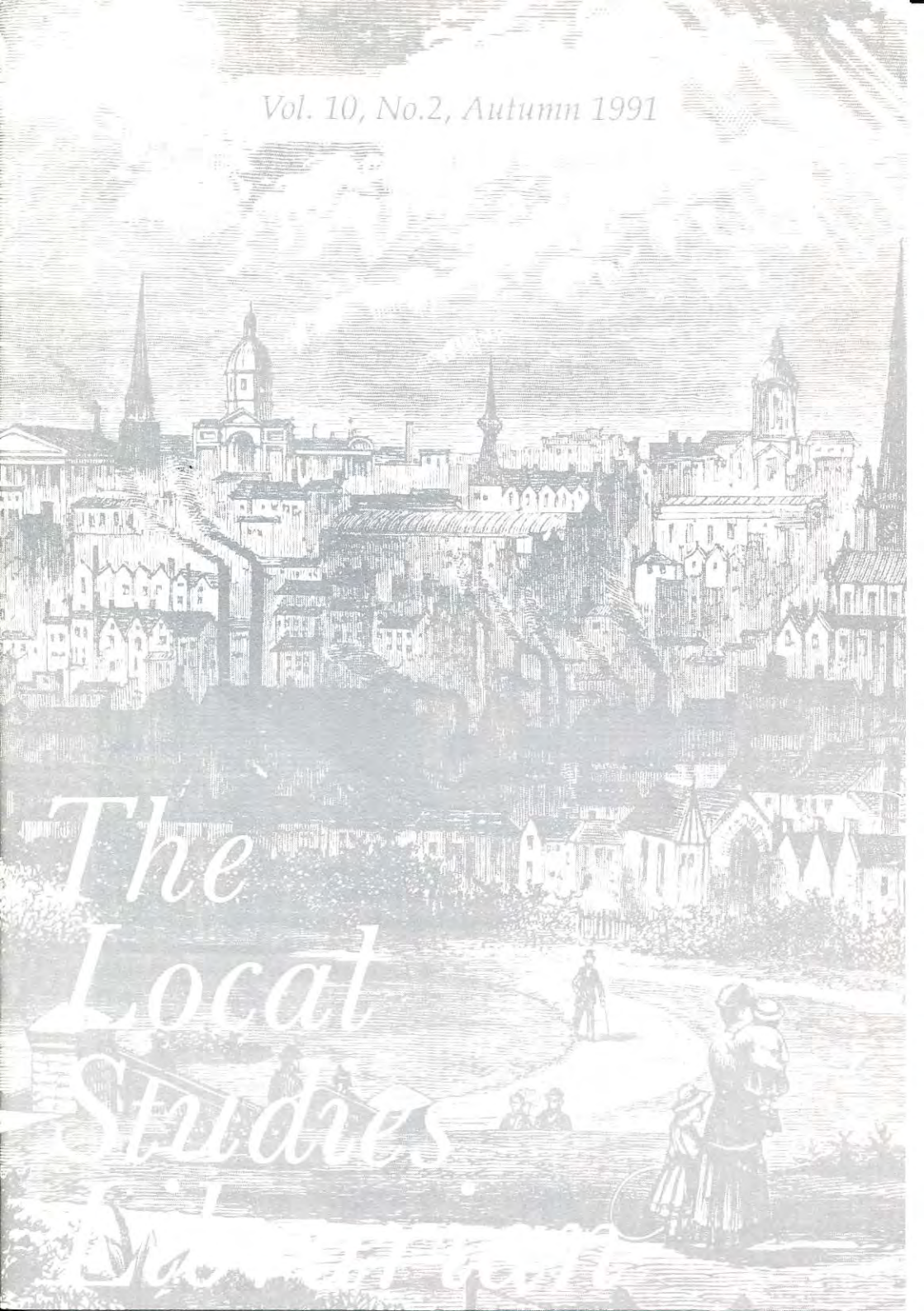
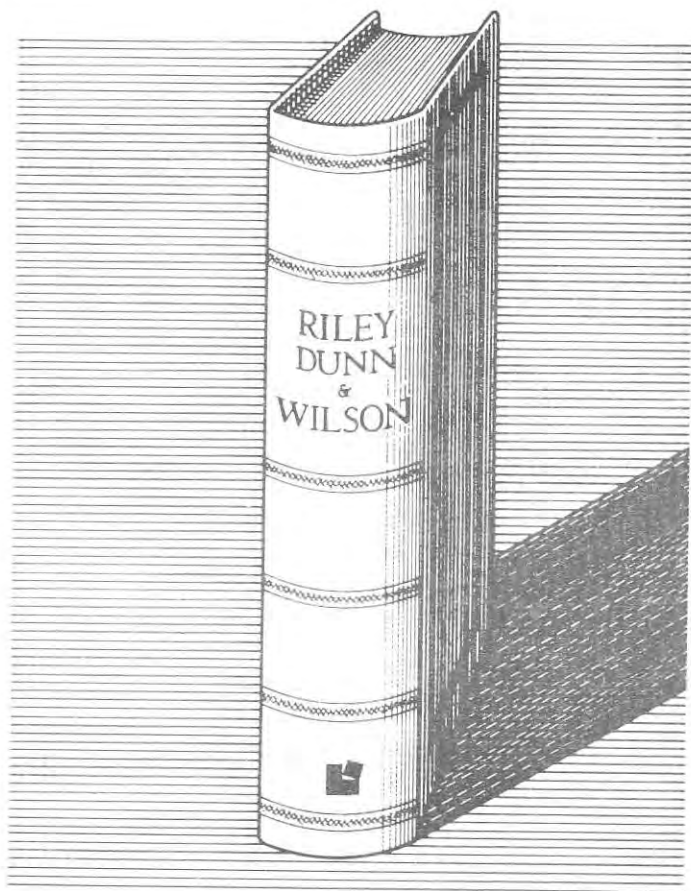


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Cover illustration: A View of Birmingham c. 1886.
Courtesy of Local Studies Department, Birmingham Reference Library.

EDITORIAL

It seems a long time since the LA's Umbrella conference, and various matters of concern to local studies librarians have developed since then -for instance the green paper on the government's proposals for local government reform, referred to elsewhere in this issue, and the 'stop press' item below. But the Weekend School should not be forgotten: it brought together a large number of librarians from different backgrounds and with different specialist interests, and almost everyone felt that it was a successful venture. Indeed, the LA is already thinking of another such conference in two or three years time. Among the active participants was LSG, who provided a range of papers which not only served the relatively small number of LSG members present, but attracted, in varying measure, other delegates as well, and useful contacts were made. In particular, the Group benefited from the sponsorship of the Library Services Trust in a joint reception and awards ceremony for the Dorothy McCulla and Alan Ball Awards, which were presented by Tom Featherstone, the LA President. The LSG's sessions provided a wide range of papers, from a talk on local studies in Catalunya to one on ephemera in Wales, and perhaps inevitably one concerned with the National Curriculum. The Group intends to publish the papers in some form as soon as possible so that the rest of our membership can benefit from the expertise of the speakers.

STOP PRESS. The Department of the Environment has just issued a consultation paper on compulsory competitive tendering (*Competing for quality: competition in the provision of local services*. DOE, the Scottish Office and the Welsh Office, November 1991). The section on 'Direct services to the public' includes public library services. While the paper does not, as some had feared, suggest that the tendering process should apply to library service generally, it does propose that compulsory competitive tendering should cover library support services, which it defines as acquisition, cataloguing and processing of books and other materials. At first sight this may not seem to be of any great moment, given that some authorities already buy in such services from, for instance, library suppliers. If implemented fully, however, what effect might it have on specialist services such as local studies where much material is acquired through personal contacts and where, for instance, cataloguing is done in the department, sometimes to a different level and with a different classification scheme, on the grounds that specialist should deal with specialist collections? These seem to be points well worth making in the discussions: certainly any tender documents would need to be drawn up very carefully.

The discussion paper proposes that tendering for the first contracts for support services should be completed by October 1994 and that the contracts themselves should run for between four and six years. Comments on the proposals are asked for by January 31st 1992. The LSG committee will consider its response, but those from individuals are also worth making, either direct or through your own authorities. Responses should be sent to Mr. Chris Leamy, Office of Arts and Libraries, Horse Guards Road, London SW1P 3AL.

NORTH DEVON LOCAL STUDIES CENTRE, BARNSTAPLE

This article hopes to provide an insight for interested readers into the workings and progress of a cooperative local studies service operating in a district of a county - a district traditionally known for its unspoilt topography, independent culture and difficult communications; but it makes not claim to be a comprehensive guide or an official statement.

Situation and Origins

The North Devon Local Studies Centre occupies the larger part of the second floor of Barnstaple's new North Devon Library and Record Office, opened to the public in April 1988, its fundamental aim being to provide an integrated information service in the field of local studies. This is available on the one hand to the local people of Barnstaple and North Devon and Torridge districts, and on the other to visitors and correspondents from further afield.

The key word is integrated since the Centre is a unique cooperative venture in the South West, making use of the combined printed and archival resources of Devon Library Services, North Devon Record Office, and the North Devon Athenaeum. The Record Office is a branch of the Devon Record Office whose headquarters are in Exeter, yet the range of its holdings compare well against a County office. Over 1000ft of records, including church, local government, educational, private and public (e.g. courts) archives were transferred from Exeter and many new collections have been deposited. The Athenaeum is the most long-standing of the three partners, having been founded as a free library in 1888 by Barnstaple benefactor William Rock. The cooperative theme is further explored below with regard to staffing and promotion.

Barnstaple town has an official population of 21000 yet a catchment area of around 100,000. Barnstaple's role as a district centre has been growing more prominent, and continues despite national recession; the chief feature of its expansion being the North Devon Link Road which has connected the whole district and the coastal holiday routes with the M5 motorway, attracting major developments in shopping, housing and employment.

In this context of growth the new Library and Record Office made a timely entry in 1988. The whole library building continues the theme of cooperation, being also home for the central library, schools library centre, citizens' advice bureau, and tourist information office. The response to such facilities has been most encouraging. The lending library, for example, has witnessed a doubling of its book loans from around 22,000 per month in early 1988 (at its old premises) to around 44000 per month by March 1991; whilst the number of registered borrowers has shot up from 12,000 to 32,000 in the same 3 years. Until 1988 Barnstaple branch library shared cramped accommodation, occupying the ground floor of the former North Devon Athenaeum library and museum building, now refurbished to house the Museum of North Devon. Local studies books formed a very small part of the reference library stock at the branch, but the space was insufficient for Devon Library Services to build up an adequate local studies collection in the town. The reference library lacked many works, both on the local districts of North Devon and Torridge and on the county as a

whole. Supporting material such as newspapers, cuttings files and microfilms was only developed as far as the limited space would allow, and the seating accommodation for six was sometimes fought over between staff and public! The North Devon Athenaeum was relied upon for its more extensive local studies book collection which had been built up over a century, and for the local history knowledge of its staff.

Facilities

The facilities offered in the reading room of the Centre include comfortable seating and tables to accommodate twenty, with wooden shelving around the perimeter walls, and a separate Record Office search room where use of original documents is supervised. The table area, overlooked by the enquiry counter is designed to reflect the atmosphere of a more traditional library reading room, and is well lit by natural light. The Henry Williamson Room, and adjoining meeting room, can seat around sixty people and is highly suitable for undisturbed use by school classes.

A darkened area, to the side of the counter, serves as a microforms reading area; the five fiche and five film readers can normally meet demand, although all users are encouraged to use a simple booking system for these machines. Ownership of the range of machines being spread between the three organisations can cause confusion in responsibility for maintenance, but the benefits are obvious. Photocopies (made by staff) from books and periodicals are permitted unless their condition is fragile or the binding too tight. A microforms reader-printer is jointly owned by Athenaeum and Record Office and is used by library staff to produce printouts from various films and fiches, with a delay of three to four working days.

Staffing

Starting at 9.30 every morning the Centre is open till 5.00 each day, excepting early closing at 4.00 on Wednesday and Saturdays, and the late opening till 7.00 on Thursdays. A measure of knowledge of each other's stock and willingness to deputise is necessary for library staff, since the Athenaeum is closed on Saturdays and on the late Thursday. Similarly the Record Office has limited Saturday staffing; agreement was reached in Jan 1990 for it to open on two Saturdays per month, with only microform copies of archival material being available on the remaining Saturdays when the Centre is single-manned by library staff.

The library staff consists of one professional local studies librarian who is supported by a part-time assistant. Apart from the staffing arrangements mentioned above, hours of duty to staff the public enquiry desk are based on the relative manpower of each organisation; thus the provision of service and knowledge of resources is shared at the most basic level. Obviously the strengths and skills of not only the three organisations, but also their individual staff, have become known over time and are there to be drawn upon, especially where members of staff have taken a personal interest in family history.

An overlapping relationship is also seen with the reference and lending staff in

their companion departments. The reference librarian is the immediate line manager of the local studies librarian, and there is a very necessary contact between local studies and reference staff, most of all in the field of current local business information: newspaper cuttings and company brochures might be found in the Centre, and current directories and financial data in the reference library. Meanwhile the lending library houses a collection of the more common or popular local studies books; this is very much a complementary service since such stock can of course be borrowed.

The local studies and reference services in Barnstaple also relate to a county wide Information Team which is responsible for implementing agreed policy in the whole field of information services; whilst Devon's Local Studies service in particular is coordinated by a County Local Studies Librarian who, in addition to the North Devon LSC, also oversees Torquay and Plymouth local history libraries and the main collection at Exeter, the Westcountry Studies Library.

Budget

There is a general aim that the local studies book budget should amount to roughly 10% of the reference budget, or 1% of the total Area budget (covering a central library and 12 branches). This was certainly the case in 1990-91; and for 1991-92 a budget of £3500 was agreed, almost 1.7% of the £206,000 Area allocation. This has allowed a little more freedom and flexibility in the purchase of expensive items like Ordnance Survey large scale plans, aerial photographs, and second-hand items (e.g. rare local fiction). The Area Support Services department manages the budget and ordering, providing regular information on the amount of committed expenditure.

Stock

The collections have a mixed origin. The old branch reference library has contributed a rough third, with all the benefits of having been locally based and able to collect the more parochial books and pamphlets. Another 2000 volumes, formerly maintained as a loan collection until 1974 at library headquarters in Exeter, was transferred, thus improving the existing range of Devon and Westcountry works. The resulting collection has been further extended since the opening of the North Devon LSC with the addition of many new works - a task more easily done now that a librarian has specific responsibility for its upkeep. The total number of volumes now stands at around 7000. Notable improvements have included the purchase of around £10,000 worth of National Grid plans, filling gaps in the North Devon and Torridge coverage, and of many rare Henry Williamson first editions.

In addition to this large book stock, which ranges from antiquarian county histories to the latest county council reports on road traffic, there are many county and local periodicals and newsletters, newspapers on microfilm and in hard copy, electoral registers and trade directories, and council minutes. Maps include the current National Grid plans mentioned and County Series first or intermediate editions, early engraved county maps, geological maps, shopping plans and navigational charts. This map stock has been improved by the

purchase of some microfiche editions from the British Library.

For family historians the International Genealogical Index (microfiche) for the British Isles is kept, and 70 reels of microfilm of the census enumerators' returns, covering 1841 to 1881, were purchased jointly by the Athenaeum and the library service. An extensive (and ever growing) system of newspaper cuttings and ephemera files acts as a vital supplement to the information available in standard printed works; the North Devon Link Road and river pollution are perhaps the favourite topics with local students.

The Athenaeum can prove a great support to this stock, its major strengths lying in its background collections on social and political history and biography; also its parish register transcripts, portfolios of illustrations, and rare or manuscript local works.

Organising the book stock has in fact meant a reorganisation, bearing in mind the dispersed origins. Cataloguing and classification had to start from scratch with the aid of a microcomputer database. Although most local studies items are added to the county on-line catalogue, it is not best suited to such specialist material. Devon local studies libraries have otherwise maintained their own independent card catalogues. Technology has taken the card catalogue a step further in Barnstaple, allowing more flexibility in subject and place indexing by the use of dBase III plus.

Enquiries

The types of enquirers who pass through the door are common to any local studies library, being mostly family or house historians, amateur historians, or school and college students with endless projects. Casual enquiries are also received for other local information, especially for maps, but their pattern is not so regular. Total enquiries per month for library materials (excluding Record Office enquiries and users) now hover around 800, peaking at 1000 with summer visitors or during the autumn term, and heading for a traditional decline towards Christmas. Up to 100 written enquiries are received in the year. These totals represent a 40% increase on the enquiries per month in the first year of operation (1988-89).

Promotion

On the promotional side leaflets are made available about the facilities of the Centre as a whole and the Record Office and Athenaeum separately. A range of leaflets has also been started on popular research topics- on house, family, and maritime history, and crime and punishment. A small number of talks and displays are presented by the local studies librarian to local societies and to groups of teachers or students, allowing plenty of opportunity to promote the library's role in the Centre. A series of introductory talks on starting family history gave an opportunity for all three organisations to plan and contribute to a promotional event, and the year's round of exhibitions in the display lobby allows an input from each again. Such displays are good for encouraging awareness of local studies beyond the range of regular users. Two examples from the current year include seals on documents and the bi-centenary of the Ordnance Survey.

Perhaps the most significant development, and one which takes advantage of the new facilities and joint theme, is the promotion of educational use. The proximity of the North Devon College and the arrival of National Curriculum guidelines has fired up a response from teachers and students ranging from enthusiasm to panic.

In order to present a unified response to local schools a method has been evolved whereby teachers planning a project can call on the human and material resources of not only the library service, but also the Record Office and the Museum of North Devon, also based in Barnstaple. This venture has been named JEDI (Joint Educational Development Initiative). A JEDI booklet describing resources, study hints, and people to contact has been circulated to all schools, inviting considered responses on a form. Emphasis is placed on prior preparation, so as to avoid problems like the unannounced arrival of classes of children, or unrealistic expectations of our materials. Either a class visit can be planned, involving all or just one of the organisations, or material can be copied, where permissible, for class use.

Having the Schools Library Centre in the same building and the Teachers' Professional Centre across town has made professional help regarding the needs of schools the more accessible. Interest from schools has been enough for staff to join in with teachers' in-service training days. The bottom line is of course well researched projects, improved skills of investigation and evaluation, and a positive image of the library service.

**Mark Lawrence,
Senior Assistant Librarian (Local Studies),
North Devon Local Studies Centre.**

VIDEO HISTORY : PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Having attended the British Universities Film and Video Council's first conference on video history at the National Film Theatre last March, and apparently been the only public librarian present, I felt it important to bring some of the issues raised into the public library arena. I was also encouraged by John Airey's account of how Newcastle are beginning to use video to complement their local studies provision.

Video seems to me to represent one of the most exciting forms of documentation that has become available to local studies librarians for a long while. It is not simply an extension of oral history, as some would see it, but has a much greater potential as a resource in that video adds extra dimensions to much of the material already kept by local studies libraries as well as being valuable on its own. In addition perhaps one of the most attractive features of video to continually under-funded library departments is its low and falling cost. In comparison to the film camera at a similar state of development, the cost of the video camera makes it an easily obtainable and useable resource although costs will inevitably depend on the quality of video-film required (archivally speaking or in terms of broadcast quality). Even the low costs which are incurred can be offset by bodies such as the Video History Trust¹ (which loans out equipment free

of charge to worthwhile projects) or by reaching agreement with local Cable TV networks to receive copies of any programmes or news items which are of interest.

So the opportunity now exists to record work-practices, crafts, customs etc. which are about to disappear in a fully comprehensive way which would not have been financially possible for public libraries even ten years ago. However it is not only the historical aspect which must be considered; it is also important to record the scenes of everyday life (work, entertainment, religion, music etc.) with which we have become so familiar but which will be invaluable to the social historians of the future. There is an enormous wealth of material to be recorded and this could be of such benefit to the community at large that I feel we should begin actively collecting local video-recorded material as soon as possible. Another important factor is the range of uses possible for this type of material, which is very large indeed, from the simple public loan to education and exhibitions. Indeed its use in exhibitions highlights the point that video could prove to be the most effective link yet between local studies, museums and the arts, three bodies which have so much in common and a lot to offer each other but which are so often totally independent of each other. The other major usage for this kind of material is for education; indeed so much educational material is now presented as video that teachers and students have come to expect material of this type.

The Scottish Film Archive has already compiled videos on various topics (for example holidays and work) for use in conjunction with the National Curriculum, which have proved very popular indeed and is now also looking to deposit local interest material in public libraries. The Museum of London is another body which has realised the potential of video at an early stage and, after initiating several projects using equipment borrowed from the Video History Trust, has now purchased its own Betacom video equipment.

If we have agreed then, that video is (or soon will be) an important, perhaps essential, resource for the local studies librarian I feel it is imperative that we accept the responsibility to adopt some kind of collection policy at this early stage. Hopefully, we would then avoid the situation which occurred at the birth of oral history when there were numerous local history libraries as well as individual oral history societies, all recording away to their hearts content completely oblivious to what the others were doing. Consequently oral history collections were in many cases scattered, incomprehensible (due to lack of a standard interview technique, training and indexing) and often contained many, many duplications. Isn't this an area where local studies libraries/units should take responsibility locally to coordinate and oversee video history collection and therefore development? This might at least mean that in the long term not only is the collection accessible but that maybe some kind of national index or database could be more easily developed. In addition to this do we need to consult archivists in order to decide what archival policy to adopt in relation to storage condition, materials to be used and also where to store the material? What are the archival qualities of video-tape? How long will it last? Could it be copied easily onto any new medium which might be developed in the future without too much loss in quality? These are all questions I feel we should be asking ourselves *now*.

There are many other factors to be considered including such important areas as the depth of indexing required for video history collections. Should individual frames be indexed as opposed to individual tapes or parts of tapes? These sorts of questions will obviously depend on factors which are hard to predict, such as levels of staffing or funding but they are nevertheless ones which we should be addressing in order to ease the path of video history development. Even if your department can only afford the most basic level of video collection it is still important that this is well managed and indexed in order to provide some kind of useful framework for the future.

In conclusion I feel we are on the verge of an exciting decade in local studies work complemented to a large extent by emergence of video as a resource which gives local historians the chance to capture material in a very complete way, but also in a way which is affordable at varying levels of provision. Video ownership is now very widespread and it is therefore important that local studies libraries/departments do not get left behind in the development of video as a documentary resource. It is important too that material is collected in a practical and organised way and in such a way that different collections can be drawn together in one index at some time in the future. I would suggest that the development of a central index/database to local collections be at the top of the agenda for librarians involved in establishing video history collections at this time.

The evolution of video history is now at a critical stage because the degree of its future importance depends crucially on appropriate action taken today. It is clear that without a great deal of forethought and subsequent forward planning now, this whole new area of local studies provision will become one more resource with enormous potential which was hampered by too little direction in its early stages.

Stuart Bligh
Croydon Local Studies Library

1. The British Video History Trust (c/o BUVFC, 55 Greek Street, London W1V 5LR) was set up in 1988 to encourage the collection on video-tape of first hand testimony and scenes of everyday life in Britain. To this end the Trust makes available professional quality video equipment to allow groups or individuals to make recording which may be of significance to researchers, historians and programme makers in the future. If a proposed project is accepted the Trust provides both equipment and training in its use free of charge. Twenty six projects have now been completed, with subjects ranging from the working days of a Savile Row tailor and of a Hampshire coalman to interviews with people who are current or ex-travellers and with veterans of the International Brigade who fought during the Spanish Civil War of the 1930s.

THE ALAN BALL LOCAL HISTORY AWARDS

The annual Alan Ball Local History Awards, instituted seven years ago, have become an established part of the local studies scene in public libraries. They were originated by Library Services Trust, which is managed by the London and Home Counties Branch of The Library Association, to acknowledge the many years' service to that Branch by Alan Ball (Chief Librarian of the London Borough of Harrow). As Chairman of the panel of judges, I hope that these few observations about the Awards will be of interest and might result in an even greater number of entrants.

The object of the Awards is to encourage the production, by local authorities, of material of a high standard relating to local history. Originally this was restricted to "library departments", but today that term has little meaning in many local authorities - libraries often operate corporately with museums and archives in directorates, and indeed other departments of local authorities frequently produce publications relating to local history. Consequently, as from last year, the only stipulation is that the publisher must be a local authority, irrespective of the originating department.

Incidentally this rule change resulted in one of the 1990 winners being a non-metropolitan district council, Halton Borough Council, for its book *Old Runcorn*. It is hoped that librarians will see the value of this change, for the aim is to boost the dissemination of information on local history by publishing items of high quality - not necessarily the exclusive preserve of libraries.

Another rule change has recently been made, arising from the diverse formats in which local history publications are now produced. It was for some years necessary for items to be entered for either the "Book Production" or the "Author" Award. The implication was that the items would be books or booklets, and it was difficult to judge the many other formats - postcards, calendars, maps, videos, tapes, exhibition catalogues, folders of prints and archive material, and so on - in terms of book design or authorship. Greater flexibility was obviously required, and the categories for judging were therefore eliminated. Now it is necessary only to submit items as examples of excellence in local history "publications", and the judges make a number of Awards after taking such factors as authorship and standard of production (as appropriate) into account. It is also recognised that local history publications are frequently joint ventures between local authorities and commercial publishers or local societies. Providing that the local authority is clearly recognised as the joint "publisher" and has been fully involved in the project, these are now eligible.

So what do the judges look for? Obviously it is impossible to provide a neat list of Award-winning criteria, since overall excellence is a somewhat subjective matter. Maybe a few of the "no-nos" we have seen all too frequently would bear mention, however - type faces unsuitable for the subject of the text, text and illustrations constrained by the chosen format rather than determining the format, sources of illustrations not indicated, illustrations undated, title pages of books which give no indication of the author or editor or even publisher, poor relationship between the page and the type area which results in margins which are unduly large or non-existent, footnotes and endnotes which are difficult to relate to the text, the lack of an index in the case of books, and so on.

We have seen some marvellous examples of local history publishing, and we have seen some which - to put it mildly - have been of lesser standard. It must be recorded, however, that in recent years the quality of the items submitted has shown a marked increase. This is not necessarily the effect of the Awards, of course, but clearly indicates that local authorities are no longer content merely to churn out local history information, but give greater attention to the way in which it is presented.

At the Library Association's "Under One Umbrella" Conference in Leeds in July, the Local Studies Group held a very pleasant reception at which the Alan Ball Awards for 1990 were presented. It was clear that the recipients regarded this recognition of their achievement in local history publishing as prestigious, and furthermore that they intended to capitalise on this by arranging local press events. This will, it is hoped, increase sales of the publications concerned.

Just to recap, it may be of interest to record that in recent years Award-winning publications have been produced by Wiltshire, Isle of Wight, Northamptonshire, Hillingdon, Somerset, Suffolk, Halton and Gateshead. Why not join these and many other local authorities by submitting your own publications in future, and perhaps join the list of Award-winners?

The Awards themselves have to date taken the form of polished metal cylinders, photo-engraved with early maps from the local authority areas of the winners. This is under review at present, owing to the larger number of Awards now being presented under the expanded scheme. Even more important, however, is the enhanced local publicity engendered by the Awards.

Submissions for the 1991 Awards should be made as soon as possible after the end of the year. Early in 1992, Library Services Trust will send a leaflet (including entry form) to all chief librarians, with a closing date of 31st March. If you get perilously near 31st March without seeing your leaflet, contact Eric Winter at Library Services Trust, 7 Ridgmount Street, London WC1E 7AE. And good luck!

Melvyn Barnes
Guildhall Librarian and Director of Libraries and Art Galleries,
Corporation of London.

Editor's Note:

The Alan Ball Awards for 1991 are as follows:

Suffolk County Council, for the book *Southwold river: Georgian life in the Blyth valley*, by Rachel Lawrence;

Halton Borough Council, for the book *Old Runcorn*, by H.F. Starkey;

Northamptonshire County Council, for the book *Waterways of Northamptonshire*, by David Blagrove;

Gateshead Metropolitan District Council, for two works, *A fighting trade: rail transport in Tyne coal, 1600 - 1800*, by G. Bennett, F. Clavering and A. Rounding, and the folder *Archive map collection*, edited by Les Turnbull and published to celebrate the National Garden Festival.

The judges were also impressed by works from Somerset County Council, Oldham MDC and Newcastle upon Tyne MDC, and comment was made about the generally high standard of entries.

NEWSPLAN Annual Conference, 1991

Stoke Rochford in an English Spring - an idyllic setting, were it not for the rain which began when the delegates arrived and continued until after their departure the next day! Those who braved the weather heard seven speakers consider the past, present and future of NEWSPLAN. Major points of interest to emerge were:

Financial commitment. Fulfilment of the recommendations embodied in the various NEWSPLAN reports is a major financial constraint on both library authorities and the British Library, even more so now that the BL has increased its microfilming charges so dramatically. The target of 1% of book budgets for NEWSPLAN conservation work was now widely regarded as a standard.

Hard copy files. Guidance and consistency of approach is needed on what should be done with hard copy files once microfilming has taken place. There needs to be a co-ordinated policy regarding the role of the British Library Newspaper Library and other libraries in the preservation of original material.

Standards of microfilming. There are now a number of specifications available for microfilm readers, including that from the East Midlands Implementation Committee, which would be offered to other Committees. BSI standards for microfilming processes need to be reviewed as they do not presently ensure the quality of the finished product, which therefore has to be closely checked by library staff.

Free Newspapers. There is considerable difference in attitude to "Frees" between authorities, because of: a) their general lack of significant news or editorial content, b) their short lives, c) frequent changes of title, d) repetitive nature of advertisements, e) difficulties in obtaining regular supplies. The problem will be more closely studied as a research project by Selwyn Eagle.

National Database. Conference was split on the desirability of producing a national database, but there are certainly practical difficulties as a result of the incompatibility of the computer systems used to store and handle the data.

The British Library Newspaper Library. The BL has accepted the need to formulate an implementation strategy for NEWSPLAN, principally to fill gaps in the national collection. In the meantime, progress is being made sporadically according to libraries' own perceived priorities.

Exploitation. The Irish NEWSPLAN Committee have produced guidelines for newspaper indexing which should be available to all other interested Committees. Doubts were expressed about the necessity and stability of colour microfilming. CD-ROM was not considered a suitable alternative to microfilming as it is an information tool rather than an archive. Optical disc technology has the ability to scan newspapers to produce a facsimile, but the scanning device is thought not yet sufficiently developed to cope with columns of poor print.

The Future. Five areas were identified in which co-operation is essential to maintain momentum with NEWSPLAN: a) bibliographical control, including procedures for updating information contained in the reports, b) review strategy and policies, c) microfilming standards and costs, d) problems of hard copy retention or discard, and e) how are these unique resources to be best exploited?

Rob Stanley

**Bibliographical Services Officer, Humberside Libraries.
Member, Yorkshire and Humberside Region Implementation
Committee for NEWSPLAN.**

HUMAD: Hull University's on-line guide to archives and manuscripts

In the Autumn 1989 issue of this journal Dr. Barbara English described a major new computerised project designed to help local historians: the East Yorkshire Bibliography¹. This has now materialised into a database containing the best part of 20,000 records, the basis of which is the size and processing power of the Geac computer in the Brynmor Jones Library of the University of Hull. Since then, a number of other databases have been devised and mounted, one of which represents a further major aid to local historians and others interested in discovering more about potential original research materials in Hull University Library. Unfortunately, there has never been a comprehensive published guide to the vast range of archive and manuscripts held. Now, however, the creation of HUMAD - the Hull University Manuscripts and Archives Database - provides a most useful (and arguably better) alternative. For HUMAD is basically a 1200-page guide to the multifarious collections held, which has the advantage of being accessible on-line, offering the sort of sophisticated search facilities (title, name, keyword, etc.) associated with the East Yorkshire Bibliography. Above all, perhaps, it gives the currency impossible with conventional published guides, for with HUMAD the details of a new collection will, once entered into the database, become almost immediately (there is an overnight processing delay) available to potential users. Furthermore, various additional features, including specialised lists and news items, mean the HUMAD is not only a useful database, but also a specialised information system.

The database is, however, the main part and purpose of HUMAD, and the first option to be found on the system's introductory 'Welcome' screen. The database provides facts and background details about the 120 larger and 350 smaller collections of archives and manuscripts to be found in the BJL. For each entry, an initial summary screen gives the following details: the title or name of the collection; its archival reference code; whether or not the collection is freely open to scholars; whether or not there is a detailed list or calendar available (held in the Library's Archives Reading Room and the National Register of Archives); the span of the collection in terms of first and last dates; the size of the collection in terms of approximate number of documents; and the general subject category into which the collection falls. Where appropriate and necessary, added entries are given - particularly in the name and subject fields.

A special feature of the database is provided by the final two fields of the

summary screens. The first of these - the DESCRIPTION field - contains a sometimes detailed account of the particular collection and those responsible for its creation, and may give examples of the more important documents present. The second field - known as the SECTIONS field - literally provides a detailed breakdown of the component sections of the collection as listed in the associated calendar or list, together with the number of documents present in each section, and the years covered by that section. The DESCRIPTION and SECTIONS fields generally contain no more than a paragraph or two; but for the larger or more important collections, there may be up to 10 or more pages of text. To facilitate keyword searching of these pages, certain words (for personal and corporate names, place-names, subjects, and so on) within these two fields have been capitalised, thereby providing an additional and very useful way of finding out more about the contents of the collections.

A fairly typical entry on the database is that for the firm of Hull Printers Limited. Here, the reference code is DHP; the collection is freely open to scholars, and there is a detailed list available; the 127 documents present span the years 1897-1978; and the subject categories are: 'Business', 'Co-operation', 'Labour' and 'Printing'. There is just one page of DESCRIPTION, with a potted history of this initially fairly successful co-partnership venture, the reasons for its demise, and the nature of its surviving records. The SECTIONS field reveals, amongst other things, that the original minutes of the company are held for the 1913-75 period, along with the accounts between 1901 and 1975.

The HUMAD database may be searched in various ways. These include: by names and titles of collections (such as the name of an individual, or of an organisation or institution); by keywords in the DESCRIPTION and SECTIONS fields; by reference codes (for the more knowledgeable); and by (subject) categories. Thus, a search under the name Langdale, reveals that there are two collections of papers relating to that famous Yorkshire family; a search using the keyword 'Benedictine' reveals that there are two relevant collections (Marrick Priory and Selby Abbey). A search under 'Beverley' produces 27 matches, whilst 'Lancashire' finds just three. For those who already know something of what is held, a reference code search will take the enquirer straight to a particular collection - thus 'DEW' will lead to the papers of the Ellerman-Wilson Line, and 'DDHO' to the Hotham family of Scarborough and South Dalton.

A novel and extremely useful feature of the above search facility is the 'Category' search. This is helpful in two ways. In the first place, it is possible to list all the available categories (there are currently over 120) and in doing so, discover how many collections there are in each category. Thus, a search under the category 'Business' reveals that there are 31 collections of this type in the BJL, whilst 'Education' produces 20 matches and 'Military' 11. Likewise the term 'Art history' shows there to be 8 relevant collections here. Secondly, the category search option means that, for the researcher who is interested in only one type of collection, it is possible simply to browse through the descriptions of the preferred category alone.

Other aspects of the HUMAD information system serve to enhance the enormous amount of information obtainable from the database itself. From the initial 'Welcome' screen, the second option invites the user to peruse a series of special lists. Two such lists are currently available. The first contains details of the large

collection of Yorkshire maps and plans to be found in the archive, and is searchable by individual place-names. A search here under 'Bridlington', for example, produces 7 matches, each with a summary description, date, precise reference code and, where given, the scale. A second list under this option contains details of the sizeable holdings of manorial records, and is again searchable by place-names. Thus a search under 'Elstronwick' leads instantly to details of the court rolls, jury lists, and other items held dating from 1647 to 1935, whilst a search under 'Binham' (Norfolk) reveals details of a 'View and Survey' of the manor in 1576. Other lists are in preparation or planned, including parish records, enclosure documents, local Acts of Parliament, and so on.

The final part of the system, again accessible from the opening 'Welcome' menu, under option 3, gives some of the latest news from the archives section of the Library. This inevitably varies from time to time, but is intended to include details of the availability of free and priced publications, of new lists and calendars, and other pieces of information likely to be of interest to actual and potential users of the archives.

HUMAD is, of course, an indicative rather than a comprehensive system: it provides an overview of each collection held, together with the essential facts about those collections. The information included in HUMAD, which was originally intended to form the basis of a traditional hard copy guide, has taken several years to assemble, whilst devising the system and inputting data has taken about six months. All those inputting information into computer databases can relate horror stories: my best example came with the entry for the (Bradford-born) Midlands trade union leader, Julia Varley. Having keyed in a nine-paged description of her life and work, and of the papers held by the Library, I discovered next day that the whole lot had disappeared. The programmer subsequently managed to retrieve 8 pages, but we never did find the original page one!

HUMAD may now be seen using the BJL's Geac computer system. From the main Geac menu, it is to be found under option 3 (Recent Accessions, Bibliographies and other Local Databases), item 6. For potential users not fortunate enough to enjoy direct physical access to the Hull University Library's computer systems, remote access is possible by means of a personal home microcomputer with suitable port, modem and telephone link (as explained earlier by Barbara English in relation to the East Yorkshire Bibliography). For those living within the Hull telephone area, this essentially means the cost of a local telephone call (which are untimed). Others may use JANET (the network linking universities and colleges) or telephone Hull University direct on (0482) 466103 or 466310, and typing 'CALL GEAC' at the 'PAD>' prompt. Such access is possible at all times, including at night and week-ends, and from any location in the world enjoying telephone communications. It is hoped that the introduction of HUMAD will increase public awareness of materials available for local historians and others at the University of Hull.

**Brian Dyson,
Archivist, University of Hull.**

A NEW STRUCTURE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT?

The LA has made its response to the DOE consultative paper on local government structure in England, which suggested further changes to the present situation, basically in the direction of (smaller) unitary authorities. The statement points out that, in general, since the changes of 1974, public library authorities have invested heavily to rationalise and standardise services and that a break up of those services would produce frustration and probably a deterioration in standards of service generally. The case for economies of scale in public library services is spelt out and it is pointed out that specialist services can be provided more efficiently from a large resource base. The practical problems of disaggregation of stock in particular are addressed, as are those of catalogues, and of situations where integrated systems have been introduced. The weakness of small individual library services (even though the point of delivery of large services is to small service points) is dealt with and the general conclusion is that to the user of the public library what matters is the quality of service, not the basis of its government and control, and that devolvement to often small unitary authorities would provide no guarantee of improved service in the long run, while there would be an inevitable increase in costs. To place responsibility in the hands of a large number of smaller authorities will not bring them any closer to the community. These comments, it is said, are in line with the LA's position over the years.

The Response deals with public library services as a whole and local studies collections are not specifically mentioned. However, all local studies librarians must be concerned with proposals which could radically change their structure of control, especially where county libraries have provided strong centralised collections.

Meanwhile, the Association of County Archivists has issued a statement warning against the transfer of county archive services to district council level, making the point that the result would be an explosion of small, expensive-to-run repositories. joint working arrangements would confuse accountability and greatly increase capital and running costs. The statement concludes that County Councils are the right level for service delivery because they are large enough to provide specialist services without waste of resources, because they provide nationwide coverage, which would not be guaranteed if provision was transferred to district level, and because the existing investment in purpose-built archive buildings is based on the county structure. In short, county archive services are cost-effective and give an efficient service. On the same theme, the Society of Archivists has also responded to the proposals, making much the same points, saying that County archive services have many achievements to their credit including new repositories and the application of information technology. The cost of providing any new form of service would be enormous, and the logical solution, if a unitary system was imposed, would be a joint service based on the existing counties.

FROM OUR GROUP COUNCILLOR

My two-year term as your representative on Council is now almost finished, but I am looking forward to serving for another term, having just been re-elected. The chief recent Council matter which should be of concern to LSG members has been the discussion of the possible merger between ASLIB, the IIS and the LA. Some (slow) progress has been made towards this, without much sign of uncontrollable enthusiasm on the part of members of the three organisations. At the April Council meeting a paper was discussed which set out the basic lines on which a new organisation might be constructed to replace the existing three. Although this seemed to be considered acceptable in broad terms, serious reservations were expressed on seemingly inadequate provision for democracy in decision-making, a suggested subscription system which did not take account of salary levels, and, most significant for us, the arrangements for groups and branches.

The suggestion in the paper was that, whilst branches would be supported by the organisation, special interest groups would have to be self supporting. This last point sounds like a concession to IIS practice and would very seriously alter the whole structure of work on behalf of specialised groups within the profession. Faced with the need for membership dues which covered the whole cost of the group and which members would have to pay over and above the main subscription, membership of groups would certainly fall. Once the membership level had stabilised and surviving groups were self-sufficient, their reasons for staying within the new organisation would not be especially strong and a new fragmentation of the profession might occur. LSG members might bear this in mind if proposals for a new organisation containing this recommendation are eventually put to them.

Once again I must stress that I welcome members bringing matters to my attention so that I can take them up at Council level. I would also be glad to receive invitations to meet members at LSG branch meetings.

Paul Sturges

NOTE: Since this report was written, negotiations between the three institutions have collapsed, with both ASLIB and IIS withdrawing from the discussions.

HAVE YOU SEEN....?

Some recent items of interest to local studies librarians

Perks, R. comp. Oral history: an annotated bibliography. British Library National Sound Archive, 1990. 185pp. £12.95. ISBN 0 7123 0505 X.

The use of oral evidence by historians has greatly increased in recent years, and this bibliography attempts, for the first time in Britain, to list the published results of work in the field. The scope is wide, including both printed works based on oral evidence and published recordings. In addition material on the value and techniques of oral history is included. Within its date limits of 1945 and 1989 it attempts to be comprehensive for British works and selective for the rest of the world. The total number of entries is over 2100 and most are annotated.

A thorough literature search has been carried out, and there is, for instance, a long list of periodicals checked. The bibliography is a single sequence arranged by author. However, because the work includes both sources and techniques it might have been better to separate the oral evidence publications from the manuals. Although there is a very detailed subject index, and location of information related to specific topics such as mining, and references to places, are easy to trace, it is more difficult to find information on aspects of recording as the section under 'oral history and archives', while subdivided, is still somewhat difficult to follow.

The bibliography is, however, of major importance in gathering together information on an important current topic and should be well used by both historians and librarians.

Murphy, M. Newspapers and local history. Phillimore, for BALH, 1991. 24pp. £2.95. ISBN 0 85033 782 8. (The local historian at work 5).

Another of this useful series of booklets for the local historian. Within its small compass it includes a great deal of information from a brief outline of newspaper history to the value of and problems of newspapers as historical sources. Sources of information such as bibliographies and repositories are covered and the question of indexes and indexing is dealt with. An appendix provides a master list, based on one by W.G. Hoskins, or suggested headings for those wishing to index newspapers.

Withers, C.W.J. Discovering the Cotswolds. John Donald, 1990. 209pp. £7.50. ISBN 085976 268 8.

This is one of a growing series of books, originally covering areas of Scotland, and now spreading into England, intended for the discriminating visitor. It is much more than a guide book: the first half is a history of the area as a whole while the second part provides a guide to places to visit: much of this is also historically based. The volume is well written and illustrated. The pattern is similar in most

of the series so far published, though the style varies somewhat with the different authors.

A sense of place: discover your local history with the Cornish Studies Library. Cornish Studies Library, Cornwall County Council, 2-4 Clinton Rd., Redruth, Cornwall TR15 2QE. 1991, 20pp. £0.30.

A nicely produced, well written and well-illustrated introduction to conducting local research. Produced for the general reader, it starts off with 'What is a community?' and goes on to trace the steps involved in studying a local area and deals with the likely sources. Although the examples here relate to Cornwall, the pattern could be applied almost anywhere. An excellent example of its kind. The Cornish Studies Library has also recently produced a colourful free leaflet promoting the collection, aiming to reach the general public. Very well produced, it ought to do just that.

Pyle, Jon. Publishing programmes in libraries. LA Public Libraries Group, 1990. 8pp. £1.75 from JMLS, P.O. Box 17, 24 Gamble Street, Nottingham NG47 4FJ. ISBN 0 863 780 27 X. (Library Operations Checklist 12).

A brief checklist dealing with the setting of objectives, the organisation of the operation, planning the programme, evaluating manuscripts, costing, design and marketing. It is simply a list of the stages of the process and the questions which should be asked; while very brief the statements form a useful summary for those thinking about starting a programme - and perhaps for those already doing so!

Carter, P., ed. The Forth and Clyde Canal Guidebook. 2 ed., Strathkelvin District Libraries and Museums, 1991. 128pp. £3.90 + £0.55 p&p. ISBN 0 904966 31 3. Worling, M.J. Early railways of the Lothians. Midlothian District Libraries, 1991. 63pp. £3.95 + £0.38 p&p. ISBN 0 9511915 6 X. Martin, D. The story of Lenzie. Strathkelvin District Libraries and Museums, 1989. 64pp, £3.00. ISBN 0 904966 29 1.

Three library-published works related to transport. The *Guidebook*, written by members of the Canal Society, deals both with the history of the canal and with its present use for leisure and recreation. As a current guide it is helpful in pointing out what to see and where and, for instance, includes a section on wildlife. There are maps, a good bibliography and a list of useful addresses. A particularly useful point is the stated intention to produce an annual updating service during the life of the edition.

Worling's work is a solid attempt to chronicle the early history of railways in the Lothians, largely based on newspaper accounts because, as the author points out, much of the original source material has not survived, although, of course, it has been used where it is available. After an introduction on early mining and

transport in the Lothians, each of the eleven lines identified as having been considered or initiated before 1826 are dealt with in a separate chapter. There are copious references and a bibliography, but no index - for which the author apologises. This is a nicely produced booklet, with a good deal of information packed into a compact space.

As Don Martin points out, Lenzie grew up as a commuter village for Glasgow with the coming of the railways, and this element is well brought out in the early sections of this book: indeed its main purpose is stated to be to provide an insight into the factors which brought Lenzie into being. However, the story is continued beyond that with a good deal of information about the village and its inhabitants in the twentieth century. The book is well illustrated, and a useful page of 'Sources of Lenzie history' is provided.

THE DOROTHY McCULLA MEMORIAL PRIZE

This award was set up by the Local Studies Group in memory of the late Dorothy McCulla who initiated and was first chairman of the Group. It consists of £50 and a certificate. The intention of the committee is that it should mark the contribution of individuals to any aspect of local studies librarianship - for instance awards have been made in the past for publication, for personal service and for promotion work. Nominations are now requested for the 1992 Award from members, chief librarians or anyone else with a suitable nominee. The closing date is January 31st 1992. Nominations, with brief citations, should be sent to Patrick Baird, English and History Department, Central Library, Chamberlain Square, Birmingham B3 3HQ.

NOTES AND NEWS

Book theft and damage is a major problem for all kinds of libraries today with a total estimated loss in the United Kingdom each year of £100 million. Local studies libraries, of course, can lose valuable or irreplaceable items through theft or mutilation. Readers will therefore be interested to hear that the British Library National Preservation Office and the Home Office Crime Prevention Unit are jointly undertaking a six month research project aimed at providing the UK library community with information on the size of the problem and some possible answers. A questionnaire will be sent to a large number of libraries of all types to gather information on book loss, library practice and trends. A description of good practice will be developed to help librarians with their crime prevention strategies, and case studies to measure areas of crime and staff attitudes will be carried out in Hertfordshire Public Libraries. The report on the project, in the form of a Home Office Crime Prevention Paper, will be issued Spring 1992.

Local Studies again feature in the Library Association/T.C. Farries Public Relations and Publicity Awards. Durham County Arts, Libraries and Museums Department won the Specific Event category for 'Sweet memories', an exhibition

focusing on Horner's Dainty Dinah sweet factory, formerly the major employer in the town of Chester le Street. Taking a nostalgic look at the firm and its employees, including the tracing of the composer of the Dainty Dinah Waltz. The exhibition took branch librarian Joan Brown eighteen months to prepare. An article about its preparation will appear in the next issue.

Lancashire County Library and Lancashire Polytechnic have jointly organised a series of in-service courses for teachers on the history of specific areas of the county. Designed with the national curriculum in mind, the courses aim to enhance awareness of source materials held in Lancashire libraries which can be used in local history teaching, to demonstrate how local source material may be used to investigate particular local themes, and to consider how work undertaken in those themes meets the history attainment targets and levels specified in the National Curriculum. So far several courses have been successfully held in the Fylde area, with others in the pipeline for other parts of the county.

Affiliated Members of the Library Association held their inaugural general meeting on April 29th at Ridgmount Street. Points of specific interest to affiliates were addressed, and in discussion two major areas of concern were identified - qualifications and distance learning and training and employer support.

LSG has at present thirty five Affiliated Members and would welcome more. Are any of your staff interested?

North Yorkshire County Library Service and Riley Dunn and Wilson have recently announced a pilot scheme to provide a conservation binding service for the general public. Library staff will discuss books brought in by members of the public and give some idea of the physical requirements needed to conserve each item. If the enquirer wishes, the book(s) can then be sent to Riley Dunn and Wilson for a detailed estimate. If the customer decides to proceed, the work is carried out and the item returned to the library for collection. Staff training is provided by the firm and the library will receive commission in the form of credits for conservation binding of its own material.

The kind of material it is envisaged as being suitable includes such items as family bibles, first editions and books with special sentimental, historical or financial value.

The British library points out to purchasers of the NEWSPLAN report dealing with Yorkshire and Humberside that a sequence of entries, from *Barnsley Herald to Beverley News*, has been omitted. The missing entries are now available as an Addendum, free of charge, from Christine Campbell, The Newspaper Library, British Library, Colindale Ave., London NW9 5HE. Copies of the full report, including the addendum, may be purchased from the British Library Publications Sales Unit, Boston Spa, Wetherby, West Yorks, LS23 7BQ, at £30.00.



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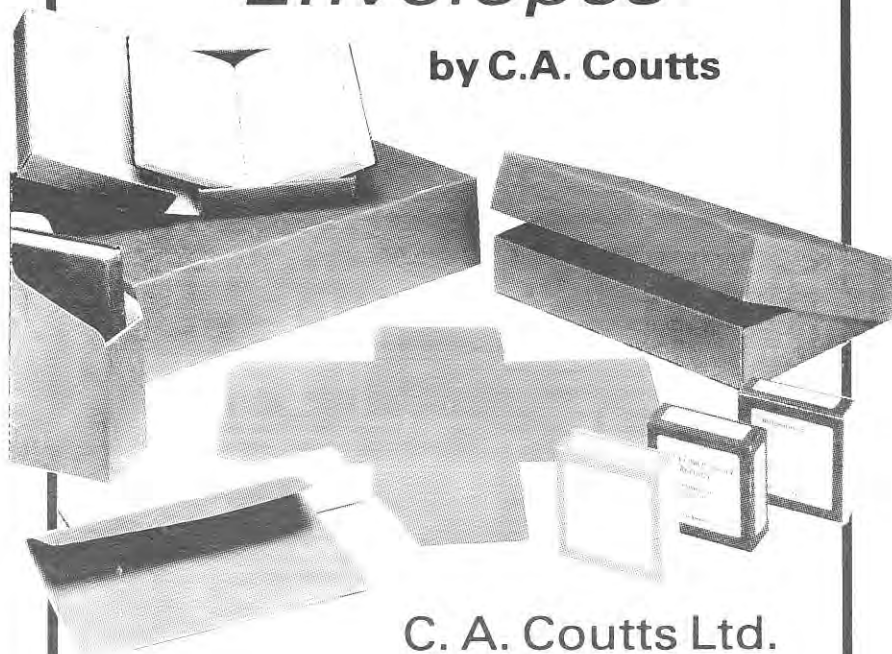
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