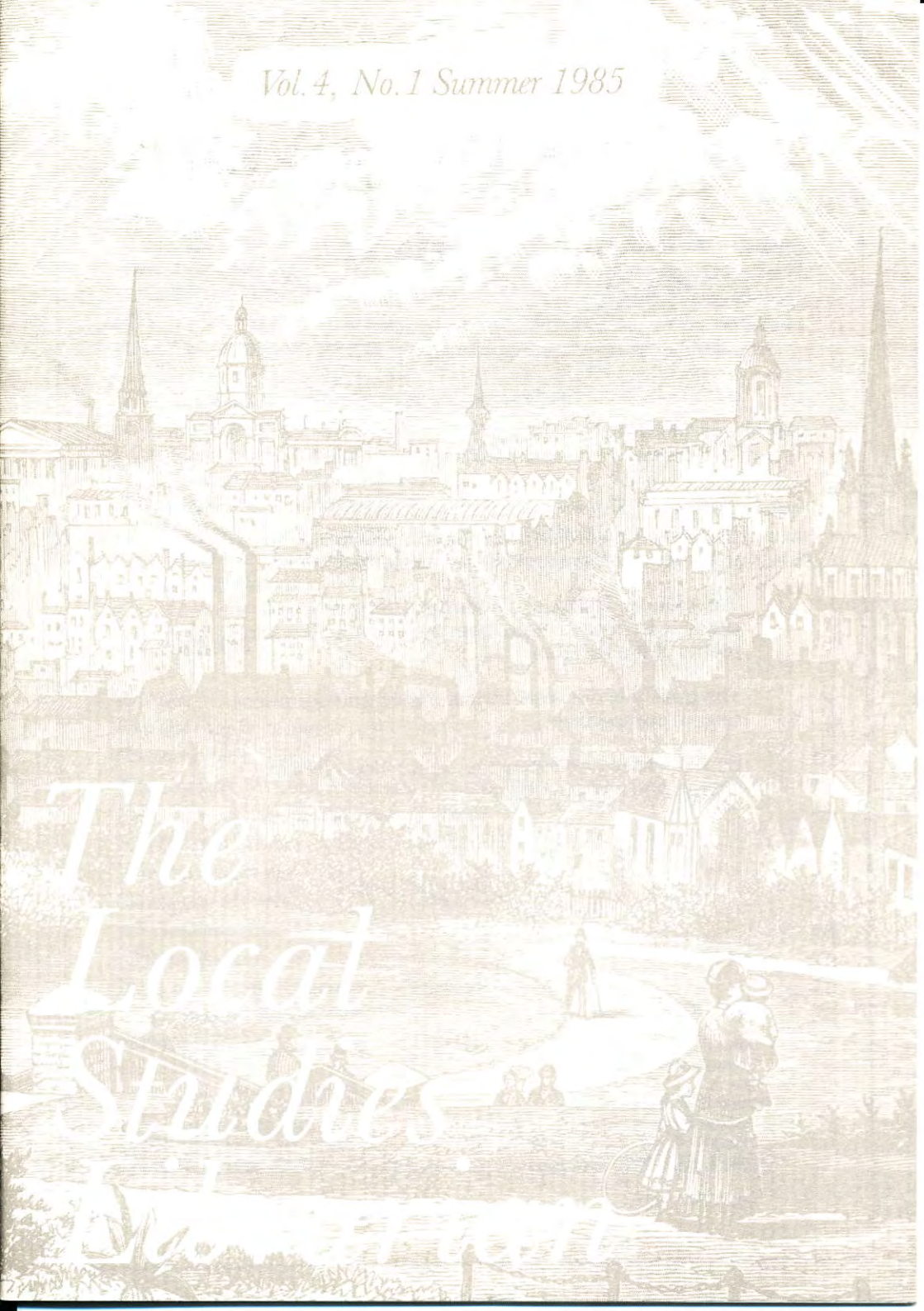


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Cover illustration: A View of Birmingham c.1886.

Courtesy of the Local Studies Department, Birmingham Reference Library.

Editorial

Conservation is a topic much in the news at present, with the Ratcliffe report, reviewed in this issue, and the establishment of a Conservation Department at the British Library, as well as the Library Association's own sub-committee on conservation. It is a topic, however, which has been of importance to local studies librarians for many years, for what is the use of spending time searching for material if it is not to be conserved for posterity? Much of the material we acquire is ephemeral in nature, produced on poor quality paper, and not intended to survive the topicality of its message: increasingly, too, the information we store is produced in other forms, such as audio or video tape, whose lifespan has not yet been established. Although we claim to be maintaining collections for future use, very few libraries in fact have proper facilities to provide for the storage of materials so that they do not deteriorate. Very few libraries, for instance, have air conditioned stacks, though it has been known for many years that temperature and humidity control can considerably extend the life of documents. Wear and tear through increasing usage also poses problems: some of these can be overcome by the use of copies or of microform, although the latter is not popular with users. If microreaders and printers became less tiring to read and easier to use, they would become more acceptable.

Deterioration of stock is not the only problem for librarians, though it is perhaps the major one. Security is another. While much of what we acquire is not of great monetary value, much of it is unique and irreplaceable, and precautions must be taken to see that it does not disappear. Theft seems to be an increasing problem — with heavier usage of material there is a tendency for more to vanish, and there have been reports of more valuable material being stolen. Security tagging is difficult with much of our stock, but some method needs to be devised to protect our collections for future use.

This question of conservation is important. As has been said often enough before, if we do not collect and conserve material, who else will? How seriously do you — or your authority — treat this problem?

The editor thanks all those who have sent information and publications following his request in the last issue. Please keep them coming — the more the merrier! If sufficient new publications are received it would be possible to have a review article on library publications in the LSL.

Available for all to use? Planning documents in public libraries

This is an edited version of a paper given at a seminar on information resources for leisure and recreation, held on 3rd November 1983, jointly organised by RSIS and Aslib. As a result, the bias is towards documents which relate to tourism, recreation and leisure and not planning documents generally, although many of the things that were said would apply equally to other documents published by planning departments.

An important source of local information is to be found in documents, reports etc which are published by planning departments, but there is a serious problem in trying to trace what has been published, by which section of the department and when. As many of the publications which emanate from planning departments are of local interest and importance, it is expected that copies will be found in local public libraries. However, this is not always the case and it becomes apparent that there are serious gaps in library holdings if these are checked with available information on planning department publications. Why is this the case? This paper tries to answer this question and to discover the extent of the shortfall in public libraries and whether there are any types of material which are not picked up or whether the gaps are in all types of material.

What do planning departments publish?

On the surface, this might appear to be an easy question to answer, but on investigation it is discovered that it can be the most difficult of all questions simply because few planning departments produce comprehensive lists of what the department publishes. (By publications I am including reports, books, pamphlets and leaflets). Capital Planning Information is making an attempt to collect and list as much of this material as is possible, but how many libraries actually use URBANDOC as a means of checking for what they have missed is uncertain. Certainly some librarians are aware that C.P.I. is discovering material which has escaped the net in the past. For example, when one local studies librarian in the north west was approached by C.P.I., it was discovered that there was material that had been missed although the librarian was under the impression that the planning department had sent copies of everything. This type of situation is probably repeated on numerous occasions throughout the country.

Since 1974 there has been an increasing number of plans produced covering general as well as specific subjects. Many of these go under the heading of "local plans", but some documents are very substantial, often

running to several volumes. The material which librarians hear about or which is referred to in the press is only the tip of the iceberg as there are often many shorter documents produced for the public which are not sold but given away free of charge. There is also material which planning departments publish on a commercial basis, such as Cheshire County Planning Department's "Man's imprint on Cheshire". This latter group of materials is probably the easiest of all to trace as it often reaches B.N.B. as well as local bookshops and is reviewed in the local press. Of the other types of material, it is usually the free leaflet type that is the most difficult to trace and often, when the librarian comes to hear about it, it is out-of-print.

In addition to documents and reports which specifically relate to plans for a particular area, there is a growing tendency for planning departments to use the statistical information which they have collected as the basis for publications. For instance, Manchester City Planning Department has compiled and published an excellent series on individual wards, including some general information on the recreational provision in the area. Fortunately, copies were sent to the Central Library. Likewise, some authorities have produced lists of their buildings of architectural or historic interest, which can be used by the visitor as a guide to the more interesting buildings in the area. The same applies to leaflets produced on conservation areas.

The main problem is to establish what planning departments produce. One gets the distinct impression that even with local authorities generally there is no co-ordination in publishing and little co-operation between departments. For example, an attempt is being made to compile a bibliography of all recent publications, in the widest sense of the word, on the Castlefield area of Manchester. All bodies involved were asked to supply copies of everything their organisation published both retrospectively, currently and in the future. Few did so with any degree of regularity. An attempt to discover whether the G.M.C. Planning Department issued a list of its publications was met with the statement that one was being prepared, but no approach has been made to at least one section which has published about 20 separate leaflets. Eventually a sort of list was traced to a report presented to the Planning Committee which listed those items which were for sale and their price. However, it was obvious that there were many gaps in this list.

Sometimes, individual sections of a planning department will produce lists of publications in which they have been involved. For example, the Countryside Group of the G.M.C. Planning Department compiled a list of

all their publications and added to it those published by the various river valley and country park wardens. Unfortunately, this list is not kept up-to-date, but it is at least a guide.

To check whether G.M.C. was unique in not having a list of planning department publications, I sent two junior members of staff to several other planning departments in the area to try to obtain lists of their publications. In every case it was discovered that no overall list existed. Though many did have a typescript which could be consulted by the public on request giving the various publications which were for sale, no mention was made of the free leaflets which might have been available.

There are one or two sources which do list planning department publications. Mention has already been made of URBANDOC, but Town Planning Review also includes occasional references to planning material: for instance, in the autumn of each year there is usually a list of conservation area leaflets that have been published in the preceding year. Some of the other planning journals and those relating to architecture and design also refer occasionally to planning documents. The Essex design guides, for instance, were widely reviewed in both the planning and architectural journals. However, as these items do not appear with any regularity, it is necessary to scan each one in case there is something of local importance mentioned.

Having established that there were difficulties in finding out what was published, an attempt was also made to ascertain whether there was any specific policy about letting libraries have copies of newly published material automatically. Generally no such policy existed although in some cases, where a library had been used for an exhibition, it was often allowed to retain copies of items which had been on display. How many copies of the leaflets were also retained and preserved is an unknown quantity. In one or two cases, a more enlightened view has been taken by the planning officer concerned, with copies of everything that is produced on a particular subject being sent to local libraries, but how much is actually retained and how much is illicitly removed from the library is not known. Unfortunately, planners tend not to think of libraries wanting the more ephemeral material. For instance, in July 1983, the Greater Manchester and City of Manchester Planning Departments organised a two day conference on new uses for buildings. Amongst the material which those attending received was a wallet containing details of the buildings to be visited, each building having an individual sheet containing a brief history of the building, details about its conversion and an illustration. A check with Manchester's Local History Library after the event revealed that no-one

had passed a copy over. Fortunately, I had kept one or two sets for just such a situation.

The first conclusion that can be drawn, therefore, about planning department publications is that they are difficult to trace and that rarely does a complete list of such publications exist even within the department itself. Although it may be possible to trace major reports, lesser documents and leaflets are often virtually impossible to trace unless copies are given to the library, or the librarian or a member of staff is made aware of their existence.

Associated bodies

In addition to material published directly by planning departments, there is a growing volume of literature relating to tourism, recreation and leisure being published by people such as river valley and country park wardens. Although these people may not be employed directly by the local planning department, many of the publications are the result of suggestions made, often in vague terms, in general reports about the area in question. In some cases, these river valleys and country parks are controlled by a joint committee of the local authorities involved in it and often including planning departments. For example, the Hollingworth Lake Country Park near Littleborough is managed by such a joint committee. Several publications have been produced by the wardens on behalf of the joint Committee and are available to the public. The Local Studies Librarian at Rochdale has made a conscious effort to trace all these publications and ensure that copies are to be found in the local studies collection. In the case of part of the Croal-Irwell Valley, it was the planning officer concerned who ensured that all publications for which she was responsible or heard about were passed on to the local libraries.

It must be remembered that some material which is published for visitors to an area is produced not by the planning department, but by other departments within the local authority. As with those items for which the planning department or wardens are responsible, it can be extremely difficult to trace what has been published, by which department and when. It is, therefore, important to take into account all local authority departments when considering publications.

What material is to be found in public libraries?

Having obtained a sort of list of publications issued by both Manchester City and the Greater Manchester County Planning Departments, a check

was made to see how much of this material had actually found its way into various libraries, most notably Manchester Central Library. It was discovered that holdings were by no means complete. Most of the major reports were to be found, but many of the leaflets were not. Structure plans, for instance, were well represented, but reports on river valleys were not. As for leaflets and summaries of the report, very few of these were to be traced through the catalogue, although copies might have been found in departmental files and not fully catalogued.

On the narrower subject field of the Castlefield Heritage Park, I had hoped that the coverage in the Local History Library would have been fairly comprehensive. On checking the catalogue, there appeared to be very little in the library. However, on making further inquiries it was discovered that some of the material, although by no means all of it, had been filed in the miscellaneous collection of ephemera as most of it was in leaflet form. This is not really satisfactory, as a stranger to Manchester looking for material on the area might not be aware that there are other sequences that have to be checked for material. When the bibliography which is being compiled on the area was checked with the library holdings, items such as the action plan were found to be missing and some of the very latest leaflets were not in the collection either.

Making material available to the public

It is all very well cataloguing the major reports on an area, but often these tend to be rather dull and dreary documents and of little interest except to a planner or someone planning to undertake development in the area concerned. The general public is often interested in the leaflet type of material which summarises reports or tells them what is available in the way of facilities or what is planned. It is these documents which are often the most difficult to trace in the library and most usually absent from collections. Even if they are in stock, they are probably filed away and as a result can easily be overlooked or missed. It is, therefore, important to ensure that not only the reports in their entirety are entered in the catalogue, but also the leaflets. If these can be left in box files where members of the public can easily gain access to them to see what there is, so much the better.

Problems of acquisition

The problems of acquisition were summed up a few weeks ago by David Taylor, Manchester's Local History Librarian, when I was discussing this

paper with him. Recalling the difficulties I had encountered a decade earlier in obtaining publications from the various departments of the Town Hall, he commented that things had not improved in that time, and went on to say that it was often easier to obtain material from the local Arndale Centre than it was from the Town Hall itself. When various members of the Planning Department were asked why this might be the case, they admitted that they had not given libraries any thought, except when they wanted to use libraries for an exhibition. It is a question of trying to educate such people in the need to ensure that the library receives copies of everything, however ephemeral, that is produced.

I conclude with a few suggestions on how the situation might be improved to ensure that libraries have a better coverage of this type of material. Partly this is aimed at improving current awareness and partly at the need to ensure that local studies libraries have as comprehensive a collection of local material as possible. At the same time, this material should be made more accessible to members of the public wanting to consult it either for research purposes or simply to know what is being proposed for an area or what there is to see.

The easiest way for the problem to be overcome would be for all local authorities to centralise their publication and printing in a separate department, staffed by those who are skilled in the work of publication, and also graphic design and marketing and distribution. If adopted, this might result in publications being given ISBNs and ultimately finding their way into B.N.B. It might also result in someone in authority being aware of what is being published and being able to co-ordinate the authority's publication programme. However, in a time of financial restraint, it is unlikely that this type of system will be implemented.

What other methods can be employed by libraries to improve their coverage?

- i) Try to persuade the chief planning officer of the importance of sending at least one copy of everything that is published, reports and leaflets, to the library. Preferably, two copies should be sent so that one copy can be on public display and one kept for permanent preservation.
- ii) Planning departments should be encouraged to compile lists of publications, including those of related bodies, and to keep them up to date. Having been compiled, they should be circulated.
- iii) Local papers should be scanned as they often refer to local planning reports in a fair amount of detail when they relate to the paper's circulation area.

- iv) Staff should be encouraged to pick up material at exhibitions they visit. Even if the library receives several copies, it is far better than having no copies at all.
- v) If the authority prints its material in-house, it might be possible to arrange with the department concerned to put one copy of everything printed on one side to be collected later by the library. This might require the agreement of the chief officers concerned, but here the help of the chief librarian should be enlisted.

Once in the library, the material should be made as accessible as possible. Permanent acquisitions need to be catalogued: this should include leaflets, trails, and similar items, as well as full length reports.

In answer to the question posed at the beginning of this paper, I would say that there is a lot of material published by planning departments which is not as accessible as it ought to be. The situation can be improved if it is accepted that if a document is intended for the public, the public library is the best place for it to be deposited as it is open longer hours than town halls. How much material escapes the net, it is impossible to say, but if a system of bibliographical control was established, it would be easier to build up a comprehensive collection both for current awareness purposes and for maintaining a historic record for future researchers.

C.E. Makepeace
Chairman, LSG

Notes and News

A three year course leading to the Certificate in Local History is offered by the University of Leicester. It is designed to meet the needs of those with an interest in local history and who wish to develop their competence by part-time study.

Further details of this course, which will be held in Northampton, are available from Mr. R. L. Greenall, Adult Education Department, University of Leicester, Leicester LE1 7RH.

Conservation in Libraries: a review of the Ratcliffe Report

Ratcliffe, F. W. Preservation policies and conservation in British libraries. British Library, 1984. (Library and Information Research Report 25.) £9.50. ISBN 0 7123 3035 6

The purpose of the Ratcliffe Report (the name by which this document is already widely known) was to find out the facts about conservation in British libraries, to find out what is being done, what policies and plans of action have been drawn up, and also to find out the kind of training available to librarians and practising conservators. As usual with works on conservation, the results of this investigation are frightening.

In recent years librarians have been made well aware of the importance of conservation. The flooding of Florence in 1966 brought home the vulnerability of library stocks to natural disasters and soon afterwards there was quite a sudden realization that, even without the intervention of natural disasters, stocks were deteriorating at a rapid rate. The deterioration was being caused by a combination of factors, chiefly poor storage conditions, poor manufacturing materials and processes, and greatly increased usage of library stocks by readers, all aggravated by a decrease in the number of craftsmen able to put matters right. Despite this awareness by librarians, nothing much seemed to be being done, and certainly no new money was being made available for conservation.

The Cambridge University Library Conservation Project was therefore set up under the direction of Dr. Ratcliffe to uncover the facts. The Project Steering Committee very carefully drafted two questionnaires, one to be sent to librarians and the other to be sent to training institutions. Samples of 418 libraries (including public, academic and government departmental libraries) and 275 training institutions (including schools of librarianship and institutions which were thought to teach conservation and bookbinding) were chosen. A high level of response was achieved and about 80% of the library questionnaires and 85% of the training questionnaires were returned. The report analyses the completed questionnaires.

The library survey showed that most library stocks are heavily used and are therefore subject to corresponding heavy wear and tear. Very few libraries are able to control their storage conditions and even fewer make any attempt to monitor those conditions. New employees have little knowledge of conservation when they begin their careers in librarianship and hardly any libraries undertake in-house training. There are probably no libraries making use of

microforms in conservation, and in any case such a scheme would be too expensive. There was an enthusiastic response to the suggestion that some kind of national advisory centre should be established, although there was no agreement on its exact role or location.

In rounding off the discussion of the library questionnaires the report comments:

Whilst the responses to the individual questions are important in themselves they cannot convey the sense of unease which a perusal of all the individual returns induces. Collectively they create an impression which amounts to unsolicited evidence of the educational need and the low priority traditionally attached to conservation which is difficult to quantify.

It has always been my impression that of all the libraries it is public libraries which are least concerned with conservation. Local history collections are the one notable exception to this, a point which is mentioned in the report:

Public libraries have long since made local history their undisputed province and, in fact, many returns from these libraries indicated this as a prime field, in some cases the sole field, of preservation activity.

The public library attitude appears to be that conservation is for old and rare material (not to say stuffy, boring, academic and elitist material), and therefore there is little point in worrying about it. Public librarians seem to regard their collections as ephemeral and attach more importance to getting the stuff used rather than making sure it lasts for any length of time. However, the figures in the report are quite startling on this point. About 15% of the public libraries in the sample (28 out of 184) intend to retain all their stock permanently, and about 39% of public libraries (73 out of 184) intend to retain 80% or more of their stock permanently! My impressions about public libraries were wrong and there is no wonder that they are worried about conservation.

Analysis of the training questionnaires shows that both the education of librarians and the education of conservators is inadequate. Seven of the schools of librarianship did not bother to return the questionnaire, so presumably conservation is not taught at all in those institutions. The report acknowledges that librarians should not be conservators, but they should be sufficiently informed to care for their stocks properly and to call in a conservator whenever necessary.

Although the questionnaires show that almost all librarians are now aware of conservation they are still unprepared and uncertain about what to do next. More money (as usual) will solve some of the problem but detailed and accurate estimates of costs will have to be worked out first. The traditional attitude in which books and periodicals are sent for 'binding' by the newest recruit will

have to change and senior members of staff need to be involved. Conservation needs to be seen in relation to the whole collection in each library. Every library cannot permanently retain everything and therefore a national listing of what is being conserved will need to be started. The report also points out that unless education for librarians and conservators changes, the future will be worse than the present. A national plan is urgently needed.

The most important statements in the report occur in the final section where a series of recommendations are drawn together. These are summarised in seventeen points on pages 68 and 69.

The report also contains a glossary and appendixes reprinting the two questionnaires, the synopsis of a survey of national libraries completed by the National Library of Canada, the papers submitted to the Project Steering Committee, and the papers read at the Dissemination Seminar.

A great deal has been written lately on conservation, almost all about the scientific and practical aspects. Most of the material is at a fairly elementary level and consequently each new contribution repeats what has already been written several times elsewhere, a very counter-productive state of affairs. The **Ratcliffe Report** does not attempt to explain practical conservation methods. It is a clear and perceptive analysis of why we are in a mess and what to do about it. It is the reverse of counter-productive. It is not addressed specifically to local history librarians, but it concerns them all. It should be read by every librarian in Britain.

John R. Turner,
College of Librarianship Wales.

The Dorothy McCulla Memorial Prize

This award, of £25 and a certificate, is awarded annually to the L.S.G. member who, in the opinion of the committee, has contributed most to local studies librarianship. Nominations are therefore invited for this year's award from members, chief librarians, and anyone else with a suitable nominee. Nominations should be received by the Hon. Secretary by 31st August 1985, and may be concerned with **any** aspect of local studies librarianship, examples being an index, a new technique or good promotions work.

Local History and Reminiscence Therapy

I would like to draw the attention of LSG members to the therapeutic value of local history to elderly people.

Thanks to modern medical knowledge many people today live well into their eighties or nineties, yet these extra years are not always as enjoyable as they could be. Due to increased population mobility it is far less common than it used to be for the older generation to live near younger members of the family who might draw on their long experience of life and make them feel still useful. Instead, many elderly people now live on their own or in homes, where they have little incentive to try to keep themselves mentally active.

Doctors, psychologists, social workers and organisations such as Age Concern and Help the Aged are becoming more and more aware of the importance of having interests in old age as a way of deferring the mental ageing process as long as possible. Even where this process has started it is usually recent memory which is affected first, and making active use of long-term memory may help to slow the rate of deterioration. Reminiscence is a recognised form of therapy.

Many elderly people are particularly interested in talking about places they knew well when they were younger, whether or not they still live there. Local studies librarians and local history societies can be of great value by providing materials for reminiscence therapy, perhaps working together with hospital and welfare librarians and members of other professions such as psychologists and occupational therapists. Pictorial materials are always of great interest, and sound archives are particularly appreciated by people with visual handicaps.

The Library Association Medical, Health and Welfare Libraries Group holds twice-yearly meetings on Reading Therapy at which the subject of local history is frequently mentioned. A separate Reading Therapy sub-group is being set up within the MHWLG, membership being open to librarians and non-librarians, and anyone who might be interested in joining is invited to contact me. I would be very interested in hearing from anybody who is already using local history in a therapeutic context.

Mrs. Eileen Bostle,
Patients' Librarian,
Northwick Park Hospital,
Watford Road,
Harrow,
Middlesex HA1 3UJ.

School Local History Projects: How BALH is trying to help

During the course of my work for the British Association for Local History I have visited local studies libraries and local record offices in many parts of the country. As an ex-schoolteacher I have a particular interest in the way in which schools make use of their local resources. It has become very apparent to me, and I am sure that local studies librarians will have been aware of the situation for a long time, that there are ever increasing demands being placed upon libraries, record offices and museums as a result of the emphasis that is being put upon personal project work by some of the newer history syllabuses, in particular those of the Associated Examining Board, the Cambridge Board (both for 'A' level courses) and the Joint Matriculation Board (for the 16+ examination). This is happening at a time when there are increasing pressures in schools both through financial cuts which result in reduced staffing and through the movements towards curriculum re-organisation in many subject areas. As a consequence many teachers do not have the time and energy available to embark upon the detailed research and preparation which is necessary if they are to guide their students through project work on an individual basis.

The situation has led to a steadily increasing volume of complaints from librarians, archivists, museum curators and others who are in a position to provide facilities for research based project work. They are finding that they cannot cope with the many requests for help that they receive from ill-equipped and ill-prepared secondary school students (not to mention streams of primary school children arriving to carry out project work set by teachers who have not bothered to make a preliminary visit to assess the availability of resources!). There are some fortunate areas with education officers based in local record offices and museums but, I believe, only one library (Birmingham). However, it is the libraries which have to bear the greatest initial onslaught of project researching pupils. The whole situation is exacerbated by the fact that libraries and record offices also are suffering from the devastating effects of local authority cuts.

It was through recognition of the problems outlined above that the BALH Programme and Development Committee, under the chairmanship of Ray Acton, History Inspector for the Lincolnshire Education Department, decided to investigate possible ways in which the Association might offer positive help to schools in developing "evidence based" local history work. We realised that anything we offered would be a mere drop in the ocean but hoped that any new

approaches that we might develop could be taken up by other bodies and in other parts of the country. It was agreed to concentrate initially on students in the 14-16 age group. We had the feeling that this is a period during a student's school career when a latent interest in local history might be suppressed by the heavy demands of GCE or CSE course work. Paradoxically it is also the period during which students might need most help in preparing to undertake personal local history projects.

Two courses were planned by BALH. One was a two-day non-residential course in Leicester, held in May 1984, the other a four-day residential course in June, based at Saffron Walden Youth Hostel in Essex. The Leicester course took as its theme "Crime and Poverty in Victorian Leicester". It involved twelve secondary school students from three different schools in the city, while at Saffron Walden our theme was "Discovering Lost Communities". Here seventeen students, from seven different counties, took part. The core of each course was documentary research in libraries and record offices, linked with work using museum displays and with fieldwork. At Leicester the fieldwork element was rather limited whereas at Saffron Walden it formed a major part of the programme.

On both courses the students used carefully structured worksheets as the basis for their research. I had been through all the sources to assess their availability and suitability as teaching material. At Leicester we were able to use, from Aubrey Stevenson's excellent Leicestershire Studies collection, local newspapers and directories, printed electoral registers, the Report of the Commissioner to Inquire into the Condition of the Framework Knitters, reports of the Leicester Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society, the annual reports of the Leicester Domestic Mission and Ordnance Survey maps, among other material. The students worked in four groups, each group investigating a different aspect of the main theme. To illustrate the range of materials used and the way in which we tried to integrate the use of various services, the following is a list of the sources used by the group which investigated "The living and working conditions of poor people in Victorian Leicester".

Library sources. Report of the Commissioner to Inquire into the Condition of the Framework Knitters, 1845: Reports of the Leicester Domestic Mission, 1846 and 1876: 'Leicester Journal' 29 November 1861.

Leicestershire Record Office sources. Census enumerators' returns, Burgess Street, 1851: Outdoor Poor Relief List, 1849: Building plan — eight houses in Burgess Street, 1852.

Newarke Houses Museum of local history. Reconstruction of framework knitter's workshop.

Fieldwork. Remains of Victorian terrace housing in Grafton Street West.

Typical of the assignments covered by this group was the following:

'Use the "Outdoor Poor Relief List for 1849" to find out which occupants of Burgess Street received assistance during that year. Make a list of their names with the assistance they received. Check this list against the 1851 Census Enumerators' Returns for Burgess Street to find out, as far as possible, the occupations of those who had received assistance in 1849. Add the occupations to your list.'

During the final session of the course, based in a workroom kindly provided by the Leicestershire Museums Education Service, each group had to prepare a small display and a short verbal report on its work.

The Saffron Walden course made less use of libraries, although we had an excellent introductory talk from John Shaw-Ridler at the Town Library on the types of resource available in local studies collections. Also we used material photocopied from items in the library's collection, including local directories, Ordnance Survey maps and eighteenth century Poor Rate books. In addition we used microfilm printouts of the 1841, 1861 and 1881 Census Enumerators' Returns for the town, provided by the local studies library at Colchester. When we repeat the course this summer we hope to make greater use of the Saffron Walden collections.

The aim on both courses was to impart the following background information and basic techniques:

Library and record office. Introduction to scope of collections: use of finding aids: procedure for requesting documents: use of original documents: use of microfilm.

Museums. Examination and evaluation of artefacts and displays as evidence which can be related to documentary sources: sketching of museum displays.

Fieldwork. Examination of surviving field evidence as evidence for life in the past: relating field evidence to documentary sources: field sketching.

Writing of summary accounts based on historical evidence.

Encouraged by the success of the 1984 courses, BALH is to run further courses this year, on similar lines. We will be repeating the Saffron Walden "Young Historians' Workshop" and will run a further residential course at Matlock Youth Hostel, where the theme will be "Investigating Lead Mining and Lead Miners". In addition we have planned a three-day non-residential course for schools in the Portsmouth area. This will follow closely the pattern of the Leicester course and will make use of the excellent facilities offered by the Portsmouth Central Library, Portsmouth City Records Office and the Portsmouth City Museums Service. The theme will be "Crime, Poverty and

Public Health in nineteenth century Portsmouth'', highlighting the onetime squalid conditions in that now very clean city!

We hope that our efforts will result in at least a handful of students being better prepared to embark upon their own personal project work. If at the same time we help to nurture some future adult local historians we will have helped to further the stated aim of BALH "to promote the advancement of public education through the study of local history"

A detailed illustrated report on the 1984 courses is included in my "Field Officer's Report for December 1983-December 1984" (£2.00 inc. postage), available from the Secretary/Administrator, British Association for Local History, The Mill Manager's House, Cromford Hill, MATLOCK, Derbyshire DE4 3RQ (Phone: 062-982 3768).

David Hayns,
Field Officer,
British Association for Local History.

Information Wanted

Mr. Stephen Green, Head of the Newspaper Library, The British Library, Newspaper Library, Colindale Avenue, London NW9 5HE, writes: **British Librarianship and Information Work, 1981-85.**

I have been asked — and I am much honoured — to write the chapter for the 1981-85 edition of the Library Association's **British Librarianship and Information Work** on 'news libraries and newspaper collections'.

If I write solely from the perspective of what I feel I know, the chapter is likely to be unduly influenced by descriptions of activities in which the British Library Newspaper Library has had some degree of influence or activity or participation.

For instance, in 1983 I attended a fascinating meeting in Stamford organised by the Local Studies Group on aspects of the newspaper and its exploitation relevant to that area. Equally, I know by reputation of a number of exciting local indexing projects. I am heavily convinced there is much more I don't know.

To diminish the risk of wearing metropolitan blinkers, could I appeal to librarians anywhere in the UK to send me any information or opinions they may have relevant to these five years concerning newspaper provision, use, storage or preservation? Any contribution, from elegant essay to the hasty scrawl, will be most welcome. I cannot guarantee that every offering in the anticipated flood will be used, but every contributor will be sent the draft chapter on which to comment and all contributions which are significantly quarried will be acknowledged.

Committee Matters

The LSG committee met at Birmingham Central Library on 20th March. Among the items discussed were the following:—

1. LA Working Party on Branch and Group finance. The Committee had been consulted by this body on its far-reaching proposals. If adopted, it was felt that the LSG would probably end up better off.
2. LA Report of the Futures Working Party. Committee members discussed this important paper at some length. Comments arising, which would be communicated to the LA, included: a) If more work is to be devolved on the LSG, then extra resources will be required; b) We wish to maintain the category of Affiliated Personal Member; c) We strongly urge that entry into the profession by part-time study be re-introduced.
3. Scottish Branch. It was reported that Norma Armstrong is to retire this year as Chairman of the Scottish Branch. She has held the post since the branch's inception in October 1980.
4. Eastern Counties Branch? Mike Petty had informed the Acting Hon. Secretary of his wish to establish such a branch. The Committee gave its approval in principle.
5. Alan Ball Medallion. It was reported that this award, named after the Borough Librarian of Harrow, would be funded by the London and Home Counties Branch of the Library Association. The medallion would go to the best local studies publication issued by a local authority. Committee members welcomed this original idea. The Hon. Treasurer would sit on the selection panel.

Robin Ansell,
Assistant Hon. Secretary.

LSG Committee, 1986-87

The present committee will complete its term of office at the end of 1985, and nominations for officers and committee members will be called for later in the year. A notice will appear in the L.A.R. so please keep your eyes open. Elections will also take place for the group's Scottish, North Western and London and Home Counties branch committees.

"Have you seen...?" some recent items of interest to Local Studies Librarians.

Sturges, P. A bibliography of George Poulett Scrope. Boston, Mass., Harvard Business School, 1984. \$8.00 + postage. Available in Europe from Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, The Museum, 41 Long Street, Devizes, Wilts., SN10 1NS. £8.50 + postage.

One does not often these days come across bibliographies of local historians, but this monograph by our honorary secretary deals with a man who was well-known in his own day not only as a local historian but as an M.P., a geologist and a political economist. From our point of view he was known as an excellent writer on Wiltshire topics, and his output in this field is fully listed and annotated, comprising about a tenth of the total of 175 entries. While the majority of his writings are not concerned with local history, the volume is a useful reminder of the wide-ranging interests of many nineteenth century scholars, and contains more and more detailed entries than those which appear in the two volumes of the Bibliography of Wiltshire. There is a very useful and lengthy introduction on his life and work.

Hall, H. W. et al. Indexing local history. *Journal of Educational Media and Library Sciences*, 21(4), Summer 1984, p 341-362.

This paper was originally presented at the 103rd Annual Conference of the American Library Association, Dallas, 1984, and describes approaches to indexing a local newspaper. The study compares time and accuracy involved in indexing and producing an index manually and using a microcomputer. Information about the software used is included.

Stephens, W. B. American local history through English eyes. *The Historian*, 3, Summer 1984, p 22-25.

The current position of local history in the United States discussed by a well-known British historian.

Local History, 5, March 1985.

Series of articles on local history and education:

Children and local history, by Bryan Wailes, p 17-18.

Local history in field centres, by Celia Jennings, p 18-20.

Lincolnshire's 'LEAP': the Lincolnshire Educational Aids Project, p 23-24.

Lower Kem Mill: the past for the future, by Simon Millward-Hopkins, p 8-10.

Smith, D. The bibliography of Scotland. LOCSCOT, 1(7), Autumn 1984, p 125-127.

Starts with a description of the National Library of Scotland's Bibliography of Scotland and how it is compiled, then moves on to a more general discussion of the current situation in Scotland, existing problems and possible future solutions.

Berry, E. Archive services in the Metropolitan Counties and in Greater London. *The Historian*, 4, Autumn 1984, p 8-11.

A discussion of the possible effects on the archive services of these authorities of the proposals in the Government White Paper 'Streamlining the Cities'.

Toase, Mary, ed. Public reference library services in the UK: a directory of information and specialist staff. 2nd ed, LA(RSIS), 1984. £7.20. ISBN 0 946437 02 6.

All public libraries should have a copy of this list. Its usefulness in local studies work lies in the fact that this new edition now includes in its entries the name and address of the local studies librarian, or in some cases the person responsible for the local collection. District and branch libraries are included where relevant. A useful way of finding your opposite number in other libraries.

SLA News no. 186, March-April 1985.

Several articles on local history:

Local studies, what art thou? by Joe Fisher, p 3-5.

The library as community publisher, by Don Martin, p 23-26.

The local historian and the local archivist, by Constance Brodie, p 28-31.

Garden, Elma. Local history: a community resource. *Proc. SLA Conference, Aberdeen, 1984*, p 49-53.

Discussion of the ways in which local studies collections can serve the whole community, including the media, education, and social welfare groups, including those for the elderly.

British Association for Local History. Field Officer's Report, 1983-84.

As noted elsewhere in this issue, BALH has now published its second Field Officer's report. Apart from the report on courses there is a major section on local history societies in London, and a report on conferences for county organisations held in Cambridge and Exeter in June 1984. The whole report is well worth reading.

Prescott, H. Movie films as local archive material. *Audiovisual Librarian*, 11(1), Winter 1985, p 26-29.

Describes the collection of movie films made as local records of the locality by Llanelli Public Libraries. Includes production and storage. The collection now contains more than 130,000 feet of 16mm film.

Local Studies and Education

A Weekend School to discuss the role that local history can play in the teaching of history, geography and environmental studies, and the part that local studies libraries might play.

Date: September 27th-29th 1985

Place: Wansfell College, Epping, Essex

Fee: £83.00. Twin-bedded rooms. Facilities for day and half day visitors.

PROGRAMME

Friday 27th September

6.00 pm Assemble

8.15 pm Local studies and education — introduction by John West, author of 'Village Records' and 'Town Records'.

Saturday 28th September

9.30 am Local studies with a micro-computer in the primary school — Alistair Ross, Polytechnic of North London.

11.00 am Local studies and secondary education — Peter Street, H.M.I. Inspector.

1.45 pm Visit to Epping Forest Field Centre.

4.45 pm Local studies in a college of further education — Ralph Billington, Woolwich College of Further Education.

8.00 pm Local history films and slides.

Sunday 29th September

9.30 am Adult education and the diploma course — Dr. James Thomas, Portsmouth Polytechnic.

This course is organised by the London and Home Counties Branch of the Local Studies Group. For further information please contact Brian Curle (Local Studies Group), Central Library, Phillimore Walk, London W8 7RX.

Local Studies Group Annual Report 1984

This year has seen the absence of the Secretary since September as he is spending a year in Botswana. He is due to return in September 1985 and for the period of his absence the Chairman has also acted as Secretary and will continue to do so until he returns.

Membership of the Group has continued to rise. The change in rules approved at last year's AGM, allowing for personal affiliate members of the Group has resulted in a number of non-librarians taking up affiliate membership. The membership fee was fixed at £4.50, part of which goes to the branch where one exists.

There have been a number of successful meetings held during the year organised either by one of the three branches or by individual members of the Committee. These have included meetings in Birmingham, Stamford, Exeter and Taunton. The meetings organised by the branches have been held at Kirkcaldy, Edinburgh, Preston, Manchester and Essex, and at several venues in London. Thus it can be seen that the Group is trying to hold meetings in various parts of the country so that as many members as possible can attend without having to travel too far. One member of the Committee, Mike Petty, was invited to give a paper at an Italian local studies meeting in Sardinia — a refreshing trend that hopefully might bring local studies librarians in England into closer contact with those on the continent.

The Group's two journals, the *Local Studies Librarian* and *LOCSCOT*, published by the Scottish branch, both had successful years and continue to include worthwhile material which might not otherwise be published. As in previous years, there has been no lack of suitable material offered for inclusion. There have been a few technical problems associated with the production of the *Local Studies Librarian*, principally caused by the distance between editor and printer, but these problems appear now to have been overcome.

The 1984 Dorothy McCulla award was given to Harold Nichols, formerly of Loughborough University School of Librarianship, for his outstanding services to local studies librarianship and to the Local Studies Group.

Notes and News

Federation of Family History Societies

Readers will recall that the last issue of LSL referred to CLW's family history course. This seems to be an appropriate time to remind librarians of the existence of Family History societies in various parts of the country. The addresses of these societies — and other information about family history research — can be obtained from the Federation of Family History Societies, the administrator of which is Mrs. Pauline Saul, 31 Seven Star Road, Solihull B91 2BZ. She will be happy to send, on receipt of an SAE, a list of all member societies worldwide, and details of the Federation's publications and activities. Local societies will of course provide information about their own activities, but many enquirers will be searching for their roots outside the place where they now live.

Index of London Newspaper Files

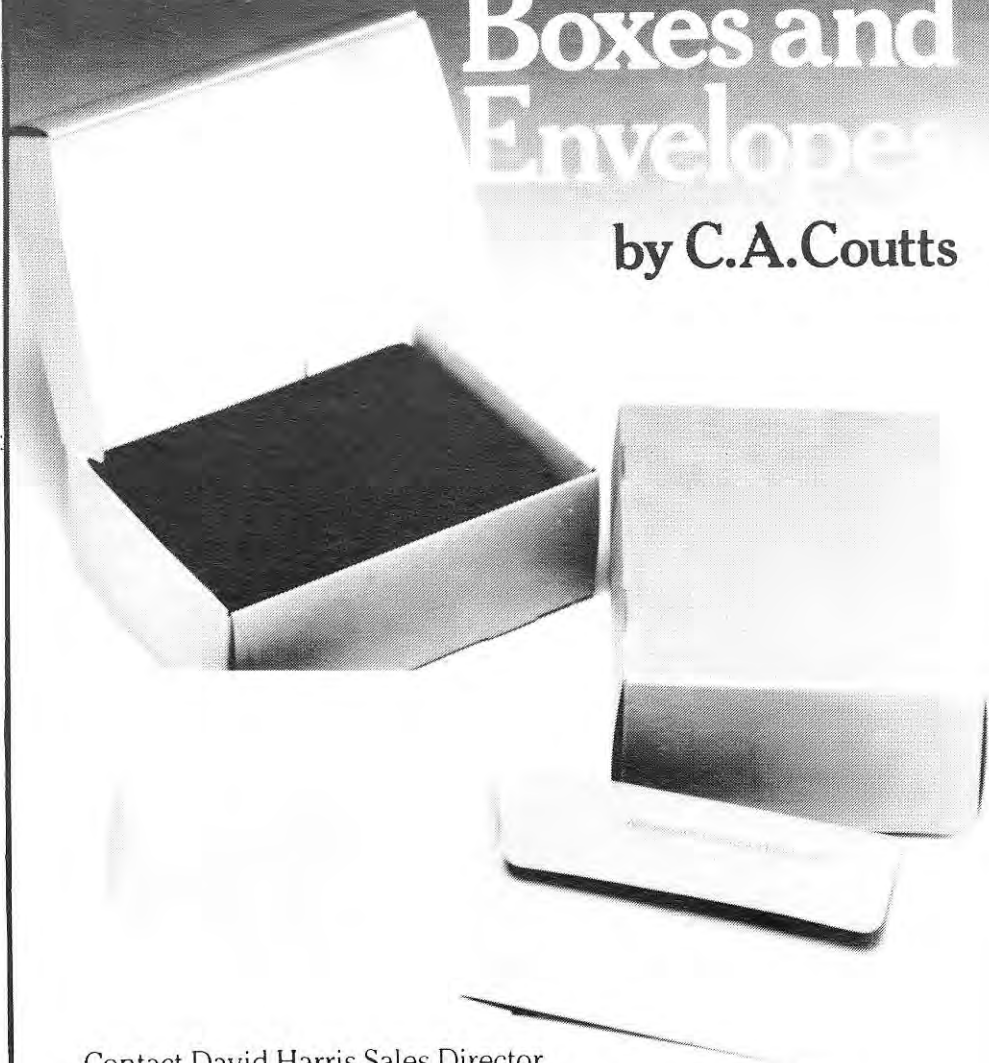
We should like to point out that in the reference on page 14 in the last issue of LSL, this index should have been attributed to Mr E. A. Willats, FLA. Our apologies to both Mr. and Mrs. Willats. Mr. Willats, who retired recently from Islington Libraries, is maintaining his interest in local history. He is at present working on 'Streets with a story', a history of every street in Islington (including the former Finsbury) plus every block of flats, giving date, items of architectural interest and any notable residents of the past. Publication hopefully will be in 1986.

Librarians are invited to join in the CORAL Annual Conference at Lancashire Polytechnic, Preston, from 6th-8th September. The subject is 'Regional Industrial Development'. It will be addressed by a number of eminent historical geographers and historians, and discussion topics will include differing types of industrial development in a number of English regions. Day visitors will be catered for. Enquiries to Mr. J. G. Timmins, History Division, Social Studies Faculty, Lancashire Polytechnic, Corporation Street, Preston PR1 2TQ.

A seminar on oral history, organised jointly by the Local Studies Group and the Audio Visual Group is planned. It will probably take place during the week beginning 11th November 1985. Further details will be published as soon as they are available, so keep your eyes open.

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