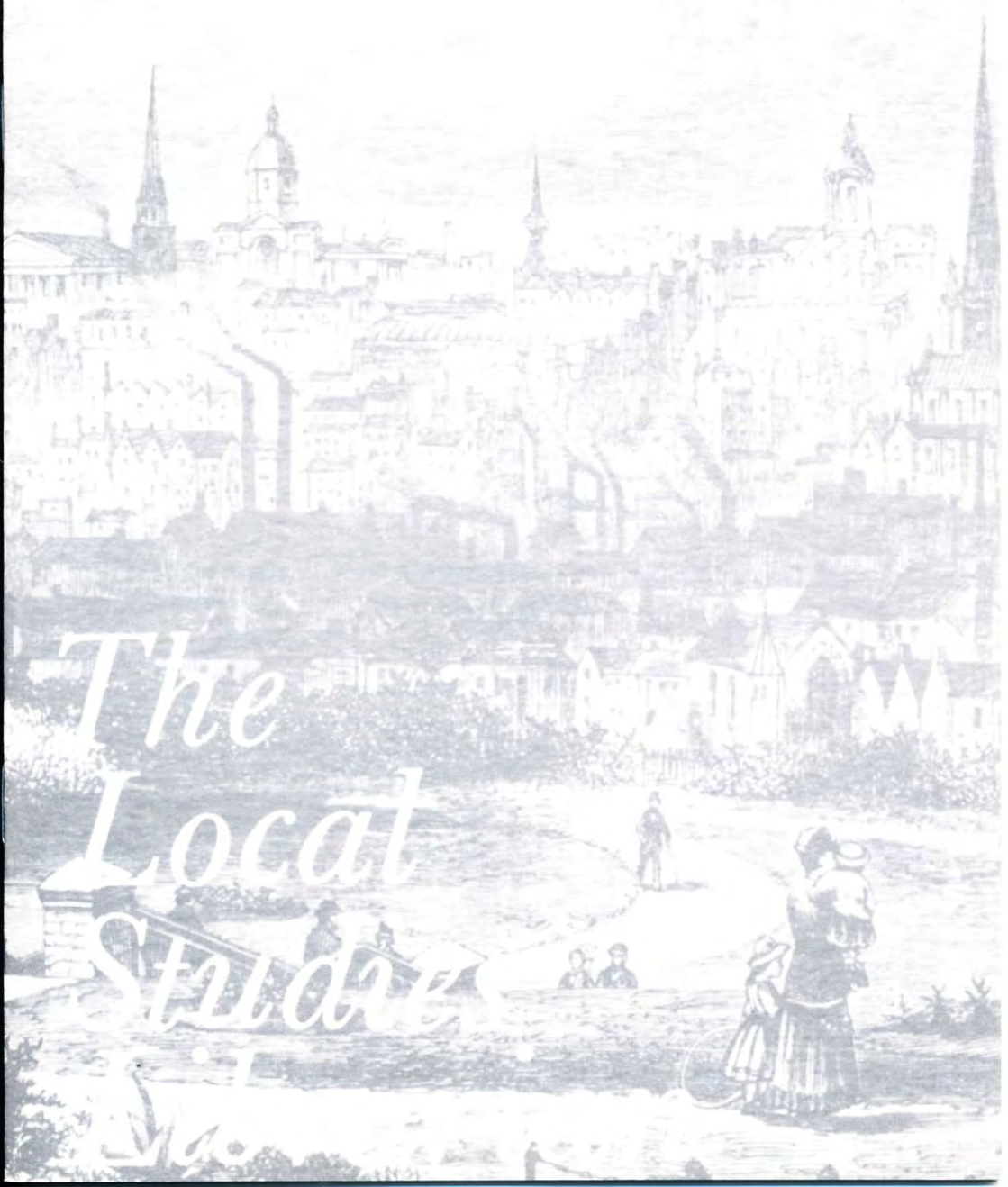


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Cover Illustration: *A view of Birmingham c. 1886*

Courtesy: *Local Studies Department, Birmingham Public Library*

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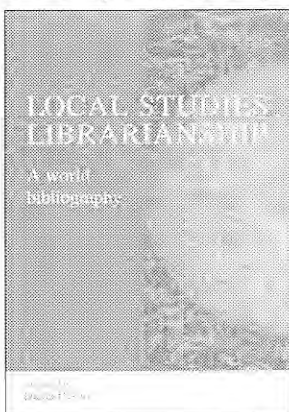
library association publishing

Local Studies Librarianship

A world bibliography

Diana Dixon, compiler for the LA Local Studies Group

As local studies and community information resources are increasingly seen as the unique assets of public library provision, this publication is particularly timely.



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- general works on local studies librarianship
- collection management – acquisitions, cataloguing, preservation, conservation and disaster planning
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- materials
- marketing and promotion
- ICT and local studies – digitization, the internet and CD-ROMs
- partnerships and co-operation
- indexes of authors and places.

October 2001; 288pp; paperback; 1-85604-307-X; £29.95 (£23.96 to LA Members)

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EDITORIAL

The Local Studies Group is now part of CILIP, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals. In addition to taking our place in the new setup, we are also celebrating our Silver Jubilee, the Group being founded in 1977 (although its inception was in 1972, when the late Dorothy McCulla called a meeting in Birmingham under the auspices of the RSIS, of which it became a subgroup). In the last 25 years there have been many changes in library practice which have impinged on local studies, most notably the widespread use of computers in so many ways. There have also been changes in local authority areas which have affected local studies collections. Throughout these 25 years, the Group has always attempted to aid local studies librarians by holding meetings and workshops and by publication, including *The Local Studies Librarian*, and we have recently published both a bibliography and a new edition of the Guidelines, both of which are reviewed in this issue. As far as we can tell at the moment, the Group will continue as before, with a remit to represent our members in all aspects of our local studies work – collecting material of all kinds, organising it, and exploiting it for the use of all members of the community. As we have pointed out before, the study of individual places is something which can bring together all the inhabitants, and promote social inclusion – indeed committee member Elizabeth Melrose is to present a paper on social inclusion at the Midlands and Anglia sub-group's Day School in September.

The necessity for local studies collections to act as the community memory is clearly stated in the article in this issue by Alan Crosby, and it is refreshing to see the views of a practising local historian on perceived problems with collections, mostly, as he says, not caused by the departmental librarians themselves, but by decisions made higher up the chain of command. Most of these comments could be echoed by local studies librarians somewhere and it is good to see support from outside the profession – it is not merely us whingeing!

Local studies librarians are always aware of the need to help users via direct services such as catalogues or by helping them in their work. Local History Week has provided a major opportunity to co-operate with other bodies and bring the existence and availability of collections to wider notice, and very many local studies libraries have taken advantage of this. However, perhaps we need to be much more vocal in emphasising to our employers the ways in which we can benefit the whole community and promote social inclusion as well as fitting into the government's policies concerning lifelong learning. Alan Crosby's article can only help us in our task of explaining this to those who would cut rather than expand our services. Even if libraries achieve the utopian dream of having all material from all libraries available at their terminals, there will still be a need for an intermediary to help users to find the most appropriate information for their needs – and this is where we come in.

LOCAL STUDIES COLLECTIONS

Alan Crosby

The continuing threats to the integrity and funding of county and borough local studies collections in libraries has recently been debated within the British Association for Local History, and nationally and locally there has been a series of campaigns to highlight this issue. Some have been prompted by specific crises, others by a more general concern for the future. Local studies collections face many problems. It would be wrong to suggest that in this they are uniquely unfortunate within library services, for many other aspects of the work of libraries have also been suffering – the future of the superb music library in Manchester Central Library, for example, has been a major point of heated controversy during the last three years. Nevertheless, local studies collections are as vulnerable as any, though their usership is precisely that at which policies of inclusivity should be targeted, and their future is all too often uncertain.

One of the problems which has often been identified is the way in which specialist staff, who have proper expertise in local history and related subjects, and who know their collections intimately, have been replaced by staff who can be, and are, employed in any part of the library and who have no special knowledge or experience. Specialist staffing of particular departments does not fit in with the current fashion for the interchangeability of personnel – itself a direct result of cost-cutting and staffing reductions. Probably quite a few readers will have experienced what I have not infrequently encountered – hearing a well-meaning but unknowledgeable member of library staff giving misleading or downright inaccurate information to an enquirer in a local studies section, simply because he or she does not 'know the ropes' and yet is heroically manning the desk alone.

The possibility of dispersal of special collections has often been raised as a threat. Local studies material is arguably less likely to suffer from this than some other categories (inevitably, perhaps, it is the valuable [i.e. 'we can raise some money by selling this junk'] or less frequently used [i.e. 'nobody will notice if we bin this lot'] resources which are likely to be affected). Local studies collections are not usually all that valuable in monetary terms, though beyond price in an intellectual and cultural sense, and they are reasonably well used, especially if the ever-popular family history resources are included as they certainly should be.

But their maintenance and upkeep, conservation and security, are all vital issues. I know of too many local studies libraries where books are badly-housed, pamphlets are crammed into acidic brown-paper envelopes, large quantities of material have gone missing, catalogues and indexes are hopelessly inadequate, and security is minimal. There are too many libraries where keeping the local collection up to date seems to be largely a matter of getting this year's *Yellow Pages*, putting the free newspapers in the racks and buying the latest cheap and flimsy books: 'chilling' ghost stories, murders and true crime. The runs of periodicals and journals are stopped as an economy measure, and the undoubtedly expensive but relevant and essential 'proper' books do not appear. This paints a depressing picture, yet is it far from the truth? How often does quickly-outdated technological wizardry – 'see XYZ on-line' – seem to receive all the money, while the old-fashioned and unglamorous books, papers and pamphlets are neglected, and deteriorating.

Many readers will be able to point to shining examples to the contrary, and that is good. I do not (usually) blame the librarians who work in local studies collections for this state of affairs, but rather the service chiefs who are seduced by technology and who forget their own first principles that they learned, or should have learned, thirty years ago when they were tidying the shelves in the small branch library. Today they are the ones persuaded by the glamour of screens and keyboards, fancy glazing and in-library cafes (or, in the case of the new Norwich library, pizza restaurants), potted plants and internet access. Yes, libraries should be attractive, welcoming places. Yes, they should be full of the new media. And yes,

I say with feeling, they need to be places where a serious researcher can spend a day, a penny and a pound or two on food and drink. But all this should not be at the expense of books, paper, print, ink, bindings, pages to touch rather than pages on the screen, staff who know the subject rather than bored individuals who simply direct you to a terminal and say, more or less in these words, 'Dunno, you'll have to look there'. Printed books have been with us for half a millennium, paper and parchment and ink for centuries more. No civilised society should throw all that away for the sake of some computer equipment which will be out of date by three weeks next Tuesday, a plethora of unchecked and unvetted internet data, and library staff who have been downgraded to serve merely as receptionists. Support your local studies collection. Campaign for its proper funding. Make sure it is used and publicised. Fight for its continuation as one of the cornerstones of Britain's proud and honourable tradition of free accessible public library excellence.

Alan Crosby is the editor of Local History News, the magazine of the British Association for Local History. This article first appeared in Issue no.62, Spring 2002, pp2-3, and is reproduced by permission.

OUR UNTOLD STORIES: the Gloucestershire minority ethnic group history project

Nasreen Akhtar

The *Our Untold Stories* project started at an exciting time at the advent of the new millennium. The opportunity could not be missed to document, for the first time, the contribution made over the last fifty years by the three main (African-Caribbean, Asian and Chinese) ethnic communities in Gloucestershire. Ethnic Minority history and settlement in Gloucestershire was an area which I felt was lacking in research, and this project provided an opportunity for the older generation to share their experiences of settling in a strange country and how they became part of it. These individual stories are published in a book alongside general information about the local minority ethnic communities. There are also photographic records, a CD Rom and a website to support the project. Because of its importance and the number of partners and sponsors it was able to call upon during the course of the project, *Our Untold Stories* was the winner of the Sponsorship and Partnership category of the Library Association/Emerald Intelligence+Fulltext Public Relations and Publicity Awards 2000.

This was the first project of its kind in the county. I initiated it because there was a paucity of original information to offer to people who wanted to find out about local ethnic history that mattered to them. I realised, however that we would need researchers and funding to put the books together. The first step was to draft the aims and objectives of the project. I discussed my plans with the County Library Arts and Museums Service, and then with the other departments of the County Council, the City Council and minority ethnic groups. After making sure of support from these organisations I established a working group and produced a written constitution for it. A work plan and costings for the project were devised. With the help of the working group and Library Services I managed to obtain resources from the County, City Council, GlosCAT, the Local Education Department and a variety of charitable trusts. In fact we were very successful in obtaining funding for the history project: only one application was turned down and some sources offered more funding than had been requested.

Having secured funding, job descriptions were drawn up and six paid researchers, who were mainly unemployed or students with dual skills, were recruited from various communities. In September 1999 we arranged a successful two-day training course for the researchers to help them develop new skills. In this training course we introduced the project aims, research methods, chapter and story writing techniques, as well as the recording of oral history and interview techniques. Specialist trainers from London and Manchester and local trainers from BBC Radio, GlosCAT and Archives were involved. They produced a helpful basic list of appropriate questions based on those used in a similar project, *The Origins in Bristol*, and the BBC Millennium oral history project *The Century Speaks*. Meanwhile, equipment for recording was purchased and provided.

It was planned to produce a book with a chapter on each community, focusing primarily on Gloucestershire but with some information about the UK generally. Most of the interviews were conducted with elderly people in their own languages, so after recording the interview the researchers had to translate it into English. This was a time consuming process with one hour interviews, on average, taking as long as ten hours to translate. The working group and the researchers had regular meetings to discuss problems and progress. One difficulty that came up was making contact with members of the Chinese community by telephone. This was resolved by the two Chinese researchers using personal contacts as an introduction instead. Other issues included the fact that some of the interviewees gave useful information and stories but they did not want their names mentioned in the book. Also, in telling their true stories some withheld information for personal, legal or political reasons. Despite working through these realities of the interviewing process, the researchers made wonderful progress, finding it hard but interesting work. Gloucestershire County Library Arts and Museums Service helped enormously by providing relevant resource material and created a special collection for the researchers.

A leaflet was produced to introduce this project to the general public. Talks and displays were arranged. The local media were involved: very good coverage was given in the local press and on BBC Radio Gloucestershire.

Promotional activities and publications

While the researchers were working on the project I took the opportunity to promote it further into local community groups and involved them in arranging "Faith, Arts and Culture: Our Heritage" programmes - Chinese New Year celebrations, Qawwali (Sufi Mystic Poetry) Live Entertainment, an Asian Musical Evening and a Gospel singing performance were arranged with Chinese, Asian, and African-Caribbean community groups. These programmes were generously supported by Gloucestershire County Library Arts & Museums Service, Gloucester City Council and BBC Radio Gloucestershire.

Photographs for the project were taken by a professional photographer from the local newspaper (The Citizen). A graphic designer from the Gloucestershire County Library produced a fantastic exhibition of these photographs. This was used in the County Council's Equalities Week (2000-2001) and also travelled to the Guildhall Arts Centre, Olympus Theatre, various Community Centres in Gloucester, the Forest of Dean, Stroud and Tewkesbury areas.

Some of the interviewees' voices and photographs were used for the display called "Ten voices of the County" at the Cheltenham Literature Festival. I was asked to deliver talks at National Conferences organised by Arts Shape and the Library Association as well as South West Arts in Cheltenham, and in Manchester and Bristol.

Our Untold Stories: The Chinese Community in Gloucestershire is the first book published in this national award winning project. This is also the first printed record of Chinese people's experiences of arriving in Britain as first generation immigrants more than half a century ago. The book charts the lives of four local residents as they make their way from various parts of China to the county, often being the only Chinese family in their street. Their stories offer a fascinating insight into the challenges they faced and their attempts to adapt to a new culture whilst trying to retain their own. For instance, Frank Wing Yow Soo tells in his story how his father got off a boat thinking it was America, but it was in fact Liverpool. His family bought the one and only Chinese laundry in the county in Cheltenham and in 1958 his father opened the first Chinese restaurant in the town.

Our Untold Stories: the African-Caribbean Community in Gloucestershire, was released as the second in a series of cultural history books. Gail Johnson, the researcher for this book, said to the local Press "Caribbean people have played a vital role in the history of Britain

and the City of Gloucester, and their story must not be lost as the elders in the community pass away. Moreover, their contribution continues to be made, and I will continue to ensure that it is remembered". This book spans a wide range of subjects from the First World War to building a community. It gives a historical perspective, with records of Black and African-Caribbean People in Gloucestershire dating back to November 22, 1603.

A History of the Asian people in Gloucestershire is going to be launched in October 2002 (Black History month). Multilingual researchers interviewed community members and recorded very interesting stories of the people whose culture, religion, customs, language and taste of good food was totally different from that of the host community. What made them feel at home in a strange country? You can find out by reading their life stories. This book will deal with several different groups and the sacrifices and hardships they experienced in order to settle in Gloucestershire. There is an enormous depth of emotion when people talk about their lives, achievements, losses and regrets, the lessons they have learned and their advice to the second and third generation of British Asians. It is true to say there is nowhere like your homeland, and many whose stories you will read have left it behind never to return.

I hope these books will preserve our great cultural diversity in Gloucestershire and enhance mutual respect and understanding between cultures. Our aim throughout the project has been to create a valuable educational resource. It has already inspired many schools, colleges and community groups to carry out history recording at a local level and I am pleased to promote their efforts alongside the *Our Untold Stories* project in the Gloucester City Museum. Publicity will be arranged for all these smaller groups and I will provide full co-operation to them to work with the project.

I feel that *Our Untold Stories* is one of the most worthwhile things I have ever done. A big thanks goes to all the people and funding providers who helped my dream come true!

Nasreen Akhtar is Senior Librarian, Ethnic Services, Gloucestershire County Libraries.

ARCHIVE 2000: DUDLEY LIBRARIES AWARD WINNING MILLENNIUM PROJECT

Liz Woodcock

In 1996 Dudley MBC set up a small Millennium fund and all departments were encouraged to bid for a share of the pot. Dudley Libraries Promotions Team had already been discussing a small local history project for the millennium, which would highlight the photographic collections in our individual libraries and our Archives and Local History Service. A successful bid for money from this fund gave us the start we needed.

The aim of the project was to make a collection of photographs recording Dudley Borough in the year 2000 and if finances permitted, to produce a book of some of the best photographs submitted. At the same time we would encourage members of the public to donate or lend old photographs of the area for copying and adding to our collections.

We had start-up money but we knew that we would need more than this if the project took off and we had hundreds of photographs to copy and store for posterity. So we set about looking for further sponsors for the project. A sponsorship proposal was sent to local and national businesses, and resulted in us obtaining one major sponsor. Dunns Imaging Plc, a local photographic and reprographic firm, was keen to link with us in what they saw as a very exciting project. They offered to provide us with a copy of each photograph submitted as well as a negative; they designed the publicity for us and supplied us with a large mounted poster for each of our 18 libraries.

So **Archive 2000** got under way. We asked members of the public to take snapshots of their home, their street, school, place of work or leisure, in fact anything they felt would add to a picture of Dudley in the year 2000. We wanted *everyone* to feel they could contribute, whatever their age or ability. We felt some competitive element would give an added incentive to joining in the project but we didn't want people to think of it as a "photographic" competition, so we decided to have a prize draw at the end of the year, for all contributors. Again, we managed to find sponsors for the prizes from local photographic stores and they, along with our main sponsors, attended the prize giving ceremony and presented the prizes. The project was promoted in all the libraries in the borough. Extra display materials were purchased and staff mounted eye-catching displays to draw attention to the project. Libraries became the collection points for all the photographs and these were displayed in the libraries until the time came for the prize draw.

From a series of press releases we gained valuable publicity from the local press and also had a slot on local radio, with a member of staff being interviewed about the project by local celebrity historian, Carl Chinn. Schools and local societies, particularly Historical and Photographic societies were canvassed.

It wasn't all plain sailing. We needed to find a way of keeping interest in the project throughout the year both with the public and with the staff who we relied on to promote the project in their area. Initially, we had themes for each month suggesting that people would like to take photographs of sporting events one month or work and school another, but this proved difficult to keep going, as it involved a lot of staff time doing displays and publicity. However, our department's marketing section managed to get considerable media attention using this themed approach. Setting up the project also took a lot of time and organisation, particularly in ensuring that those photographs which were on loan to us were kept safely and returned to the correct lender after being copied.

In the end we had approximately 2500 photographs to add to our collections. Photographs have come from nearly all areas of the borough. Some members of the public really took the project to their heart and gave us photographs throughout the year, while others brought in photographs of single events. We had many straightforward shots of the area but we also had wonderful slices of life in the borough such as a picture of three ladies having their hair done at the local hairdressers and council workers mowing the lawns in the public parks, just what we had hoped for!

We also received many old photographs of the borough; some were donated, others were lent to us. We had a large set of slides of one area given to us, and again Dunns, our sponsors, made hard copies for us: they are now mounted and stored in our archives and local history department.

At the end of the year 2002 we gathered all the photographs together and put the names of contributors into a hat and our sponsors came to draw the winning tickets. We then had a prize giving evening to which the press and local MPs and councillors were invited. Again our sponsors were on hand to present the prizes. It was an enjoyable evening, which rounded off what, we now realised, was the first stage of our project.

We were proud of what we achieved through the hard work of all the library staff and the support of the public, the press and of course our sponsors, so when the opportunity came to enter the Library Association/Emerald Intelligence+Fulltext Public Relations Awards 2001 we decided to go for it! We entered Archive 2000 in the Sponsorship and Partnership section. This was the first time we had entered for an award such as this and we were not sure what the standard of entry would be or whether we stood a chance and so we were absolutely thrilled when we heard that we had won! As well as giving us another opportunity to promote our services it was a wonderful tribute to staff and sponsors and to the generosity of the public who took the time to take photographs and donated them to the library service.

So where do we go from here? Most of the photographs have been mounted and catalogued now and we are selecting photographs for the book. However we have been delayed by pressures of time, as ever! We also need to find funding. Sponsorship may be the answer again.

We have learnt a great deal over the last few years with Archive 2000 but the main thing has been how linking with local business and the press can make a simple idea evolve into a large project which has involved the whole community and raised the profile of the Library and Archives Service within it.

Liz Woodcock is Assistant Head of Libraries, Dudley MBC

EMERGENCY PLANNING: report of a workshop

Eleanor Nannestad

This workshop was organised by the Midlands and Anglia Branch of the Local Studies Group and was held at Sutton Coldfield on November 21, 2001. There was an excellent attendance and it was generally agreed to be a useful day for the participants. There were three papers on aspects of emergency planning; there was a small amount of overlap in some places, but this just reinforces some of the main points discussed.

Why have a disaster plan? Clive Wilkins-Jones, Norfolk Libraries

To put the need for a disaster plan into context, the speaker reminded us of the Norwich library fire in 1994, and its repercussions. Despite this disaster, a remarkable amount of material was saved, yet staff experienced a great sense of loss, in some cases almost equivalent to bereavement. Libraries should be prepared for the worst, while much of the advice which can be given on disaster management ultimately comes down to common sense.

There followed some 'dos' and 'dons' from Norwich's experience:

- Don't have mezzanine floors, which encourage the spread of fire due to the large amount of air circulating;
- do have metal rather than wooden map cabinets, and make sure drawers are always kept shut tight, so that there is less air to circulate – the maps in Norwich's metal cabinets survived;
- do have doors in the stairwells on every floor;
- do have a sprinkler system;
- do microfilm/digitise or otherwise copy all unique material including facsimile copies, or photographs of bindings, bookplates and inscriptions of rare books;
- do keep negatives in a separate location from the positive images they relate to – fortunately, just before the fire, Norwich had moved some of their photographs from the 1850s away from the main Local Studies Collection, so they survived;
- do identify the particularly valuable material and house it in a more secure environment – much of the Colman collection, which was kept behind reinforced glass as a security measure, survived. Likewise, boxed material at Norfolk Record Office (in the basement of the building) remained largely undamaged, despite the volume of water which cascaded down from above as the fire was extinguished. The unboxed material, still being worked on, suffered much greater damage;
- do copy as many card catalogues and finding aids, including research notes, as possible, and store the copies away from the originals. Although microfilming or copying catalogues can be expensive, these often represent years of staff work, and are immeasurably useful;
- do catalogue rare items fully – good catalogues should record things like grangerisation and marginal notes;

- do have collections valued at regular intervals, ideally every five years, for insurance purposes. It would be unrealistic to have every item valued, so the more valuable/unique items should be picked out. The replacement costs are surprisingly high, and increase regularly;
- Finally, although it is certainly not recommended practice, the fact that the books at Norwich were packed tightly on the shelves, because of space restrictions, limited the fire damage because there was less air circulating.

As far as Norwich was concerned, the biggest problem was conservation and repair, as the majority of books were damaged, but not beyond repair – they had 8,000 volumes which 'deserved further work'. The first problem is to identify where damaged books can be stored while they are still warm, and the ideal location would be local, within a few miles of the library. It is likely that after a fire has been extinguished, more items will be water damaged than fire damaged, so access to sufficient deep freeze accommodation will be needed. It is likely that several conservators will be needed following a large fire, and some work will need specialist conservation. All conservation work will need a precisely worded contract – conservators usually do what they are instructed to do, but no more: they will not know the significance and value of specific items unless they are told. Conservation is also an opportunity for security tags to be put into material while it is being repaired. It is a lengthy process – after 7 years, material damaged in the fire of 1994 is still being repaired.

Emergency planning for museums, libraries and archives in the East Midlands: Amanda Wallace, East Midlands Museums Service

As Amanda Wallace was unable to attend, Joan Bray delivered this talk with the help of Amanda's OHPs and handouts. The role of the Regional Emergency Disaster Squad (REDS) was outlined. This is available to museums, libraries and record offices in the East Midlands, and is co-ordinated by the East Midlands Museum Service. Members have to commit to having a disaster plan in place on each site, and have access to a 24 hour call-out service in the event of an emergency which requires immediate response or specialist conservation. There are 12 REDS squad members spread throughout the region and each has access to a stockpile of emergency salvage materials, and has a 'flight bag' (with protective clothing and equipment for an emergency), at their home, available at any time of day or night. When an emergency call comes, they will ask for details of the person calling, and the location and nature of the incident, so that they can assess whether other squad members need to be called. The REDS squad regularly review the contents of their stockpiles, and hold training days, which include practical exercises – for instance how to cope with a flood. Emergency manuals are issued to all REDS members, who should ensure that copies are stored both on and off site. These give plans of sites, risk advice, recommendations about stockpiles, and contact details in case of an emergency. The third edition of the manual is now available on CD-ROM, and is recommended as a template for an emergency plan, including sites which have not signed up to the REDS scheme. Non-members can purchase copies for around £30. It is hoped to continue the REDS scheme through Resource: the Council for Museums, Libraries and Archives after EMMS has dissolved.

Planning for a disaster: Joan Bray, Nottingham City Libraries

At the start of her talk Joan recommended a British Library Research Report which gives useful disaster guidelines on disaster management (1). She then went on to discuss some practical steps in producing a plan for the management of a disaster. The first step is to identify the risk to the collection from the building, checking for correct humidity and temperatures (local archives offices may have machinery for testing these) and lighting levels: other risk factors include pollution (eg dust, gas), pests such as bugs or rodents (which would be killed off in a deep freeze!), the location of water pipes, threats of collapsing

structures, theft and vandalism, floods and fire. Risks can then be reduced by moving items, boxing them or covering them. When assessing a collection, unique rather than expensive items should be identified. These should include card catalogues, indexes and scrapbooks, and the risk to these will be reduced if copies of these items are made. Boxing unique material not only preserves it by keeping it dust free, but will also keep it dry for longer in the event of water damage.

Being prepared for a disaster involves having some basic supplies for an emergency in an accessible place. Most important is communicating your plans to the relevant people: have a list of the people, both internal and external, that you should inform. As well as local studies staff, remember that caretakers, keyholders and administrative officers are likely to be first on the scene following a disaster. Basic procedures can be included in regular fire evacuation practices. Fluorescent tape that can be seen through smoke could be attached to items, such as catalogue cards, which should be saved first in an emergency. Firefighters can often redirect a fire, even when they are unable to extinguish it, and may be able to divert flames from the most vulnerable areas, provided that they know where these areas are.

To sum up, avoid exposure to risk; if you cannot avoid it, block it: if the worst happens, make a swift response, and try to recover as much as possible, always remembering that however valuable the stock, human lives are the priority.

Eleanor Nannestad is Community Librarian, Information, Lincoln Central Library.

Reference. 1. *Disaster management in British Libraries: a report.* The British Library, 1996. x,176pp. ISBN 0712333061. (Library and Information Research Report 109).

CREATING A PERMANENT DIGITAL ARCHIVE OF LOCAL MATERIALS: A SLIC FUNDED PROJECT

Stephen Winch

Like many public libraries East Dunbartonshire has acquired a large number of historic resources relating to the history of its local area. For the last thirty years the Information & Archives Section has actively sought photographs of the surrounding area, both through donations and by means of photographic surveys. Today, the library boasts a collection of around thirty thousand photographs and a large collection of personal papers and ephemera.

At the William Patrick Library in Kirkintilloch access to the photographic archive has been encouraged by providing several thousand copy-prints that can be browsed by library users. Access to the special collections is available by request, although there is always a concern for the fragility of unique items. Given the resources at our disposal it is logical that we have looked towards the possibilities of digitisation to allow new forms of access and preservation.

East Dunbartonshire's first experience of digitisation came from involvement with SCRAN (Scottish Cultural Resource Access Network), which has made available over a million images relating to Scottish culture and history. This scheme enabled institutions to digitise resources by supplying 35mm film or slides of resources to a bureau that digitised them onto Kodak Photo CD. This was accompanied with a catalogue entry prepared on an Access template supplied by SCRAN. More recently East Dunbartonshire has been involved with the *no-f-digitise* scheme through Resources for Learning Scotland (RLS), a consortia of libraries working together under the guidance of SCRAN and the National Library of Scotland. This scheme has been set up in a similar way to the SCRAN project and allows Scottish libraries to digitise material without having to host the digital items.

These projects have enabled East Dunbartonshire to become involved in digitisation, although other institutions control the final product. This means that we cannot add or remove items as we choose and the choice of what is digitised is dictated by the funding bodies, usually around narrow subject categories. To enable us to look beyond the SCRAN/NOF/RLS schemes, the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) funded a project entitled *Creating a Permanent Digital Archive of Local Materials*, which sought to examine options for creating digital collections that would be affordable and sustainable for smaller local authorities. The research also involved investigation of the viability of digital preservation for digital and analogue resources.

On the commencement of the project we first looked at the guidelines available to institutions for creating digital collections. What is striking about these is that there is little agreement over standards for imaging, cataloguing format or preservation. The government had recently published its e-Gif framework, which sets out standards for information published on the web by government departments and local authorities. On top of requirements for file formats, the guidelines state that all metadata (cataloguing data) should be created in a Dublin Core format (a 15 element standard commonly used for web resources) and be held in XML web pages. The project funders, SLIC, have suggested that Scottish libraries should use MARC21 to catalogue digital items to maintain quality records and to facilitate CAIRNS (Co-operative Academic Information Retrieval Network for Scotland), a virtual union catalogue that allows cross searching of the major Scottish library catalogues.

In attempting to reconcile these two conflicting methods of cataloguing we sought advice from the Centre for Digital Library Research (CDLR). They suggested the use of CORC (Cooperative Online Resource Catalog), a service provided by OCLC for cataloguing web pages. Like OCLC's WorldCat, CORC facilitates sharing of catalogue records, but it is only web pages that can be catalogued. Resources are catalogued online in MARC21 or in Dublin Core. The resulting record is stored on the WorldCat and can be converted and downloaded in either format. By using CORC East Dunbartonshire can create a high quality MARC record that can be downloaded into its library catalogue. At the same time the record is available for other institutions to download from OCLC. To meet e-Gif guidelines the same record could be downloaded in a Dublin Core RDF version (RDF being an XML encoding) which could be used to construct a searchable database on the Council website.

There is an ongoing debate about which metadata formats will stand the test of time for Internet resources. By using MARC, the records are held in a format that is well supported throughout the world and that can be integrated into library catalogues. The complex nature of MARC also provides a safeguard for the record's future, as it is far easier to convert a complex record format into a simpler one than the other way round. It can also be said that by using AACR2 and recognised subject headings a better quality of record is produced. In Scotland, virtual union catalogues such as CAIRNS have been established, allowing cross searching of many catalogues at once. For such catalogues to be a success a common cataloguing format and set standards for completing them are needed.

Another area that was of importance for the project was digital preservation. We concluded that at present there is an uncertainty regarding the lifespan of digital objects and it would be unwise to rely on any form of digital preservation for the foreseeable future. Although CD-ROMs have an expected lifespan of 100 years, the file formats used to save images may only have a 10-15 year life. Equally the software needed to read specific file formats is also likely to change, suggesting that files, although perfectly preserved, might not be readable in years to come. East Dunbartonshire has kept a comprehensive backup of 35mm negatives of its photographic collection since its inception. It was concluded that the expected lifespan of 75 years for negative film kept under proper conditions provides a safer bet than the untested longevity of digital alternatives.

Concerns for the lifespan of file formats also led the project to recommend the use of non-proprietary file formats such as TIFF and JPEG. At East Dunbartonshire there has been use of Kodak's PCD format, which has provided a cheap way into the world of digitisation. However, there is a danger that this format could be altered or discontinued by the Kodak Company, leaving the library with images held in an obsolete format. To prevent this, a precautionary conversion of files to non-proprietary formats was recommended.

Even if digital preservation is backed up by the use of traditional filming of resources it is still in the interest of libraries to prolong the lifespan of digital assets that they create. Given the rate of change in the world of IT, it must be remembered that digitising a photograph or a piece of ephemera is not necessarily a one-off cost. A routine for refreshing resources is also an important part of a digitisation project. Migrating files to new formats can prevent redundancy and so a regular reassessment of files and formats should be built into any digitisation project.

Along with researching options available to a library when embarking on a programme of digitisation we digitised and catalogued a sample from our collections. Using CORC was a challenge as there was no experience of MARC cataloguing within the library. A template was developed to simplify the cataloguing process and this may be of interest to other institutions considering a similar path. The project encountered difficulties in getting the images onto the local authority web site due to cost and technical difficulties but it is to be hoped that these will be sorted out in the near future.

Digitisation involves considerable expense, especially during the development of a methodology and in staff training and time. Any local authority looking to develop a digital archive needs to be fully aware of all operating costs and the need to create a service that is maintainable under current funding. The methodology outlined in the report provides options that could be used in creating a digital archive for local studies materials. Given the unique nature of these resources it seems likely that there will be an increasing interest in widening access to these items through digitisation schemes.

The *Creating a Permanent Digital Archive of Local Materials* report by Don Martin and Stephen Winch is available from East Dunbartonshire Libraries (2 West High Street, Kirkintilloch, G66 1AD) for £3.00, post free, and is available as a PDF file online at: <http://www.slainte.org.uk/slicpubs/cpdalm.pdf>

Stephen Winch is Project Researcher, East Dunbartonshire Libraries

Selected References

Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC): <http://www.slainte.org.uk>
CAIRNS: <http:// Cairns.lib.gla.ac.uk/>
SCRAN: <http://www.scran.ac.uk/homepage/>
OCLC: <http://www.oclc.org/home/>

INDEXING LOCAL STUDIES COLLECTIONS: A WORKSHOP FOR LOCAL HISTORY GROUPS

Ian Maxted

On 9 May during local History Week a workshop was held in Exeter Central Library by the Local studies Service of Devon Library and Information Services. Nothing strange in that perhaps, and it proved to be one of the most successful of Devon's activities during a busy week which included several talks and displays. What is somewhat unusual, however, is that the subject was indexing local studies collections and the audience was not library staff but the general public. It was clear that there were many local history groups across the county busy collecting material to build what are misleadingly termed community archives, and the millennium seems to have given an added impetus to this. On several occasions the local studies staff have been approached for guidance in developing these collections and it was clear that there was a need for some form of training. The workshop was advertised on the web, through press releases and on Devon's monthly web-based local studies newsletter which reaches representatives of a number of local history groups by e-mail notification. Teams from two local history groups and several individuals attended, a total of a dozen people, a good number for such a trial run.

The workshop was not tied to the practices of any one domain in the heritage sector, nor was it linked to any specific type of software, nor indeed to computer based indexing as opposed to manual indexing. The aim was to introduce the general principles of listing and indexing, drawing attention to the different traditions of indexing in libraries, museums and archives. The workshop then sought the basic principles which underlie all approaches to indexing and which have been addressed through such projects as the Dublin Core initiative. From there it was possible to suggest a basic record structure and discuss principles for subject indexing. At the close of the workshop a number of sample documents were used to demonstrate how these ideas could be applied in practice. Whole areas were only touched on briefly – for example the question of thesauri – even though Devon is working on a lengthy taxonomy of local studies terms. There was no attempt to be too prescriptive and it was stressed that there was often no single correct answer when indexing individual documents.

It was a risky undertaking – after all, “cat and class” was for many students one of the most obscure facets of study at library school, and indeed in some library school courses today it is scarcely touched on. How would the general public survive a ninety-minute session without their minds being boggled? In the event those attending were highly motivated and, from the pertinence of their questions, showed that they appreciated and understood the issues involved. The workshop notes were revised as a result of comments on some points of detail and it is hoped to use them again to train other groups. In the meantime they can be seen on Devon's website at <http://www.devon.gov.uk/library/locstudy/indexlec.html> – just in case anyone else wishes to attempt a similar event. Any comments would be gratefully received, but remember that it is not intended as a full textbook – after all we wish to encourage such voluntary work and not to frighten people off by making it all sound too complex. The important thing is that what local history groups produce should be properly structured and thus be useful and accessible to others.

Ian Maxted is County Local Studies Librarian, Devon Library Services, and Chairman of the Local Studies Group.

HELP WANTED

Networking Digital Mapping

Martin Hayes, Principal Librarian, Local Studies, West Sussex C.C. Library Service, writes that the service is considering the introduction of a digital mapping service to all 35 of our libraries. We hope to start with current data received on CD from Ordnance Survey under the local authority S.L.A. (Service Level Agreement) and eventually include historical mapping later. Library staff are discussing the project with colleagues from the County Council's Information & Communication Technology Services department. We have a pilot scheme at one library with the data loaded on the hard disk of a single PC, which has worked well.

However, the main issue we are trying to resolve is how to deliver the data most efficiently to libraries. The options include loading onto each hard disk, duplicating CD-Roms or, ideally networking. I would greatly appreciate any advice on data delivery from anyone (whether working in libraries, or ICT, or planning departments or similar) with experience in setting up similar systems.

If you have any information or advice please contact me

c/o Worthing Library, Richmond Road, Worthing, West Sussex, BN11 1HD
Telephone 01903 212414 E-mail: martin.hayes@west.sussex.gov.uk

FROM OUR CILIP COUNCILLOR

To be elected to the Council of the new CILIP representing the Local Studies Group has been a rare honour and I hope I can play my part well over the next year. As a very new Councillor I attended the reception marking the launch of our new organisation at the end of March. This treat was held at the Globe Theatre and I was able to spend some valuable time there with our previous distinguished Councillor, Albert Hartley. He was able to give me some advice about the amount of paperwork that would be coming my way.

The first official Council meeting began with a choice of many different blends of coffee in the International Coffee organisation building – a welcome start to an induction session on the work of Council through its committees, panels and boards. Lots were drawn from a velveteen bag to determine the term of office of each Councillor and I was confirmed for one year. I will have to be very assiduous with the paperwork to make an impression on behalf of our Group by March 2003.

I have been put on the Professional Development Committee and, just as Albert Hartley foresaw, I have already been sent lengthy reports on which to comment. The first was very pertinent to local studies librarians and concerned the CILIP response to proposed regulations on access to electoral registers. Here I was able to give local examples of inconsistencies of approach by Electoral Registration Officers to public access or to the concept of 'previous' editions. The second was on the draft CILIP response to a consultation paper on a national strategy for local e-government.

So far I have learned far more from reading the documentation than I have been able to deliver, but I hope that any member at all of the Local Studies Group will contact me should they have any issues that they might wish to be raised at Council level or any subjects that they would like to talk over with me.

Elizabeth Melrose, CILIP Councillor.
Tel: 01609 767800,
email elizabeth.melrose@northyorks.gov.uk



Chartered Institute of
Library and Information
Professionals

LOCAL STUDIES GROUP AGM

Our Annual General Meeting this year will be held on Wednesday 18 September at Alfreton Library, Severn Square, Alfreton, Derbyshire, at 1.00pm. It will take place during our Midlands and Anglia sub-group's annual Day School, which is on *Local Studies and Social Inclusion*. **All** LSG members are entitled to attend the AGM itself free of charge. However, we feel that the Day School itself will be of interest to many of our members, and attendance for the whole day is welcomed. The cost of the Day School is £28.00 + VAT (total cost £32.90).

For further details contact Eleanor Nannestad at Lincoln Central Library, Free School Lane, Lincoln, NE2 1EZ, tel 01522 510800, email eleanor.nannestad@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

For any information about the AGM, contact our Hon. Secretary, Diana Dixon, at 11 Cautley Road, Southwold, Suffolk IP18 6DD, email diana.dixon@la-hq.org.uk

TREASURER'S REPORT

These accounts cover a fifteen month period, instead of the usual calendar year, to show the position when we became the Local Studies Group of CILIP, in succession to the L.A.

You may recall, in my last Report, my advice about becoming too delighted at our then artificial surplus at 31st December 2000, caused by the very late receipt from the L.A. of the agreed Grant towards our Bibliography expenses. The relevant expenses to date have virtually used up this Grant, and there may be more to come.

The deficit therefore should come as no surprise. The fact that it is a round figure is purely coincidental.

These accounts include the cost of three issues of the LOCAL STUDIES LIBRARIAN, against one only last time, a difference of nearly £2600), so these results are, at worst, not bad.

Our Main Group, along with our five active Sub-Groups, remains in a very healthy financial state, without holding funds in excess of what the L.A. (now CILIP) recommend.

Philip Thomas,
Hon. Treasurer

Income and Expenditure Account for the period
1 st January 2001 - 31st March 2002

<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>£</u>
Nett V.A.T. on Goods & Services	33.86	Capitation	6463.00
LOCAL STUDIES LIBRARIAN (3 issues):			
Printing & Distribution	£4493.97		
LESS Subscriptions, Sales.			
Advertising & Inserts	£517.00 3976.97	Umbrella SIX:	
Main Committee (4 Mtgs) Exes	1843.76	Share of Surplus	£1038.00
Officers' Exes (at Outside Mtgs)	376.52	LESS Expenses	£362.52 675.48
Membership Services	0.95		
Stationery & Photocopying	307.35	LSL. Index - Sales	1.00
Postages, Phone Calls,			
Faxes & e-mails	241.11		
McCulla Award: Award	£100.00	Interest Received:	
Incidental Exes	£40.46 140.46	Bank Current a/c	£3.17
Bibliography Research Exes	1410.37	Charities Deposit	£293.30 296.47
Guidelines Sub-Committee	13.03		
International Relations	5.68		£7435.95
Nett Payments to/for Sub-Groups	685.89	DEFICIT for period, carried	
	£9035.95	down to Balance Sheet	1600.00
			£9035.95

BALANCE SHEET of the LOCAL STUDIES GROUP
as at 31st March 2002

<u>LIABILITIES</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>ASSETS</u>	<u>£</u>
Accumulated Surplus as at		Balance in Bank Current a/c	320.48
1st Jan 2001	7595.91	COIF Charities Deposit	3722.72
LESS Deficit for period to date,			4043.20
brought down from Income &		Sundry Debtors:	
Expenditure a/c	1600.00	The L.A. (Umbrella Six)	1038.00
	-	do. (VAT Refund due)	59.71
		Advertising & Inserts	855.00
	£5995.91		£5995.91

Philip Thomas, Hon. Treasurer.

Martin Underwood, Hon. Auditor.

14th June 2002

RECENT LOCAL STUDIES GROUP PUBLICATIONS

Local Studies Libraries: Library Association Guidelines for local studies provision in public libraries. Martin, D, ed. 2nd ed. Library Association Publishing, 2002. 80pp. £15.95. ISBN 1 85604 277 4.

The front cover of this publication is disappointing – a series of confused juxtapositions of boxes of black and various shades of purple and a graphic which this reviewer failed to interpret (CD-ROM spinning against ceiling tiles?). Opening the book, however, was a pleasure – 13 and 15 pt Garamond printed on clean white stock gives an immediate impression of quality. The size of font is particularly important here. Guidelines such as these will be referred to time and again – you need to be able to quickly find the relevant section and be sure that it is the relevant section and nothing prevails against this more than text too small and too densely packed. I spend a lot of time considering access issues, particularly in relation to exhibitions and the web, and this publication certainly demands high praise for visual accessibility.

Few reading this book will disagree with the first line of the introduction – ‘Local studies librarianship has changed dramatically in the last 20 years and the pace of change shows little sign of slackening’. The editor notes that the speed of change today means that this volume will be out of date almost before it is in print – this is one of the great challenges of guidelines and it is to be hoped that, through the use of the web, access to a current, up to date version of the Guidelines can be maintained. Those involved with digitisation projects, for example, will be familiar with the way the NOF Digitise Technical Standards are regularly updated and the e-mail alerts keeping us informed of these changes.

Following a brief introduction there is what is, effectively, an ‘Executive Summary’ – a summary of the main recommendations of these Guidelines. In just over 3 pages of A4 the working Group have managed to summarise, in approximately 55 statements, what a local studies library should do, under two main headings: The Service and Resources, each of these being subdivided into four sub-sections. The Service covers the local studies service; the user; relationships; and marketing and promotion, while Resources includes the collection; collection management; staff; and facilities management. It is significant, and welcome, that the Guidelines begin with the Service – ‘Collections are established, maintained and developed as a public service, in the public interest’ (my underlining).

Perhaps the most important issue that comes up from the work of these Guidelines is the importance of networking, in both its ICT and traditional sense. Local studies librarians need to network with other local studies librarians not only so that they are aware of holdings but also to develop their skills and maintain awareness of current developments. An issue that every local studies librarian will be familiar with is the historical accident by which much local studies material arrives at its final repository. Though most institutions now have detailed collecting policies this was certainly not the case in the past and a service focused on users and not on the collection should see staff developing their skills through networking and, crucially, providing access through union catalogues or, at least, an awareness of which institutions, locally and nationally (and internationally!) hold complementary material. In this respect the ephemeral boundaries of local authorities can be a

particular issue. These boundaries which seem to shift significantly every 20 years or so may, and will, be of great significance to a local authority funding a local studies library but may not be of the slightest relevance to a user of the library who may regard the 'significant' boundaries as those which he or she grew up with or may be researching a period at which the boundaries were markedly different.

These Guidelines are generally very thorough and reading through them anyone with experience of working in local studies will, I am sure, find themselves nodding their head in agreement with the working group over most of the sections included. A rider must be added to this, however, that most of us, whilst we are familiar with the ideas discussed could not have listed them as comprehensively and expressed them as clearly as this working party have done - a big thanks must go to the group for this. Whilst the guidelines do acknowledge the changes in libraryland and in the libraries, museums and archives sector there are times at which I wish the Guidelines were more forward looking. The issue of cross-domain working is addressed (in particular in section A4.5: Local Studies Centres) and discussed fairly, noting comments from archivists, and fears from librarians that, in an interdisciplinary local studies centre, they may be the first 'victims' of any cuts at times of budget pressure. Whilst noting the role of Resource, the Guidelines do not highlight the importance of the emerging Single Regional Agencies - in my own experience, working in both libraries and museums, I was aware of fears from staff in both domains at the time of the creation here of the first of the SRAs. Since North East Museums, Libraries and Archives Council came into being in April 2001, however, the opportunities offered to staff have increased and the number of local studies library staff, in particular, seeking work shadow placements in museums under a scheme operated by NEMLAC has been very encouraging.

If I were to issue a challenge to the working group and editor of these Guidelines it would be over the use of the word librarian. Everyone will be familiar with the lament heard from some branch librarians about the demise of the 'bookman' or 'bookwoman' and the fact that they did not come into librarianship to help people get a hotmail account. All of us in professions such as librarianship must argue through, individually, and for our own consciences, the extent to which we reserve the right to use our own judgment (the extent to which we 'know better than our users') and the extent to which we provide the service which our users want - either demonstrated through the ballot box and the democratic process or by voting with their feet. We know that local studies is a popular subject, we know it is highly motivational and therefore can be an incentive to learning, we know that properly presented it has the power to reach to citizens who would not otherwise access museums or libraries. Do we then focus on the needs of the user or the needs of the collection? A detailed discussion of these issues is missing from these guidelines - it is probably not appropriate for a document of this kind - but I do have a concern that the emphasis of this document is too much on the professional and the collection. Whilst there is acknowledgment that, for example, local studies librarians will 'forge links with local and family history groups' and *Libraries: the essence of social inclusion* is quoted ('Actively engage with and know your community'). I did not find in these Guidelines a mission to empower these communities and individuals, to involve them in other than a subordinate way within the local studies library, or to operate truly 'in association with' rather than 'on behalf of'.

This publication was probably brought together before local authorities became fully aware of the implications of the Freedom of Information Act. As most librarians will be aware they will be not be required to answer enquiries for published information in book form under the strictures of this Act. The implications for answering enquiries relating to the great variety of other information held by local studies libraries however is an ongoing issue – this is the sort of area where updated versions of the Guidelines on the web will be of great use – particularly to local studies librarians needing to guide their local authority Freedom of Information officers!

The Guidelines rightly emphasise the importance of staff in delivering a high quality service. Although more and more resources are available on-line and many users, even those who visit the library in the flesh will be searching digitally, the role of local studies staff as information professionals with a detailed knowledge of the resources and the skills in training users how to use them is crucial. These Guidelines suggest that 'Every public library authority should have a local studies department, headed by a local studies librarian.' Whilst supporting the principle of this I do not believe that the job title is what matters – to me what is important is that the individual concerned has the strategic vision to develop their service, the understanding to respond to the public and the skills to develop and support their staff. It is not included in the list of competencies included in the guide but I also believe that it is essential that this person should have used local studies collections for research purposes, as very many local studies librarians do, pursuing their own research interests and contributing successfully to studies in a variety of fields.

Over the last 10 years a number of local studies libraries have been at the forefront of digitisation initiatives and this book provides useful outlines of the digitisation process – references provide more detailed information. In general, sections on digitisation are very good though I would suggest that the use of 35mm negatives and slides as an intermediate stage in the digitisation process should carry a warning with it – this may be suitable for some material, particularly smaller items. To comply with the standards for NOF-Digitise, however, (which are likely to be adopted for many digitisation projects) detailed examination of images of larger items (larger than approx. A3 size) is likely to reveal the film grain, and photography, if used, should be medium format. The section on metadata is useful though I would query the description of 'Dublin Core' as a system – it is a list of 15 elements or required 'fields' of metadata which are needed as a basic description of any item, real or digital. The guidelines also note that the adoption of the Dublin Core as part of the e-government interoperability framework 'may be significant'. As it will be essential for local and central government to conform with the e-gif I think use of Dublin core is essential - this does not mean that metadata has to be limited to 15 elements but that there must be at least one field in each record you create which can be mapped to each Dublin Core element. I do wholeheartedly agree with the Guidelines that well-established library cataloguing procedures have much to commend them and records created in MARC/AACR2, which can also be provided in XML format must be a sensible way forward for library digitisation projects.

The Guidelines provide some very sound advice on collections and collection policy setting out, for example, the importance of distinguishing between a library collection

of ephemera and an archival collection – 'e.g. large collections of bills or receipts providing evidence for business history', I do feel that the general guidance on archives could be strengthened. Advice to libraries without archive facilities, to pass material to the appropriate repository could be clearer. The existence of artefacts in local studies collections is not referred to although some collections do contain material which would more appropriately be cared for in a museum: I know at least one local studies library collection which has a stuffed bird of some historical significance in its collection (this bird is on loan to an appropriate museum).

My overall reaction to the Guidelines is very positive. During the course of reviewing I sat down and read them, dipped in to them serendipitously, and used them as a reference tool. I think they will be of great use to most local studies librarians and earn a key place on the desk. An online edition with updates and more weblinks will be even more useful and I hope that this will come soon.

Iain Watson, Senior Curator, Hancock Museum, Newcastle upon Tyne

Dixon, Diana (compiler). Local studies librarianship: a world bibliography. Library Association Publishing, 2001, 288p. Paperback, £29.95. ISBN 1 85604 307 X.

'Local studies librarianship stands at the cutting edge of modern library and information work . . .', writes Diana Dixon in her introduction to this handsomely produced bibliography: 'Over the years it has probably accommodated more changes than any other aspect of library and information work.' It is certainly true that what was still a fledgling option in library schools in the 1960s and 1970s, when the 'local collection' was regarded as a gloomy backwater by most librarians, has burgeoned to become the showpiece of many library authorities.

This compilation demonstrates and celebrates the coming of age of the discipline. Like any good bibliography it provides a faithful map of its subject, depicting its chief features, defining its boundaries, and guiding the explorer around all its intricacies. Its 1,646 annotated entries, describing works by more than 1,300 authors, are arranged within six main and nearly sixty sub headings (with cross-references), covering all aspects of collection management, services and activities, materials, ICT, partnerships, and works on general topics and individual collections. Within sub headings the arrangement is alphabetical by author, and there are indexes of authors and places. The coverage is worldwide – impressively so – with information from Japan, Nigeria and Hungary (to name but three), as well as most English-speaking nations and western Europe.

An excellent short introduction sets out the parameters of the subject. The compiler's main difficulty (predictably) has been drawing the line on what to include from the wider literature of local studies, on the one hand, and librarianship on the other. One may quibble at some of her omissions, and there are other small grumbles – proof-reading oversights which have scrambled author index citations to entries 488-93, for instance; 'W.B. Stephen' (*recte* Stephens); a wrong date in entry 616; the same paper included twice (893, 952, by this reviewer, coincidentally!); and inconsistent treatment in the place index. This last point is slightly more serious (and surprising in view of the subject). Localities are sometimes indexed also under

region and/ or country, sometimes not – a glance at the entries for Dudley, Staffordshire, Walsall, West Midlands, and 'Black, Country [sic]' will reveal a number of inconsistencies.

But such carping must not overshadow the scale of the compiler's achievement on behalf of the Local Studies Group of the Library Association. What better or more useful present could be offered the group as it reaches its quarter-century (it was founded in 1977) than this? It is proof, if proof were needed, that the discipline's parochial image has been shaken off, local perspectives have become global, and a whole arsenal of library skills has been employed. 'The track record of local studies librarians to date,' quoting Diana Dixon again, 'ensures they can face the future with confidence.'

John Chandler, Local History Consultant, formerly Local History Librarian, Wiltshire Libraries.

LOCAL STUDIES GROUP COMMITTEE 2002

Chairman:	Ian Maxted, Devon County Library
Vice Chairman:	Alice Lock, Tameside Libraries
Hon Secretary:	Diana Dixon, Suffolk
Hon Treasurer:	Philip Thomas, Birmingham
Minutes Secretary:	Douglas Hindmarch, Sheffield Libraries
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North Western:	Alice Lock, Tameside Libraries
Scottish:	Don Martin, East Dunbartonshire Libraries
Welsh:	Rheinallt Llwyd, DILS, Univ. Wales, Aberystwyth
Northern Ireland:	Yvonne Hirst, representing the Lib and Inf Services Council (Northern Ireland)
	Local History Panel

The Group also has a Liaison Officer at CILIP headquarters to keep us in touch with areas 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 or day schools, workshops etc - or indeed anything you wish to bring to the attention of the Committee - please do not hesitate to contact your nearest Committee member, or the Hon. Secretary at 11 Cautley Road, Southwold, Suffolk IP18 6DD, email diana.dixon@la-hq.org.uk

FROM OUR SUBGROUPS

Our Scottish sub-group, *LOCSCOT*, continues to flourish. Once again, it organised Local History Week, and Christine Miller of East Dunbartonshire Libraries reports that it also held a very successful day school at Dunfermline in March. The subject was "Digital Ancestors" and the speakers provided informative talks on current developments in digital family history information. Elizabeth Carmichael from the Mitchell Library, Glasgow, spoke about online resources for family historians. She detailed the most useful site and talked about her experiences in helping family historians find information on the Internet. This was followed by Martin Tyson, who oversees the Record Enterprise, which provides access to the historical and current records held by GROs. He explained how the 1901 project was completed and indicated future plans for further digitisation. Hazel Anderson from the Scottish Archive Network (SCAN) spoke about her work with the Testaments Project. This is a major project to digitise the wills of Scotland from c1550 to 1875 in full colour. They expect to capture about two million images finishing by the end of the year. This work is carried out in partnership with the Genealogy Society of Utah. The final speakers, Sylvia Brown and Liz Stevens, talked about records of The Church of Jesus Christ and Latter Day Saints and the development of their 1881 Census CD and the Family Search internet site.

From *Northern Ireland LISC* reports the success of Local History Week there, which was held in May to coincide with the Historical Association's national Local History Week. All the Education and Library Boards took part, providing a wide range of events including talks, exhibitions and history trails. The LISC (NI) Local History Panel held a seminar to give practical advice to writers and researchers in the field of local history, with speakers from the fields of broadcasting, education, research, funding, journals, libraries and archive work. This was highly successful, with about fifty people attending and many contacts made. It is also reported that the Northern Ireland Publications Resource has created a database and two repositories for items published in Northern Ireland post 2000 have been established, and that RASCAL (Research and Special Collections Available Locally) now has over 500 descriptions ready for entering onto the database.

Following on from the success of their 'Disaster planning' day school the *Midlands and Anglia Sub-group* held a workshop on "Preservation on a shoestring" at the new Millennium Library, Norwich, in May. After a tour of the new library by Claire Agate of the Norwich local studies library, Alison Walker and Belinda Sanderson of the National Preservation Office dealt with the planning of a low-cost preservation programme, including the cleaning of collections, good handling practice, photocopying guidelines and protecting collections, and there was a session for delegates to share problems and solutions.

Our *Welsh* sub-group held a successful day school on the census entitled "1801 and all that: the significance of the Census". Various speakers talked about aspects of the topic. Rheinalt Llwyd dealt with the inception and early days of the census, while Dr. Jill Barber provided a comprehensive account of the importance and value of census returns for a wide variety of purposes and for different user groups. Dr. Mari A Williams discussed a Glamorgan case study using census returns from 1891

to give linguistic evidence and migration patterns in two specific areas in the Rhondda valley. Beryl Evans, genealogical researcher at the National Library of Wales, gave a timely reminder that a whole range of other sources, both national and local, often needed to be considered and used in conjunction with census returns. Finally, Helen Palmer, the Ceredigion County Archivist, related some of the joys (and frustrations!) of attending to the needs of family and community historians. 29 delegates attended and there was a lively roundup session with numerous questions and comments to round off what was agreed to be a very worthwhile day.

The *North West Sub-Group* had an attendance of nearly forty at its day school on military history, held at Fulwood Barracks in April. The Queen's Lancashire Regiment provided excellent hospitality and an interesting tour of the barracks, and the day also gave those attending an idea of the range and usefulness of regimental records, with a particularly interesting session on their use for family history. The subgroup is now planning its next day school, which is to be on the subject of fundraising for local studies. Speakers will be talking about successful bids – and why bids fail.

NOTES AND NEWS

Volunteer photographers are needed by the *Images of England* project, which aims to photograph all 370,000 of England's listed buildings and make the results freely available on the internet. Volunteers do not need to be professional photographers to take part, but they do need to have a keen interest in photography, experience of working under a variety of conditions and a desire to know more about their local architecture. Some areas have already been well covered - in Tyne and Wear, for example, 85% of listed buildings have so far been photographed – but more volunteers are needed particularly in south and east Kent, north west Essex, Suffolk, Gloucestershire, Dorset, Cumbria, the Yorkshire Dales, south Somerset, Shropshire and Herefordshire. Travel expenses, film and processing costs, and training are provided by the project. Librarians might like to draw this to the attention of some of their local photographers who, for instance, may have taken part in local photographic projects. Notes on the experiences of individual photographers have appeared in the project's own newsletter, *Images of England*, 6, Summer 2001, and in an article by Ann Vink in *Local History Magazine*, 89, Jan/Feb 2002, 14-18. The contact is Jan Foster at Images of England, English Heritage, NMRC, Kemble Drive, Swindon SN2 2GZ, tel 01973 414643, email ioevolunteers@english-heritage.org.uk

Electoral registers are in regular use by local historians, with sets, often on microfiche, being available in record offices and local studies libraries. Recent developments, however, may put access to this resource at risk – a recent DTLR consultation paper on "Electoral registers: access, supply and sale" deals with proposed new regulations, which among other things are concerned with the issue of freedom of information and personal privacy. A meeting was recently held at CILIP headquarters to discuss the future public provision of electoral registers: present were representatives of county and unitary authority libraries, county record offices, the British Library, the Public Record Office and copyright consultants. Various issues were discussed, and recommendations were made, particularly where there were omissions – for

instance there was no mention of public libraries in the discussion documents. The meeting agreed that two main courses of action were required: to provide guidance notes for library and record office staff, and the raising of concerns with the appropriate bodies, including DTLR, DCMS and the Local Government Association. A fuller report has been prepared by Ian Maxted, and this has been published in the June issue of the local studies newsletter published by Devon Local Studies Service: this is available on the web at <http://www.devon.gov.uk/library/locstudy/list369.htm>

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

Smith, C. *Community and change: the future of the Victoria History of the Counties of England. The Local Historian*. 32(2), May 2002, 84-89.

A brief history of the development of VCH, followed by some ideas for its future ways of working, including revision in working methods of VCH staff and the use of the Internet to provide better communication of findings to the public. Examples are given from Wiltshire, where the author is VCH's assistant editor.

New publications from the Federation of Family History Societies:

Gibson J, Langston B and Smith B.W. *Local Newspapers 1750-1920*. 2nd ed 2002. 72pp. £4.95+£1.05 p&p. ISBN 1 86006 157 5.

Gibson J and Churchill E. *Probate jurisdictions: where to look for wills*. 5th ed 2002. 72pp. £4.50+£1.05 p&p. ISBN 1 86006 152 4.

Gibson J and Peskett P. *Record Offices: how to find them*. 9th ed 2002. 64 pp. £3.95+£1.05 p&p. ISBN 1 86006 126 5.

Like most of the excellent series of publications from the FFHS, the titles are largely self-explanatory, and are likely to be of value to local studies librarians who, along with archivists, receive so many enquiries from family historians. These volumes are all revised and updated editions. Apart from updating maps where the location of the Record Office and/or access routes have changed, this edition of *Record Offices* includes website addresses as well as Email and postal ones, all confirmed in mid-March 2002. *Probate Jurisdictions* shows various changes including the transfer of some probate records from Somerset House to First Avenue House, High Holborn, and an increased number of indexes, both printed and in electronic format, and such changes as there are in custodians and addresses of repositories. *Local Newspapers* takes account of the Newsplan project and notes that there have been many increases in holdings as a result of its survey and the subsequent microfilming programme. The guide is based on the BL Newspaper Library Catalogue, now available on the internet. While the latter is vastly useful to libraries, this is a handy booklet for the individual to keep at home, as not everyone has internet access immediately to hand, and it has been published as a result of demand. It attempts to cover all newspaper repositories in England, Wales, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man, with the caveat that the most up to date information should be sought from the repository. Newspapers which lasted less than four years are excluded. The bibliographical references which appeared in the last edition (15 years ago, and long out of print) are also excluded due to limitations of space.

Hall, B ed. *Aspects of Birmingham: discovering local history*. Wharncliffe Books, 2001. 160pp. £9.99. ISBN 1 871647 67 3.

Wharncliffe Books, an imprint of Pen and Sword Books, have been noted for some time as a successful publisher of Northern local history in their "Aspects" series. The furthest south they had ventured previously had been Leicester, but this volume on Birmingham is very welcome.

Eleven able contributors, all with strong Birmingham connections, have contributed chapters on various topics, including Birmingham Workhouse Masters and Matrons, Birmingham and the Spanish Civil War, the Birmingham Municipal Bank and the Birmingham Mission. The period covered is, where appropriate, the 1830s to the 1980s, and enterprises and institutions, half forgotten even by older Birmingham residents, are brought back to life with copious illustrations and generous text. Extensive notes and references are given, including primary sources from which those interested can research further. Three of the contributors are senior members of the Local Studies and History Service of Birmingham Public Libraries, while the Editor is a founder member and was the first Secretary of our own Local Studies Group.

A reviewer is expected by tradition to find faults and errors, but it is difficult to do so here. My only comment is that in the section on the Birmingham Municipal Bank, instead of four virtually identical external views of the Head Office in Broad Street: I would have preferred a better internal view of the majestic banking hall with inscriptions such as 'Thrift Brings Happiness' around the upper reaches. Also, as all the branch buildings shown are now in other use, what about a shot of the thriving Sutton Coldfield branch of Lloyds TSB at Maney Corner?

This book is very well produced and will stand a lot of handling, and is therefore eminently suitable for library use as well as personal ownership, and is very good value for money. With such a wealth of history in Birmingham, it is earnestly hoped that further additions to this series will be published. After all, Birmingham is not just a city of the Industrial Revolution: New Street itself has been known by that name for six centuries at least.

Philip Thomas, LSG Treasurer.

Dawes, M and Perkins, C.N. Country Banks of England and Wales: private provincial banks and bankers 1688-1953. The Chartered Institute of Bankers, 2000. 2vols and CD Rom. £100. ISBN 0 85927 611 9.

Although the growth of the banking system outside London over the last three centuries has been touched upon in many local histories, it appears to have been as a peripheral matter. This has now been addressed in a very comprehensive form by the book under review. The dates in the title are deliberate. In 1688, Thomas Smith opened his bank for business in Nottingham, and in 1953, the last private bank outside London, Gunner & Co of Bishops Waltham, Hants, became part of Barclays: it had been the sole survivor since 1925, when the other unconnected private bank, in Cheshire, entered the national banking system.

In the first century and a half, the growth of private banks coincided with the industrialisation of Britain and the emergence of the middle class entrepreneur, but this was no coincidence, as they provided the capital to set up the factories, the canals and later the railways, not to mention a few libraries. They were all local enterprises, the founders being the landed gentry and later the successful tradesmen, all people held in high respect by their communities, who were willing to entrust their savings and capital to them. Their impact on the local economy cannot be stressed too highly, though their provision of capital for local and national railway schemes in the earlier part of the nineteenth century planted the seeds of their own demise, as the faster communication afforded by the growing national railway network encouraged the London banking organisations to expand into the provinces and compete with the local bankers.

There were some spectacular successes. The Lloyd family in Birmingham set up in 1765 with £8000 capital and their direct successors are Lloyds TSB, present in almost every High Street. The Gurney's, at their peak, had thirty two offices in Norwich and the surrounding area and became part of the national system at a very good return to the proprietors. However, all these banks were partnerships: there were no limited liability companies in those days, and there were some spectacular failures and bankruptcies amongst the bankers, with serious repercussions on those communities and the depositors, not all of whom were wealthy and who in some cases lost everything they owned.

These magnificently produced hardback volumes list all the private banks, with their partners over the whole of their existence, and their eventual fate – closure, amalgamation, failure, incorporation into the "Big Four" etc. The lists are in alphabetical town order, and all the primary sources are given. A CD Rom is included, giving easy access to locations and persons. There is a select bibliography and, helpfully, the location of rare works is given. The amount of research done for this work means that it will remain current for decades to come, apart from any new primary sources which might come to light.

In a work of this magnitude there are bound to be the occasional small error. I found two only: in the notes on individual Oxford banks, the town was spelt occasionally as Oford, and I query Stroud (in Kent) – should it be Strood? These, however are very minor observations.

The cover price of this work may seem high, but to put it into perspective it is 75% of the price of one of the volumes of the estimable Walford's Guide to Reference Materials trilogy, each volume of which is revised every three years. In my opinion this is an essential addition to all comprehensive local studies collections – or at least it should be in the library somewhere.

Philip Thomas, ACIB, LSG Treasurer.

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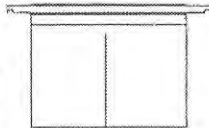
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