Although not directly involved with local studies, Frank was aware of the importance of the subject and the local material that he had in his charge at Manchester. This not only related to the older part of the stock, but also to the newer material that was being acquired as well as for posters etc which were displayed in his department. He was very much aware of the wide range of material that local studies libraries needed to use to be able to carry out their duties fully. He was also keen to ensure that the stock of the Technical and Patents Library was exploited as much as possible. When asked to give a paper at the last day school organised by the North Western Branch, Frank jumped at the chance and was equally as keen to agree to publication of the paper when approached. This paper published in the LSL is an abbreviated version of the one which he gave in May 1982 to the North West's day school.

Frank Taylor will not only be sadly missed by those who worked with him on the various committees on which he sat, but also by his staff and by all those who knew him. I always found him extremely helpful and always interested in what the LSG was doing, particularly at a local level, even after it had become independent of the RSIS.

The death of Frank Taylor leaves a gap that will be difficult to fill. He was active both in the library service at Manchester and in the Library Association. He believed in people playing as full a part in professional matters as possible and often lamented the fact that few members took an active role in LA matters. He saw, I believe, the LSG involving more people in professional matters than would otherwise have been the case and taking a more than superficial interest in the subject. With Frank's death, Manchester has lost a valuable member of staff, the library profession a stalwart member, and LSG someone who took an interest in its activities although not becoming a member and who had been in at the inception and birth of the Group.

Chris E Makepeace
(Chairman)

Librarians do it with other people's ancestors - Local Studies in Essex

Although re-organisation became effective in Essex with the 1974 changes in local government, the library service continued as a number of separate units joined together somewhat superficially leaving much of the County and Independent authority structures fairly intact. Restructuring in 1978 created a new concept in the County and replaced the existing services with a new kind of animal. The new structure is based on five divisions each consisting of two or three areas, but amongst the new County features is a stratum of subject departments with specialist staff to man them. These are the Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences, Science and Technology, Music, Medical and Local Studies. They are not all the same in all respects, Medical, for example being based on a hospital rather than a library while the others are based at four large libraries. Physical dissimilarities between the buildings have made some obvious differences, and so, too, has the kind of material and the level and quantity of demand. Another difference is that where specialist material under the above listings existed throughout the whole of Essex, the new departments had a priority, and much of this kind of stock eventually became part of new specialist departments. In the case of Local Studies this did not happen, principally because it was held that the local history material in a large town would continue to be most useful if it was allowed to remain where it had been brought together. The original purpose of service to the local community was therefore unchanged, and much unique stock may very well not be found at the County Local Studies Department but at a major library elsewhere.

The County Local Studies Department is based at the new Colchester Central Library, opened in 1980, and has a room to itself. There are about ten thousand books, two thousand reels of microfilm and a similar quantity of microfiches, five thousand maps and six thousand illustrations in the main collection. There are also five special collections, containing a wide range of material from incunabula to manuscript and audio. Most of the material is for reference only but a small corner of lending items is included. Some material is held in glass fronted lockable cases but most is on open shelves. A security system is due to come into operation in the near future.

The library holds, amongst its microform coverage, the Census returns for Essex, including those parts formerly Essex but now London Boroughs, for 1841-1881 inclusive and also the International Genealogical Index for the whole county (on fiche, of course). It will therefore come as no surprise to readers of this article to read that one of the two areas of enquiry most frequently and most voluminously made is genealogical research. It takes a great deal of time; many of the enquiries come from abroad and to suggest

that people from the dominions, colonies and the U.S.A. should come and do their own research would not necessarily be very helpful, although Essex readers are expected to do so. A twenty minute maximum time has to be allotted to this kind of personal research; answers are helped by the reader-printers allowing printout of family information from Census and I.G.I. A charge is made for copies supplied, but the advantage is that it takes less time to print them than to interpret and then re-write.

The other main area for enquiry is the endless demand for project material from a huge number of schools, individual children and parents. This threatens to get out of hand, especially in the autumn, and a summary of the problems experienced with this kind of demand may be of interest.

1. A high percentage of non library projects, e.g. practical subjects such as

‘What grows on a particular stretch of coastline?’

2. Favourite projects on which very little information is in printed form, e.g. The pure geography of a well defined and very small area.

3. Lower level school projects for which the only appropriate material is at ‘A’ or graduate level.

It did not seem that very much headway was being made in satisfying this intractable area of enquiry. The senior humanities inspectors of schools in Essex were therefore contacted and a very fruitful two way liaison has sprung up, providing an authoritative avenue of contact with teachers and schools. The inspectors also act as a sounding board for any ideas we may have.

A series of meetings was held, soon after the re-organisation and subsequent move to the new building had been completed, at five major libraries, to which teachers were invited. Exhibitions based on the kinds of material available at Divisional libraries as well as at the County Local Studies Department, showing some of the ways of using it, were set up; a short talk was given and a question and answer session ensued. However, most of the attending teachers appeared already to be quite well equipped to deal with the material at some level, and perhaps to some extent we were preaching to the converted. Many of the schools where problems had been experienced rejected the invitation to attend and undoubtedly many teachers who might have taken advantage also did not come.

In more recent times a fresh approach has met with the approval of the inspectorate. With their assistance a tape slide sequence for guidance is being prepared. At the same time an abbreviated Project Guide No. 1 has been produced. The tape slide production ‘How to do Local Studies Projects in the Library’ will have relevance to the whole county and an edition will be

produced for sale to schools and teachers centres. It is hoped that this, with its two part approach, firstly in the school and then in the library, will encourage teachers to devote a little time to preparation for project work, including making themselves familiar with the contents, indices, appendices etc. to books, and an outline of the approach to the project based on the teacher's preliminary knowledge of available material.

Essex is quite an infant in the sphere of local publications. The well established principles of not competing with commercial interests, producing publications of value in the subject and not previously done, supporting authors having some useful contribution to make but who are not likely to be published otherwise, and exploiting our own knowledge of the collection, are largely adhered to. An annual programme is formulated — it always seems to be in arrears — and a range of booklets, guides, postcards and greetings cards appear throughout each year. A small profit each year has so far been maintained.

The department has a relationship with local studies assistants throughout the county. These are subject assistants whose duties include special responsibility for local studies at all the larger libraries. These are principally the area and divisional libraries, and subject requests are routed through them before those less easy to resolve are sent on to the subject specialist. Many are for more esoteric areas of study, often covered partially, or not at all, by printed books. There are some helpful indices, the most used and most useful being the Essex Periodical Articles Index. This card index in dictionary form has author and subject entries, with up to ten or so entries for each article wherever necessary. It is up to date and goes back into the major articles in nineteenth century newspapers as well as current periodicals. Its usefulness, particularly as far as newspapers are concerned, is limited by the fact that main articles only have been included. If obituaries and other short entries had been indexed, it would be even more useful than it is.

Book selection is important and a current awareness programme ensures that most of the 19 local studies assistants throughout the county get the opportunity to see, hear about or be aware of what is being produced. A weekly list is compiled as copies of books are obtained, and the list, together with order forms and view copies are circulated throughout the County. The County Record Office also is notified of new books. Orders are correlated and sent on to the Bibliographical Services Dept for order and supply. The list is printed in 'Information', the County Library's regular staff newssheet.

These are not the only and perhaps not the most important aspects of staff training in Local Studies for the County. The County Local Studies Librarian

has responsibility for staff training at various levels. Newly appointed subject assistants, whether new to Essex or transferred from other disciplines, come to the county department at Colchester for one week. They are given an insight into the work of the subject specialist and encouraged to explore ways in which the resources of the county local studies centre can best be used to supplement their own area collections. Their co-operation is also enlisted in looking out for publications of local interest which appear within their areas with minimal publicity and could otherwise be missed.

Continuing training for all local studies staff is provided at six monthly subject assistants' meetings. The morning session is a general business meeting with the afternoon devoted to training on a specific topic. Subjects covered have included the map collection of the Essex Record Office, the work of the county information officer and family history. One training session took the form of a group exercise on Essex Libraries' response to the BBC series 'History on your Doorstep' and resulted in the publication of a companion booklet.

More basic training is provided for both professional and non professional staff within the Colchester area who may need to refer enquiries to the local studies library and for those based at Colchester Central who could be called on to man the department.

The County's trainee librarians are normally based in one division for their year's pre college work and those in the North East spend a month in their local studies library.

This is not the whole story of local studies in Essex but it may serve to outline some of the current thinking and the attempt to provide a coherent framework for the future.

Philip Gifford and Jane Dansie,
Essex County Local Studies Department.

“... and on the right, past the chippy, we have Edwin Chadwick’s birthplace.”

The English summer is the peak period for history walks; the sight of a small group trailing after their guide is a common one in pretty villages, and the centres of large cities generously endowed with Roman ruins or Georgian terraces. They are not so common in areas of high unemployment, boarded up houses and the litter of a dozen take-aways. The area I work in is Longsight, a suburb of inner Manchester, and it scores on most indicators of social disadvantage, but, after having collected information for the library’s local studies section for a few years, I was sure the area could yield an interesting history trail. The question was whether anyone would come.

Local studies work, with the lengthy enquiries it often entails, the opportunities to talk and make tape recordings with old people, and the collecting of pamphlets and photographs generally leads to the librarian becoming a storehouse of information. It seemed that an effective way of exploiting this information was to organize a local history walk for the community. Besides, everyone likes to be thought of as an expert in some field, and I quite enjoyed the picture of me bossing around a group of people who were hanging on my every word as I pointed out local treasures that they had hitherto passed every day without appreciating them. Also, I have to admit to a personal interest; I live in the area, and tend to get a bit defensive when its disparaged — alright, I know Charles II and Shakespeare both gave Longsight a miss, but George Orwell once stayed here!

Longsight library management generally reacts favourably to proposals that use the word “community” at least once, and it was decided that even in these times of staff shortages it was still A Good Thing to have a librarian shouting about tithe maps above the roar of the traffic.

The preliminary organization was quite easy. The local studies collection produced information on plenty of interesting buildings, the sites of old farms, clippings on recent housing developments, and photographs of mill outings, and a route including the best of them virtually suggested itself. A map of the route and a list of places to be seen was prepared.

Publicity consisted of a poster inviting people to “Enjoy a summer evening walk and find out more about your neighbourhood” which was posted up around the area. Intending walkers were asked to leave their names at the library, and an upper limit of 15 was set — it seemed a controllable number for a beginner guide. To my relief the list filled quickly,

and a waiting list for cancellations and future walks was begun. I then started to pray that on the chosen evening, the rain, the skinheads, the drunks and the nutters would stay away.

Who turned up? It was a mixture of the expected and the unexpected. A couple of teachers, a pensioner who provided the library with some excellent old photographs, and people from local community groups, but also there were people I'd never seen before, mums who'd brought their kids along, and sceptics waiting to be convinced that there was anything worthwhile in the area. There were even a few who'd lived in the area before affluence and the lure of a 'good' school had propelled them to the outer suburbs, back for a bit of nostalgia. Also, there were people who talked too much, or couldn't walk very fast, or thought I'd chosen quite the wrong route . . . all had to be shepherded, cajoled and their questions answered.

Each walker was given the route map and a photocopy of a map of the area as it was 100 years ago. I carried a bundle of photographs to pass around at appropriate moments — a whitwalk photograph of 1905 as we passed the site of a long since demolished church, a photograph showing World War II bomb damage of a local school. After a quick talk on the area's development — largely rural, Victorian boom, decline, recent housing improvements — we set off. We passed the site of the old theatre that once saw performances of vaudeville and melodrama, poked around the gravestones of the parish church, looked at the upper floor windows of what would once have been the servants' bedrooms, admired some fancy brickwork, peered at crumbling date stones and trespassed around some derelict and probably dangerous terraces.

Guiding, I found, is a demanding task. It's like hosting a large dinner party for people you've never met, who have widely differing ages, backgrounds and interests, and who you suspect won't hit it off. Contentious subjects like whether litter is to be blamed on the English, the Irish, the Asians or the West Indians, or perhaps the "children of today" whatever their origins, are best avoided. Added to these tensions are the problems of keeping everyone together without sounding like a sergeant-major, or your voice giving way, and trying to strike a balance between encouraging everyone to air their knowledge of the area and getting a word or two in yourself. (One woman knew so much about a particular church that I turned the tour over to her. She was obviously going to do a better job on describing its history and architecture than I could have).

However, in 2½ hours it was all over, and they all said they'd have a lovely time. Very gratifying it was. I was taken off to the local pub, a suitable spot to finish a history walk as it dates back to 1690 and was once visited by the Scottish rebels, for a well deserved pint.

The success of this walk led to a second walk a few weeks later. This went equally smoothly, although I found that I had learnt so much from the people on the first walk that my spiel had trebled. Also, I'd forgotten about earlier nightfall; we just about needed a torch to decipher dates on the memorial stone of the last church in the tour. Feedback from both walks was positive, photographs and information were donated to the collection, school teachers used parts of my tour in area studies with their students, a couple of walkers did their own research on buildings that had aroused their curiosity, and a languages tutor suggested I might like to do similar tours for her language classes for Asian women. I can't say that vandalism and litter have disappeared and community involvement has soared, but I feel that such projects do something to increase peoples appreciation of and pride in their neighbourhood.

My aim in writing this article was to give a fairly light description of what I consider to be an interesting part of my local studies work in inner Manchester; it may be of interest to others. Questions as to how to justify this type of activity can arise. I would reply that for a small amount of staff time the library and its collections had been satisfactorily promoted to the local community, new material had been added to the collection, and some useful local contacts made.

Gay Sussex, Longsight Library, Manchester.

Who's Who in Greater Manchester

Contemporary biographical material about local worthies is often difficult to come by unless there is a local who's who. One covering Greater Manchester has now been compiled by the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society. It includes about 1300 names of people from all walks of life, many of whom will never get into the main "Who's Who". Although not an item for local studies libraries outside Greater Manchester, it is something that colleagues in reference departments might wish to know about.

"Who's Who in Greater Manchester" is obtainable from the offices of the Manchester Lit. and Phil. at 55 Brown St., Manchester M2 2JG price £3.50 plus 45p post and packing.

Chris E. Makepeace

Local Studies and the New Technology

A Weekend School to explore some modern techniques in local history, with a contrasting look at two old Lancashire Libraries.

Date: March 18th-20th 1983

Place: Fernlea Hotel, St. Annes-on-Sea, Lancashire

Fee: £70. Single bedrooms. Reduced rates for day and half-day visitors.

PROGRAMME

Friday 18th March

6 pm Assemble

8.30 pm M. Mullett, University of Lancaster — The library of an 18th century clergyman: The Burnley Grammar School Library at Lancaster.

Saturday, 19th March

9.15-10.30 am P. Smith, Centre for English Cultural Tradition and Language, University of Sheffield — Computers in dialect and folklore study.

10.45-12 noon Professor P. Hair, University of Liverpool — The Cheshire Parish Register Project.

2.00-5.00 pm Visit to Stonyhurst College Library. Stonyhurst College is an important Roman Catholic College associated with Stonyhurst since the late eighteenth century: it has a fine library.

7.30pm K. Howarth, Archivist, North West Sound Archive — Oral history and sound archives.

Sunday, 20th March

9.15-10.30 am E.R. Downer, Ordnance Survey — O.S. Maps with SUSI, SIM and chips.

10.45-12 noon M. Roper, Public Record Office — The archivist and the computer.

Members interested in attending this school are invited to contact Diana Winterbotham, The Lancashire Library, 143 Corporation Street, PRESTON, PR1 2TB. Tel: Preston (0772) 264021.

Notes and News

The Scottish Branch of the LSG will be holding a one-day school at Paisley Town Hall on Wednesday, 26th January, 1983. There will be papers on map collections, the Scottish Film Archive and the local studies resources of Renfrew District. The Branch AGM will also be held during the course. LSG members wishing to attend the school or the AGM should contact the Scottish Branch Secretary, Mr. Joe Fisher at the Glasgow Room, The Mitchell Library, North Street, GLASGOW G3 7DN.

The LSG is organising a meeting at Stamford on Thursday, 12th May 1983. The subject will be the potential value and the problems of early newspapers to local historians. At the morning session the present editor of the Lincolnshire Chronicle will speak about the launching of the Chronicle a hundred and fifty years ago. A professional journalist and a village correspondent will add their views on their work and on the role of newspapers in local studies today.

The afternoon session will provide ample opportunity for discussion on the problems encountered by librarians in conserving and indexing the newspapers in their own collections. Mike Petty will speak about the ways Cambridgeshire Libraries exploit their newspaper collection.

At the same time the Group hopes to organise a display of early newspapers from various counties, so that participants at the meeting can compare the coverage of information supplied by this source material in the 18th and 19th centuries in different parts of the East of England.

This should be an interesting and useful day in the town that is always associated with one of the earliest of local newspapers, the Stamford Mercury.

More information can be obtained from Elizabeth Melrose, The Reference Library, Free School Lane, Lincoln (0522 33541 ext. 23).

It is proposed that a branch of the LSG to cover London and the Home Counties be set up. Anyone interested should contact the Hon. Secretary of LSG, Paul Sturges at the Department of Library and Information Studies, Loughborough University of Technology, LOUGHBOROUGH, Leics. LE11 3TU.

Have you seen . . . ?

Some recent items of interest to local studies librarians

The British Library, Newspaper Library, Newsletter.

Twice a year.

While not concerned specifically with local studies, this publication includes various items of interest to librarians in the field. Issue 4 (summer 1982), for instance, includes some comments by librarians on the BL's draft proposals for national cooperation on local newspapers, a report of the LSG Newcastle meeting on newspapers and a note on the problems of variant editions of local newspapers. The current issue (no. 5) includes an account of the first fifty years of the Newspaper Library and an article on the types of research carried out at Colindale which includes examples of the use made of local newspapers.

The Newsletter is distributed free of charge. Apply to the British Library, newspaper Library, Colindale Avenue, LONDON NW9 5HE.

Bibliography of British Newspapers.

Edited by Charles A Toase.

Kent (07123 0007 4), £15; Northumberland and Durham (07123 008 2), £10.
British Library.

This bibliography commenced a number of years ago under the auspices of RSIS. For various reasons there were problems and delays in publication and the project was eventually taken over by the British Library which is now responsible for publication. The *Bibliography*, giving, as it does, a listing with locations, of all newspapers published in the county concerned, is a valuable aid to historians and librarians. We hope that steady progress will now be maintained in the production of the rest of the series.

Northern Labour History: A Bibliography.

Compiled by A. Potts and E.R. Jones

LA, RSIS, 1981. £18.00 (£22.50 to non-members) 0 85365 955 9

Orders to Mrs. F.A. Winkworth, 16 Springfield, Ovington, Northumberland, NE42 6EH.

This volume is a companion publication to the Northern Business Histories bibliography published in 1979 and its preparation was made possible by a grant from the Social Science Research Council. It attempts to cover the history of labour in the Northern region, here defined as Cleveland, Cumbria, Durham, Northumberland and Tyne & Wear, and the main sections deal with political movements, trade unions and individual trades. Sources cited are restricted to those directly related to the Northern region and references are only given to national organisations where they have a

direct association with the North. The compilers, however, have used various relevant national repositories as well as local organisations to provide information, and so a wide variety of sources, both primary and secondary, are cited. Locations are given for primary sources, but not, in general, for secondary ones which the compilers consider can be found in most public libraries.

This is a valuable list not only to local historians in the north-east, but to labour historians generally, and the Northern Group of RSIS is to be congratulated on its enterprise.

Reid, David.

Packages rule OK? *in* New Library World 83 (1989) November 1982, p. 161-2.

This article discusses the provision of local history information packages for branch libraries, schools etc.

Information wanted

"Printed Reference Material"

A new edition of the above work is being prepared and I have been asked to update and revise the chapter I wrote on local studies material. I should be grateful if members would let me know of any publications which they think might be considered for inclusion in this chapter and which I might have overlooked. This is particularly the case with new publications and local ones which illustrate specific points. Any member who wishes to draw my attention to such material should do so before the end of January 1983. I can be contacted on 061-247 3548 or at 5 Hilton Road, Disley, Cheshire SK12 2JU.

Chris E. Makepeace

One of our advertisers, Mr K.G. Carr of Pamlin Prints 73 Temple Road, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 1HW, is concerned about the fate of Motor Taxation records which in many cases seem to have been destroyed. He points out that these can be an invaluable means of identifying early vehicles. If anyone has any information or comments to make on the subject perhaps they would get in touch with him.

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