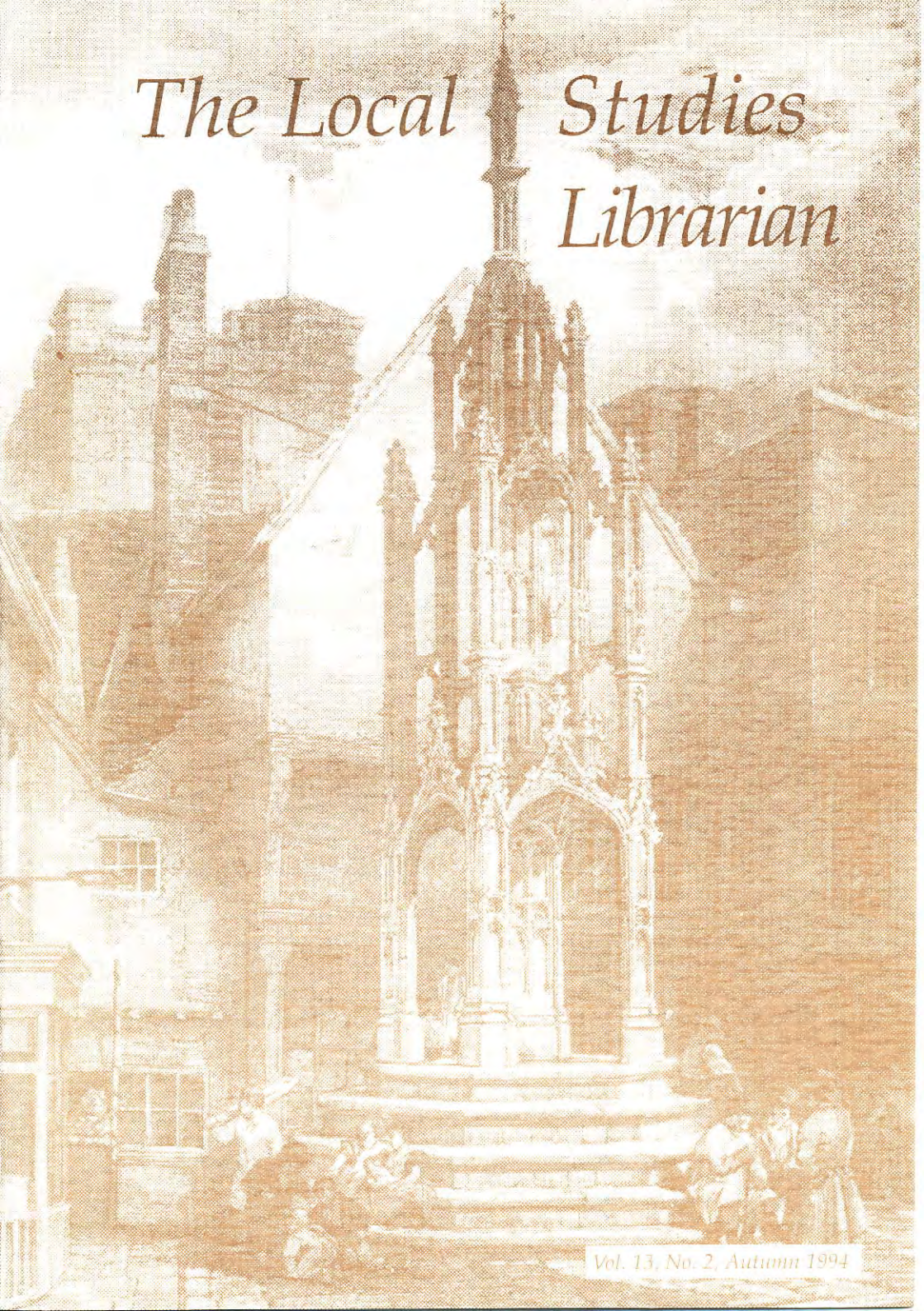


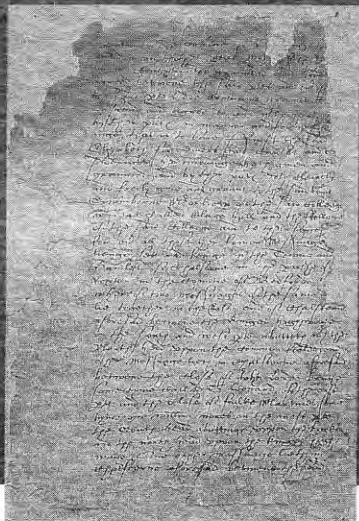
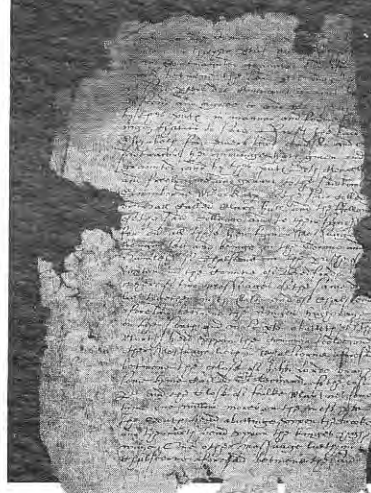
The Local Studies Librarian



Vol. 13, No. 2, Autumn 1994

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The Local Studies Librarian
Vol. 13 Number 2(27) 1994 ISSN 0263-0273

The Local Studies Librarian, the official journal of the Local Studies Group of the Library Association, is published twice per year - Spring and Autumn. It is issued free to members of the group. Annual subscription to non-members is £5.00 U.K. and £6.50 plus £1.00 service charge overseas. Post free in both cases. Overseas service charge does not apply if payment is made in Sterling.

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Cheques to be made payable to the Library Association, Local Studies Group.

CONTENTS

Editorial	1
Local Studies at the New Kirkintilloch Library	2
Köszönöm a Meghivast - and the bus was very comfortable	4
All our Yesterdays: The making of an exhibition	7
Living Memories of Hyde: Using volunteers in an oral history project	11
Devon's Parish Council Celebrations	16
Award for Local Studies Publications	17
Our New Councillor	17
The Dorothy McCulla Memorial Prize	18
Free Newspapers: A British Library Policy Statment	18
Information Wanted	18
Have You Seen...? Some recent items of interest	19
Notes and News	20

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EDITORIAL

The public library world is under close investigation at present, both by the government's Public Library Review and by the separate investigation into the contracting out of services. LSG has recently made representations to the review teams for both surveys. As far as the Public Library Review goes, the Committee is concerned at the lack of emphasis given to local studies work in the draft report, given that local studies received a mention as an important function by many respondents. Our comments point out that the public library service provides the only nationwide network for non-archival information that is generally available and that, in most cases, it is the only institution to have been collecting such information over a long period of time. The resulting collections often form significant research libraries, and the use of them is growing; there is therefore a need for a clear statement in the final report about the use and development of local studies collections. A rather different point was raised to the 'contracting out' review team. Here the concern is for the integrity of collections which have been built up with the help of donations of material in the past on the basis that this material was placed in public keeping for the public good. As 'commercial exploitation' is often excluded in conditions of use, where does that place private firms who may tender for the operation of a library service as a whole, or for a local studies service? This point does not seem to have been raised elsewhere, so we hope that it will now be taken on board by the consultants. If any readers have any comments about these, or any other points, please write to the consultants - Aslib for the Public Library Review and Peat Marwick about contracting out. LSG would also like to have any comments.

This is all, of course, at national policy level. At personal development/training level, we would draw your attention to Umbrella 3, to be held in Manchester in June, and for which an advertisement appears elsewhere in this issue. As on previous occasions, LSG is presenting an attractive programme, with various papers related to the local collection and its community. In addition to these expert contributions, there will be a visit to Chetham's Library, and we hope to continue our tradition of having a speaker from abroad, this time, in conjunction with the LA's International Group, from Sweden. Make a note of the date in your diaries, and send for details.

It is impossible not to make reference to the disastrous fire at Norwich Central Library which destroyed large parts of the local history collections and, as the service tries to pick up the pieces, we send our best wishes to the library service as a whole and to Clive Wilkins-Jones, the local studies librarian.

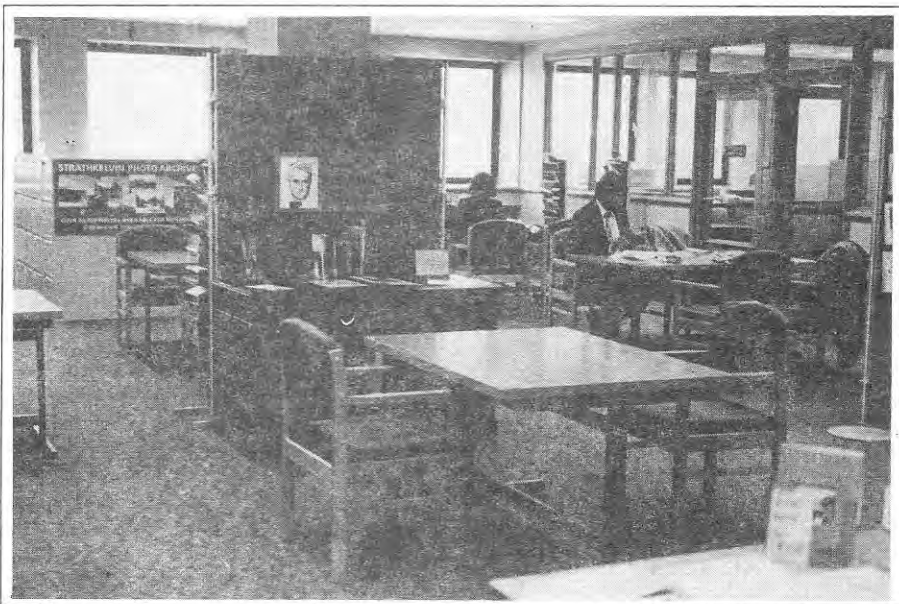
A final point. As you have seen above, the Local Studies Group is active on your behalf. We can do this best if we have a strong base of members. Don't forget to continue your membership when you renew your LA subscription, and please encourage others with an interest in local studies to join us.

LOCAL STUDIES AT THE NEW KIRKINTILLOCH LIBRARY

Don Martin

A feature of public library reference provision in Scotland, in recent years, has been the way in which many of the smaller District authorities have integrated their general reference and local studies services. In these Districts, typically, a dedicated staff is appointed to administer both reference and local studies from one central department. This does not necessarily work against the provision of an effective local studies service. In some Districts, especially those in the Central Belt, near Glasgow or Edinburgh, local studies is seen as equally important or even *more* important than general reference (partly because some of the 'in depth' reference work is handled by the large city reference libraries, but also because there is a great degree of community consciousness in the smaller, more compact Districts, and a consequent demand for information of a local nature). Furthermore, the option of a combined reference/local studies section is considered preferable to sharing duties with lending staff.

One local library service which operates a combined reference/local studies service is Strathkelvin. The District of Strathkelvin, just outside Glasgow to the north-east, has a population of about 84,000. It embraces the former burghs of Kirkintilloch and Bishopbriggs and an assortment of villages and small towns, including Lennoxtown, Milton of Campsie, Lenzie, Tyechar, Gartcosh, Moodiesburn, Chryston and Stepps. These are drawn from three of the old counties - Stirlingshire, Lanarkshire and Dunbartonshire. The reference/local studies service is operated from the library at Kirkintilloch (the largest and most centrally situated town) with a dedicated staff of four (including three qualified librarians). Responsibility for provision of a local archive service is also vested in this staff.



The reference library, Kirkintilloch.

In recent years considerable effort has been made to develop the Local Studies Collection into a major asset with which the local people can identify, drawing from it to increase their awareness of local heritage, and using it for recreation, education and information. Promotion of the collection and its development are seen as part of the same process, since the main source of new acquisitions must be the people themselves, who are encouraged to search their cupboards, drawers and attics for items of interest. Since 1985 one specific Strathkelvin community has been targeted for special attention each year, with a public meeting in the spring to explain what is required, the appointment of key people in each community to act as 'collecting agents', and an exhibition in the autumn. The official opening of the exhibition becomes an important local event, a real gathering of friends, relatives and acquaintances. A key role is fulfilled by the local branch librarian, who provides a vital link between local people and the library service. Since 1985 the following communities have been targeted in this way: Chryston (1985), Stepps (1986), Bishopbriggs (1987), Lennoxton (1988), Lenzie (1989), Milton of Campsie (1990), Baldernock/Balmore (1991), Twechar (1992), Moodiesburn & Gartcosh (1993) and Kirkintilloch (1994). In recent years the launching of these community exhibitions has been programmed as part of the Scottish Library Association/LOCSCOT 'Local History Week' celebrations.

A cornerstone of the District Local Studies Collection is the photographic archive. A well-developed photographic service generates a great deal of interest and can be employed for a great variety of purposes. Strathkelvin now has over 20,000 black and white photographs, and similar numbers of negatives and 35mm slides. Every photograph lent or donated to the service is immediately copied to produce a negative and a 10in x 8in copy print, and in many cases a 35mm copy slide is also produced. The copies and negatives are held in the library; donated originals are passed to the local museum for preservation. The photographic archive is kept up-to-date, with coverage in both black and white (negatives and prints) and colour (slides) of current scenes and events. The black and white photographs in the collection are fixed to display mounts in such a way that they can be withdrawn from their public-access storage cabinets and instantly adapted for exhibition purposes. In this way displays can quickly be mounted in branch libraries, council offices, schools, church halls and other sites around the District.

From 1976 the Local Collection was administered along with the Reference Collection at the old William Patrick Memorial Library in Camphill Avenue, Kirkintilloch. Accommodation there was extremely limited and storage had to be found for local studies materials at a number of different locations around the District. This greatly inhibited the provision of a fully-efficient service. However, in January 1994 the Local Collection was moved, along with the Reference Collection and the District Archives, into the new William Patrick Library at Kirkintilloch Cross. All local studies materials were located in the Reference Library on the first floor, or in storage rooms immediately adjacent. The following accommodation and facilities for local studies materials are provided:

Reference Library (165 square metres). Facilities include: extensive shelving for books; 12 standard filing cabinets for photograph storage; card cabinet for local newspaper index; microfilm reader-printer; 2 microfilm readers; microfiche reader-printer; display case; photocopier. A special display consists of the personal desk of the late Tom Johnston, a well-known Scottish politician and author, with relevant books and other memorabilia.

Reference Office (59 square metres). Facilities include: plan chest; vertical file for large-scale maps; filing cabinets for cuttings, ephemera, folded maps, etc.; storage cabinet for approximately 500 reels of 35mm microfilm of local newspapers, census returns, OPRs, etc.; fax machine; document shredder; mounting press; cabinet for storage of archival stationery.

Fire-proof Walk-in Safe (15 square metres). Approximately 70 metres of shelving for minute books, accounts books, valuation rolls and other archival volumes; two filing cabinets for District collection of photographic negatives; another two filing cabinets for the District collection of 35mm slides; small safe for storage of charters, etc.

Main Reference Store (77 square metres). Shelving for reserve collection of reference and local studies volumes; racks for boxes of documents and other archives (including rolled plans); rack for storage of 160 newspaper volumes (one horizontal shelf for each volume). Equipment for the control of temperature and humidity is provided in this room and in the Walk-in Safe.

Strathkelvin's extensive stock of local publications for sale (approximately 40 titles currently available) is stored in roller shelving in the library basement. Improved facility for display and sale of these publications is provided both in the Lending Library and the Reference Library. Already the new library at Kirkintilloch has proved to be exceptionally popular, with a great increase in the use of all services, including local studies.

Don Martin is Principal Assistant, Reference and Local Studies, Strathkelvin District Libraries and Hon. Secretary of LOCSCOT

KÖSZÖNÖM A MEGHIVAST - and the bus was very comfortable.

Elizabeth Melrose

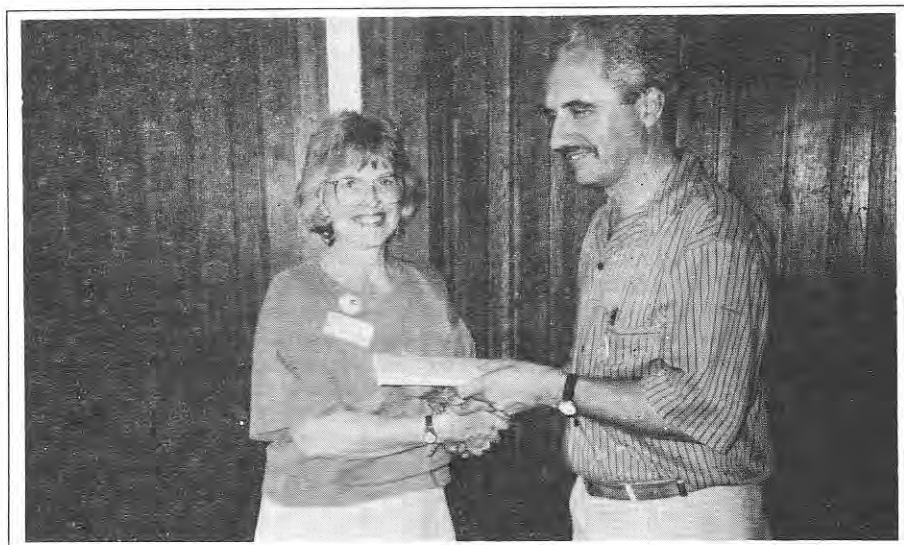
I had not allowed the airline hostess to take my briefcase. It contained my script, my guidebook, my slides... and my perceptions! I went to Hungary in August at the invitation of the Association of Hungarian Librarians to give two papers to the 26th Conference of the Association to be held at Körmend in the west of the country. Direct contact between the Local Studies Group and our colleagues in Hungary began in 1991 when the Group enquired about an existing journal-exchange programme that was in danger of elapsing due to cut-backs at the Library Association. Since then, not only has the Group taken over responsibility for its own journal-exchange with the Science Library in Budapest, but, having developed a correspondence with Erzsebet Gancs of the Kasfaludy Karoly County Library in Győr, invited her to speak about local studies librarianship in her country at the Umbrella 2 study weekend in Manchester last year.

My reciprocal visit was more complicated for my hosts since my knowledge of Hungarian is definitely limited! My papers were faxed for translation in advance and I was assigned two interpreters who worked heroically to keep me informed. Around 750 people attended the Conference, most from the public library system. Körmend is a small town, so many delegates stayed on campsites and in the dormitories of a local boarding school. The Conference itself was held in the impressive former mansion of the Counts Batthyány, and had as its theme "Libraries and History". My main talk was on "Local Studies Librarianship in Britain" with special reference both to my own expe-

rience in North Yorkshire and to the work done by other colleagues in the British Isles. The slides were intended to illustrate any points where my accent and Erzsebet's paragraph-by-paragraph translation into Hungarian left the audience bemused in heat that rarely fell below 90 degrees. The second, shorter paper, to the international section, was on our professional association, the Local Studies Group, and the support it gives to local studies librarians.

Thanks to the interpreters I was able to join in all the sessions and learned much about the organisation of libraries in Hungary today. The issues and concerns of Hungarian librarians are similar to the ones that we face in Britain, though the scale of re-organisation since the withdrawal of the Soviet forces is much greater and the lack of funding is more acute. Because of the very recent changeover of government in Hungary, unfortunately no senior politician could be present to hear the pleas for adequate financial aid. With the new political system and privatisation, many of the trade libraries in offices and factories have been closed down. At the same time local government is expected to organise a network of town and county library services - in a period when book prices are spiralling and there is an obvious need for investment in information technology. Local studies collections including rare and unique material are held in the main county libraries, but the city libraries are now pressing the claims of the smaller communities to their own heritage. The adoption of viable collection policies is considered a top priority.

Genealogy is an important part of the work of local studies departments and of record offices. In the communist era archives were not open to the public without special permission, but this has changed. Hungarian emigrés write for details of their family trees, villages are researching their historic coats of arms and the public has access to documents that may prove their legal right to state land formerly owned by their families.



Dr. Miklos Benyei presenting his newly published volume "Helyismereti Tervekenység a Könyvtárakban" (Oral history work in libraries) to Elizabeth Melrose

The concern over dwindling budgets is more serious in other eastern European countries. A speaker from Ukraine was visibly distressed when she commented on the condition of library buildings and on how her library had received no new books for seven years. However Hungarian library authorities are trying to reconcile free services and the need to attract readers - especially those who used the factory libraries in what is known as "the previous period" - with the need to produce income to provide these services. I met many colleagues whose enthusiasm and care for their collections clearly showed that professionalism does not rely on vast resources. Dr Miklos Benyei, an expert in Local Studies librarianship, presented me with his new volume on Local Studies Librarianship in Hungary straight off the presses, and last month the Association of Hungarian Librarians supported the formation of an independent Local Studies Group. It was announced at the Conference that already fifty members had joined the Group.

I had been shown the treasures of the National Szechenyi Library in Budapest at the beginning of my visit to Hungary. After the Conference I stayed on for another six days in the library flat at Győr. Several librarians in the Győr-Sopron-Moson County arranged a study tour for me. In the company of Erzsebet Gancs, I visited libraries in Győr, Sopron and in the Benedictine monastery of Pannonhalma - where I saw an example of the Corvina incunabula from the 15th century library of King Matthias Corvinus - along with many historical sites in these towns and their surrounding districts. The Director of the library at Sopron invited me to give an informal question and answer session to her staff. "What would you do with our library," they queried, "if money was no object?" These visits showed me the difficulties experienced by a country that is changing its political system and is under economic pressure but I was warned by a Hungarian businessman against making assumptions without more in-depth knowledge of continuing conditions within Hungary.

I have come back to Britain certain that our Group will be able to continue the contacts that I made during the Conference and after. I am working my way down a wants-list on behalf of several Hungarian librarians. This includes ten copies of the *LA Guidelines for local studies provision...* to be distributed by the Secretary-general of the Association of Hungarian Librarians and samples of the *Local Studies Librarian* and *LOCSCOT*. Other requests were for a work by Somerset Maugham and a couple of videos about the second World War. This is all small recompense for the kindness and hospitality that I received.

And the bus? I was burbling away last week to a colleague from the National Library in Budapest, who was visiting York, about my marvellous experiences. I did not mean to indicate that I was surprised that the bus from the capital to Győr was comfortable. In fact it was so comfortable that I must have fallen asleep for an hour or so. I certainly missed two stops on the journey and panicked when I found I was on the outskirts of Győr sooner than expected. I was told, "We are European, you know!". It is perception and language again! For this timely reminder - Köszönöm! - thank you for having me!

Elizabeth Melrose is Principal Librarian:
Information Services, North Yorkshire County Library Services

ALL OUR YESTERDAYS: THE MAKING OF AN EXHIBITION

Peter White

1993 was officially designated the European Year of Older People and Solidarity between Generations (EYOP). As part of Durham County Council's Arts Libraries and Museums Department's contribution, Darlington Library devised "All our Yesterdays", a month-long event which aimed to fulfil some of the objectives of EYOP.

EYOP came about as a result of the growing recognition of demographic changes occurring throughout the EC associated with the increasing numbers of older people and the consequent effect on the politics, economics and social structure of communities. Its aims and objectives were to raise awareness of the issues of ageing and promote positive images of older people and to promote a closer relationship between generations.

To co-ordinate the year's programme locally an organisation, EYOP - Durham, was formed: membership included representatives from the Arts, Libraries and Museums Service (ALMS) and from Durham County Social Services. In considering themes for a major event, the group recognised that nostalgia plays a big part in the lives of older people, and it was suggested that an exhibition presenting different aspects of life in and around Darlington during the period 1900-1950 would be well received. This period would be within the recall of many people, and there were major events such as two world wars to stimulate memories, as well as local events of significance such as the development of industry within the town. The period also saw important social developments in education, health care, housing and employment. Even the library itself underwent major changes in the 1930s.

Planning and organisation

A small working group of key staff from Darlington was set up, with input from the Department's Promotions and Marketing Manager, the Local Studies Manager, and the Special Services Manager. Planning began in late 1992 with a projected date of May 1993 for the exhibition, although in the event an unexpected complication with electrical re-wiring work in the building caused a seven month disruption to the service which led to the exhibition being postponed until September 1993. A funding application was made to EYOP - Durham for money to buy materials, equipment, publicity and so on: staffing costs were not covered.

It was decided that the exhibition would be centred on a 'home base' representing domestic life, and visitors would have the opportunity to explore outwards from this into other areas of life such as school, industry, leisure and transport. Staff were allocated specific tasks and began by searching for suitable photographs from the local studies collection. Captions were written and photographs enlarged and mounted on caper board.

Various local organisations were invited to take part, including Social Services, WRVS, Age Concern and local businesses. A local bakery agreed to provide food and refreshments free, and another shop donated prizes. Local schools were contacted and invited to bring children to view the exhibition, and to prepare work in advance for display. The Department's own Durham Learning Resources Section and Darlington Borough Council's Museum agreed to lend objects to support the displays and the Trans-

port Department supplied old bus conductor's uniforms, ticket machines and other memorabilia.

The editor of the *Northern Echo* newspaper was most receptive and agreed to feature material before, during and after the event. An appeal for members of the public to donate suitable objects for loan was published, and we were almost overwhelmed by offers of old cooking utensils, toys, food packaging, and household objects. The press continued to report on the exhibition throughout the event, and many of the photographs featured in the exhibition were reproduced in the *Northern Echo* on an almost daily basis. Individual aspects of the programme were also covered, and the press coverage generally was excellent.

With the aims of EYOP in mind, we contacted Durham County Social Services and arranged to have groups of elderly residents brought to the library to see the exhibition and to join in with a series of sing-alongs.

As well as the exhibition we wanted to feature demonstrations of domestic crafts now seldom seen, such as 'proddy' mat making and quilting. Volunteers were contacted to do sessions during the event. Much of the finding of suitable people was done through the personal knowledge of individual members of staff.

A number of older readers offered their services as volunteer stewards, and expressed an interest in talking to groups of children about life during their own childhood days, thus meeting one of our prime objectives - bringing generations together.

It was decided to hold the main exhibition in the Art Gallery, which is part of the library building, although the main adult and children's lending departments were also used.

Using sheets of chipboard painted various colours, a kitchen area was built in the centre of the gallery floor. This consisted of two rooms, back to back with an open front. Apertures were cut into the side panels to represent windows. One room was designated a traditional early kitchen, and furnished with a poss tub, tin bath, hand washing machine and mangle. A wooden table carried pots and pans, and household objects from the pre-war era.

The second room was meant to represent a post-war kitchen with all "mod cons". This had a gas cooker, vacuum cleaner and a more up to date washing machine, although still hand-operated. Replica food was on display, with ration books, war-time recipes etc. In true '50s fashion, three ornamental ducks flew across one wall. The proddy mat demonstrations took place in this room. Graphics consisted of photographs of home life and reproduction posters, while the text consisted of quotations about the cost of living, wages, diet and nutrition and rationing.

A representation of a schoolroom from the 1930s was built, again with chipboard. Visiting school children were given a talk by one of our elderly volunteers on school life before the last war, sitting at wooden desks supplied by Durham Learning Resources. Other objects in the room included a teacher's desk, easel blackboard, slates and chalks, a cane, wall charts and ink wells. Adjacent to the schoolroom we had examples of toys and games. We found a company manufacturing traditional toys such as skipping ropes, tops and whips, diabolos, marbles and jacks, and supplies of these were bought from our EYOP funding.

To give an idea of clothing and fashion it was decided that, rather than display historic or replica costume, "Aunt Sally" cut-outs showing costume from the period would be used. Three of these were made, showing the clothes of a 1920s 'flapper', a soldier of the Great War, and a schoolboy from the 1940s. A mirror was supplied so that visitors could see themselves. Illustrative material took the form of reproduction posters and advertisements from shops and from catalogues.

An outline of a section of a Darlington tram was built and painted in the colours of the former Transport Department. Cut-outs for windows allowed visitors to see inside a glass display case housing model trains and trams. Other memorabilia - bus tickets, uniforms, timetables and so on - were cased for viewing, while captioned photographs of transport scenes were also on show.

"Made in Darlington" was the theme for the industry display and featured mounted photographs of local industry such as the North Road Railway Works and wartime industries such as a munitions factory. The accompanying text referred to topics such as wages and working conditions and unemployment.

For "Darlington at War" another replica room was created. On the back of the door hung a Durham Light Infantry battledress uniform, with an ARP warden's uniform and tin helmet on a chair. Other objects borrowed from the DLI Museum included a gas mask, a stirrup pump and an incendiary bomb. A radio on a shelf played wartime announcements and music - this was done by means of a concealed tape recorder. The display was supported by photographs and text referring to war time experiences of life in Darlington. The Imperial War Museum supplied posters and reproduction ration books, Identity cards, air raid precaution notices and so on.

The final display looked at old age. Although there were few objects available (we did find a commode and walking sticks) we had photographs of workhouses and institutions, old people then and now, and text looking at legislation and statutory provision.

We also looked at the history and development of Darlington Public Library and featured photographs of the original building and subsequent extensions, backed by displays of memorabilia including readers' tickets, date stampers, and copies of the rules and regulations from the 1930s. A one day fines amnesty was arranged and staff wore 1930s costume on that day.

Items were collected together a week before the exhibition opened and itemised in case of problems later.

Library staff built the rooms, cutting out windows, painting the boards etc. Captions and photographs and posters were spray mounted on to copper board. Nylon fishing line was used to secure small items to tables in case of theft. In the event the only item to go missing was the concealed (!) tape recorder which was stolen.

The exhibition

The official opening was by the Chair of the Arts, Libraries and Museums Service, Councillor Robinson. Tea was served in the 'Palm Court' Tea Rooms by volunteers. A local garden centre provided suitable palm plants and catering was by courtesy of a local bakery. Piano music was performed by a volunteer and the event ended up as a sing-along. A preview of the exhibition was held the same evening reserved for all

those who had helped in some way with the event. Refreshments were served, and entertainment was provided by members of the local operatic society who sang popular songs from the first half of the century. The evening was a great success, and a small way of thanking all our paid and unpaid helpers.

"All our Yesterdays" opened to the public on 7th September 1993 and ran until 2nd October. During that time there were 7982 visitors, including 750 children in organised parties from schools in Darlington, Newton Aycliffe and Richmond.

The programme of events included a series of historical talks (so successful that more had to be arranged); a Family History advice day with members of a local history society on hand to give advice on research; four war-time cookery demonstrations by British Gas - another sell out; sing-along sessions, including one reserved for residents of old people's homes; and a craft day with demonstrations of Durham Quilting and hooky mat making. 280 people attended the historical talks, and the cookery demonstrations attracted an audience of 200. Admission to all events was by free ticket so that we could control numbers.

On arrival, school parties were split into two. One group was taken to the junior library where they were shown how to make traditional toys such as peg dolls, and whizzers. The other party was split into small groups which were taken around the exhibition, spending 10 minutes on each of the displays. Several elderly volunteers were on hand to answer questions about their experiences as children of schooldays, Christmas, food and drink, games and pastimes. After 45 minutes the parties changed over. Prior to the exhibition, not every school responded to our invitation to participate. As word spread amongst the schools they began to contact us and eventually we were over-subscribed and were unable to accept more parties. Publicity during the exhibition was provided by local newspapers who responded positively, particularly the *Northern Echo* who devoted generous coverage each week, reproducing some of the photographs from the exhibition. Staff also made use of local radio to promote the event.

Positive spin-offs for us included a surge in orders for copies of photographs; a widening of our network of contacts from other agencies; a lot of goodwill (will you be doing this every year? was a frequent question); and some ideas for future events. On the negative side, there was a tremendous drain on staffing resources which put all staff, whether directly involved or not, under pressure.

The final event was Library Day, which featured a presentation on the history of the library service in Darlington, a fines amnesty, and staff attired in 1930's costume. A small party complete with cake was held for some readers and some ex-members of staff to formally close the event.

The Future

Interest in the photographs on show was so great that we are planning to publish a booklet featuring the more interesting ones. The sing-along sessions could be repeated, particularly at Christmas, as they brought so much pleasure to the elderly. The quilting and hooky mat making are obvious candidates for craft workshops. To continue the links between young and old we are planning to involve a local school to make recordings of reminiscences by older people (possibly in one of the homes) on topics such as the war, schooldays, or Christmas, with a view to publication.

Peter White is Manager, Southern Division, Durham County Library

LIVING MEMORIES OF HYDE: USING VOLUNTEERS IN AN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Alice Lock

In a time of shrinking resources, but increased use of local studies libraries, it is tempting to consider the use of volunteers to complete necessary tasks, especially as many library users are keen to help in this way. This is an account of an oral history project using volunteer interviewers and transcribers which produced eighty tapes which are now deposited at the Tameside Local Studies Library in Stalybridge, Greater Manchester. We hope our experiences using volunteers may be of interest to anyone else considering a similar project.

The project originated in 1987 when we were approached by Age Concern, Tameside, who wished to do something to mark the "celebrating age" theme of that year. They sought to combat the image of elderly people as a drain on resources with nothing to contribute. We were keen to develop our oral history collection so a joint venture seemed ideal. We had started recording oral history interviews at the Local Studies Library in 1976, but were finding it increasingly difficult to continue taping because there were so many other demands on the service.

Age Concern contacted a range of other organisations concerned with elderly people, including the Adult Education Service, and a working party was created on which we were represented. The working party decided that the main aim of the project would be to create tapes which would be deposited at the Local Studies Library; that the focus would be on one Tameside town (Hyde), rather than the borough as a whole; that interviews would be recorded with elderly Hydonians and with elderly people from Bangladesh who had come to the town in the 1950s, 60s and 70s; and that the tapes should be recorded by volunteers, preferably retired people who would therefore contribute to the project as interviewers and interviewees. The project was expected to produce an exhibition and, perhaps, a book.

The next step was to attract some volunteers. We attempted to do this through the distribution of leaflets and a public meeting at Hyde Library on 19th April 1988 which attracted forty-three people: these included individuals who had seen the leaflets and a notice in the press, people from the organisations which Age Concern had contacted and members of Hyde Historical Society. The members of Hyde Historical Society were to prove dedicated, continuing supporters along with many of the individuals who had turned up as a result of seeing the leaflet. Many of the latter were "professional volunteers" - their main aim was to do voluntary work. They were interested in local history, but it was not their primary motivation and for many our project was slotted in alongside a wide range of other voluntary work. People like this proved particularly useful because they were very hard-working and brought a different perspective to the project. Many of the local historians had preconceptions about what they were going to find out which influenced their interviewing technique! Fortunately most of our "professional volunteers" were women and their interest in women's experiences helped even the balance among the tape recordings. People who had been involved in local history and community groups in Hyde for years were very welcoming to these newcomers - a fact which we took for granted at the time, but which could well have turned out to be a problem.

With a core of interested people we arranged two training days, one at the Local Studies Library and one at the Community, Language and Arts Centre in Hyde. They were attended by people from the public meeting, some Hyde Sixth Form College students and their tutor and some new people who had seen the publicity in the paper. Members of a neighbouring local history society who had already started their own oral history project also came along, so the training days served a dual purpose by helping them as well.

The training consisted of sessions on the aims of the project, oral history recording, use of video equipment (initially we hoped to include some video recording, but this never materialised), transcribing and the work of the Local Studies Library in providing a permanent home for the tapes. Dermot Healy, a Research Fellow at Manchester Polytechnic (now Manchester Metropolitan University) who has extensive experience of oral history recording, helped us with the training sessions. He was keen to demystify oral history and to make it clear that the most important prerequisite was curiosity about the past and a recognition of the diversity of people's experience. We had some interesting practical sessions finding out how many of us had been shop-lifters as children! As Dermot pointed out, no amount of training sessions are a substitute for going out and doing interviews, but it served a purpose in bringing the group together, creating a feeling that something was going to happen and, perhaps, giving a bit of confidence to the waverers.

Obviously the volunteers would be going to the homes of the elderly people they interviewed so it seemed sensible to have some kind of "vetting" system if only to cover ourselves if problems occurred. Age Concern already had facilities to record volunteers' details, take up their references and issue them with identification so this was fairly straightforward.

A committee was set up including as many volunteers as possible along with representatives of the Local Studies Library, Hyde Library, Age Concern, Community Education and the Special Services Librarian. We decided to meet at least three times a year although for the first year or so we met almost every month. Preferences among the volunteers soon emerged - some preferred interviewing, some transcribing and some administrative work. We wanted the project to become a community group in its own right, not something controlled by library staff or the other organisations involved. This obviously demanded high levels of commitment from the volunteers and we were lucky in that the project Chairman, Bill Cullen, was willing to put in so much effort. As well as doing a large number of interviews he took on the task of chivvying the volunteers and committee.

While the library was able to pay for blank tapes as they would eventually be added to our stock the project had numerous other expenses and its plans for an exhibition and, later, a book would obviously also involve large costs. We approached local firms and the New Horizons Trust for grants, but this met with mixed success. In the end we obtained money from the local branch of Tesco's, support from Home Service Improvements (a Hyde firm) and a grant from Age Concern's national organisation: Tameside Libraries funded the tapes, some stationery for transcribing and the cost of the exhibition. The book was paid for through the generosity of Sir George Kenyon, one of the volunteers on the committee, who was paid back as money from sales came in.

During the first twelve months tapes, transcripts and material for deposit or copying (photographs, ephemera and archival material) flooded in and we discovered that the

use of volunteers in a project like this increases rather than decreases the burden on staff. Many tasks such as copying, cataloguing and indexing photographs and other material has to be undertaken by staff, as does the accessioning and cataloguing of tapes and the writing of thank you letters to interviewees. We had to keep up with the new material as it came in or the volunteers were discouraged to find their work was not available to readers.

The volunteers and committee also wanted to see some use of the material - nobody ever believes things are used in libraries! - so a major exhibition was planned. It was designed to publicise the project and attract more volunteers and interviewees. The exhibition went on display at Hyde Library in April 1989. It was split into several sections covering topics such as sport, amateur dramatics, churches, the cotton industry and so forth and included copies of photographs, documents and transcripts from tapes. The work and cost of producing the exhibition fell mainly on library staff as it proved impractical to leave it to a group of volunteers, but selections of material at each stage were approved by the committee. Many people brought objects associated with the history of Hyde which were displayed in cases and Mr Cullen, an ex-Mayor himself, arranged for two other ex-Mayors to be present. There was a huge opening with wine and cheese which was well reported in the local press and the whole event was very enjoyable. The volunteers welcomed a chance to see what the project as a whole had achieved and outsiders seemed to enjoy looking at the exhibition. It was displayed at Hyde for a month and then went on display at other local venues including Hyde College, Hyde Hospital, a local factory and various schools and elderly persons homes. It then became part of the collection of touring exhibitions held at the Local Studies Library and is still in frequent use at venues all over Tameside.

In December 1989 when the exhibition was over, the committee turned its thoughts to a book and decided to set up a working party which consisted of two, later three, volunteers and myself. By this time we had bought two cassette players, but still had over £1000, from grants, in the bank. Tapes were still being recorded, most notably by Bill Cullen and Ann Richardson, one of the younger volunteers, but transcribers were not keeping up with the numbers of new tapes. An appeal was made in the press for more transcribers and a deadline of February 1990 was set for material for the book. Anything unrecorded or untranscribed by that date could not be included in print (though it was still added to the library collection). We hoped to have the book available for the Christmas market.

Gradually a list of headings for the book was assembled and a volunteer agreed to research and write up each subject area. We included topics such as the First World War, the Second World War, schools, entertainments, industry, churches and Hyde Market (a favourite subject in all the interviews). Later we decided to add the full transcript of one complete interview.

Writing a book "by committee" proved surprisingly efficient - the individual contributions were received on time, the working party agreed on all major decisions and the full committee accepted what the working party produced. This may have been in part because editing was kept to a minimum. I felt it was important that the book reflected the interests and enthusiasms of the volunteers and did not become too similar to our own library publications. By August 1990 we were seeking quotes from printers.

Once an estimate had been accepted the committee turned its thoughts to the book launch. We had always had good publicity for the project as our Chair made a point of

calling in to the local newspaper offices on a regular basis to update the editors. Reports on the progress of the book appeared regularly and helped create demand for it. Word of mouth publicity was also very good because so many people were involved with the project.

Unfortunately the printer was unable to meet our deadline so we missed the Christmas market and had to launch the book in March 1991. The launch was held in the Mayor's Parlour at Hyde Town Hall which proved far too small for the huge crowds who came to buy their copies of the book. Wine was provided, Sir George Kenyon made a short speech to launch the book and a few extracts from the tapes were played. Over 150 copies were sold in about one and a half hours. 1250 copies were sold in the first three months the book was in print.

Once the book had been produced the less interesting aspects of the job - the marketing and organisation of sales - seemed likely to become a problem until Harold Plevin, one of the more recent volunteers who later took over as Chair, undertook this work. His energy in this department made sure that sales continued at a steady rate. There were times during the development of the project when I had felt that it was too unwieldy and that too many people were involved in decision-making, but the reverse side of that coin was that somebody always appeared eventually with the necessary skills and interest in each new phase of the project.

After the book was published the committee discussed various new projects - Age Concern wanted to develop a pack drawing on the experience of the project for sale to organisations considering something similar while other members of the committee wanted to produce a quiz book on the recent history of Hyde. The quiz won and *Quizzing Memories of Hyde* was published in October 1992. The project still exists and has recently started a new set of recordings concentrating on the cotton industry and the Second World War.

By this time it had become obvious that library staff could no longer give the same amount of commitment to the project that we had over the last five years. We suffered constant staff shortages which always seemed to coincide with major events in the development of the project so from 1992 onwards we gradually loosened our ties while remaining interested in its progress.

The Living Memories of Hyde project achieved everything we had originally hoped for it except that we were never able to make enough contacts with the ethnic minority communities in Hyde to record any tapes with them. We attempted this through Asian community groups, especially those involved with the elderly. We did not attempt any real contact with schools or young people's organisations. All our volunteers were white and most interviewees came from their circles of acquaintances or from wardens of sheltered housing.

I was surprised to find that a group which had been manufactured for our own purposes by Age Concern and ourselves was able to develop a life of its own and attract committed volunteers. It proved very time consuming for us and much of the time went into committee meetings and dealing with the mass of ideas which were always springing up, but this meant that the group was developing its own identity. The independence and strength of the group meant that its traditional views of local history were probably reinforced rather than challenged, but its enthusiasm resulted in a tape collection which can be used in many different ways by different researchers. Being

involved with an active community group with a mind of its own brought us many advantages, especially as all the towns in Tameside remain fiercely independent - it was a good way to make friends in a town outside Stalybridge. Any librarian wishing to use volunteers simply to fill a gap in library services would want more control, but would have to remember that volunteers have to be motivated and in this case their independence helped give them the motivation.

The large numbers involved often made the project seem unwieldy and was discouraging at first. Many people who were not making an active contribution seemed to be attached to the project, but often this was because the task which called for their special talent and interest had not yet appeared. Even those who never did devote large scale energies to the project had a role in publicising our activities and proved their usefulness in the end. While men took over the positions of Chair, Secretary and Treasurer there were large numbers of women on the committee and there seemed to be a fairly even balance of power which was nice to see!

We learnt very early on that free labour does not make a completely cost-free project. Additional expenses include administrative costs such as correspondence and telephone calls as well as any materials required. There has to be some provision for finance and setting up an independent group allows some opportunities for raising money from grants. Library staff took a large part in the project in terms of dealing with the new materials, providing support for interviewers and transcribers and producing the exhibition and book. It taught us that the use of volunteers can increase your workload because they want to see their work added to the collection quickly and what use is made of it. But the benefits are not just the additions to stock (in our case the tape collection doubled and all the tapes were transcribed), but also the involvement of readers in the life of the library. We were lucky in that, almost by accident, we picked an oral history project. It proved ideal in that the necessary skills are easily developed and it provides for a range of interests, including transcribing for people who do not want, or are unable, to go out and about to participate.

The number and range of the volunteers was also surprising. Of course people dropped in and out as their circumstances changed, but there was always a steady core of the same people. We expected members of Hyde Historical Society and some of the regular users of the Library to be active, but many other people who had been involved in community groups in Hyde, along with individuals who had never set foot in the Local Studies Library before, were among the most committed volunteers. This confirmed our belief that there is an inexhaustible supply of people interested in Local History! Another major gain for the Library was publicity - word of mouth through the new people we met and through the channels of the exhibition, and book and press reports about both. Use of the tape and photograph collections increased as more people heard about them.

Overall the benefits of using volunteers were enormous, but I would be less optimistic about their use in a major project like this to try to compensate for the shortage of library staff.

Copies of *Living Memories of Hyde* (£4.95 + £1.85 p&p) and *Quizzing Memories of Hyde* (£3.50 + £1.85 p&p) are available from Tameside Local Studies Library, Stalybridge Library, Trinity Street, Stalybridge, Cheshire, SK15 2BN

Alice Lock is Local History Librarian, Tameside Libraries

DEVON'S PARISH COUNCIL CELEBRATIONS

As part of Devon's celebrations of the centenary of Parish Councils, which were established by the Local Government Act of 1894, a Parish History Day was held. This was a joint venture between Devon County's Heritage Section, the County Record Office and the County Library Service, and representatives from seventy parishes were among the 150 participants. In the morning there were presentations on archival, archaeological and printed sources for parish history, while in the afternoon there was a series of workshops giving advice on the conservation of material, on the preparation of exhibitions and on writing and publishing. The occasion was also used to launch Devon Record Office's circulating exhibition 'The parish community in Devon'. The ten panels which make up the exhibition provide examples of documents from the Record Office collection to illustrate life in Devon over the centuries. The panels deal with topics such as war and peace, education, leisure pursuits, law and order and charity and self help, with documents from over sixty parishes being used. Since its launch in April the exhibition has been circulating widely throughout the county at the invitation of the various Parish and Town councils.

The day also saw the publication of a booklet entitled *Abbots Bickington to Zeal Monachorum*; a handlist of Devon parish histories.¹ This is a list of material in the Westcountry Studies Library in Exeter. Arranged alphabetically by parish, some 400 places are included, and there is also a list of about seventy places for which no publications have been traced, with a note asking for help in locating works. Readers are also referred to general histories of the county, to the library's cuttings and information files and to Devon Record Office.

¹ *Abbots Bickington to Zeal Monachorum*: a handlist of Devon parish histories. Devon County Libraries, 1994. 72pp. £2.00 ISBN 1 85522 331 7.

AWARDS FOR LOCAL STUDIES PUBLICATIONS

This year's winners of the Alan Ball awards have recently been announced. These awards were established by the Library Services Trust to encourage local studies publishing by public libraries and are now in their tenth year. Over the years the standards have steadily risen and recent changes in the rules mean that up to five awards may be made each year: this year the maximum number were made, the judges commenting on the continuing high standard of nominations. The award winners for 1994 are:

Essex County Council, for *Essex Gold: the fortunes of the Essex oysterman*, by Hervey Benham;

Durham County Council, for *Durham Cathedral: artists and images*, by Patricia R. Andrew;

London Borough of Merton, for *Merton Priory*, by Penny Bruce and Simon Mason;

Clydebank District Council, for *Beardmore Built: the rise and fall of a Clydeside shipyard*, by Ian Johnston;

Shropshire County Council, for *From the Air: man and the landscape*, by Michael Watson and Chris Musson.

The 'Publications for sale' category of the Library Association/TC Farries Public Relations and Publicity Awards was won, for the second year running, by Northamptonshire Libraries and Information Service, this time for *The Life and Times of John Clare*.

OUR NEW COUNCILLOR

Neil M Bruce has been elected as the local Studies Group's representative for 1995-97 on Library Association Council. At present Principal Librarian, Services, with Highland Region's Library Service, Neil has long had an interest in local history and been associated with local studies work, dating back to the days when he worked for Stirling Public Library and the high point of his day was manning the reference and local studies counter over the lunch period. More recently he has been a member of the LOCSCOT committee and edited the Group's journal from 1988 to 1991. We welcome Neil to the LSG Committee, where he will be able to keep us up to date with events at Ridgmount Street.

We should also like to take this opportunity to thank our retiring councillor, Paul Sturges, for his active work on Council on our behalf over the last few years. Pressure of work has caused him to step down.

THE DOROTHY McCULLA MEMORIAL PRIZE

This award, of £50 and a certificate, is LSG's own award and is presented annually to the LSG member who, in the opinion of the committee, has contributed most to local studies librarianship. Nominations are therefore invited for this year's award from members, chief librarians, and anyone else with a suitable nominee. Nominations should be received by the Hon. Secretary, Patrick Baird, Local Studies and History, Birmingham Central Library, Chamberlain Square, Birmingham B3 3HQ, by 31st January 1995, and may be concerned with any aspect of local studies librarianship, examples being publication, an index, a new technique or good promotions work. It is hoped that the presentation may be made at Umbrella 3 in Manchester.

FREE NEWSPAPERS: A BRITISH LIBRARY POLICY STATEMENT

The British Library Newspaper Library has recently produced a policy statement on free newspapers following an investigation by Selwyn Eagle of problems encountered by libraries in attempting to collect and preserve these publications. The policy aims to ensure that a complete file of each free newspaper published in the British Isles which contains news and editorial features is permanently retained in a national library. Free newspapers containing only advertisements will not be collected by the British Library, though the National Libraries of Wales, Scotland and Ireland will do so for their areas. The British Library's preservation treatment of free papers will be the same as for paid-for titles, with each title microfilmed and the original copies stored. The policy will be implemented by co-operation between the British Library and local libraries via the regional NEWSPLAN committees: the latter will be asked to survey its region's free newspapers and to report what is being done locally to collect and preserve them.

A summary of the policy statement, which is still to be regarded as a discussion document, appears in the British Library Newspaper Library Newsletter, no. 17, Spring 1994, p.9, and the full text is available from the Newspaper Library.

INFORMATION WANTED

Elsewhere in this issue is a note on the new Open University course in family and community history. Are there any readers who are undertaking this course and who would be willing to write a short account of their experiences with it and their reaction to it? If so, please contact the Editor. The report would need to be submitted by the end of March to tie in with an article on the course from Michael Drake of the OU. Even if you don't wish to write about the course it would be useful to hear from you to get an idea of how many librarians are taking it, as the OU don't categorise so closely.

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

Counce, S. *Oral history and the local historian*. Longman, 1994. 227pp. £29.00 hbk (ISBN 0582 07294 8), £11.95 pbk (ISBN 0 582 07295 6).

A practical and readable handbook for those, librarians or local historians, who wish to record oral testimony. It deals with both theory and practice, giving examples from the author's own research in the East Riding of Yorkshire (a name itself no longer with us). The first section deals with the uses of local history, for instance people, places, and lifestyles. Oral evidence is then placed in the context of other forms of historical evidence and its value is discussed. The remainder of the book is concerned with the practicalities of collecting oral evidence from initial ideas to the gathering of material, its transcription and indexing, and its use once it has been collected and documented. There is a chapter on hardware, with plenty of useful hints on successful recording, types of equipment and looking after tapes: the use of videotapes and camcorders is also mentioned. The final chapter deals with the author's view of the present state of oral history. There is a useful annotated list of further readings.

This is a useful volume, more detailed than Robert Perks's *Oral history* (Historical Association, 1992) and less academic than Paul Thompson's *The voice of the past* (OUP, 1988), to which readers are referred as a logical next step. Copious examples are quoted and numerous illustrations back up the text.

Reid, Andy. *The Union Workhouse: a study guide for teachers and local historians*. Phillimore, for BALH, 1994. 94 pp. £10.95. ISBN 0 85033 914 6.

The workhouse played an important part in the life of many people in Victorian days. This work is both a study aid and an information source for the history of Union Workhouses. Its original intention was to provide guidance for teachers working with National Curriculum local history projects, but it is of use to a much wider audience of local and social historians, as well as to librarians and archivists who are so often approached by pupils studying the subject.

The book's aim is to show how the history of a workhouse can be reconstructed from surviving physical, printed and documentary evidence. It has three main sections: an introduction to the history of workhouses, a section on locating and using sources, and a chapter on themes which can be pursued, including a case study showing how information about an individual inmate can be traced. There are reproductions of many documents and a useful select bibliography.

Stephens, WB. *Sources for English Local History*. Phillimore, 1994. 342p. £16.95. ISBN 0 85033 911 1.

This is an unaltered reprint of the second edition of this work, originally published by Cambridge University Press in 1981. It is a standard work on sources for local historians, and many librarians will welcome its reappearance in print. It is a good quality hardback edition, slightly larger in format than its predecessor, and at a considerably lower price. Arranged mainly by topic with chapters, for example, on population and social structure, industry trade and communications, and religion, it describes a wide range of printed and documentary sources which can be used when studying an aspect of local history.

NOTES AND NEWS

Birmingham Central Library has recently acquired the James Watt papers from a descendant of the inventor. The collection includes letters, notebooks, accounts and reports, and joins other Watt papers which were acquired in the 1930s. The City archives collection already holds the papers of the Boulton and Watt steam engine partnership and the personal papers of Matthew Boulton, so this purchase brings together all the main surviving archives relating to Birmingham's contribution to the industrial Revolution. The cost of the papers, £1 million, was aided by grants from a range of charitable trusts and private companies.

In the Summer 1992 issue of LSL plans for a new Open University course in local history was announced. DA 301 - Studying Family and Community History - had its first intake in February 1994, with about 700 students undertaking the year-long course. The course takes an interest in family and/or local history as a starting point and aims at enabling students to relate their studies to those of other researchers: basically it is intended to be a course on research developments and historical techniques, backed up by the production of a supervised project. Because documentary sources are plentiful for the period, the course is focused on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but the skills in techniques it provides will enable students to research further back in time. As with other OU courses, the course materials are multi-media, with four basic OU textbooks backed up by audio cassettes, six radio programmes and a television presentation on how to shoot video history. The next course starts in February 1995 at a fee of £485 if taken in the Associate Student programme or £279 if taken as part of the undergraduate programme. Further information can be obtained from Central Enquiries, The Open University, PO Box 200, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6YZ.

It has been announced that responsibility for local authority archive collections is to be transferred to the Department of National Heritage from the Department of the Environment and the Lord Chancellor's Office. This is seen as a logical step when so many local authorities today are placing libraries, museums and record offices under the same span of control, and DNH comments that it is already responsible for libraries and their local studies collections.

To coincide with the unveiling of a new memorial dedicated to Gerard Manley Hopkins, Newham Local Studies Library produced an exhibition entitled 'Gerard Manley Hopkins - a Stratford poet'. Hopkins was born in Stratford and the exhibition celebrates his little-known links with the borough.

Gloucestershire County Library reports that it has recently produced a Local Studies Development Plan in consultation with colleagues and customers. This makes recommendations about the future direction of the service: the first challenge will be to improve access to the collections and a project to develop a county wide database will be undertaken over the next year. During the past year all county directories from 1820-1939 have been microfilmed, as have the Gloucestershire Collection cuttings. The collections of material in the county's Local Studies Centres have been improved and several libraries have received new reader-printers. Enquiries at the Gloucestershire Collection showed an 18% increase over the previous year.

Martin Hayes, Principal Local Studies Librarian, West Sussex Library Service, is the first winner of a new annual award for map librarians which has been set up by Alan Godfrey, the map publisher, in conjunction with the British Cartographic Society. Mr

Godfrey, who is best known for his reproductions of large scale Ordnance Survey maps, has established the award in recognition of all the help he receives from librarians round the country. It is given with the aim of furthering the use, appreciation and understanding of maps, and is awarded to a librarian who has made an outstanding contribution towards carrying out this aim. The prize, a specially commissioned wood carving and £250, is open to any librarian in Britain, Ireland, the Isle of Man or the Channel Isles. Mr Hayes was chosen, from a wide range of nominations, for his work in making maps available throughout West Sussex libraries.

Scotland's annual Local History Week took place this year from 17th to 24th September, with the theme of 'Women in Scotland', and as usual many libraries took part. For next year it has been proposed that the event should be held during the last week in April, with the theme 'The end of the War'.

There have been previous references in LSL to the progress of a project to produce a cumulated index to Pevsner's *Buildings of England* series. Work has now been completed, and Oxford University Press has recently published *A Compendium of Pevsner's Buildings of England on Compact Disc*. Compiled by Michael Good, it contains 300,000 entries covering each of the buildings and furnishings described by Pevsner. The records can be searched by volume, by category (eg type of building), by place, by role of artist (eg sculptor) and by date: thus you could look for Norman fonts in Cornwall, stained glass windows designed by a local craftsman, or a national search for gardens landscaped by "Capability" Brown. While this disc could obviously be of great value to your own local historians, it clearly has a much wider use, so it is well worth bringing to the attention of your reference librarian. The price is £295.00 + VAT.

The National Monuments Record opened its new Record Centre in Swindon in June, bringing together collections from several repositories. It now houses 6.5 million photographs and records covering archaeology, architecture and maritime sites, including aerial photographs covering all of England and information on England's 400,000 or so listed buildings. The records are held in computer controlled environmental conditions in new purpose built accommodation. The Record Centre also serves as the headquarters of the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of Britain, and there are also facilities for the public including a reference library and search rooms.

Northamptonshire libraries arranged a number of activities in connection with the European Year of Older people, including a Local History Week in Daventry Library. This included drop-in sessions with local experts and a 100 year old Daventry resident who did a recording session. There were also two evening talks on town history, and displays on 18th and 19th century Daventry, while pupils from Danetree School performed playlets depicting scenes from Daventry's past to an audience of older people. Corby was another town to choose local history as a theme: here the library was the venue for a multi-media exhibition on the history of the town during the period 1933-45. Drawing on the memories of older people, talks were given to schools, housebound readers and people in residential homes. The exhibition proved to be the most popular ever staged in Corby Library and the event raised the profile of the Local Studies Collection as a resource and a suitable place to deposit local material.



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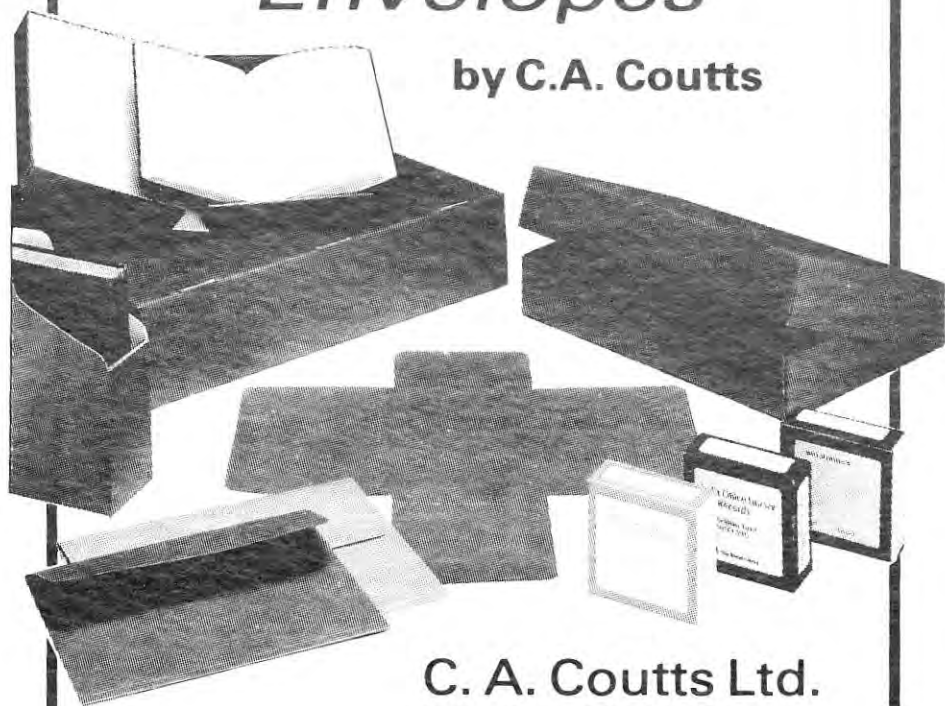
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