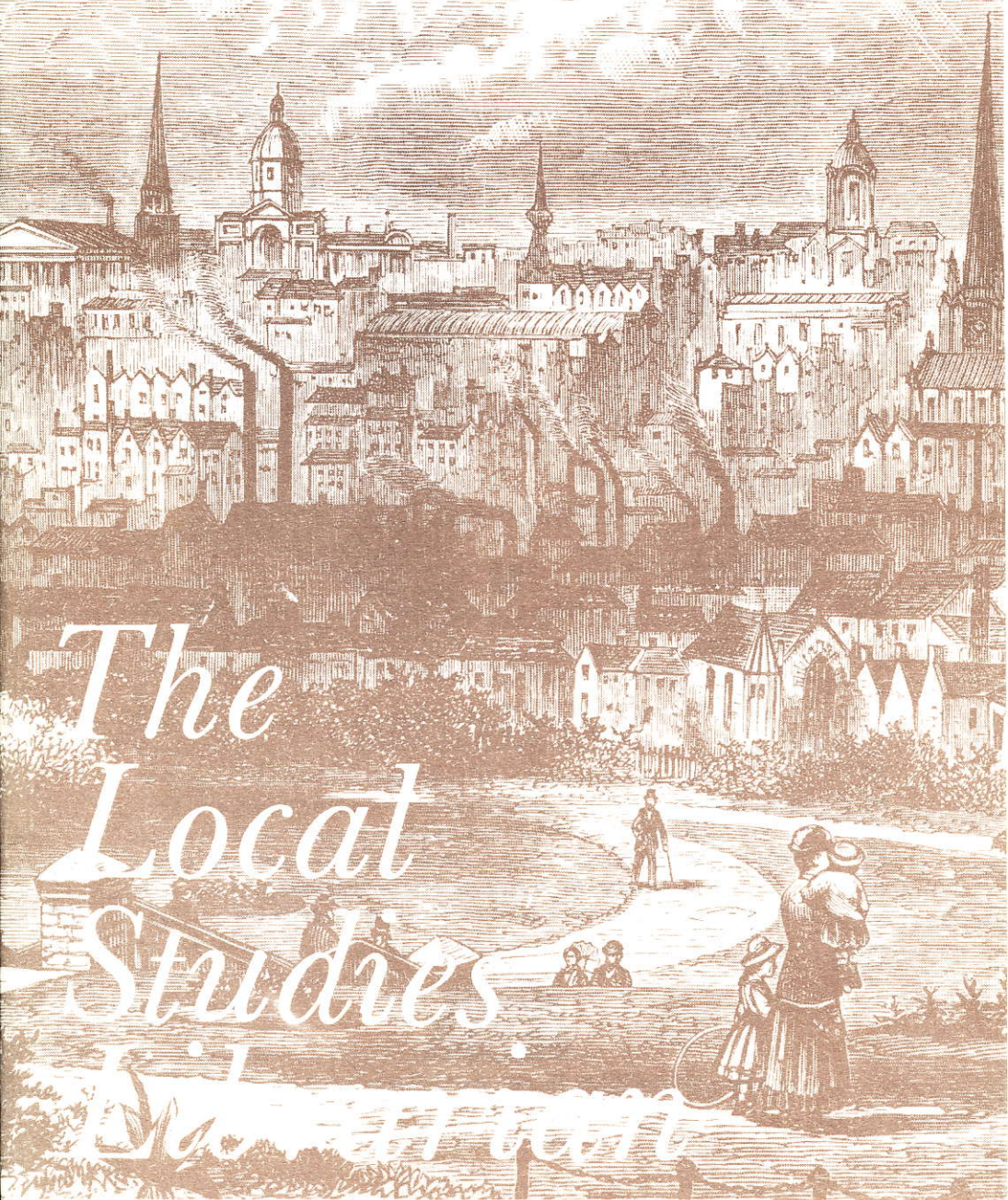
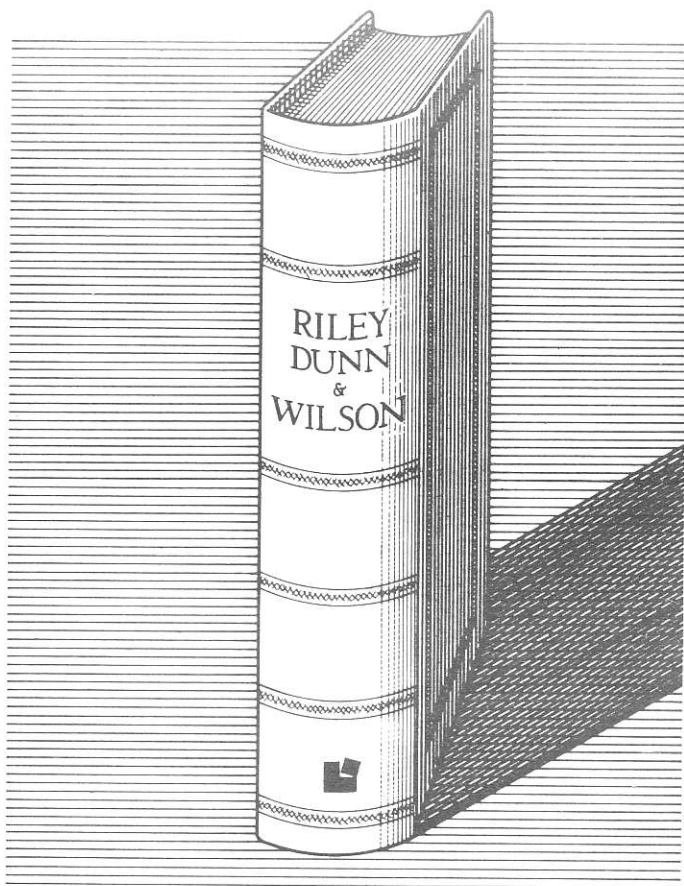


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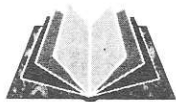


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## **The Local Studies Librarian**

### **Vol 9 Number 2 (19) 1990 ISSN 0263-0273**

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*Cover illustration: A View of Birmingham c. 1886.*

*Courtesy of Local Studies Department, Birmingham Reference Library.*



## Editorial

The Local Studies Group is raising its image within the profession and hopefully outside. During the past few months we have acquired a logo, have at last had our Guidelines published and have seen local studies librarians gain two prestigious national awards.

The Guidelines are the most important single product of the Group's activities. The result of much consultation, it is to be hoped that they provide a major influence on the development of local studies services. Some may say that they are too general, others that they are too ambitious, but there is no doubt that the existence of such guidelines provides some kind of measure of the type of local studies service which should be provided by libraries, given the amount of interest in local history which is now shown by the population at large. It is hoped, too, that their existence might provide some kind of defence against threatened cutbacks by employers.

Our image, too, can only be helped by the announcement of awards to local studies librarians as reported elsewhere in this issue. Awards, however, can only be won if there are nominations. How many local studies librarians enter for such competitions? Of course it usually means extra work in preparation when staff are already tightly stretched, but if the end result is national recognition and publicity in local newspapers, is it not worth it?

It may seem a far cry from the day to day round of serving family historians and schoolchildren but image is important these days. That is why LSG has introduced a logo and is preparing publicity material. The logo represents the concentric circles of local, regional, national and international history: the publicity leaflet is to explain what the Group is about and hopefully will help to recruit new members at such events as conferences and exhibitions.

A final point. LSG is working for you, so please don't forget to renew your membership when you pay your LA subscription - and encourage others to join too. The more members we have the more influence we can exert and the more effective we can be.

## Correspondence

Diana Winterbotham, Vice Chairman, LSG, and Chairman, Guidelines Working Party, writes:

The Local Studies *Guidelines* have at last been published and LSG members will have had an opportunity to read and assess the final version. Members may also have read the statistical analysis, albeit a somewhat imperfect one, which appeared in the last issue of the *Local Studies Librarian*.

I feel that it would be of interest to hear whether LSG members feel that there is anything further that should be done in the direction of setting standards for local studies provision. The *Guidelines* recommend policy, but do not make statements about quantities - how much bookfund per thousand population, how many staff and so on. It seems to me possible that quantitative standards of this kind might be devised, although it would not be an easy task. While a written statement is certainly an attractive tool, would such a standard be practical or meaningful in local studies libraries? Are collections too diverse, geographical areas too varied, collections too fused with reference collections to make standards practicable?

I am sure that the Executive Committee of LSG, as well as myself, would welcome any view members may have as to whether a further set of standards should be attempted.

## 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. The 1991 Award is to be made by the President of the Library Association at the LAs Weekend School in Leeds in July 1991, and nominations are therefore required as soon as possible from members, chief librarians and anyone else with a suitable nominee. The closing date is March 5th 1991. Nominations, with brief citations, should be sent to Patrick Baird, Local Studies Department, Central Library, Chamberlain Square, Birmingham B3 3HQ.

## **SCOTLOC - Automation for local studies**

SCOTLOC is a microcomputer database of materials of relevance to local studies in Scotland. All are currently in print; they are published and produced mainly by Scottish public library services and local studies groups. The program incorporates sophisticated searching facilities presented in an easy-to-use, menu-driven interface; it is designed for use in schools and public libraries. SCOTLOC runs under MSDOS on any IBM-compatible XT, AT or PS microcomputer, or on any microcomputer using a DOS emulator. A hard disk is required; a colour monitor is recommended, but is not essential.

### **The development of SCOTLOC**

SCOTLOC is based on a printed directory of materials such as texts, maps, prints and postcards, produced by Scottish public libraries. 'Scottish local studies resources', edited by Brian Osborne and published by the Scottish Library Association, had grown significantly in the two years since its first edition, and it was apparent that keeping it up to date would be made much easier if an automated version was developed. After much consultation with the Association, LOCSCOT (the Scottish branch of the Local Studies Group) and other local history librarians, I was able to write a program that allowed the Association to maintain a database of bibliographic records, producer names and addresses, and controlled vocabulary keyword indexing terms. A 'user-friendly' retrieval package was also developed, to allow greater access to the information than is possible in a printed directory. This interface, together with the database, was published in September 1989 as SCOTLOC. The number of bibliographic records was already three times that of the printed directory.

Shortly after publication, the Association was asked by several library services if the maintenance program would be suitable for cataloguing their own local studies collections. A pilot project was set up to allow Monklands District Libraries and Falkirk District Libraries the use of the original program for three months, to assess its potential and advise upon desirable enhancements. The project proved successful; material of a wide variety of formats was incorporated into the pilot databases, and favourable comment was passed on the ease-of-use of the package. Suggested enhancements included the addition of 'local' fields in the bibliographic record for accession and location data, indexing by classification number, improving the specific material designation codes, and password protection. All of these were later incorporated in the program.

These changes to the maintenance program meant that SCOTLOC itself

required modification, so existing users were also asked to suggest improvements that could be added at the same time. The development of Version 2 of SCOTLOC is now complete; the full local studies maintenance package will be ready by the end of October 1990.

## **SCOTLOC Version 2**

Version 2 is now available. There has been a 35% increase in the number of records (now 1500) in the bibliographic database, due to the larger number of publications notified to the Association. Of particular note is the inclusion of the catalogue of the Scottish Central Film and Video Library, listing material available for purchase and hire. As before, SCOTLOC contains information about items which are currently in print; records for those no longer produced have been removed and archived.

SCOTLOC can be searched by title (acronym), by up to three words (with full truncation) in the title or publisher name, and by subject keyword via a thesaurus. The thesaurus contains a single alphabetical sequence of terms taken from what are separate thesauri for placenames, names and subjects in the maintenance program. The thesaurus contains the keywords and narrower/broader and use for/use relationships between them. It is fully browsable; rekeying of a search term is not necessary. Up to three of these keywords can be combined by an implicit Boolean AND logic during a search; the number of records retrieved is shown at each stage. The user can choose to search for records which have been indexed either by the selected keyword itself, or by the keyword and all of its narrower, more specific terms. If a search is successful, the bibliographic records are displayed in a 'card' format, with ISBD punctuation used where appropriate. When more than one match has been found, the records can be browsed. Each record contains the title, statement of responsibility, edition statement, publication place and date, publisher name, physical format and description, price, ISBN and notes. A separate file of names and addresses of publishers, and others from whom the material can be obtained, can be searched by corporate name.

Printouts can be made of single bibliographic records, and of all the records retrieved during a search. Publisher information can also be printed, formatted for use as an address label; SCOTLOC allows the user to locate materials of interest, and print their details and an address label for dispatch to the producer, in a single session.

The thesaurus can also be printed out, so that users may formulate their search strategy in advance. The printed thesaurus is useful for answering reference queries such as the Districts and Authorities in which particular towns and villages are located.

A major enhancement for SCOTLOC is the incorporation of context-sensitive, on-screen help; the user can 'pop' a window containing detailed instructions whenever a choice is to be made. This complements the menu-driven, screen prompt design of the package.

### **Local studies database maintenance package**

The same SCOTLOC interface is used for the public access module of the maintenance program. Bibliographic records can be created, amended and deleted; entry points for personal and corporate names, placenames, classification numbers, and subject keywords, can be added or removed; and authority keywords and relationships can be created, amended and deleted in the thesaurus. Bibliographic records are identical to those in SCOTLOC, with the addition of fields for location and accession number (the price field is dropped, however). Separate thesauri are used for name, placename, subject and classification keywords, as this makes 'conceptual' maintenance easier. The publisher name and address file of SCOTLOC is not required, and has been removed.

As well as the SCOTLOC search options, the maintenance program allows records to be retrieved by a unique identification number. The keyword search option is more specialised: terms from different thesauri can be combined in a predetermined number and order, so that a single placename can be searched, or two subjects limited by placename, or two personal or corporate names, or a single classification number.

Bibliographic records, and their entry points, which have been created or amended between two specified dates can be printed out for checking, while the thesauri can be printed in alphabetical sections. The help facility has been extended to cover the additional functions.

The package also contains a number of 'housekeeping' functions for back-up of the data files, and restoring the database if there is a hardware problem.



## **Future development**

Much interest has been shown by local studies librarians in the full package, and it is likely that two or three Scottish local authorities will use it to organise their collections. The new maintenance software has already been used to produce SCOTLOC Version 2, as a 'field' test. There has been discussion about the possibility of merging databases produced by different users, and of arranging for smaller local history groups to use the program to prepare bibliographic records for inclusion in future editions of SCOTLOC proper. There are no technical barriers to achieving this; organisational and conceptual problems will exist, however.

Perhaps the most serious problem involved in merging data records from different sources is that of vocabulary control. The thesaurus capabilities of the package are very sophisticated; users can choose their own keywords and conceptual relationships between them, and index bibliographic records accordingly. From the start, the original SCOTLOC was based on available standards: data is stored in the de facto standard dBASEIII+ structure (which means it can be accessed by any dBASE compatible software); the contents of the record conform to AACR2 where possible; personal and corporate name keywords also conform to AACR2 practice; placename keywords use the Ordnance Survey Gazetteer and Atlas as an authority; relationships between placenames are taken from the Scottish Government Yearbook. There is, however, no suitable set of standard subject descriptors for Scottish local studies; those lists already published or proposed are not comprehensive or detailed enough to take full advantage of the thesaurus approach.

Users of SCOTLOC and the maintenance program are supplied with the standard thesaurus of Scottish placenames. This thesaurus describes places down to the level of town or village; full package users can add even narrower terms, such as streets and individual houses, as required. Few problems are anticipated in merging the placename thesauri compiled by different users, as it is likely that very narrow placename terms will not overlap between different local studies areas. Similarly, merging personal and corporate name thesauri should be relatively easy provided AACR2 standards are followed. It is hoped that a standard subject thesaurus will evolve as terms are added by full package users; this will have to be closely monitored and reviewed at regular intervals, and indications are that the users are willing to cooperate in this manner. The Scottish Library Association may act as a coordinating body, with the assistance of LOCSCOT.

Potential technical development of SCOTLOC and the maintenance package are also being discussed. It is now possible to add 'geographical information systems' software as a front-end to dBASE files; these typically provide a map display on screen, which can be scrolled and zoomed. Placenames could be selected using a mouse or cursor controls, and a search carried out on the bibliographic records as though the placename had been chosen from the thesaurus. Further into the future lie the possibilities of issuing the database on CDROM, together with relevant graphics and text data, and of incorporating pictorial data in the database itself.

SCOTLOC is available from the Scottish Library Association, Motherwell Business Centre, Coursington Road, Motherwell ML1 1PW (Tel. 0698-52526). The subscription for corporate bodies is £65 per annum for the database; a one-off purchase of the interface at £60 is also necessary, but revisions and upgrades will subsequently be supplied free of charge. Corporate users may copy the database and interface freely for use within the organisation. Personal, private users can obtain SCOTLOC for £35, but may not use it on more than one microcomputer. The maintenance package costs £600 for corporate users.

Further information can be obtained from the Scottish Library Association, or from mee.

Gordon Dunsire  
Information Systems Librarian  
Napier Polytechnic  
Sighthill Court  
Edinburgh EH11 4BN  
(Tel. 031-444-2266 ext. 3303)

## **Producing a union list - step by step**

The Local Studies librarians in Northern Ireland get many opportunities for cooperation. They meet on various committees and have worked on joint projects. Through this experience they have learned a simple lesson of life - the more people you have to consult, the longer it takes to complete a job! To combat this problem is difficult, but the librarians concerned feel that colleagues elsewhere might be interested to hear how one particular project, that of producing a union list of Irish periodicals, is being undertaken by the Library Local Studies Panel. The panel is made up of local studies librarians in the five public Education and Library Boards in Northern Ireland and the Linen Hall Library (a subscription library in Belfast) along with the Librarian of the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum. Most members of the panel are in charge of small local studies

departments and also deal with members of the public every day. They are therefore aware of the practical problems of providing a local studies library service to their readers.

Producing a list of our holdings of Irish journals seemed a great idea and the aim behind it very laudable. To quote from the minutes of the panel meeting in May 1988, 'The idea behind this project was that it would facilitate a sharing of library resources especially in the Inter-Library Loan field.' Often it is assumed that only the "big libraries" (i.e. in Belfast) have certain journals and so it was decided to produce a list of the Irish journal holdings of those libraries represented on the panel which are outside Belfast. Another restriction was put on the list - it would only include Irish journals first published before 1850. This immediately made things easier - the goal seemed obtainable.

Those of the five institutions concerned which keep their journals in a separate sequence acted first and passed their titles on to those where journals are dispersed throughout the classified sequence.

A first draft, edited by the Secretary of the Panel, was available for the panel meeting in November 1989 and after final corrections the finished product was presented at the September 1990 meeting. The list was produced on a desk top publisher by the Western Education and Library Board.

The next two steps are currently under way. Firstly the two Belfast members of the Panel - the Linen Hall Library and Belfast Education and Library Board - are soon to add their pre-1850 Irish journals to the list. At the same time the institutions outside Belfast have begun to list journals first published between 1850 and 1900 inclusive. One body has done this and has circulated its list of titles (again as an aid to those where the journals are dispersed throughout the classified stock.)

The step after that will be to get the Belfast libraries to bring their list up to 1900. After that ... well, it has been under discussion. Additional institutions could contribute and additional years be covered.

This step by step approach has been successful for this project. It has kept our eyes on the obtainable goal and it leads to an end result which is always and increasingly useful.

Kate McAllister  
Irish and Local Studies Dept.  
Western Education & Library Board

## Local Studies at the Library Technology Fair

*Information and data retrieval for local studies* was the subject of a session at the Hatfield Polytechnic Library Technology Fair held on the sweltering afternoon of 18th July and organised by the Library Association's Local Studies Group. The session consisted of presentations by Bridget Towler from Hull University Library speaking about the East Yorkshire Bibliography and Gordon Dunsire of Napier Polytechnic demonstrating SCOTLOC. Both are systems librarians and have developed enhanced forms of indexing for local studies books which will allow for a combination of up to three search terms, including personal names, place names, subjects and either precise dates or broad periods. The East Yorkshire Bibliography however, runs on a GEAC mainframe (separate from the ordinary GEAC book catalogue), whereas SCOTLOC has been designed for use on a PC and is being actively marketed by the Scottish Library Association.

The East Yorkshire Bibliography contains fields for author, title, edition, ISBN, notes, whether illustrated, number of pages, area code, subjects covered (including personal and place names) and location of the book. It does not have fixed field lengths on the author, title and note fields, but it is limited to 70 characters for the subject field, which is searched by means of keyword. The initial input in 1988 was carried out by a Manpower Service Commission Scheme, but new cataloguing is done by the participating libraries, with area codes and subject entries added at Hull University Library. All fields are capable of being indexed, but the public use the author, title and subject fields and can either request print-outs of keyword searches or gain access to the database on their own PCs. A future development is the combining of the title and subject index. The thesaurus used is based on the one developed at York University, where plans to develop the York local studies database into a national database had previously been abandoned.

SCOTLOC has been developed from dBASE III+ and therefore has fixed field lengths. The database cannot currently contain over 100,000 records. The author and title both appear in the same field, and there are other fields for edition, publication date, ISBN, cost, format, physical description and notes. The title field can be searched using up to 3 search terms combined. The subject field can contain up to 99 keywords per record and again a search can be made using a combination of up to three terms. The thesaurus controls the hierarchy of terms and can be searched at the outset in order for the user to pick a term to search. Placenames are shortly to be removed from the subject thesaurus. Full details of the public access and maintenance (staff use) programs can be obtained from the Scottish Library Association. Gordon Dunsire's demonstration was

accompanied by a useful hand-out showing the menus and screen lay-out which appeared easy to use. SCOTLOC has been tested by Falkirk District Libraries.

Both the East Yorkshire Bibliography and SCOTLOC have been developed primarily for the efficient retrieval of information in local studies books, and, as such, they appeared very impressive and may hopefully lead to some form of national standardisation. I am sure their subject thesauri could be of great use to librarians in other districts. It occurred to me as I think it did to representatives of other London boroughs present, that the programs had been piloted in areas which, if not entirely rural, at least contain relatively homogeneous towns, where attaching several additional topographical and subject terms to a bibliographic entry is feasible. In large cities, however, a book on Georgian architecture in the city, for example, might generate hundreds of references for a street-by-street index to property, and the librarian is more likely to want to attach the bibliographic reference to the topographical entry than the other way round. Whether either of the two systems demonstrated can handle such a different situation remains to be seen.

Both systems can apparently be adapted for other local studies materials, but we did not see a demonstration of this. Photographs would perhaps conform most closely to the bibliographic fields, but I expect more problems would be encountered trying to accommodate long print titles and names of artists and engravers, with possibly the title of the book in which it was first published and a long reference number consisting of a numeric code and place name. It would be useful if a further session could be arranged for delegates to take along examples of their own indexes to see how these could be accommodated on the two systems.

Alison Kenney  
Westminster City Archives

## Notes and News

Readers may have noticed that we have once again changed our printer - this is our third one in four issues, our previous 'new' printer having closed his business. Hence delay once again. We hope, however, that the next issue will be on target for late spring. Any items for the Spring issue should be in the hands of the editor by March 24th.



## Newcastle Past and Present: Shops and Shopping (the video)

During the summer of 1990 a unique undertaking to produce a commercial video was begun by Newcastle upon Tyne City Libraries & Arts and the Newcastle firm of Turners Film and Video Productions.<sup>1</sup> The production of a video series is seen as a natural extension of the Libraries' publishing programme that was described by David Parry in the October 1990 edition of the *Library Association Record*.<sup>2</sup> It was decided that *Shops and Shopping* would be the first title in the series and the original research and writing of the script were begun by John Airey of the Local Studies Unit under the direction of John Grant of Turners. A shooting script was prepared in collaboration with John Grundy of BBC TV *Townscape* who agreed to present the video. Material for the video was selected by John Airey from the photographic and documentary archives in the local studies collection and interviews were arranged with several local people associated with the history of local shopping. Music was specially composed and recorded by a local band and the full shooting schedule prepared by Turners.

Shooting of the first live action began at the end of September and all the filming, including the stills and interviews, had been completed by mid-October. A total of six hours of recorded material was edited into a half-hour rough edited version which was viewed by the Publications Panel before final acceptance. An exciting cover for the video was designed by David Boyes, the Libraries Promotions and Arts Officer, together with posters and leaflets for the launch of the video in early November. Sales are through local retailers as well as the library itself.

Initial reactions to the video have been very favourable and an official press launch on 7th November was attended by about thirty invited guests. Preparations are on hand for the next video in the series, the venture marking an exciting new direction for the study of local history and the full exploitation of the unique resources in the Local Collection of Newcastle upon Tyne Central Library.

John Airey  
Local Studies Unit  
Newcastle City Libraries

1. *Newcastle Past and Present: Shops and Shopping*. Newcastle City Libraries, 1990. £9.99 Running time 37 minutes

2. Parry, D. *Library publishing: a north east success story*. *Lib. Assoc. Rec.* 92(10) Oct 1990 p759-62.

## Local Studies in Bath

Until July 1990 local studies in Bath, Avon, formed an important part of the Reference Library, although not staffed separately. The Reference Library staff of seven included some with academic qualifications in history as well as library qualifications, and all new staff were given practical training on the local history collections by experienced people. The aim was to ensure a high standard of service to all users - from young children to visiting academics - and a good reputation was built up over many years.

The planned new Central Library, bringing together the lending and reference services which were previously on different sites, gave an opportunity to expand the local studies section. To have more material on open access, to integrate the loan collection with the reference items, and to co-operate with the young people's department for GCSE work, and other improvements were all seen as achievable in the new building.

A new staff structure was necessary to amalgamate formerly separated departments. Unfortunately the restructuring has resulted in early retirement and transfers for most of the former Reference Library's personnel. Local studies has now been placed in a new team together with arts, humanities, music and sound recordings, with only two professionally qualified librarians, one full-time assistant (City & Guilds desirable but not essential!) and other clerical grade assistants on an ad hoc basis. Thus arts, humanities, music and recordings, and local studies each get only about half a professional and one quarter of a permanent assistant.

With no disrespect to the present staff of the new team, who are doing a good job under difficulties, they do not have the relevant qualifications or experience in local history essential in this particularly historic city. The interruption in the continuity of training is unfortunate, to say the least, and the new staff have to teach themselves how to exploit the rich variety of Bath's local collections.

The growing trend towards non-specialism which has brought non-librarians into top management positions in large library authorities, has thus reached an important local studies library, to the detriment of the service.

H. Mary Wills  
formerly of Bath Reference Library  
County of Avon

## Recent Awards to Local Studies Librarians

Local studies librarians have been prominent in various national award schemes this year. Apart from the annual Alan Ball Awards, success has been achieved in fields as different as stock preservation and public relations.

Thea Randall, an archivist and Pauline Thompson, a librarian won the 1989 National Preservation Office/Riley Dunn and Wilson Conservation Competition. Entrants were asked to prepare a proposal for a preservation survey of collections with which they were familiar, and Thea and Pauline worked together on a detailed proposal to survey the holdings of the William Salt Library, Stafford, the finest local history library in Staffordshire. Apart from personal cheques, the main award was of £2000 worth of conservation work which will be carried out by Riley Dunn and Wilson Ltd.

Mike Petty, Librarian of the Cambridgeshire Collection of Cambridgeshire Libraries, and a member of the LSG committee, was awarded the Library Association/T.C. Farries Public Relations and Publicity Award for Individual Public Relations Achievement, an award which has become known in recent years as the 'Librarian of the Year' award. This is in recognition of a combined programme of promotion for the Cambridgeshire Collection over several years. Mike's activities have included the development of exhibitions, giving talks to groups and organisations round the county, publishing books about the collection, weekly articles in the *Cambridge Weekly News* and weekly broadcasts on Radio Cambridgeshire - all this while continuing the daily routines and work of the Cambridgeshire Collection.

The Alan Ball Local History Awards for local history publishing by public libraries were awarded for the sixth time. The results were:

**Author award.** This went to Hillingdon Libraries for *The Goodliest Place in Middlesex: a history of the ancient parish of Ruislip from the Domesday Book to modern times* by Eileen M. Bowl.

**Book Production award.** This was given to Somerset County library for *William Barnes: the Somerset engravings* by Laurence Keen.

In the Book Production category a commendation went to *We served: wartime Wandsworth and Battersea 1939 - 1945* by Anthony Shaw and Jon Mills, published by the London Borough of Wandsworth Leisure and Amenity Services Department.

Although no other commendations were made on this occasion, the judges expressed their pleasure at receiving, for the first time, a video. This was *Hounslow in World War II*, made by the late Dr. Henry Mandiwall of the Hounslow Photographic Society, and published by the London Borough of Hounslow Libraries Department. The judges commented on its high quality, although the absence of any written or spoken commentary made it impossible to consider for the Author award. The initiative was praised and the judges commented that they would like to encourage more audiovisual local history materials to be produced and entered for the Awards.

## **Huddersfield Local Heritage Fair: some reflections**

After almost twelve months of increasingly frantic behind the scenes planning, the Local Heritage Fair finally happened on September 1st in Huddersfield Town Hall. To our amazement, everything really did go (almost) alright on the day. Originally a Local History Fair, it was decided quite early on that this was rather too narrow and it was decided to showcase as much as possible of the Town's heritage as our part of the 50th Birthday Celebrations for Huddersfield Library and Art Gallery. To this end we invited as many long established local societies and local firms as possible, together with local entertainers to give some extra liveliness and interest, and ultimately there were forty stands.

We learnt a great deal from this exercise, some of it at the very last minute. Publicity was disappointingly sparse, despite pleas to increase the size of our ad in the local press. True, the size was doubled by the second appearance, but as it was minute to start with this did not improve matters much. One consolation here was that visitors to another, much better publicised event, which shall remain nameless, heard about our fair by word of mouth and declared it to be much the more enjoyable of the two.

We also learned, painfully, not to take anything on trust, from the dimensions of the Town Hall according to the floor plan to the actual amount of free pop promised by a local firm. (Both were much smaller than we anticipated!) We learned to chivvy exhibitors mercilessly and even so it was not until twenty minutes after opening time that the last exhibitor arrived and began frantically to set out their display. We also learned that we had so much to do co-ordinating everyone else that we had left ourselves no time to ensure our own display was as exciting as we would have liked. Finally, we learned that in the crunch everyone mucked in and gave us invaluable help, without which chaos would undoubtedly have ensued, and we would like to thank sincerely everyone who helped save our bacon and make this an event to remember. The contact we have

had from exhibitors and visitors during and after the fair left us in no doubt that it was, against heavy odds, a very successful day.

Jane Helliwell  
Local Studies Librarian  
Kirklees Libraries

This article originally appeared in Kirklees Cultural Services Staff Bulletin, Issue 7, Oct. 1990

## **From our Library Association Councillor**

The editor has suggested that it would be more economical for this report to appear in the pages of the *Local Studies Librarian* rather than as an insert. Since I last reported to you on my own work as a Councillor I have attended meetings on the 5th April and 26th June. I have been maintaining a watching brief for items with especial importance to the Group, but most of the agenda on these occasions was of more general professional significance. Please do not forget that I will be very happy to take up issues on your behalf with the LAs officers or in Council.

As I'm sure you know, each Councillor is allocated to one of the standing committees. Although I felt that the Library Services Committee would be most appropriate for LSG purposes a place could not be found for me. So I am serving on the International Committee. This has turned out to be extremely interesting and in April I went to Warsaw as the LAs representative in discussions with the Polish Library Association about future cooperation. As part of the visit I got to see some libraries with historic material, particularly the rebuilt Royal Castle's library which has material on the castle and on preservation issues. It was very refreshing to be amongst librarians who had such a passionate concern with their nation's written heritage. I felt very privileged that representing the LSG on council had given me this opportunity.

Paul Sturges  
Dept. of Library and Information Studies  
Loughborough University

## **Notes and News**

In October a party of four Hampshire librarians visited Normandy to establish cultural links with Caen Library Service. Topics of discussion included exchanges of exhibition and deposit collections of local books, and the joint publication of local studies and tourist materials. A more detailed account of this visit will appear in our next issue.



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

**Library Association. Local Studies Group. Local studies libraries: Library Association guidelines for local studies provision in public libraries. Library Association, 1990. 32pp. £5.95 (members £4.76). ISBN 1 85604 005 4.**

These guidelines set out to assist libraries in formulating policies for the development of a well-organised local studies collection, and have been established after wide consultation with members of LSG. Although they have been formulated basically with regard to public rather than academic or special libraries, the general points made are likely to be helpful to librarians working in local studies collections of all kinds.

The Guidelines are wide ranging, and attempt to cover all aspects of collecting, organising and exploiting local studies material. Thus the place of the community library is included, and exploitation methods such as publishing and use of the media are covered. Income generation, too, is covered. Other topics dealt with include collection policy and stock organisation and conservation, and there is a section on staffing and accommodation. A reading list is appended.

This is a useful attempt at providing guidance on the collection, care and display of local studies material in libraries and, as an official Library Association policy statement, hopefully will be widely circulated and used.

**Atkins, P.J. The directories of London, 1677 - 1977. Mansell, 1990. 732pp. £60.00. ISBN 0 7201 2063 2.**

This is a major work, in which the author identifies 5827 items, giving locations in 64 libraries, almost all, as one would expect, in London. The listing, the result of ten years work, is comprehensive, although the author does not claim completeness and asks for any additions or corrections to be notified to him. There are indexes of titles, publishers and places and of libraries and their holdings.

In addition to the listings there is a very substantial introductory section of 135 pages. This provides a history of London directories, a discussion of directory types, a section on the compilation of London directories and one on their use to students. These latter sections in particular will be of interest to readers far outside the capital. The whole work is an excellent example of a specialist bibliography.

**Northern Ireland Bibliography. No 27, Jan-Mar 1990 - . Quarterly. £8.00 p.a. ISSN 0959 8812. Obtainable from the Editor, Area Reference Library, Demesne Avenue, Ballymena, BT43 7BG.**

Since 1981 this current bibliography has recorded books and articles relating to Northern Ireland. As an article in LSL in 1983 explained, it was compiled co-operatively by, and distributed mainly to, the five public library systems in the Province, and was basically a free publication, although subscriptions were accepted. It has been relaunched under this new title and it is hoped that it will become more widely available in other areas. Now including input from the Linen Hall Library, the Ulster Museum and the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, it includes much locally published material, while articles are listed from both local and national periodicals and newspapers. There is a name index, a list of publishers and a list of journals and newspapers consulted - about 250 titles altogether.

**Local Government minutes: Northern Ireland library holdings with locations. 1990. 6pp. Gratis. ISBN 0 9516510 0 5. Irish Journals published before 1850: a union list of Northern Ireland holdings outside Greater Belfast. 1990. 12pp. Gratis. Both Published by the Library Local Studies Panel and obtainable from the panel c/o Western Education and Library Board, Omagh Library, Omagh, County Tyrone, BT79 7AQ.**

These are good examples of the way in which useful publications can be produced by co-operative effort. Simply produced by desktop publishing, they show what can be done at a local level. The Journals list is part of a larger project and its compilation is described in an article elsewhere in this issue.

**Conrad, James H. Developing Local History Programs in Community Libraries. American Library Association, 1989. £18.95. ISBN 0 8389 0517 X.**

For books on the techniques of local studies librarianship, Britain has long been better provided than the USA. To balance Hobbs, Lynes, Nichols, Petty and Dewe, the US can really only offer Enid Thompson's *Local History Collections: a Manual for Librarians* (1978). James Conrad's new book is welcome in Britain because it gives us a new opportunity to pick up American insights. It is also particularly helpful in that it does this in the context of public libraries. Most local studies work in the USA is done by historical societies or universities and Conrad is concerned to help public librarians who may be beginning local studies service from scratch, or developing rudimentary services to a higher level. This might make the book sound irrelevant in British circumstances, where local studies

service is usually long established, but this is not the case. He advocates the use of a 'needs analysis' exercise, seeking answers to such questions as 'Who are the potential users?', 'What staff and skills are needed?', 'What impact will the service have on other services provided by the library?'. When such fundamental questions have been considered, a level and type of service can be designed to relate to the results obtained. Collecting based on a written policy and budgetary planning on a regular cycle then follow. Finally, he advocates regular evaluation in the light of specific objectives and goals identified in the original exercise. There is no reason why this approach should not also be broadly applicable to existing services such as we have in this country. Conrad also makes plenty of helpful technical points. A minus factor is that the book's separate treatment of local history, oral history and genealogy services does not seem particularly worthwhile. The approach outlined above is used in each case, and an integrated treatment of the whole range of service was surely possible. Despite this criticism, the book is well worth purchasing. The British distributor is Eurospan Ltd, 3 Henrietta Street, London WC2E 8LU.

Paul Sturges,

Loughborough University

**Kay, P. A guide to railway research and sources for local railway history. SSG Publications, 22 Brunswick Street, Teignmouth, Devon, TQ14 8AF. 1990. 36pp. £4.95 inc p&p.**

Railway history is an extremely popular pastime today and this booklet is an attempt to provide information on resources available to researchers. Those covered range from official records of the railway companies and central government to photographs, local newspapers and interviews with railway staff. For the PRO, class numbers of relevant material is given. Information is also provided about other main record offices and libraries and this includes opening hours. Major photographic collections and their availability are also covered.

What makes this work of interest to more than the railway researcher, however, is the introductory section on approaching railway research. This is a useful set of hints, from notes on types of sources to consult to comments on quality of writing and the problems and pitfalls of getting work published. This section is useful to any local historian - the railway element can be taken as an example.

There is a mixture of information in this pamphlet, but as an introductory 'how to do it' work it seems to serve its purpose well.

## Committee Matters

The LSG Committee met at Birmingham Central Library on 7 November 1990. The proceedings were enlivened by a fire alarm resulting in a total evacuation of the building. The alarm proved to be a bomb scare; the weather, though chilly, was neither wet nor windy, and the Committee reconvened at a quiet spot on a bridge reminiscent of Holborn Viaduct. Agenda item 3 (Treasurer's Report) was resumed without delay, Elizabeth Melrose adopting her best soap-box oratory for the *al fresco* occasion, much to the amusement of bystanders in Chamberlain Square. The Assistant Hon. Secretary scribbled stoically throughout. The rest of the agenda was taken after we had re-entered the building; the following are the main points of interest:

1. LSG Committee. Chris Makepeace, as past Chairman, has been co-opted to the Committee.
2. Finance. The Group's financial situation is healthy enough for it to be agreed to issue a publicity leaflet and the first monograph without delay.
3. Scottish Branch. The weekend school at Perth on local history publishing was a resounding success, but why did so few people from England attend? One hero (Terry Knight) drove all the way from Cornwall: surely others could have made a shorter journey!
4. LSG Guidelines. These were published recently by LA Publishing Ltd. and are available at £5.95. The Committee recorded their gratitude to Diane Winterbotham, Patrick Baird, Don Martin and Tom Scragg who put in so much time and effort in producing them.
5. Awards. Tom Featherstone, LA President for 1991, will present the Alan Ball and Dorothy McCulla Awards at one of the Group's sessions at the LA's joint weekend school at Leeds in July next year.
6. The Committee noted that Joe Fisher of Glasgow Libraries, Chairman of LOCSCOT and a former member of the LSG Committee was retiring in November, and sent him their best wishes for a long and happy retirement.

Philippa Stevens  
Assistant Hon. Secretary

## **British Librarianship and Information Work, 1986 - 1990**

The Editor has been invited to contribute the section on local studies for this work. Please let me have any information relating to developments in your service during the period. Despite cutbacks, a great deal of development has taken place, though much of it has not been written up. Please help to make this a thorough survey - and the information will also be of use to me for teaching purposes, and for LSL. Press releases would be helpful, as would reports, guides to libraries and collections and information about publications. *Any* information about the local studies world would be useful - the more contributions I have, the more useful the survey will be.





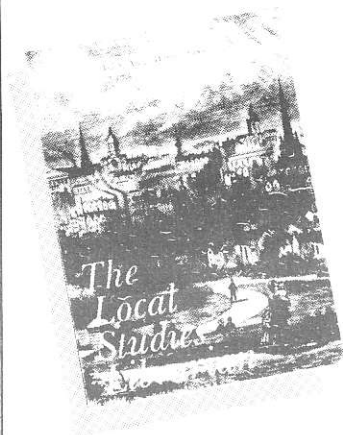
### **Our new logo**

This has been designed by Michael Dense, Chairman of the Welsh Branch of LSG, and a lecturer in the Department of Information and Library Studies, University College of Wales, Aberystwyth. It represents the concentric circles of local, regional, national and international history, with the Group spanning these.

### **BACK ISSUES OF THE LOCAL STUDIES LIBRARIAN**

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- Vol. 5. No. 1. Summer 1986
- Vol. 5. No. 2. Winter 1986



Write to: *Elizabeth Anne Melrose, Hon. Treasurer L.A.  
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YO1 1RJ, North Yorkshire.*

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The 1990 Annual General Meeting of LSG was held in York Minster on July 11th. After the official business was completed the small number of attenders enjoyed a most interesting talk on the library and its collections, which contain, in the Hailstone Collection, a great deal of material relating to the history of Yorkshire. It is hoped that a meeting to celebrate the centenary of this collection will be arranged in the spring of 1991. This will be advertised in the Diary section of the Library Association Record.

Darlington branch library, which holds the main local studies collection of Durham County Library, has recently opened an extension to its local history study room. Since its original opening in 1971 use of the room has steadily increased, as has the stock: the new extension more than doubles the available space for stock, equipment and study facilities. Now known as the Centre for Local Studies, it was officially opened on July 18th by author Nancy Livingstone.

Thanks to a generous donation of £600 by St. Neots Round Table, St. Neots Reference Library has been able to microfilm a further 23 volumes of the St. Neots Advertiser. The originals, which are in heavy demand, are becoming increasingly fragile, and those in poorest condition have been microfilmed to prevent further deterioration.

Joe Fisher, Librarian of the Glasgow Room in the Mitchell Library, Glasgow, retired in November. Among his many activities included spells as secretary, then Chairman, of LOCSCOT, LSG's Scottish Branch. To mark his retirement A *Glasgow collection: essays in honour of Joe Fisher* has been published by Glasgow City Libraries. Containing sixteen essays on a wide variety of aspects of Glasgow's history, it is a fitting tribute to a long-serving and well respected librarian.



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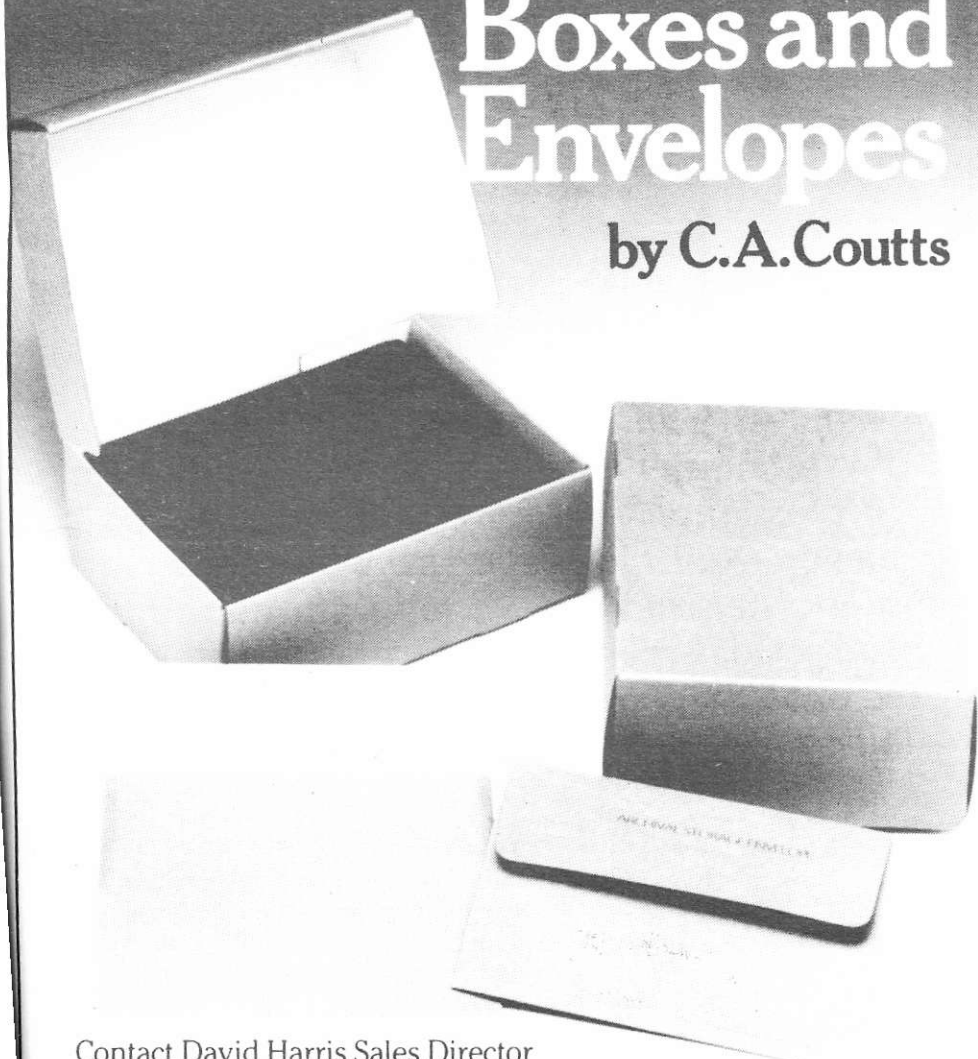
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