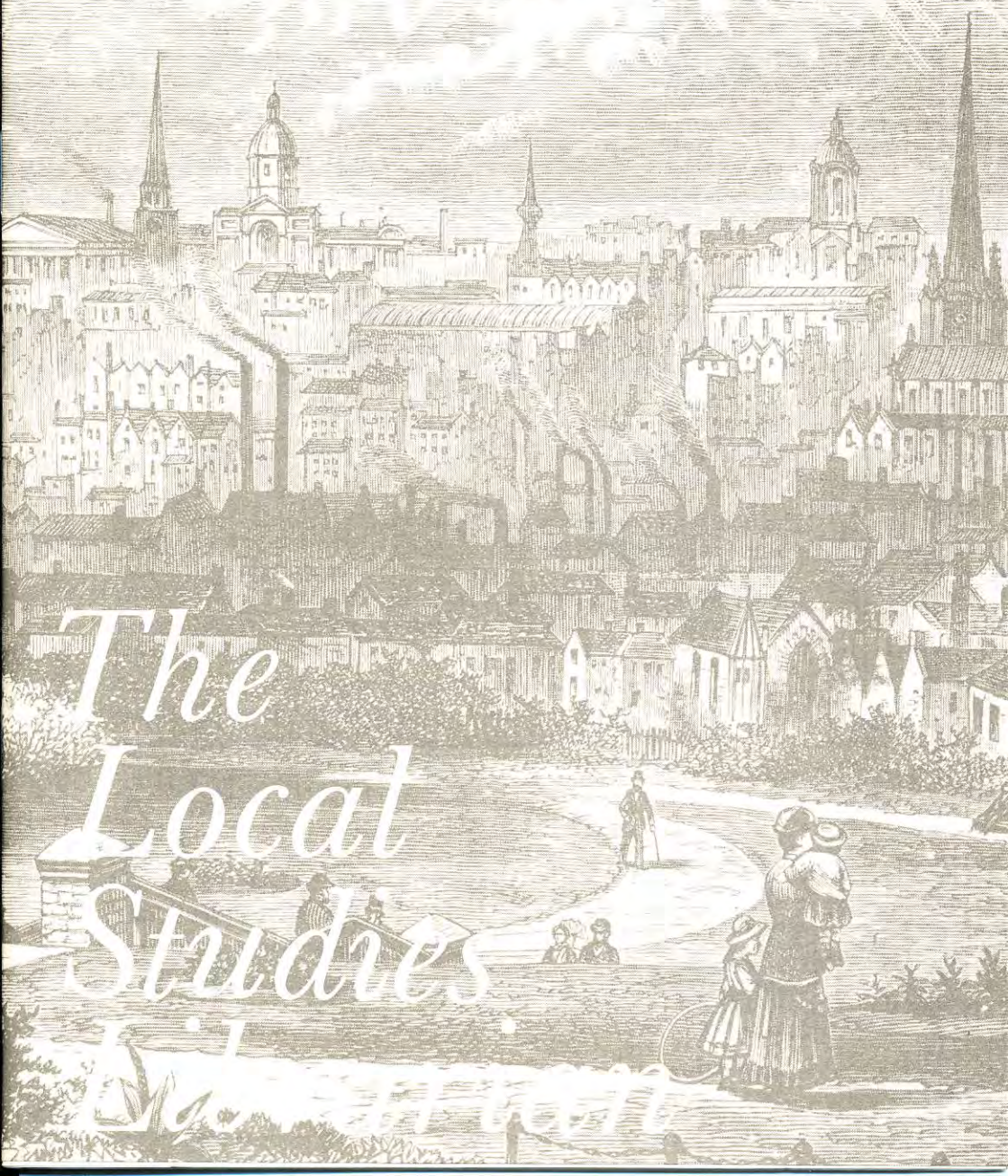


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Cover illustration: A View of Birmingham c.1886.

Courtesy of the Local Studies Department, Birmingham Reference Library.

Editorial

The Local Studies Group has now approximately 1800 members. The Committee believes that this is because it is seen to be active — and because local studies are seen to be relevant to the work of many librarians. Branches have been set up in various areas. Regular meetings are held in these areas and elsewhere, often in conjunction with other bodies. The Committee, as well as promoting activities, works behind the scenes, with work on publications (as a result of discussion at the Weekend School) and on guidelines for local studies libraries in hand at present. The *Local Studies Librarian* is circulated to all members, and increasingly to other subscribers, and tries to present a range of information from the general to reports of meetings and articles on practices in specific libraries. Overall, we feel that LSG members get good value.

The Committee, then, seeks to serve members, but what of the members themselves? Elections are held every two years, but no voting took place this year as there were no nominations outside the existing committee members. Nor were there any outside nominations this year for the McCulla Prize. What are the reasons — are members too busy in their own libraries, or is it merely apathy? We know that there are local networks, but the LSG can provide a wider range of contacts. The recent Weekend School, on Local Studies and Education, provided an excellent chance to meet other librarians in the field, as well as gaining useful information from a wide range of speakers, but only about thirty people attended. The course on family history at CLW did not run due to lack of takers, and the Audiovisual day school planned in London was postponed for the same reason. All of these topics seem highly relevant to local studies librarians, so what went wrong — were they at the wrong time, too expensive, insufficiently publicised, in the wrong place? The organisers would like to know to help future planning.

All, of course, is not gloom. Some meetings do attract good audiences — for example the annual day school at Stamford regularly attracts over fifty people, and the North West programme is well supported. A new branch has just been established in East Anglia. It is, however, difficult to mount meetings in sparsely populated areas — the way forward here can only be through joint meetings. Members can help by suggesting topics and areas of joint concern. Please let the Committee know your interests.

Indexing the Illustrations Collection in Hastings Library: an MSC project

Hastings Area Local Studies Project (HALSP) was formed by the Manpower Services Commission in October 1983 to sort, classify and index the material in Hastings Library's local studies collection and to form a Modern History Archive. Sponsored jointly by East Sussex County Council and Sussex University Centre for Continuing Education, the project provided employment for a full-time supervisor and eight part-time assistants. It proved itself to be an exciting and dynamic project, and was brought to the notice of the public by good coverage in the local press. During the first year its achievements ranged from producing booklets and holding exhibitions on local topics to recording oral history. This article concerns one of its major efforts, the devising of a new system for organising the illustrations collection. This consists of 2,750 loose photographs, a further 1,750 photographs mounted in albums, 1,270 film negatives with contact prints, several hundred glass negatives, over 5,500 postcards, just under 1,000 35mm slides, and over 1,000 prints, sketches and paintings.

The Classification Scheme

The loose photographs were the first part of the illustrations collection to be tackled, and the classification scheme evolved for these was then used for the other sections.

It was decided to primarily sort the photographs into three basic geographical areas:

- i) inside Hastings Borough boundary.
- ii) outside Hastings Borough but within the zone covered by Hastings library
- iii) Outside the library zone; this was used only for the John E. Ray collection of Victorian glass negatives.

Area i (inside Hastings Borough boundary) was then subdivided into 20 smaller areas. It was at first hoped to use the historic parishes, but difficulties arose where one side of a road was in one parish and the other side in the next. As the loose photographs were to be housed in files under a street-by-street arrangement, it was felt that it would be more practical to keep all photographs of a street together in one file which could be handed to the user. Enquirers would be likely to ask for photographs of a particular street, and it would be more straightforward to look up the street index and hand them the relevant file than to have to check which parish (or parishes) it was in and hand out perhaps two or three dif-

ferent files. Accordingly, a compromise was made between parishes and well-defined areas such as the Old Town. Each of these areas was numbered, starting at the nucleus of Hastings (The Old Town), and working outwards. Within these areas the streets were listed alphabetically and numbered. Each photograph was then given a running number, these groups of numbers being divided by /. Thus 1/02/08 indicates the 8th photograph of All Saints' Street, Old Town. It was necessary to divide the sea-front area (a long, narrow strip) by a different method, owing to the overlapping of many photographs taken from out at sea. This was sub-divided east-west along the coast. An "odd" sub-division, "Ships", was housed at the end of the sea-front area, as it was decided this was the best way that such a class could be accommodated within a geographical sequence.

General views of Hastings and St. Leonards (mostly aerial) were classified together at the beginning of the sequence, and similarly, general views of smaller areas were classified together before the first street in that area's alphabetical sequence. It was hoped by this method to accommodate users with both general and specific interests. Collected views were grouped between the numbered Hastings areas and the alphabetical sequence of parishes outside the town, as some of the collections ranged over a wide area. These were given the class mark COLLECTED VIEWS followed by a running number.

Photographs in area ii (outside Hastings Borough) were classified by the historic parishes (not the present administrative units), in a single alphabetical sequence. Romney Marsh was kept together as a single area.

Imposing the present Hastings Borough boundary over the historic parishes results in a fringe area where some parishes are only partially included within the borough. Individual geographical criteria were used in determining the classification of the parishes so affected, and the class numbers were formed by the first three letters of the parish name (or more if necessary in cases of similar names), followed by a running number.

It was decided not to arrange the photographs chronologically within their classes, to facilitate the hospitality of the sequence for additions.

Two non-geographical sequences were formed, for portraits and military photographs. Class numbers for the portraits were formed by the first three letters of the person's surname, followed by their initial, then a running number, e.g. TRE.R./01 (Robert Tressell). Group photographs were classified under the name of the most important person in the group, cross-references being made to the others in the index. Military photographs were divided chronologically into five periods, reflecting periods of wars, each period being allocated a letter: each photograph was then identified by the word MILITARY preceding the period letter, followed by a running number.

Newspaper cuttings of photographs were classed by physical form i.e. as cuttings, as this determines the storage conditions, but it was envisaged that these would eventually be included in the comprehensive illustrations index.

The index

The ultimate aim was to have a single illustrations index covering all types of illustration, including those in scattered locations such as directories and other books, newspapers, etc. The index cards are colour coded, each type of illustration having its own colour, e.g. white for photographs, pink for prints. The index is in dictionary form; combined proper name and subject.

Each type of illustrative material was worked on separately, but the indexes so produced were filed together. Each index forms a separate entity within itself; there are no references across the types of material as this was found to be impractical. For example, on the prints card under the heading *Churches* are SEE references only to those churches of which prints exist, and on the corresponding photographs card are SEE references only to those churches of which photographs exist. Therefore it is important when looking up a particular subject to check all cards under that heading.

A white card was made out for each street in Hastings and St. Leonards with its class number, regardless of whether any illustration of it existed in the collection at that time. White was chosen for ease of upkeep as it was assumed that later additions were more likely to be photographs.

Each illustration was indexed in depth; thus a photograph of a town street was indexed under name of street, names of any important buildings, and any other subject which seemed important in the picture, e.g. trams, street traders. Fishing boats were indexed individually under name and number.

When the same illustration appeared twice, once as a single photograph and once as a collected view, the collected view was not indexed, to avoid frustrating the user by referring him twice to the same illustration.

There was unfortunately not time to index names of painters and engravers. This still needs to be done, as there are prints by famous artists such as Turner and Holman Hunt.

Certain individuals have been given specific index entries. These are basically people of local importance, including those appearing in the D.N.B. and locally published biographical works. An index card was also made out for special classes of people, for example mayors, clergy.

For form of headings Sears' List of Subject Headings was used as authority, with the additions and modifications necessary to adapt it for an English local

studies index. D.N.B. was used as the authority for form of heading for personal names, with the main entry under the name best known and cross-references from other forms. Dates of birth and death were given where necessary to distinguish between individuals of the same name. Titles etc were given where useful as a means of identification and a descriptive note was given after each name to assist the user.

By the time HALSP was originally due to end (September 1984), the indexing of the loose photographs and the prints, sketches and paintings was completed. In addition several of the albums of photographs had been indexed.

The extreme care and accuracy needed in indexing necessitates a great deal of time being devoted to it, and the one drawback of it being done as part of an MSC Community Programme is that the individual employees' contracts are for one year only. HALSP itself was extended for a second year, finally coming to an end in September 1985. Although much new work was accomplished, nothing further was done to the illustrations index. There is so much scope in a project of this nature that it is to be hoped that there will be the opportunity to complete the work at some future time.

Susan E. Toplis, ALA,
Project Assistant, HALSP.

Oral History and Libraries: some recent developments

Oral history has been recognised for some time as being a valuable form of historical evidence, though some people are more convinced of its value than others. Oral reminiscence is today also being used as a therapeutic device with the elderly, and this is a further source of evidence. While much oral evidence originates outside, libraries are increasingly becoming involved, either directly by the recording of interviews, or by becoming a repository for tapes and transcripts made by others, or sometimes by providing resources to aid the recall process. Various articles of interest to librarians, ranging from general introductions to reports on specific programmes have recently appeared, and this article reports on some of these.

The most general, by Clive Cochrane¹, states the case for public library involvement in oral history, and examples are given of different kinds of initiatives as well as types of source. The importance of local radio as an oral history source is also brought out. The article concludes that the public library, and especially the local collection, has an important role to play in ensuring that these resources are preserved for posterity, yet at the same time are made accessible to the public.

A different kind of resource is described by Owen Surridge in his article in *New Library World* about the London History Workshop, which is aiming to build up on Oral Archive². It is pointed out that at one time as many as thirty different projects were in progress in London, and that often, when the written report had been produced, the tapes were laid aside and forgotten. The Workshop found sponsors (the Nuffield Foundation and the GLC) which allowed it to start collecting and also to generate recording activity. It now has 500 tapes and would welcome help with transcription and cataloguing from interested librarians. That it has been accepted is shown by the recent decision by Camden Council, in agreeing to set up an oral history programme, that it shall initially be operated through the agency of the Workshop. Camden's purpose is to bring together the large number of groups and individuals with varying backgrounds and approaches who are or wish to be involved in the oral history of the area, and to provide guidance and assistance, for instance in techniques and by providing equipment. The project involves the appointment of a full-time Co-ordinator. Initial funding will be for one/two years with a first year projected expenditure of about £17,000. As part of the programme it is proposed that an Oral History Archive be established in the local history collection in Swiss Cottage library.

Suffolk Libraries have become concerned with oral history through their Years Ahead Library Clubs. The aim of this MSC scheme is to hold clubs to give mental

stimulation to the elderly, and they are held in libraries throughout Suffolk. Activities vary and include music, talks, play readings — and reminiscence. Club leaders receive basic training on how to go about asking elderly people to record their reminiscences, and on techniques, and the tapes are being gathered together to be transcribed by another Community Programme which is about to start, and which is also involved with tapes from other oral history programmes at the Museum of East Anglian Life and the County Record Office. A brief article has appeared in the Suffolk staff magazine³.

Some years ago 'Help the Aged' introduced a 'Recall' programme aimed at helping reminiscence work. A brief note in Belfast Public Library's staff newsletter, *Scan*, July/August 1985, indicates that the library, as a result of requests from groups and organisations, has published a collection of items to aid this work, with a second in course of production. Several local 'recall' packages have been produced in Ulster by various organisations following a general Northern Ireland version of 'Recall' produced by Faith Gibson of the University of Ulster. This general package of 32 slides is accompanied by notes and cue questions for social workers, and its intention is to encourage those working with the elderly to use localised material specifically related to their own town or neighbourhood. Reminiscence therapy is a valid basis for co-operation between libraries and other organisations — a note appeared on this topic on p.13 of the last issue of this periodical — and hopefully the memories recalled could be a useful source of evidence for the historian.

A further source of oral information, mentioned in Cochrane's article, is material acquired from local broadcasting stations, and several libraries, including Wolverhampton, Cumbria and Cleveland, have some form of arrangement with their local stations for the deposit of relevant tapes: some record offices are also involved.

Oral evidence is increasingly recognised as a basic part of the local studies library's stock. Librarians must ensure that they are in contact with the various organisations creating such evidence, or take part in schemes themselves. One thing, widely recognised, that libraries can do particularly well is to organise the tapes for use, and another is to ensure that the information they contain is available for all. It is therefore necessary to disseminate information about oral history collections by various means, and librarians should note that the periodical *Oral History* now includes a section on 'libraries and archives'. The aim is to co-ordinate news of oral history collections and projects based on libraries and record offices in the hope of developing an information-sharing resource. If you would like anything included the contact is Angela Hewins, 7 Knightlow Way, Harbury, Leamington Spa, Warwicks, CU33 9NB. Included in the first appearance of this

new column is a report on an oral history programme at Rhondda Borough Library.

Ian Jamieson

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1. Cochrane, C. Public libraries and the changing nature of oral history, *Audiovisual Librarian* 11(4) Autumn 1985, p. 301-7.
2. Surridge, O. Oral archives: the London History Workshop, *New Library World*, 86 (1023) Sept. 1985, p. 16.
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Early O.S. plans: the Godfrey edition

All local studies librarians are aware of the importance of Ordnance Survey large scale plans, with their vast amount of detail, for the way in which they have portrayed our towns and villages over the last 130 years. Copies of earlier plans are now hard to come by, and many in libraries show signs of heavy usage and are rapidly deteriorating. While some libraries have microfilmed their sets, this is not a particularly convenient answer.

In 1981 Alan Godfrey, an antiquarian bookseller and map dealer, began to issue reprints of early editions of the 25 inch plans. Although photographically reduced to approximately 15 inches to the mile, the quality is such that most detail is clearly distinguishable. The reverse of each plan contains information about the area covered and usually an extract from a local directory of the time. The price is 90 pence per sheet, and librarians buying a minimum of one hundred copies get 50% discount: they sell well to the public.

Mr Godfrey has just issued his hundredth sheet and is looking forward to expanding his series. The venture started as a Tyneside project but areas covered now include parts of Scotland, Yorkshire and London. Much of the impetus for publication has come from librarians and archivists who have requested the publication of maps and who have in many cases written the introductory material about their areas. The publisher would be pleased to hear from any librarians interested in the reproduction of maps of their own areas. His address is 52-58 Spoor Street, Dunston, Gateshead, NE11 9BD.

History is Local: a residential course for librarians

In January 1985 forty six librarians from branch libraries and reference departments within the Birmingham Public Library system gathered together for a five-day residential course on local history, held at Avoncroft College in the heart of the Worcestershire countryside. Birmingham Public Libraries are fortunate to use this venue twice a year for in-service training — it is actually leased to Birmingham District Council for use by all of its departments — but this was the very first time that a week was to be devoted to local studies. The programme was intended to be full of variety and interest and with some surprises in order to show librarians not engaged in the field that this subject is not insular or boring, and includes not just genealogy but every aspect of life from the cradle to the grave.

Part of the first morning was spent in trying to define the term 'local studies' and in trying to ascertain from branch librarians their interpretation of the term. Following lunch four outsiders representing various groups informed course members of their particular aspects of the topic and how they felt local studies/history departments could help. These speakers were a professional record searcher who dealt with the ever growing interest in genealogy; an amateur, being a founder member of a local history society in King's Norton, a village with a long history, previously in Worcestershire, but now a suburb of Birmingham; a representative of a historical project set up in the Hay Mills area of Birmingham by the Manpower Services Commission; and a teacher who had spent long hours in the local studies department of Birmingham Central Library with children aged between eight and ten researching interesting families who had lived in their area of Birmingham — Selly Oak. There was also a fascinating account by Audrey Linkman of the retrieval policies of Manchester Studies.

The theme for the second day was the relationship between a local history library and other bodies in the same field. The talks ranged widely and included one on local history departments within museums — how they are planned and established, and how working closely with the 'local' local history librarian can help each organisation dramatically; publications — how they ought to be produced; the Record Office — the role played by the archivist in collecting and collating local documentation; and the Planning Office — a talk from a qualified architect who, while working for the city's planning department, is responsible for the implementation and preservation of Birmingham's listed buildings and Conservation area. There were also talks from the education officer of Birmingham's railway museum on the importance of preserving railway history and from Barrie Trinder of the Ironbridge Gorge museum on industrial archaeology.

An evening session was taken up with the showing of a controversial film made by an independent group in Birmingham and later shown at the Edinburgh Film Festival and on Channel Four — a production called 'Property Rites' which dealt with society's reaction and attitude to the crime of rape, today and in the past. Historical elements were included which came from contemporary pamphlets concerning the rape and murder of a certain Mary Ashford in the north Birmingham area in 1817, and all available in the City's local studies department. Following the showing of the film there was an avid and heated question and answer session on the film and the role of womens' rights which it brought into the foreground with the producer of the film — Heather Powell.

The third day was concerned with providing an introduction to some of the more important types of local studies materials. Much of the day was taken up with workshops dealing with such sources as maps, directories, census returns and photographs: each participant took part in four of these. Later, three people jointly employed by the City Library and the City Museum under an inner city partnership scheme demonstrated extracts from a sound archive they were building up dealing with restaurants and food in the inner city area of Birmingham before the 1960s. Tape recordings made under this scheme will eventually be deposited in Birmingham's local studies department.

One of the most moving moments in the whole week came on the following morning when two members of the city's social services department showed parts of the 'Help the Aged' Recall Project — a tape/slide presentation devised by one of the London Boroughs. This created an immense deal of nostalgia amongst the older librarians and in fact the showing of details of hunger and hardship in the 1930s illustrated together with the popular music of the time reduced much of the audience to tears.

The afternoon proved to be fascinating and amusing, with a local writer and an adult education field officer explaining what had been involved in their setting up of a creative writing group in a school near the inner city and persuading members of the class to write down their memories of that area in the past. What resulted was so good that many of the stories were compiled and published in book form. The two had the audience in shrieks of laughter when regaling the problems of persuading these local people to set down their reminiscences and later the problems involved in actually getting the completed item printed.

Finally, the great importance of conservation and preservation of local studies materials was given in a necessary but sometimes frightening introduction by the local studies department's own Conservationist — a part of the work of the librarian which, sadly, is often neglected or pushed under the carpet.

Although these talks were varied and numerous they helped to bring an insight to the staff of Birmingham Public Libraries into the vastness and complexities of the subject of local studies. But the course members did not solely listen to speakers and play with materials: they were also there to recommend specific programmes relating to the topic from which both branch and departmental librarians could benefit in their day to day work. Some fifteen recommendations were suggested during the discussions. These included the importance and possibility of an official policy statement by the management for the collection of local material within the branch libraries; education in the existence and use of local studies materials for all staff; and the development of local studies/history packs for branch libraries.

To put these and other recommendations into action it was suggested that a special team consisting of a member of senior management, the local studies librarian and a representative from each of the branch libraries and reference departments should be set up. This has now been done and up to November LOST (Local Studies Team) has met three times and work is well under way to ensure that local studies within the whole of Birmingham Public Libraries will remain an extremely important part of its many and varied services.

Patrick Baird,
Local Studies Librarian,
Birmingham Public Libraries.

Sources for Urban History: report of a Local Studies Group/RSIS meeting

This Day School was organised for the Local Studies Group by Committee member Elizabeth Melrose in co-operation with RSIS East Midlands, and was held at Stamford on 15th May 1985.

The day began with an interesting illustrated talk by Sheila Cooke, Head of Local Studies for Nottinghamshire on the sources for urban transport history. Careful not to seem to be biased towards canal history (Mrs Cooke owns a narrow-boat!) she detailed the various sources including directories, timetables and maps. Maps are of course a vital source: however Mrs Cooke did point out that even the most standard of sources can often lead the researcher astray — for example some Ordnance Survey maps of Nottingham show railway lines which were never built. The map-makers desire to be as up to date as possible left some curious anomalies when routeways failed to materialise due to public opinion, lack of money or difficult terrain. Photographs play an important part in transport history and a selection of photographs was displayed. The importance of oral history was also emphasised. Nottinghamshire has a growing collection of tapes and accompanying transcripts of reminiscences including those of tram drivers and bargees. These help to give a flavour of the period which printed sources cannot. One final source which Mrs Cooke recommended but one which researchers often balk at are Acts of Parliament. If you can wade through the legal jargon they often reveal quite fascinating personal details — particularly those from the earlier period.

Dr Geoffrey Martin, Keeper of the Public Records spoke about his work when compiling the *Bibliography of British and Irish Municipal History*. This mammoth task has resulted in one volume published some fifteen years ago but plans are afoot to follow this up with volume two in the not too distant future. After outlining his area of research Dr Martin went on to detail the painstaking research which must have taken up thousands of working hours, not to mention filing and indexing thousands of 6"×4" cards. This left the audience in need of lunch in order to ponder the enormity of Dr Martin's task.

Duly refreshed, members of the Local Studies Group attended the Group Annual General Meeting which was chaired by Chris Makepeace. After discussion on the Annual Report (see LSL 4(1) Summer 1985, p.22), the Group finances and the election of auditors, the meeting was closed and the Day School resumed.

Diana Dixon talked to us about the *Urban History Yearbook*. First appearing in 1974, the brainchild of John Dyos, the Yearbook developed from the *Urban History Newsletter*, its aims being to highlight current areas of urban history research by

means of book and periodical reviews and the current bibliography of urban history. Miss Dixon co-ordinates the production of the bibliography with Anthony Sutcliffe from Sheffield University. The compilation is now aided by the introduction of computer software packages such as Super Brain which eradicate the constant cutting and sticking which Miss Dixon had to undertake as new entries arrived from all over the world.

The last speaker was Rodney Cousins, Keeper of Social History at the Museum of Lincolnshire Life. His personal research project into the inns of Newark proved a light hearted and interesting talk. Outlining the sources available e.g. directories, company archives and deeds, Mr Cousins emphasised the invaluable source that local newspapers prove to be and also the difficulty of not being waylaid into other areas. Newark proved a ripe area to study having some eighty public houses at one time. When the Great North Road by-passed the town centre the publicans were not dismayed. They started serving from the back door where the new road passed many of the once centrally situated inns.

The day was rounded off with tea and a mouth-watering selection of cakes and biscuits. An interesting day-school which was well received by an audience of librarians from far flung parts.

Judith Mahoney,
ex-Suffolk Record Office.



Notes and News

The third AGM of the British Association for Local History was held in London in March. The bulk of the meeting was devoted to discussion of the financial situation. The Carnegie Trust could no longer provide funding, and one result of this is that David Hayns, the Field Officer, will have to leave at the end of August — a real blow, as those who have met David and read his reports will confirm. Current membership appears to be about 1,150, and the circulation of *The Local Historian* was only 1,950 in 1984.

BALH plays a useful part in bringing together those interested in local history. It would be a great pity if it foundered. More support is urgently needed.

Family History in the Highlands: the "genealogist-in-residence" experiment.

In the north of Scotland, with its sparse population, library services are provided by the Highland Regional Library Service, which came into being in 1975 as an amalgamation of several county and burgh services. As a result there are local collections in a variety of locations including Wick, Thurso, Fort William, Dingwall and Inverness: the principal collection, running to nearly forty thousand items, is housed in Inverness Library.

Over the last few years the Highland Region Library Service, in common with many others, has faced a steadily rising demand for family history information. Enquiries have come from both local people and tourists, and had reached the 1000 per year level by the beginning of 1985. With the assistance of the Highland Family History Society (founded in 1981) a variety of source materials is made available at the main reference library in Inverness, including parish registers and indexes, collections of monumental inscriptions, censuses etc. as well as a large collection of printed works.

The problem was that as the collections expanded, and the demand increased, it became more and more difficult to deal with the number and complexity of the enquiries. Consequently it was decided to appoint a "genealogist in residence". The aim was to provide in-depth assistance to the public, to a level beyond that which could normally be managed by the regular reference staff, and at the same time to quantify and analyse the demand. The post was filled by Alistair MacLeod, who comes from Ullapool in the Highland Region, and who has done considerable research on his own family in the Lochbroom area. The experiment ran from June to September this summer, based on the main reference room at Inverness library.

Enquiries were divided into superficial (less than 5 minutes), average (up to 15 minutes), and in-depth (over 15 minutes). Half the enquiries fell into the latter category (about 200 in all). A note was kept of the country of origin of the enquirer and it was found that half of all enquiries came from Scots. The next largest group (70) were from the United States whilst the remaining 25% were divided between other parts of the U.K. and the Dominions.

Some publicity was given to the service via local press and radio, and handouts were distributed to some local hotels and all libraries in the Highlands. This undoubtedly led to a large rise in the number of enquiries compared with the same period in 1984.

The results of the experiment are still being analysed and no decisions have yet been made about the future of such a service. However it is felt that the project was a great success in that it

- (a) helped people to a far greater degree than the library service had managed previously.
- (b) demonstrated the demands being placed on the service from 'home' and 'abroad' in such a way that proposals for the future can be formulated.

Further information on the project can be obtained from the Regional Librarian or Senior Librarian (Reference) at the Highland Regional Library Service, 31a Harbour Road, Inverness IV1 1UA.

Peter Reynolds,
Senior Librarian (Reference)
Highland Regional Library Service



Local History Publications Awards

Full details of the Alan Ball Local History Awards, mentioned in the last issue, have now been published and were circulated to Library Association members with the *Vacancies Supplement* of August 31st. There are two awards for each calendar year, one for the author judged to have produced the best piece of research and scholarship, and the other to the library department which has been responsible for the best piece of book production. All publications submitted for consideration must have been produced by a United Kingdom library department.

Nominations are now invited for these awards. The address for further details and submission of entries is: Library Services Trust, c/o Administrative Offices, Guildhall Library, London WC2P 2EJ. All entries must be accompanied by a completed entry form.

Scotland, too, has an award for local studies publications. The Scottish Library Association has established the SLA Publications Award, to be presented biennially, for the best publication by a Scottish local library. The first Award has gone to Falkirk District Libraries for *Falkirk: short illustrated historical trails of Falkirk and the surrounding areas* by A. W. McGill and W. Preston.

Committee Matters

The LSG committee met at the Library Association on 6th November. Among the items discussed were the following:

1. LSG Committee, 1986-87. As the number of nominations received did not exceed the number of places available no election was necessary. However, Bernard Nurse relinquished his office as Hon. Treasurer, having served in that capacity since 1982. The Chairman thanked him for his able service during a particularly traumatic period in the Group's finances. The composition of the new committee appears elsewhere in this issue.
2. The Dorothy McCulla Memorial Prize. The Committee has awarded the 1985 prize to Margaret Evans, Associate Librarian at the J. B. Morrell Library, University of York. This is in recognition of 'the outstanding contribution made to local studies librarianship by her establishment of the Local Studies Database at the University of York'.
3. LSG Weekend School '85. It was reported that the Group's biennial event, hosted this year by the London and Home Counties Branch, had passed off successfully. Over twenty delegates, from as far afield as Cumbria, Dorset and Northern Ireland, had attended this weekend at the end of the Central Line.
4. Sources for urban history. Another meeting organised by committee member Elizabeth Melrose at Stamford. This meeting, which included the Group's AGM, proved very popular indeed, attracting more than fifty people from the East Midlands area and beyond.
5. Standards sub-committee. This sub-committee would be reconvened with a view to publishing the *Guidelines for local studies libraries* which currently exist only in draft form. Convenor: Diana Winterbotham.
6. Publications sub-committee. This would be reconvened as a direct result of suggestions made at the Weekend School. Convenor: Assistant Hon. Secretary.
7. LSG Weekend School, '86? The Hon. Secretary suggested trying to make this an annual event and offered to investigate the possibility of holding it at Loughborough in September. Its theme would probably be some aspect of local studies and the new technology. Watch out for further details!

Robin Ansell,
Assistant Hon. Secretary.

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

Holmes, M. J. *Somers Town: a record of change*. Camden Libraries, 1985. 36pp. £1.95. ISBN 0 901389 50 1.

This annotated collection of illustrations is interesting as an example of a publication relating to an inner city area without obvious visual appeal — indeed, earlier in the century Somers Town had acquired a national reputation for its slums — and the illustrations attempt to capture part of the atmosphere of a changing community. The story it tells is interesting, and it has sold well: 3000 copies were printed and it has almost sold out. One library sold over 150 copies in the first week.

Of particular interest to our readers is the promotion of the work to local residents. Because the Somers Town area has no bookshops or large newsagents, the library delivered a leaflet to about 2400 households, offering one-third discount. This enterprise was highly successful and resulted in a large number of sales.

'Somers Town' was produced as something of an experiment to test the market in an area with considerable numbers of non-users of libraries, and where there is no tradition of book buying: its success means that plans are being made for publications on other areas of Camden with similar characteristics.

Makepeace, C. E. *Ephemera: a book on its collection, conservation and use*. Gower, 1985. 247pp. £17.50. ISBN 0 566 03439 5.

There have been several books published on ephemera in recent years, but they have been written mainly from the point of view of the collector. This substantial work is the first to have been published for librarians. Definition of ephemera is always difficult, and thus the first chapter is devoted to a discussion of various definitions, bringing in the distinction between minor publications and ephemera. The importance of ephemera as evidence for the social historian and local historian, a topic enlarged upon later in the volume, is also brought out.

The longest chapter, however, as one might expect, is that which describes and comments on the different types of ephemera, with copious examples. This section is supplemented by an appendix extending to three pages which gives a checklist of items considered to be ephemera — and even this is not complete as, for instance, while it includes society ephemera, religious ephemera such as service sheets and notices is not mentioned.

The remainder of the book deals with aspects of interest to the librarian in particular — acquisition, storage, conservation and organisation of stock. The latter section, covering cataloguing, classification and indexing, includes some interesting, if not horrifying examples of the depth to which indexing needs to be carried out if information on the items collected is to be fully exploited.

This is an invaluable (and readable) book which is likely to be the standard work on the subject for a considerable time.

Dyson, B. *A guide to local studies in East Yorkshire*, Hutton Press, 1985. 250pp. £5.95. ISBN 0 907033 33 4.

This work covers the historical county of the East Riding of Yorkshire, which as a political body ceased to exist in 1974, but in the view of the editor, continues to be a distinct locality both geographically and historically. In itself, this book is clearly mainly for local readership, but it is of wider interest because of its approach and purpose. It is intended as a guide to the study of local history both for the professional local historian and the amateur enthusiast, and to complement the national guides such as 'Approaches to local history' already in existence. Indeed the publishers suggest that it might form the basis for a series of similar regional guides.

Each chapter is written by an individual specialist and after introductions to the work of the more important local studies libraries and record offices, is arranged by topic. There are chapters, for example, on agriculture, population, the architecture and history of houses, family history, and medieval church history. An interesting approach is that each 'topic' chapter includes a case study to demonstrate the use of relevant sources.

The volume is well produced, with notes and a select bibliography. It seems to meet its stated aims, and is excellent value at the price.

Perry, M. *The albatross inheritance: local studies libraries*. *Library Management*, 6(1) 1985 [whole issue]. MCB University Press. 51pp. £24.95. ISBN 0 86176 227 4.

This work is in part a good straightforward account of the work of a local studies library, and in part a discussion of the place of such a department in the management structure of the library as a whole. Cambridge library is used to provide examples of users, their enquiries and the materials and methods used to answer them. The example of Cambridgeshire is also taken to develop the author's argument that local studies libraries, because of their individuality, are not favoured by library management and, indeed, are an embarrassment because they do not easily conform to a pre-ordained pattern of management structure. The various ups and

downs in the fortunes of the Cambridge local collection are chronicled, with much critical comment on the ways in which various management decisions over the years have affected the service. Cambridgeshire is merely an example, however: the author feels that local collections generally are under-regarded and under-resourced, and that even the profession itself undervalues them.

This is an individualistic contribution which is well worth reading — not many local studies librarians are so controversial in print — but the price, even for an A4 paperback, seems much too high.



Dates for your Diary

The following meetings are planned over the next few months and will be advertised shortly. For further details contact the person named. Other meetings will be arranged during the year in various parts of the country — keep your eyes open for notices!

North West Branch. 5th March, 1986. Visit to Prescott Watch Museum.

23rd April, 1986. Wilmslow. Family history.

Contact: Diana Winterbotham, The Lancashire Library, Corporation Street, Preston, PR1 8RH.

Scottish Branch. 19th March, 1986. Motherwell. Local studies at local level.

Contact: Don Martin, William Patrick Memorial Library, Campbell Avenue, Kirkintilloch. Glasgow, G66 1DW.

Stamford. 21st May, 1986. Domesday for the amateur. This is the latest of the highly successful meetings held annually in Stamford. As well as specialist speakers the meeting will include a visit to the major Domesday exhibition at Stamford museum.

Contact: Elizabeth Melrose, Reference Library, Free School Lane, Lincoln, LN2 1EZ.

Loughborough. 19th–21st September 1986. It is hoped that the Group will hold a weekend school. More details later.

The course on audiovisual materials advertised for November 11th at the Library Association had to be postponed. It will now take place on 4th March 1986.

Notes and News

Wandsworth Historical Society has produced the first of a series of Guides to Local History Sources, covering Directories. While dealing with all local directories relating to the Borough of Wandsworth, it has sections on the use of directories as source material and on early London directories generally, so it is of help beyond the immediate area. Compiled by Rita Ensing, copies of the Guide may be obtained from H. Sims, 31 Hill Court, Putney Hill, London SW15 6BB, at £1.00 post free.

David Hayns, who was Field Officer for the British Association for Local History until lack of funds forced his dismissal has been appointed Deputy Director of the Cheshire Rural Community Council. Many of our members will have met him at conferences and meetings, and will wish him well in his new job: hopefully he will be able to continue his active interest in local history.

Congratulations to our Hon. Treasurer, Bernard Nurse, who has been appointed Librarian of the Society of Antiquaries. He takes up his appointment at Burlington House in April next, on the retirement of Mr John Hopkins, MA, FSA, who started work in the library in 1933.

The Local Studies Librarian numbers its volumes conventionally, as most librarians find it convenient to link a volume number with a calendar year. As the total number of pages in each volume is small, an index has not hitherto been considered appropriate. It is, however, intended to produce an index to volumes 1-5.

The magazine Local History now has nearly 1,000 subscribers and is budgeting to have 1,500 by the end of its second year (May 1986). Nearly half of those subscribing are either in libraries, record offices, museums or educational establishments. Since its inception Local History has grown from 20 pages to 32, and the current subscription rate is £8.70. The May issue saw the start of a series of articles about how photographers and photography can help local history, and due to start soon is a practical guide to publishing.

The publishers, Susan and Robert Howard, have asked us to remind our readers of the Noticeboard section of Local History — 50 words in every issue to all subscribers.

For more details contact Local History, 3 Devonshire Promenade, Nottingham NG7 2DS. Tel: (0602) 700369.

The Dorothy McCulla Memorial Prize

Harold Nichols was presented with the 1984 McCulla Prize at the LSG London and Home Counties Branch meeting at the Guildhall Library on November 13th. As cited in a previous issue, this was presented to him for his contribution to local studies as a librarian, as an author and as a teacher of local studies librarianship.

The recipient of the award for 1985 is Margaret Evans, who has recently retired from York University library. It is in recognition of her work in establishing the local studies database at York University, with its eventual aim of creating a national bibliographical resource for local studies literature. An article by Miss Evans appeared in LSL 3(1) Summer 1984, p.19-21. The York volume mentioned there is approaching publication. Arrangements will be made shortly for the presentation ceremony.

Nominations may now be made for the 1986 prize. Members are reminded that the award was established by the LSG in memory of Dorothy McCulla of Birmingham and is awarded annually to the member who, in the opinion of the Committee, has contributed most to local studies librarianship. A further notice will appear later, but nominations should be in the hands of the Hon. Secretary by 31st August 1986.



Information Wanted

The editor would like to hear from anyone who is or has been concerned with any of the following:

1. MSC projects concerned with local history (eg subject, dates, duration, results).
2. Libraries with official policy statements on local history collections.
3. The establishment of local history groups meeting in branch libraries.
4. Information from libraries with publishing programmes.

This is the last call for information to help with my contribution to British Librarianship and Information Work, 1981-85 — submission date is the end of March. While I would particularly welcome information on these topics, information on any aspects of local studies librarianship would help. My thanks to those who have already written.

News of initiatives by librarians is, of course, welcome at any time for notice in LSL. Please keep in touch — this is the only journal of its kind.

LSG Committee 1986-87

The Group Committee for 1986-87 is as follows:

Chairman: Chris Makepeace, Greater Manchester Planning Department.

Vice-Chairman: Ian Jamieson, School of Librarianship and Information Studies, Newcastle Polytechnic.

Hon. Secretary: Paul Sturges, Dept. of Library and Information Studies, Loughborough University.

Assistant Hon. Secretary: Robin Ansell, Somerset County Library.

Hon. Treasurer: Elizabeth Melrose, Lincolnshire County Library.

Members: Patrick Baird, Birmingham Public Libraries

David Cousins, Kent County Library

Michael Dewe, College of Librarianship, Wales

Brian Hall, Dept. of Librarianship, Birmingham Polytechnic

Ian Maxted, Devon County Library

Bernard Nurse, London Borough of Southwark Libraries

Michael Petty, Cambridgeshire Libraries

Branch representatives: Scottish: Don Martin, Strathkelvin District Libraries

North Western: Diana Winterbotham, The Lancashire Library

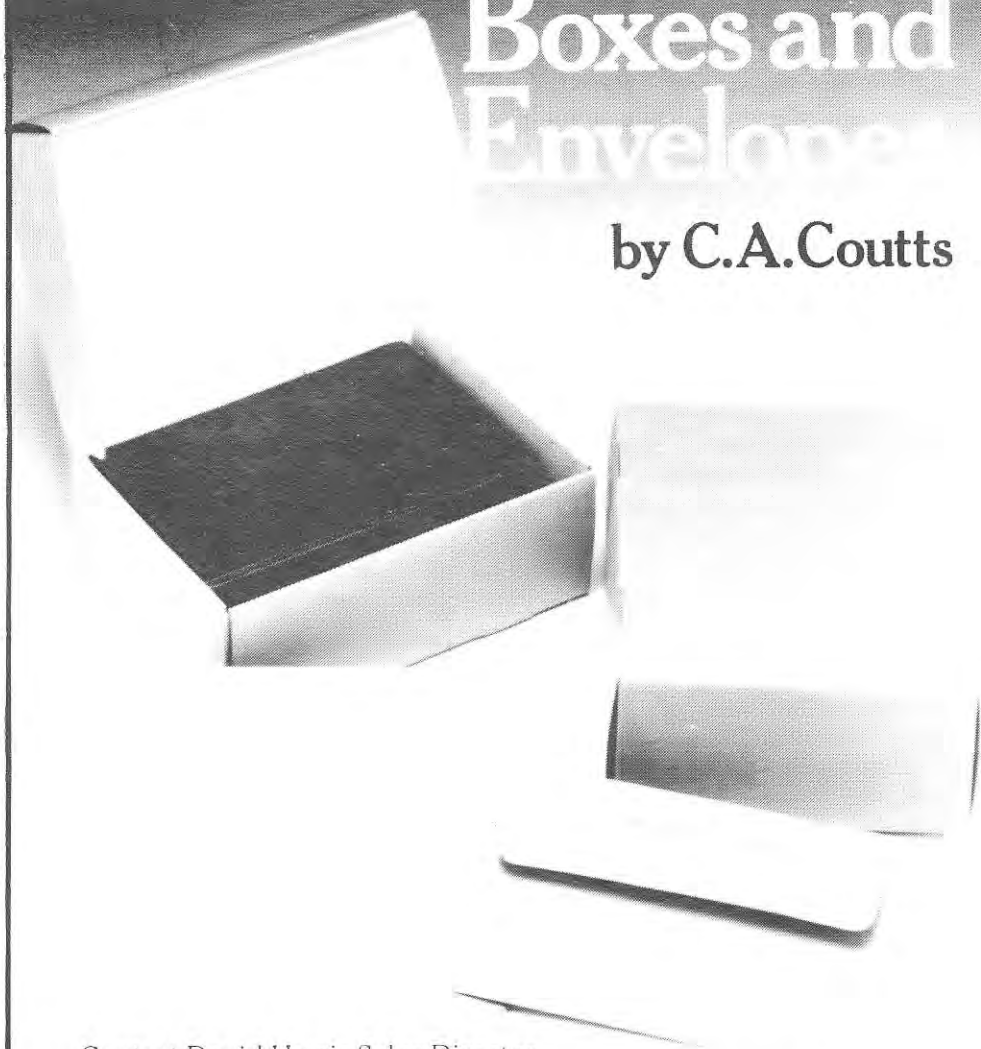
London and Home Counties: Julian Watson, London Borough of Greenwich Libraries

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 the Committee please do not hesitate to contact your nearest committee member or the Hon. Secretary.

Stop Press: An Eastern Counties Branch has just been formed, basically covering East Anglia. For further details contact Elizabeth Watthews, County Record Office, County Hall, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP4 2JS.

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