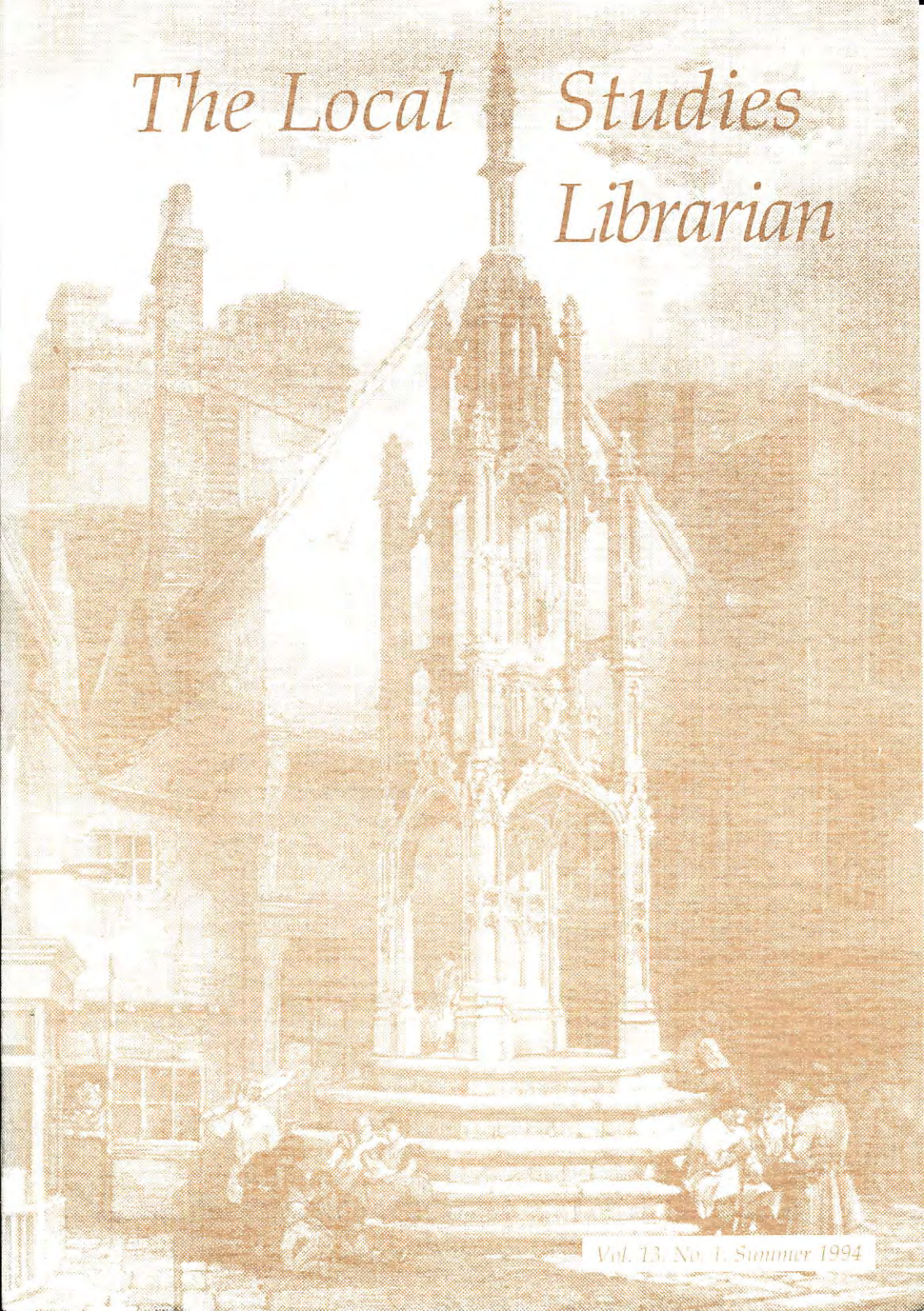


The Local Studies Librarian



Vol. 13, No. 1, Summer 1994



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Market Cross, Winchester. Courtesy Winchester Museums Service.

EDITORIAL

The Library Association recently sent out a questionnaire on the potential effects of local government reorganisation to chief librarians in all 38 English counties. Of the 33 who replied, 20 thought that local studies would be at risk. While this is not an overwhelming majority, it is still a worrying situation. It can be argued that, with smaller authorities, local studies material would be housed nearer its own locality: however, a number of counties already operate district collections, backed up by a strong central collection. One major point of concern, of course, is what will happen to the central collection, often built up over many years. By no means all enquiries in local collections come from the locality, which is another problem. There is also the worry that, given the need to appoint a Chief Librarian and create a new administrative structure, small authorities would be unable to fund even a part-time local studies librarian. Thus the quality of the service would be dependent on the priorities and interest of a generalist librarian. It is fair to say, however, that the Association and its members, of course, are the people who would be running the services.

The LA mounted a demonstration outside 10 Downing Street on 16 May to protest against the threat to English libraries posed by the local government review, and some 70,000 letters addressed to the Prime Minister and sent to the LA were delivered. If you have any opinions about the way in which local collections might be affected it is up to you to express them. Make your view known to the Group, to the LA, or to your local MP - and do it soon.

On a more cheerful note, this issue consists in large part of the papers presented as the Group's contribution to Umbrella 2 in Manchester last July. This was the second time we had taken part in the Umbrella events, and the quality of papers on our theme - Local but not Parochial - was high. In terms of numbers attendances at our sessions were better than at the previous one. The Group has already decided to be at Umbrella 3, again in Manchester, and a subcommittee is already developing the programme. Put the details in your diary now: UMIST, Manchester, June 22-25, 1995. We hope to see you there.

LOCAL STUDIES GROUP ANNUAL REPORT 1993

Patrick Baird

In some respects this was a sad year for the Group due to the fact that three of its hard working committee members resigned, due either to work commitments or to retirement. However, congratulations were due to one of these - Diana Winterbotham was awarded the MBE in the New Years Honours List.

The Group undertook its co-operation on an international scale seriously by organising a programme for a visiting Librarian from St Petersburg, Andrey Masevitch. He spent some time researching into the methodology of local studies librarianship, particularly cataloguing and classification. Not only were libraries of interest contacted and asked to welcome him, but members kindly accommodated him and the group paid towards his expenses.

July saw the Under One Umbrella Conference at Manchester and again the Group arranged a most varied and interesting programme. Under the heading *Local but not Parochial*, it dealt with the fact that local studies is not a static subject and co-operation between collections and outside agencies such as museums can become exciting and profitable.

Information on the development of local studies collections overseas was given and a visit was made by Birmingham's Community Historian and History Van in a most successful session held jointly with the Audio Visual Group of the Library Association.

The Dorothy McCulla Memorial Prize for 1993 was awarded at the Conference to Mike Petty, Librarian of the Cambridgeshire Collection.

The Group's Journal *The Local Studies Librarian* continued to be issued twice a year and managed to include articles of great interest to all its readers, whether librarians or not. Branch newsletters, including *Locscot*, the longest established, also continued.

**LIBRARY ASSOCIATION LOCAL STUDIES GROUP STATEMENT
OF ACCOUNTS 1993**

INCOME	£s	EXPENDITURE	
Capitation	3813.00	Postage & Tel	922.44
LSL Subscriptions	742.75	Stationery	281.01
Conference fees	1398.45	Officers Expenses	544.79
Interest	263.06	Com. Expenses	919.46
		LSL printing	2169.35
		Payments to branch	990.00
		Conference	210.88
		Miscellaneous	206.88
		VAT	58.55
Total Income	6217.26	Total Expenditure	6303.36
		Surplus (Deficit) for the Year	(86.10)

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 1993

ASSETS	£s
Cash and bank	7067.05
Debtors	7.00
Total Assets	7074.05
Less Liabilities	
VAT due	106.62
Creditors	2451.20
Total Liabilities	2557.82
Net Assets	4516.23
Represented by:	
Accumulated Funds	
as at 1 January 1993	4602.33
Surplus (deficit) for the year	(86.10)
	4516.23

OUR NEW TREASURER

Following a notice in the LA Record, LSG member Philip Thomas, ACIB, ALA, has become our new Hon Treasurer. Following a career in banking, Philip was a late entrant to librarianship. He worked for fourteen years for Birmingham Public Libraries, starting as a junior assistant and eventually taking early retirement from the post of branch librarian at Handsworth, the city's largest branch. Since then he has worked part time in the LA Finance Department and for LA Publishing. He is Hon Treasurer of the LAs International Group and of the West Midland Branch. He was awarded the Association's Certificate of Merit in 1992. Some members will probably know Philip from his other activities, or have met him at the UmbrellA conferences. We are delighted to welcome him as an officer.

We should also like to express our gratitude to the retiring treasurer, Paul Drew, for his work over the past few years. As a research student at the Department of Library and Information Studies, Aberystwyth, his particular concern was an investigation into the collection of Welsh ephemera, the report on which is mentioned elsewhere in this issue. He has now moved out of local studies work to take up a post with the Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research, and pressure of work in his new job has led to his resignation. We wish him every success in the future.

LOCAL STUDIES GROUP COMMITTEE, 1995-96

This is an advance notice that the term of office of the present LSG committee expires on 31 December. Nominations will therefore be invited later in the year for the offices of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Assistant Secretary and Treasurer and seven other members to form the Group Committee for 1995-96. A notice will appear in the LA Record later in the year, so please watch out for it. The closing date for nominations will probably be 30 September.

NOTES AND NEWS

Belfast's famous Linen Hall Library, which has a major local history collection, including the publications of all sides involved in the Northern Ireland conflict, suffered a firebomb attack on New Year's Day. Luckily, while the library lost about a thousand general biographies nothing of historic value was involved, though the flames were within feet of priceless collections. It seems that the attack was a mistake. Immediate assistance came from many parts of the community and a special grant of £15 000 was made by the Irish government.

GERMAN COMMUNITIES IN BRITAIN

Sue Gibbons

At one time there were large, thriving communities of German immigrants living in areas such as Tyneside and the East End of London. Often they set up their own churches, schools, hospitals and charitable institutions and formed a distinct and noticeable section of the community in which they lived. Two World Wars resulted in an abrupt retreat for many of these people: thousands of men over military age and also women and children were repatriated; men of an age for military service were interned at camps such as those at Alexandra Palace and Knockaloe on the Isle of Man; shops with German sounding names were stoned and looted and many second-generation immigrants and naturalised Germans changed their names and moved to avoid discrimination and abuse. German Jews suffered a double disability.

In 1987 Roy Bernard, the son of two German immigrants, decided to advertise the formation of an Anglo-German Family History Society. He expected about a hundred people to respond, if he was lucky. Today, in 1994, membership numbers over one thousand.

While archives offices have been the bodies most involved with these communities up to now, we feel that local studies libraries may also be able to help, and this article is by way of an appeal and an offer of help.

1. Does your repository have archives or information on past and/or present German communities in your area? If so, would you or a colleague be prepared to send a brief listing or write an article for the AGFHS magazine?
2. Surviving German communities are often very self-contained and keep a deliberately low profile. They often have archives which they have never considered depositing outside their own organisation. Indeed, English-speaking archivists may be treated with a reserve bordering on suspicion if they try to approach the keepers of these archives. In the past, the AGFHS Church Liaison Officer, Pam Freeman, has had some success mediating between archive offices and existing German communities. She is happy to make these approaches and can be contacted direct at 13 Stoke Road, Walton-on-Thames, KT12 3DF or via the writer of this article at the address below.
3. Finally, if an archive is deposited with you, your problems may not be over. Until World War II, records will almost certainly be written in the *Fraktur* script which is the written version of the German Gothic typeface. Germans born since the last war cannot read this script without training, so it presents a real problem for English archivists to catalogue properly, let alone answer queries on the content. The expertise to transcribe and index such documents exists within the AGFHS and we have undertaken this work in the past. Currently we are arranging to transcribe and index the registers of the German Lutheran Church of Sunderland and South Shields for Tyne and Wear Archives.

However, it is not simply the collecting of names, dates and places which interests us. Because our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents were immigrants with a distinct language and culture, we are particularly keen to learn anything which illustrates the social and economic conditions in which they lived.

The Chairman and Editor of the Anglo-German Family History Society is Roy Bernard, 39 Long Lane, Cookham, Berkshire.

Sue Gibbons is Librarian, Society of Genealogists, 14 Charterhouse Buildings, Goswell Road, London EC1M 7BA. Telephone: 071-251 8799.

RESEARCH AWARDS FOR LOCAL HISTORY PROJECTS

Two awards from the Public Library Development Incentive Scheme (PLDIS) have been made to local history projects. Both are concerned with technological developments which allow digital storage and retrieval of information, thus allowing wider access to unique and/or fragile material. These investigations are both intended to improve the management and availability of information from the many and varied sources used by local historians.

Durham County Council has been awarded £55 986 over 18 months for the Durham Record. This is a project to establish an integrated archaeological and historical database for Durham's industrial past, using modern technology which allows the storage and manipulation of large numbers of images. The Durham Record will be a computer database of maps, photographs, prints, plans and text. It will allow improved indexing of local history material and provide the opportunity to browse material at present held on closed access. Part of the project is to investigate the most suitable hardware and to develop user friendly software, and all information selected for inclusion will be fully indexed for easy access by place name, subject, keyword and map location.

The other project, Gateshead 1900, provides £19 340 over two years to Gateshead Libraries and Arts Department. The idea is to develop electronic publishing and local heritage work in Gateshead by the production of a Compact Disc Interactive (CD-I) programme reflecting the local history of the Gateshead area. Photographs, sound recordings, textual fragments and video will be digitised and stored, together with a script linking the material together. The broad theme of the programme will be to demonstrate how social conditions have changed in the present century through examples such as changes in living conditions, work and leisure, and will illustrate the themes of employment and unemployment, housing, transport and education. The discs will be produced by Philips PPI, and access will be through a standard television receiver via a CD-I player with simple controls. Marketing will target schools, colleges, libraries and high street retailers, heritage seeking tourists and others with an interest in local history.

HAVE YOU SEEN?
SOME RECENT ITEMS OF INTEREST TO LOCAL STUDIES LIBRARIANS.

Dewe, M and Drew, PR. A collection policy for printed Welsh ephemera: a report and guidelines. Dept of Information and Library Studies, Univ. of Wales, Aberystwyth. 1994. 79pp

Ephemera has been a topic of interest for a number of years and several books and reports have been published. This report is the result of a two year investigation, funded by the Leverhulme Trust, into the collection of ephemera in Wales, with the aim of providing a set of guidelines for a collection policy: it would also be likely to be of use outside the Principality.

Part 1 is a general survey of the collection of ephemera in Wales at present, covering national and local libraries, museums and record offices: it was found that while the collection of this material was fairly widespread, most of the organisations concerned had no collection policy for its acquisition and storage. Part 2, therefore, sets out to provide a set of guidelines for ephemera collection. While these are aimed specifically at Welsh institutions, many of the recommendations - for instance on commitment to collection, scope, types of material and sources and methods of collection - are of use elsewhere, as are the sections on use and users and on preservation and conservation. The recommendations are very briefly stated, but could provide useful checklists to any library developing a collection policy for this type of material.

Evans, EJ. Tithes: maps, apportionments and the 1836 Act. Rev. ed., Phillimore, for BALH. 1993. 32pp. £4.50. ISBN 0 85033 857 3.

Tithes were a contentious subject for many years in rural society until in 1836, with the Tithe Redemption Act, tithes were converted into rent charge payments based on the prevailing price of grain. The Act was therefore of major importance, and this work, a revised edition of a booklet first published in 1978, attempts to provide a straightforward explanation of the Act and its effects. The original edition was recognised as a basic work for the layman, and the author states that there is no real need to re-appraise what was written then, though later research work is dealt with. The volume provides a historical introduction to the pre-1836 period, a chapter on the provisions of the Act and one giving examples of how it worked in practice, as well as a section on source materials. This is a useful and understandable work for the many local historians who need to use the tithe maps and schedules.

Schurer, K and Arkell, T. Surveying the people: the interpretation and use of document sources for the study of population in the later seventeenth century. Leopard's Head Press, 1992. 308pp. £10.00. ISBN 0 904920 24 0. (A Local Population Studies supplement)

While this is a highly specialist work, it points historians and librarians interested in population studies in the direction of some key sources for the

period. Included are the hearth tax, the poll tax, the Compton census of 1676, and the Marriage Duty Act of 1695. These sources are described, and the main problems in their use are discussed. To show how the surviving documents can be used, specific topics such as the social structure of the City of London and the distribution of nonconformity in Devon are dealt with in individual chapters.

Current perspectives on newspaper preservation and access: report of the 2nd national Newsplan conference, March 1994. Information North, for Newsplan, 1994. 64pp. £12.95. ISBN 0 906433 19 3.

As one of Newsplan's major objectives is the co-operative microfilming for preservation of local newspapers, this report is of obvious interest to local studies librarians. The main sections cover services, the American experience, microfilming, the newspaper industry, and legal and technical issues. There is a useful paper from Dr Jeremy Black from the user's point of view, one on quality issues in preservation microfilming and one on the development of the Scottish Newspapers Microfilming Unit. The future of the newspaper in the electronic age is also covered, with both the capabilities and limitations of digitisation of newspapers for storage and the implications for newspaper archives of the virtual newspaper being dealt with. The various legal implications of copyright are dealt with by Graham Cornish. Finally, there is a useful overview of the conference papers and a look to the future by Geoffrey Hamilton. With its wide range, this conference report is worth reading.

Edward, M. Who belongs to Glasgow?: two hundred years of migration. Glasgow City Libraries, 1993. 143pp. £6.99. ISBN 0 906169 28 3.

There has been a great deal of migration into Glasgow over the years by people of diverse national and cultural backgrounds and this volume is an attempt to chronicle this. It is emphasised that it is not intended to be a definitive account of the subject, as it was originally intended to provide teaching material for Glasgow schools: it is, however, of interest to a much wider circle of readers. Chapter by chapter the author guides us through the history of a wide variety of groups who have moved into Glasgow over the centuries, whether they be from the West Highlands or Ireland, or from Italy or China. Using a wide range of sources, including illustrations, newspaper reports and BBC scripts the book gives a fascinating picture of the varied groups of people who have at one time or another moved into Glasgow to give it the cosmopolitan population it has today. There is a helpful bibliography and an index.

Holmes, MG. Beating the bounds of Camden: a long distance walk. London Borough of Camden Leisure Services Dept, 1993. 22pp. £2.00 + £0.50 p&p. ISBN 0 901389 79 X.

A 'town trail' with a difference. The walk of 16-17 miles described in this booklet follows the tradition of earlier years when the boundaries of parishes and boroughs were regularly inspected. Although Camden as such was only created

in 1965 the author points out that in the course of the journey many markers of the former parishes which now form part of the borough can be seen. The suggestion is made that the walk can be done in stages to allow time to explore more thoroughly the neighbourhoods travelled through, which include a deer park, a jousting ground and an execution site, and a wide range of architectural styles is to be seen. Traditionally the ceremony of 'beating the bounds' started at a town hall, so this trail starts and finishes at Camden Town Hall on Euston Road. A surprising amount of historical information is briefly provided.

Gibson, J, Medlycott, M, and Mills, D. Land and window tax assessments. Federation of Family History Societies, 1993. 52pp. £2.50 + £0.50 p&p. ISBN 1 872094 65 1.

Another of the FFHS 'Gibson Guides'. This one lists the whereabouts of surviving records of these taxes throughout Britain. This in itself is useful for family historians, but in addition there is an extended introduction to the Land Tax, explaining what it was, the information the assessments contain and how to use them in research, together with a shorter contribution on window and other assessed taxes. This introductory material, together with a bibliography, makes this booklet helpful to historians in general with a need for information on these source materials.

Reilly, L. Family history in Bexley: a guide to tracing your Bexley ancestors. Bexley Libraries and Museums Service, 1993. 24pp. £1.50. ISBN 0 902541 31 5.

One of the increasing number of similar guides produced by local studies libraries, it aims to provide a concise guide to available sources and their location. In addition to the lists there is a general introduction pointing out some of the problems, and a short guide to useful general sources in the reference library as well as a list of general books on how to research family history for those new to the work. There are brief introductory notes to the various categories of sources listed.

Kirkham, J. Barnardo's photographic and film archive. Local History Magazine, 41, Nov-Dec 1993, p 10-12.

A brief description of the Barnardo archive. Started in 1874, photographs of all aspects of Barnardo's work were taken by professional photographers - in the 1940s and 1950s, for instance, there was a full time team of five. There are also about 150 films. This archive has recently been made available to the public, and will form a major resource for research on the social history of the twentieth century.

Local but not parochial

Papers from Umbrella 2 presented by the Local Studies Group



These papers have been prepared by the editor from manuscripts, audiotapes or reports of sessions. Thanks must go to the authors, suppliers of tapes and reporters for their help. Particular thanks are due to Philippa Stevens, Hampshire County Library, Jamie Campbell, Devon Libraries and Shelagh Levett of the Community Services Group. The final responsibility, however, is the editor's alone.

REMEMBER WATERLOO: HOW TO SABOTAGE YOUR LIBRARY'S TWINNING PROGRAMME

Ian Maxted

One day in 1982 I was approached while on duty in the Westcountry Studies Library in Exeter with a request to show some items from the Library's collection of Napoleana to the visiting twinning delegation who were that afternoon celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Devon-Calvados twinning charter. The collection had been bequeathed to the Library by one Heber Mardon in 1925 and included one of only five death masks of Napoleon made on Saint Helena. In haste I grabbed the death mask, some medals and the first engravings that came to hand, which happened to be caricatures by Gillray, Rowlandson and others, and it was felt by some members of the delegation that they would arouse great interest in France.

Knowing that such expressions of interest made on the spur of the moment rarely come to anything, I forgot about it until I read in the County Council minutes of 26 January 1983 that it was intended to prepare a "major international display" on Napoleon. This was picked up by local newspapers and it was clear that, not only was the County Council publicly committed, but that it was I who would have to put it together.

I was immediately faced with the problem of how to produce something credible from what proved to be a relatively small collection - only 40 caricatures in a total of 350 illustrations. I knew that exhibitions in French libraries of twinned towns

were furnished with well-researched and excellently produced catalogues of which I had received a number of examples as exchange publications. From these it would appear that French audiences were used to more than a few blown-up illustrations slapped on boards with brief captions - especially in a "major international" exhibition.

I looked at the best traditional British practice, for example the British Library exhibitions like the one on William Caxton. The general size was about 100 items and the same setting of type was often used for captions and catalogue. It was decided that originals rather than copies should be sent, provided that they could be protected, although there was doubt over the death-mask - there was fear that it might be considered as a national treasure in the same way as the Elgin Marbles in Greece.

The prospect of research seemed daunting at first - more has been written on Napoleon than on any other historical personage and there is also an immense amount on the Revolutionary period. There were no resources to allow extensive travelling or research time. I decided to use all caricatures in the Heber Mardon Collection and shamelessly to pillage MD George's *Catalogue of political and personal satires ... in the ... British Museum*. I would try to expand on local reactions to Napoleon, quoting from local newspapers, having a section on prisoners of war on Dartmoor and elsewhere in Devon, including exhibits on Joanna Southcott, the Exeter prophetess who mentioned Napoleon, dealing with the construction of the Admiralty telegraph, and above all dwelling on the fact that Napoleon was moored off Plymouth in 1815. There would also have to be an introduction on the caricaturists and their world. I would avoid politics and military campaigns. Over the next months texts began to be drafted, copies of items obtained from Devon record office, the British Library, Plymouth Museum. Dr Michael Duffy, a lecturer at Exeter University and La Garde Imperiale, a troop of English enthusiasts I happened to see drilling at Warwick Castle.

At an early stage I drew up a list of exhibits reflecting the developing structure of the exhibition. This was vital to keep track of these items to research, photography to be undertaken and the progress of drafting and transcribing captions: it could also later be used to draw up an insurance schedule and a bill of lading for customs purposes. In addition, it highlighted individuals to whom acknowledgement was due and to whom copies of the catalogue should be sent.

In June 1983 I participated in a study tour to Caen when I measured their splendid exhibition gallery. They had screens and frames available but it was eventually decided to use our own display material so that a self-contained unit could be shipped over intact, and the exhibition could later be displayed elsewhere. Photocopies of caricatures were taken over, and copied for Caen university for possible research, although nothing materialised from this. In August the British Council was contacted for such matters as lists of agents specialising in packing and forwarding exhibition materials and the need for export licences. They proved very helpful in providing advice.

I worked closely with the Library's display department who used Marler Haley screens for which it was possible to obtain protective transparent fronts. The sizes of screens could dictate numbers of items in each section and help determine the overall structure of the exhibition. The layout designed was made up of two linked octagons with an alcove at the end for a facsimile of the death mask, which was specially cast by the Schools Museum Service. Panels in imperial green were specially ordered in 1984 to provide a main colour scheme of green and gold.

In January 1984 the exhibition was postponed by the the French to 1985, allowing a little breathing space. The texts were by now mostly drafted in French and English to be shown as parallel captions on the display, the first draft having been forwarded to Caen in December 1983 for checking. Finally in April 1985 a press release was issued stating that the exhibition would take place in September.

A French language version only of the catalogue was prepared. It was decided that publication of a bilingual text was not appropriate for Devon Books, the County Council's official publisher, and it proved impossible to obtain financial support from such sources as the French twinning committee. It was eventually published by the Library using paste-ups of the texts for the captions. The designer who produced the layout went out of business at a crucial time in the production and so it was not possible to make all the revisions desired.

On 8 July 1985 as preparations were nearing completion a twinning delegation visited Devon and I was asked to show examples of items to appear in the exhibition. I included some caricatures which were not yet mounted. The president of the French twinning committee, a formidable lady, was less than enthusiastic. It was "not what twinning is about" - they had never officially asked for this display, and wished to distance themselves from it. The immediate reaction of the county's press officer was to drop it at once as it could provoke a major international incident. The Caen librarian was immediately contacted. Her reaction was "If twinning cannot survive this it is not worth having. Go ahead." They were intending to supplement the exhibition with a display of magnificent costume plates from *Le Sacre de SM l'Empereur Napoleon* and a bibliography. It would be a city "do", not a Calvados event, with posters produced by the municipal printing department and details of the exhibition on Minitel.

During August 1985 the exhibition was mounted up. A customs officer visited the library to inspect the bill of lading and seal the cases. The oldest van was allocated to take it over together with the library's display officer who was determined to enjoy his first visit to France.

And so on 18 September we embarked on the Portsmouth-Le Havre ferry, lining up with the HGVs and arriving late at night at the gates of the Castle instead of the Library. The following day unloading and assembling the screens taxed our knowledge of French considerably.

The opening was timed to coincide with the Caen trade fair. There was a visiting delegation which included the Chairman of Devon County Council, and members of the French twinning committee were also at the opening, which was performed by the Mayor of Caen. I made a brief introductory address in French, credited in the local press to the Chairman of the County Council, and gave a tour to the delegates. I adjourned with the display officer to the Caen fair where we tasted our way through the wine section, arriving somewhat unsteadily at the gates of the fairground to be met by a limousine. The window was wound down. It was the redoubtable President of the Twinning Committee. "I was wrong," she said graciously. "Thank you for going ahead."

On 30 October we returned to collect the display only to encounter problems over customs. It appeared that VAT had to be paid on the catalogues; even if they were given away payment had to be made on the assessed value. At this stage I did not dare to mention the facsimile death mask which we had presented to Caen Library. Eventually Caen Library ascertained that the Library was exempt from VAT. Sales had in any case been minimal, but a number were purchased by the Library for distribution to schools and individuals. While in Caen I selected books in print on Normandy to the value of the catalogues, which were brought over later by a visiting member of staff to form the basis of a small twinning collection in the local studies department.

There were other spin-offs. I attended a fascinating colloquium on werewolves in the crypt of Creully Castle, the display officer is now one of the leading lights of his village twinning group and, of greater benefit to the Library, the display toured museums and libraries in the South West through the Area Museums Council, provided with an English language version of the catalogue. Notes taken on the 1983 study tour formed the basis of a leaflet on comparative local studies work. Personal links with Caen Library staff are still maintained. I provide occasional help in preparing exhibitions, for example in searching for literature references. Caen have drawn attention to local items available for purchase in France, such as a rare medical treatise on French prisoners of war in Dartmoor prison.

But this expensive and drawn-out exercise is not a model for normal twinning programmes between libraries.

The Library Association Local Studies Group has drawn up an international policy but concentrates on the techniques of local studies librarianship. It is also important to encourage the development of comparative local studies research. For this reason local studies collections should be closely involved in twinning as it is an activity which is very locally based. They should aim to use links to foster comparative local studies and avoid the parochialism of much local studies work. Looking at a community as an outsider can bring valuable insight into the nature of its structure or development and often the more remote the observer is, the more interesting the insights. The observer from another country can often look at an historical situation with a completely fresh mind.

To take a Westcountry example: *Repräsentation und Gros grundbesitz in England, 1730-1770* by Herrmann Wellenreuther (Klett-Cotta, 1979) examines the relationship between landed property and parliamentary representation using the Bedford papers in the Devon Record Office and the Bedford Estate Office in London. Coming to England from the historical background of the absolutist petty principedoms of eighteenth century Germany, the author has a different reaction to the political world of that period in England from the view of it as being dominated by bribery and corruption. The landlord-tenant relationship was not seen by him as one of passive dependence, even in a town like Tavistock, where the majority of the electorate were tenants of the patron. Wellenreuther saw the act of voting at an election as a declaration of a complex web of mutual obligations between the elector and his patron which should be viewed over a longer term than the period immediately before the election with its practices which seem so dubious to modern eyes.

The growing realisation of the importance of the region in local history is a useful antidote to parochialism. Even so one is in many respects comparing like with like when one compares communities within different parts of the same country. To gain a full benefit from comparative studies it is important to have an even wider vision.

A growing internationalism is apparent in many areas and a few examples from Devon and the South West will illustrate this. In the academic world both the Universities of Exeter and Plymouth are undertaking studies of peripherality which involve comparisons of economies in different European countries. *Centre et peripherie* is a recent volume of studies in economic history jointly produced by the Universities of Exeter and Rennes. Seventy per cent of secondary schools in Devon have links with schools in France and organise exchange visits, European work experience and study trips for students and teachers. Secondary school geography students have to compare their own region with another in Europe as part of the national curriculum: recently a Devon school undertook a comparative study of banking in France and England, and a school in Rennes visited Devon to study history. There are European offices in most local authorities. In Devon the office produces a European bulletin, provides a statistical service and maintains a European events diary. Devon is also involved in a colloquium entitled *Europe Regions*, established at Caen in 1990, where one region from each member country of the European Community is represented. Seven working parties were set up, including education and culture besides the economic, social and technical fields. The Atlantic Arc is another initiative in which Devon is participating. It is an organisation of Atlantic regions from Spain to Scotland which lobbies the EC for support in the field of communications, tourism and environmental matters. Clearly the concept is emerging of regions which cross national boundaries. The South West of England could be seen as forming part of the "Trans-Manche" region.

Over 70 Devon communities are twinned with North-West France and Devon is not the only county in the region to be twinned with a département in Normandy or Brittany. Cornwall is twinned with Finistère, Somerset with Orne, Dorset with Manche and Hampshire has recently twinned with the region of Basse-Normandie.

Many towns in these counties also have partners in the region, including ports such as Plymouth and Brest, Poole and Cherbourg or Portsmouth and Caen.

In fact the South West of England has a remarkable geographical mirror image in the North West of France, a region which shares many of its features and its problems but set against a different cultural and historical background. Both are peripheral regions with the social and economic problems which that entails, both have a Celtic fringe, both have similar communications problems, and both share industries such as cider, lace or mining. At a more local level there are sometimes striking parallels. The towns of Caen and Exeter are of a similar size. They are both inland ports, linked to the sea by a ship canal. Both are rail junctions and are situated at the end of the motorway from their capital cities, both have universities and are cultural centres with museums and theatres, and both were severely damaged during the war and have had to redevelop their town centres.

There is immense potential in such circumstances for comparative local studies of an historical or geographical nature. Why has Caen become the ninth largest port in France while the canal in Exeter is now used for recreational purposes only? What have been the different experiences of the two towns in redeveloping after the War? What has been the impact of the motorway on each town and what were the reactions of various pressure groups to its construction? These are studies that could be pursued at a variety of levels from the teacher taking a class round the port areas of the two towns, pointing out the main differences, to the postgraduate researcher investigating the differing administrative or financial structures that lead to the rise of one port and the decline of the other. Such comparative investigations occur all too rarely, even though so many communities have twinning links. Such links are often dismissed as an excuse for subsidised holidays for councillors or coach trips to stock up with wine in the twinned communities but there is the potential for more and all too often the maximum has not been realised by these contacts.

As a local studies librarian I rarely see French teachers visiting or making contact to prepare for study visits to England and the same is true of English teachers. For many purposes more appropriate material may be available through the tourist offices but local studies libraries should be closely involved in twinning. Twinning contacts are very localised and are an aspect of the communities covered by the local studies library which should be recorded, but apart from recording twinning activities the local studies library should also facilitate comparative local studies with the twinned communities. This can be done without building up a Trans-Manche collection which rivals in size the local studies collection of the home area and without the need for fluent French.

A first step is to exchange guides to collections with an appropriate local studies collection across the Channel and to arrange, perhaps through a local teacher, for them to be translated. I have been involved in translating and extending Caen's guide to local studies collections in Calvados. The choice of library could be difficult as in France local studies collections are normally to be found in

libraries run by the municipality rather than the *département*, the equivalent of the English county, although the Local Government Commission may change this. The next step is to produce a guide in French to the county's local studies resources and arrange for it to be checked by the library in the twinned community. The guide can then be distributed to schools and libraries throughout the *département* by the local twinning committee. Collections of books and pamphlets can be exchanged. A collection of fifty to one hundred items should be sufficient to enable some preparatory work to be undertaken in advance of study trips. Much publicity material is informative and available free of charge or quite cheaply. Many local authorities in France produce a free glossy periodical with short illustrated articles on a wide range of topics relating to the *département* or town past and present and this can be selectively indexed as has been done for the *Journal du Calvados*. Details of the books and periodical articles can be circulated to local secondary schools.

Once librarians, teachers and historians in the twinned community are aware of the collections, a number of enterprises are possible. Teachers could co-operate to produce and translate project material for teaching purposes or visits. Perhaps the architecture of farmhouses and field systems could be compared to see how these reflect differing agricultural practices. A joint historical booklet could gradually be compiled in this way comparing a number of aspects of the two communities. A display comparing the two communities could be produced with parallel views of the parish church, a local craft, a country house, a portrait of a local worthy, an old postcard of a street scene and so on - a truly joint display which is more modest than *Boney* and which can be done even more cheaply now that colour laser copiers are widely available. While local studies librarians may not be the prime movers in many of these undertakings, they should be in a position to support them.

It will soon become apparent that the historical sources for each country differ. In the field of printed materials for example, while the printing press spread to the French provinces two centuries before it did in England, this does not mean that provincial newspapers took root in France earlier than in England. Very few titles are recorded before the French Revolution. Local trade directories also developed later in France than in England. On the other hand there are extensive locally printed collections of printed customs and other early official publications which have no counterpart in England. Such differences will present a new challenge to researchers.

The ability to use twinning links to conduct comparative local studies will not merely broaden the individual's own horizons but make it possible to return to view one's own community in a new light. Such an injection of a fresh attitude to local studies work can only bring benefit to research in this country.

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WAKE UP TO YOUR POTENTIAL FOR PROMOTION!

Milke Petty

Our usual Sunday morning starts with the Crossword - first the attempt to answer all the questions whilst still in bed with the morning tea, then later out come the dictionaries, the encyclopaedia, the almanac and the atlas, and of course the bible: in fact, apart from the latter, it's probably just like the normal day of a Reference Librarian - except this time it's a case of doing it for ourselves rather than for our readers - and remembering just how much fun such a process can be.

Often however the paper's not arrived so we tune the bedside radio to the local station: it's usually "Dennis of Grunty Fen" - an unknown quantity to most of you. Grunty fen is a real place - grandad said they called it that "cos it was so hard going it made you grunt to walk across it", and it's just down the road from us. It was the last area of fenland to be drained, a hollow basin within the Island of Ely, which was itself surrounded by fen (we sell a map showing it as it was - just £2 ...). Londoners who stayed there in the 1890s claimed that all the girls had yellow spotted bellies and the men webbed feet. How they knew the former I cannot say, but a local doctor claimed to have treated webbed fingers - and webbed toes would not have bothered them. Anyway Dennis, who claims to live in a railway cottage with his gran, his chickens and his orgasmic vegetables, tells a variety of tales, interspersed with home-made songs such as "Fen tigers got dewdrops on their nose, Fen tigers got webs between their toes" - and we can't stand him so we turn him off.

He's followed by Lester Milbank - who some of you will have heard on Radio 5. Lester presents a sequence programme - competitions, music, newspaper reviews and guests. Sometimes he will phone me up and ask who he should invite on to his programme and what should they talk about. We will often be able to introduce him to somebody who has a tale to tell or who is researching a topic and needs some assistance from the wider radio audience, such as one bombing raid on Cambridge. I'd told how the stick of bombs fell across Jesus Green before hitting a house, and a lady phoned in who had been in that house when the bomb struck. She described how she awoke amongst a pile of rubble and remembers being pulled out by a policeman. She remembered that policeman's number - 101 - and how for the last 40 years had wished she'd thanked him for rescuing her. She said this at 10.30 one morning and at 2.30 that policeman phoned her up and said 'I believe you wanted to speak to me'. That's magic and couldn't have happened in any other way except local radio. Why have I got this involvement with Lester? - because we collaborated on a series of programmes called "Off the Beaten Track" (Cambridgeshire Libraries sell cassette copies of them - just £4.50).

It's like "Down your way" without the music. I choose the village to be covered, read through the newspaper cuttings files we maintain to identify topics - for instance the man who breeds Percheron horses, or the man who restores ancient

pianos in a stable, and through our contacts (and of course every local studies librarian has contacts in every community) we put together a list of names and topics. Lester goes out with his tape recorder (I go too if I can get away), and people are recorded, relationships established, the programme made and broadcast - "with Mike Petty of the Cambridgeshire Collection" - and you have an interesting feature which has historical importance and a potential sale.

Of course there are problems with programmes. Probably the most interesting I've done has been the "Time Was Years" with Trevor Littlechild. Trevor presents a weekly programme of music from the 20s-50s and for many weeks we put together an hour-long in-depth study of one year. Trevor would research the national events and I'd go through the local newspapers for that year to find local stories which we would put together along with the music of that period. This combination of popular song, national and local stories really did bring the year to life, showing how each related to the other. Take 1926, the year of the General Strike; as the railways ground to a halt so Cambridge undergraduates volunteered to drive trains and keep the wheels rolling. They went home at the end of the day, exhausted from the manual effort and covered in coal dust - and the music of the time: - *Black Bottom!* We have plans to make cassettes of some of our scripts but there are copyright problems over the music, and too few hours in the day. In fact I called a halt to the series since it was taking too much of my spare time - including lunch hours and Sundays - to research the local input. This must always be a consideration with any project: does the finished result justify the time taken? As far as I am concerned I am a full-time librarian who needs to be on the desk, acquiring and cataloguing material and assisting readers: other items are supplementary. But local radio is a means of reaching thousands of local people and it takes little time to prepare for "Desert Island Discs" or, as happened a couple of weeks ago, "Record Collectors". Never having heard the programme on a Saturday afternoon, because we're working, I didn't really realise I was supposed just to talk about why I bought my first record and kept referring to the Department's collection of Cambridgeshire music, and diverting the discussion back to the Library. To me this is essential, because it is what I do that is interesting, not me: the person on the wireless or standing in front of an audience is Mike Petty the Librarian of the Cambridgeshire Collection. The real me is sitting in the corner, or at home with the crossword - all this is an act. But of course librarians are supposed to be professionals in the art of communication and we have worked with Radio Cambridgeshire since before it went on air - in fact I was invited down to Broadcasting House to meet the staff before they opened, and to introduce them to the county. Because, of course, local studies libraries are devoted to recording the life of their area *now* - a job we've done in Cambridge since 1855. Except of course that we have never thrown anything out - today's news is tomorrow's history. News is what we listen to on the radio, but how often do libraries make the news bulletins? Perhaps it happens when we employ bailiffs to collect library books, or do surveys of unusual bookmarks - and of course this has been the typical image of our profession. How ironic, then, that I have to confess that I turned down an invitation to appear on the morning news programme just last Wednesday, accompanying a local author with his new book - for a live programme the

presenter will always look for a known contributor to support an unknown party. I'd probably also have ended up reviewing the papers, thus getting libraries a 10-15 minute presence, and normally this would have been well worth getting up early and being at the station by 7.30. On Wednesday, however, I had a commitment to take parents to hospital - and family life must come first (if only sometimes). In addition, I was out talking that night and only got home at 10pm. Occasionally one will get the Russian colonel using the local studies collection to research local attitudes to American Cruise missile bases, using newspaper cuttings which were so interesting that he came back a second time. This was one of the 850 topic files which we have maintained for the last thirty years. The use of these files is not news: 1200 people every month use the collection, researching everything from local companies just before they go for interview to the village they are planning to move into. It becomes news when the Colonel is expelled for spying - it made the Daily Telegraph and the Sun too ... and even the LAR and LSL.

But there are opportunities - like when we opened the Heritage Showcase, and sent them a press release. Nowadays in Cambridgeshire you need to write the journalists articles for them. You mark them *Press Release* and they will generally be printed verbatim. Heritage Showcase is a combined exhibition by Libraries, Museums Officer, Archives, Archaeology and Building Conservation together with the Cambridge Folk Museum and Cambridge Heritage (the latter own the display boards which we are only storing for them until they have their own Heritage Centre). One of these organisations will change their exhibition each month. Generally they have these displays anyway, having produced them for the East of England Show or other Exhibition, and once finished there they will be stored away until next time. We recycle them - and of course it saves the Libraries putting too many hours of effort into displays. There is no specialist display artist available to us: we have to do it ourselves between enquiries - and there isn't much time between enquiries. So what we have here is a demonstration of the County departments working together : librarians working alongside archives and providing a facility that is interesting and important to children with their local studies for the National Curriculum - they can see that you learn by using a variety of information sources, not just library books. The Showcase also invites an outside group - maybe the Family Historians, or the University Board of Continuing Education - to display for a month. Thus a new display comes in every two weeks, and every two weeks you have the potential for a launch party. To give the Showcase an initial send-off we invited the Chairman and the Chief officer of the relevant departments together with the great and good, and because it was a joint exhibition most of them accepted. It showed the County working together with outside bodies, taking the opportunity to recycle displays, forming a basis for a shop window of county activities - and of county publications (for of course each department produces material and none of us have a proper marketing policy for displaying them to the people who might purchase). Then just as the speeches had been made we were gatecrashed by a somewhat disreputable character - Dennis of Grunty Fen who had been wandering through the building, registering as a borrower and checking the on-line computer. He arrived in the Showcase causing mayhem and merriment,

and insisted on leading the assembled congregation in his famous song "Fen Tigers". That's how we got the picture that appeared in the local newspaper - the Chairman of the Education Committee singing along with Dennis. They had already given a full-page article to the setting up of the Showcase and needed a different angle or they would not have bothered. The radio station didn't cover the launch but made up for it by making a promotional trail which they broadcast for several weeks. As for Dennis, he later returned - after all, oral history (which he epitomises) is an important part of an area's heritage - as one of a series of Heritage showcase evenings alongside Trevor Littlechild with his presentation on wartime, the National Rivers Authority on the problems of flooding, and me. They all attracted an audience - as did the lunchtime film shows - but only a small number in comparison to those we can get elsewhere when others do the promotion and publicity.

Perhaps the most important thing the Showcase has achieved so far is the way it influenced a local television reporter's attitude to local government reorganisation. Cambridgeshire is due to be surveyed shortly as part of the local government review and the last county council elections may be the last before the changes are implemented. The County politicians decided they wished to fight the elections on current issues, not on the future of local government, but the reporter, who serves both radio and television, was keen to do otherwise. She attacked the county on radio for its failure to give the electorate their chance to comment before the politicians decided things amongst themselves. This caused a distinct ruction, and when she came back for television the camera crew were banned from Shire Hall and from talking to officers, though they were allowed to film old maps in the library to show the previous boundaries - in 1964, 1974 etc. When she came into the Showcase - which we had decided was more suitable for the exercise than the Cambridgeshire Collection where they would interrupt readers - she expressed herself so impressed with the variety of images that she changed her script and instead of criticising secrecy, emphasised instead how local government has always changed to reflect changing circumstances.

Of course the changes are worrying for all of us, but at least one of the Commissioners, the professor of Geography at Cambridge University, is aware of what libraries are doing in the field of information and local studies. I met him at the memorial service to one of his predecessors, being introduced by another don whose wife regularly uses our Collection. He accepted the invitation to visit the Collection and spent a considerable period asking very searching questions - which I believe were answered frankly by our Library Manager.

This example of knowing people is of course another important role for the local studies librarian. For a number of years I have attended the University Geography Department Christmas party - the things one suffers! - and established contacts, and also the party given by our local commercial television station. We of course happily supply information to the latter within the strict deadlines they have to meet, again using our newspaper cutting files to give their researcher some insight into recent developments in many areas. But television is an important area to cultivate, especially through pictures. Remember that for

every picture they use the library will get a fee - and if they repeat the programme or sell it abroad then more cash comes in. Local studies departments will often be approached by TV researchers on a variety of topics - our latest is considering a series of programmes on village life and is seeking somewhere to base it. We have pointed her at Pampisford - a thatched cottage, roses-round-the-door village - where there is a leather factory and a lacemaker, a yoga class and a bomb detection factory, a firm recycling building materials and a decayed country home in urgent need of them.

Most of what we do will never be publicised but as a wheel within a wheel we are responsible for many projects - and that particular TV researcher will always remember the help she got in Cambridge and will be likely to turn to colleagues elsewhere when the next project comes along. Perhaps one day she will realise just how interesting a programme on the work of a library could be.

So far we have covered just the 'news' part of a paper, but there is another - the feature article - and that's my mid-morning Sunday job. Each week for the last six years I have written an article for the Cambridge Weekly News - all based on the work or stock of the local collection. We've covered "The Illustrators", the engravers and artists who produced the prints of our county during principally the Victorian period - Ackermann, Storer, Le Keux and others, the Photographers - based principally on the indexing of local newspapers (for where else can you find things about the cameramen); and if you can't find things about the photographer then we write about the photograph. This incidentally should be written up in the same way that the Documentary Photography Archive here in Manchester has covered Bradford (except that we've indexed non-professionals too and have the newspaper stories to supplement the names from directories). If you think my bibliographic checking is good then I confess the reports mentioned are still sitting on the table at home, buried under piles of other paper, just as the desk at work becomes buried under the daily accessions that arrive in a local collection - by definition our job is to collect.

How do I find things to write about week after week? I've found the perfect solution with the present series "Reflections", subtitled "Old and new items arrive daily at the Cambridgeshire Collection, Mike Petty reflects on some recent discoveries". What better means of promoting the Library could you ask for? We've featured our latest library publication, *Witches of Warboys*, and our work on the Newsplan project; we can review the latest books or newly acquired older items; and all the while we can emphasise something of what happens in a library local collection, and get public input. Thus an article on a copy of the Crutchley's cyclists guide brought letters from a number of people, while others have donated pictures or ephemera that they would otherwise have thrown away. I believe our readership is quite large: the paper circulates to every house around Cambridge (and the articles often feature in the pages of the whole *Cambridge Weekly* group) - and often when I get the chance to look through a collection of books prior to their being offered for sale through the book trade I will find one of the articles tucked away.

How do you make contacts with the newspaper to start with? Basically it is - via the reporters who will often visit the Central Library for a variety of topics, not all of them local. We will give great assistance to news and feature journalists since they have the means of projecting the image of the public library as a resource for all - and while they are in the library they will be absorbing something of the atmosphere of what is going on. In exchange we get four copies of the paper free every evening for our cuttings and binding needs. Thus when the Cambridge Evening News decided to celebrate its centenary by the publication of a picture book charting the stories they had covered over the last 100 years one of the people they consulted was the Librarian of the Cambridgeshire Collection. We will of course be consulted by dozens of publishers and usually we will suggest an author, but on this occasion I felt that such a project would involve a tremendous amount of time working with the author and going through the Collection and that it would be most cost-effective in time and effort if I did the book myself.

To undertake such a project I would need a word processor. I did not know what a word processor was, nor what it would do but I knew I would need one. So the Cambridge Evening News supplied the cheapest Amstrad PCW8256 which has proved absolutely invaluable and has revolutionised the way we organise our local collection - but that must be the subject for another day. With the word processor I thought I might as well make a survey of the events that have occurred in Cambridge during the last 100 years - going through cuttings files, newspaper volumes, books and so on, and so produced our "Century of Cambridge News" index. You want to know the first council house, the visits of Oswald Mosley, or the first motor car - it's in my index. (The index also led to one of my weekly series, "*Stories from a year*", covering each year 1888-1988 - that's 2 years' worth of articles). The selection of pictures was relatively straightforward: although we have thousands, there are not many of more recent times, and part of the deal was that we got free access to the newspaper photograph files. I proved to be a very bad researcher, ordering up far more photos than I actually used in the book - but as they've not asked for them back perhaps it's time I added them to the Collection. All this cemented relations with the News, produced a best-selling book - promoted of course by the paper with full-page adverts - and hopefully ensured that when the paper transfers totally to colour photos the old black-and-white images are not discarded but offered to us for safe-keeping.

Normally this does not happen. Librarians are not historians and should not get involved in writing books, though compiling books is perhaps something different - like the "Chronicles" based on our newspaper indexes between 1770 and 1899 and now published by many local villages, with more to come. Our job is to assist those who are researching the books - and the success of our work should be judged by the acknowledgements we receive in those published books. On average our collection is acknowledged in a new book every two weeks - and has been for the last 20 years. I hope that it astounds you, as it does me and it did Jeffrey Archer when I told him at a tea party at the Old Vicarage, Grantchester - no, we didn't help him with his latest blockbuster, but we did help

his wife, Mary, who wrote an account of Rupert Brooke (what else?). Jeffrey was almost speechless, but then said something like "you've been very busy then" - so at least one Tory politician knows public libraries do more than lend books.

You'll find us acknowledged in planning reports, or for supplying the cover picture for a parish magazine or the picture on a poster; in geography textbooks and books on buses, by solicitors firms and football clubs, and even in novels - for instance *Naomi's room*. Set in Cambridge, it includes a passage describing research done in the Cambridgeshire Collection and pays tribute to its librarian and stock. We also give talks - any day but Sunday, though usually only one a week on average. Who do we talk to? A glance through the diary shows that last week it was an American University summer school at Emmanuel College, before that a group of mentally handicapped adults, Chatteris conservatives, Warboys local history society, Newnham Womens Institute, Mayfield School, Coveney Village Hall (it was supposed to be a Saturday night ploughman's supper to raise money for the hall, but never again), Coveney Methodist sausage supper.

What do I talk about? Topics include Cambridge Town & Gown (for the University Extra Mural board), Home Front 1939-45 for the mentally handicapped adults, Cambridgeshire at war 1914-18 for the Conservatives, Webbed Feet to Green Wellies (history of fens 1600 to present), the 1947 fen floods: or it could be Cambridge photographers, Cambridge in pictures, Sherlock Holmes in Cambridge (a talk developed for the Sherlock Holmes Society annual conference, in which we show pictures of Holmes arriving at Cambridge station and cycling through local villages). These are the set-piece talks with slides, all based on material in the local collection, which have been known to fill village college halls - and on one notable occasion the local county councillor had to be turned away since there were no seats and he hadn't booked in advance.

What you get out of it is the opportunity to interest large numbers of people in one part of their library service, and raise hundreds of pounds for the church tower appeal into the bargain: the opportunity to meet people throughout your area (and in various county constituencies!) and enlist their help in the work you are doing. You're taking a specialist part of the service to their community and ensuring that the talk around the village next day will feature the work of the Library service.

The drawbacks include getting home at 6.15 from work and starting out again at 7, or underestimating how long it will take to get to the Saffron Walden Masonic Dinner, or the repetition of giving the same talks time and again - the Town and Gown presentation next week to the University of Texas and again to another International school in August, for instance: but remember that these people have travelled many hundreds of miles and deserve entertaining. The fees in these instances can make up for it - the University may pay £100 per hour. However, another group just says thank you, while some forget even to do that - but fees or thanks are not the reason for doing it: it's the chance to interest people in our profession.

But once more we're pretending to be something we're not - historians, not librarians. So I prefer "Old Cambridgeshire, past and present: the work of the Cambridgeshire Collection" - a slide presentation about the work we do: we collect books (picture of a book about their village), pictures (slide of the High street), etc - changing about 12 slides to personalise it to a particular community or group. One drawback can be preparation time so now we tend not to bother! Usually now I'll do my Claire Rayner act. When I produced the "Cambridge in Pictures" book I was guest at a Literary Lunch at which Claire Rayner was chief speaker, so I saw the way she works. She has a pile of catalogue cards, each containing an anecdote and looks around the room, deciding which ones to tell - the same stories coming out time and again. What a good idea - except this can get boring too. So I now just make a note of the questions we are asked during the day and make that the basis of the talk - going through them just as they come in and explaining what resources we have to answer them: newspaper cuttings, tape recordings, planning reports, pictures; how in 1975 we answered 4,000 enquiries with four staff and how last year it was 14,000 - with the same four staff!

People tell me I'm lucky to have one of the most interesting jobs in the world, collecting and organising books and information and helping people who need them. But I don't need to tell you all about this: you do it too, it's part of the everyday life of a librarian. So wake up - tell people about it!

*Mike Petty is Librarian of the Cambridgeshire Collection,
Cambridgeshire Libraries.*

LOCAL STUDIES IN HUNGARY: A CASE STUDY

Erzsebet Gancs

Thank you for your kind invitation. I am very pleased to be here.

I come from Győr in Hungary. Győr is situated in the north west of the country half way between Vienna and Budapest. It is the capital of the Kiszalud region (Little Plain in English), which is one of Hungary's most important regions. Győr, which is more than seven hundred years old, is the residence town of the Győr-Moson-Sopron county. It is called the town of the rivers because several rivers meet there. It has always played an important role in the life of Hungary. The town has seen many battles over the years - it was often turned to ruins and then rebuilt. The centre of Győr was built between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, and has a great number of historical monuments, which are well looked after. At present the town has 130,000 inhabitants, which makes it the fifth largest in the country.

Kiszalud Karoly County Library

The library was founded in 1896. It was named the Kiszalud County Library in 1952, after Karoly Kiszalud, who was a famous nineteenth century Hungarian poet who was born in the region. It is now the largest public library in the county. It is the central library of the local government and school library network of the Győr-Moson-Sopron County: since 1964 it has been a specialised state library of literature for local knowledge and history of the county. It is both a lending library and a professional and methodological centre as well. The library's catchment area has 424,703 inhabitants and 13.8% of them are registered readers.

The Kiszalud County Library has a total of 340,456 items, including 278,071 books and 24,205 periodicals. The oldest book in the library was published in 1481 - the *Epistolae Familiares* by Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, from Anton Koberger's press in Nurnberg. We are also very proud of our other incunabulum, the *Chronica Hungarorum* by Janos Thuroczy: published in 1488, it deals with the history of Hungary from the very beginnings to the late fifteenth century.

Today we have 11,759 registered borrowers, most of them between the ages of 15 and 19. 53.7% of users are students. Members, except students and retired people, have to pay 50 forints (about 35 pence) for a year. Users can borrow thirteen volumes for a month, because there are thirteen places on the computer record.

As well as the lending department there is a large reading room where users can find 725 current periodicals. There are 58 from abroad, most of them in German, English or French. As we are living close to German-speaking countries German appears to be the most popular foreign language in our county, but English is gaining in popularity particularly among the younger generation, and in our

reading room English language magazines such as *Time*, *Newsweek* and the *National Geographic* are available.

Our library is open from 9 am to 7 pm every day: from September to July it is open from 9 am to 1 pm on Saturdays as well. There are 70 staff and of these 42 are full time librarians, 28 of them with a High School degree. The library has five departments - Reference and Lending department, Processing and Acquisition department, Economy department, a separate department for children and music and a special department which we call the Methodological Department which deals with the advisory aspect of librarianship - we are the main central library for the region and as such we have to support the smaller libraries who look to us as an example.

The Local History section is part of the reference and lending department, and has a staff of three. I am the leader of this section. It has the most important collection of documents for Győr-Ménfőcsanak-Sopron County and in my opinion this is the most important part of the library.

The local history section has a special written collection policy which states that we have to collect all documents concerning the present and historical territory of our county. There are no time limits and we do not collect according to the value of the information or the value of the documents. We have to collect everything and let the users compare the value of the information with the form or date of publication. Among the items we collect are ephemera: I agree with Michael Dewe in his article about collecting policies for printed ephemera. In my opinion printed ephemera is vital for the local library because it is usually an important part of our everyday life. We therefore collect documents which come from our county; works by local authors; or which contain information about our county, about people who live there or about institutions in the county. It is a very important duty to search the documents which are written by people who are living here about well-known persons born or living and working in our county. We have a catalogue about these people which is continually growing.

The collection includes books - fiction and non-fiction; periodicals; county and local newspapers, some of them on microfilm; and photographs, poster, leaflets, invitation cards and maps. The number of items in the local history section is about 15.000.

The local studies collection is housed in a separate room and has a special storage system. The books and bound periodicals are stored according to their size. In the local section the classification marks consist of letters - A, B, C, D, X, Z - and the running number. Arrangement in this way saves space but it means that we have to have a very good catalogue.

Local studies material is included in the general catalogues of the library, but the section also has catalogues of its own, both dictionary and classified. There is a special classification scheme for the photographs, posters, leaflets and invitation cards. In this, place is combined with date of publication and the

subject of the material. This kind of material is not in the general catalogues and, because the stock is on closed access, can only be used with the help of the librarians.

In the local collection we do not allow users to borrow material: it can only be read and used in the library. The users of the section are very varied, ranging from amateur historians and school and college students to scientists. On average there are about 150 users a month.

At present village history is becoming more and more important. The people who are living in the villages want to know many things about their history - and family history as well. We were pleased to get information about the 'village outlines' programme from North Yorkshire Libraries. We followed their pattern of making packs of photocopies of documents from the local collection related to particular villages and produced packs for four of our villages with great success.

At the moment we are developing the use of computers in the local history section. There is an annotated bibliography of periodical articles about the county on cards. The library staff look out for articles on the county and about people living in the county appearing in Hungarian papers and periodicals. For each article we record the author, the title and the date of publication, with an annotation where necessary. Since 1992 there has been a project to put these records into the computer and the database now consists of more than 5000 bibliographic records. Data processing is a time consuming procedure and we work like slaves, but it is worth doing it. We can search according to place, to person, to institute, to periodical title and by subject. From time to time we publish a selection of references from the database.

Last but not least I shall mention some of our problems. The first one is money. Public administration in Hungary was reorganised in 1990, and local government has to provide public library services. Local government is responsible for many other matters such as unemployment and other social problems, and the libraries do not get enough money to maintain their services - we only get 70% of what we need.

The other problem - perhaps the main one in the local history section - is in connection with the privatisation of the press. The press is obliged to deposit material with the county library as well as with the National Library. The big publishers have been sending their publications, but there are many new small private presses that do not bother with this regulation and this causes a big loss to our collection.

Thank you again for your invitation and your attention.

*Erzsebet Gancs is leader of the local history section
of the Kisfaludy Karoly County Library.*

BACK TO BACK AND UP THE YARD: THE IMPORTANCE OF WORKING CLASS MEMORIES

Carl Chinn

In the last two hundred years my family has moved all of two miles - from Yardley Wood in rural Worcestershire to Sparkbrook in Birmingham and then in the 1950s to Hall Green. I became interested in local history through family history, because in my view you need to build up from the bottom: to understand national history you have to understand your own history, your own family, your own neighbourhood, your own locality - and to use these topics as building blocks towards an understanding of the national scene. When I started to look at my own family I found that, while we were unique - and every family is unique - we had a lot in common with other people similar to us in the late 1800s. 150 years ago my family lived in Worcestershire, in Yardley Wood and King's Heath, which at that time was owned by the Cartland family, who had all of the King's Heath area. My family's main claim to fame was that it gave its name to a brook in Yardley Wood called the Chinn Brook. My great great grandfather was a farm labourer, and when I decided to check this family legend out I found that like all such legends, while history seems to dispel it, there are elements of historical truth in it. The name of the brook is one of the oldest Anglo-Saxon place names in Worcestershire, going back to 780AD, so the family obviously did not give its name to it; instead the family took its name from the brook. As working class people began to have surnames, they took their job - baker, miller -, or their father's name - Johnson, Williamson -, or the place - Preston, London -, so in this case the brook became the family name.

My family, like most people who came into Birmingham and other large cities in the industrial period, were immigrants, but they were not immigrants from the North of England as in the 1920s and 30s, or from Scotland, Ireland or Wales, or from abroad. Like most white working class people a century ago they came to the city closest to their village. A recent study of Blackburn showed that people moving in came from the Pennine villages outside and moved on average five miles a generation: the same thing applied to cities like Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool.

There were of course long distance migrants - Irish people fleeing from famine, Highlanders from the clearances, people from the mining districts, and from rural areas all over the country. Among these immigrants there were large numbers of young women because in mining and agricultural areas there was little work for them except as domestic servants, and therefore many had to move away. Many skilled men, too, moved long distances in search of work. They went on the tramp - a respectable word in the nineteenth century. Moving from town to town, they presented their union credentials and apprenticeship articles to the local union and were put up for the night and perhaps given a chance to look for work. If there was none they moved to the next town.

Despite these long distance migrants, however, the majority of people who moved into a town did so from its hinterland. This, of course, goes against the old view of industrialisation that all the landless labourers in the South of England moved in one great mass migration movement from Wiltshire and Hampshire to the West Midlands, South Lancashire and South Wales. It didn't happen like that. To travel long distances, unless you were a single man, meant that you had to go by train or horse and carriage, and this cost money, which landless labourers earning eight shillings (40p) per week - starvation wages in the 1840s - could not afford. Thus much of the migration into the big towns was in fact local.

This is where I feel that local historians and local studies librarians have the advantage over many national historians, who may be academics who do not recognise the strength of local patterns of migration: local studies librarians are more alert to these movements. My family followed that pattern. A century ago Birmingham was much smaller in area than it is today. It was still a large place in terms of population but that population was squashed into a very small area: much of what people think of as Birmingham today was added to the city in 1911. Because my great great grandfather died, and the house was tied to the job, the family was evicted. My great great grandmother had two options, as with thousands of other widows - either she found a job to bring in money or she went into the workhouse. When I started to record memories of older people I realised the fear and loathing that people had, not so much of the workhouse but of the hospitals which many of them became. This provides another example of the advantages of local historians over national historians - they are alert to these feelings and the significance of these places. When my grandfather was taken into the Summerfield part of the Selly Oak hospital he said that they had sent him there to die - it was the old workhouse. When recently the Regional Health Authority wanted to knock down the buildings, I led a campaign to save some of them as a memorial to all those thousands of people who had had to go there. An archway in the building was known as the 'archway of tears' because once you had gone through it the only way you came out was in a coffin into the ultimate indignity of a pauper's grave. This is another topic for the community historian to look at because many well-meaning middle class contemporaries who went into the slums to try to shed light on the poor could not understand why so many poorer people paid a penny a week for each of their family for insurance to prevent a pauper burial: they were unable to realise why people were determined to go with some pride or why the neighbours would have a collection for a wreath. There was the regular statement that this money would have been better given to the widow or the family, which we might agree with logically, but it showed a different attitude to life - that the dead person was part of the community. These are the things which need to be explored from below.

Given the dread of the workhouse, with its splitting up of families (husband from wife, children from parents), my ancestress looked for work. But there was little work in the countryside, and what there was was for spinsters and young girls rather than for widows with children, so she walked to the nearest large town, which luckily was Birmingham, because this was a city with industrial

employment for married women. Again this is an aspect of history which needs to be looked at from the local point of view: old fashioned general historians often assume that women only started to work during World War 2: this may be true of the middle class, but working class women had always gone back to work - in fact in many big towns and cities women were the mainstay of many industries. There were some differences in male-dominated places such as mining and shipbuilding areas, but in places like Birmingham many industries could not survive without the employment of women. There were plenty of jobs, but much of the factory work in Birmingham, as in for instance the Lancashire mill towns, tended to be either for single women, or for married ones with no or few children. For older women there was home work. This was a great attraction for widows like my great grandmother, as she could find work and keep her independence. So she moved into Sparkbrook, which is quite close to Yardley Wood. She got up at 5.30 am to light the copper, got the children ready and saw them off to school, then did washing all day.

Sparkbrook today is an inner city area, with many Asian immigrants, though most of them nowadays have been born in Britain. Most of those of Asian descent came from Kashmir - and in fact from one district. They came in the 1960s to look for unskilled jobs, as they were from agricultural backgrounds, and they were looking for cheap housing: in Sparkbrook they found both, and, as they sent for their families, they created a community. It seems to me that people studying white working class migration into the big cities in the nineteenth century could well take a look at the migration patterns of Asians and Afro-Caribbeans since the second world war. The same pattern that these followed was similar to that of the Italians in the 1870s and 1880s and it seems likely that the English, Scottish and Welsh people also did so.

Even within the working class there was clear stratification. My father, as a street bookmaker, was held by some to have a disreputable job, but economically he was well off. My mother came from a back to back up the yard in Aston, while my grandfather had one of the only two houses in his street with two downstairs rooms and a toilet in his own backyard, as well as an Ascot water heater. When I interviewed my father's uncle, aged 97, about Sparkbrook in the 1890s, and asked him where he had lived, he listed nine houses in nine years: all of these but one were within a hundred yards radius. When rural immigrants moved into the city they brought their villages with them. The idea of urban villages is popular today but again one needs to look at historical patterns. Any big city can be broken up into a number of towns, largely based on class, with clearly defined boundaries - canals, railways, main roads and so on, and within towns, there are smaller units or villages - maybe just a few streets. These loosely defined and overlapping 'villages' are connected by corner pubs and corner shops, and also by the main shopping thoroughfares with pubs, cinemas, a billiard hall, and perhaps a theatre, and where at the weekends was the 'monkey run', where groups of girls paraded up and down looking for boyfriends. These main thoroughfares gave cohesion to neighbourhood, round which these urban villages congregated. Villages were often based on status within the working class or kinship networks because when rural people came into the city they

reacted to poverty in the same way as people always reacted to poverty: they tried to bank together. There were charities and there was some institutional help, but much of that was seen as outside interference. The real friends of the poor against poverty were other poor themselves, and the poor that were going to help each other were the people who knew each other and were probably related. This doesn't mean that there were no disputes, but when they came into the city people tried to settle down by somebody they knew and they tended to stay in the vicinity for many years, creating ties of kinship.

The women were responsible for the home, and where the family moved to. Many older people with a working class background recall that when they married they often moved into the same street as, or very near to, the wife's mother. Interconnecting kinship networks, which are very important, gave an important role to women, particularly older women, who might become the matriarchs of the street. Although some historians would disagree, I would argue that working class women had a loyalty to class rather than gender. They had an important role to play as keepers of stories and information which they transmitted from generation to generation. Many of these matriarchs were the old wise women of the streets - and many of these wise women were people who had come in from the country when they were young girls. My great grandmother, for instance, was the one in her street. Apart from providing remedies these women were the local layers-out and unofficial midwives: when they had come in from the countryside they had brought their skills and local lore with them. Many national historians of working class life do not recognise the importance of rural life to the city: the countryside was so much closer a century ago. One of these layers-out pointed out that it had to be remembered that in poor areas of Birmingham with back to back housing there was only one room downstairs and two up and that people could not afford a chapel of rest, so the body was kept at home for seven days until the funeral. It would be on the kitchen table with the life of the family going on around it and neighbours coming in to pay their respects - and one of the family had to sit up at night to keep it company. The way in which it was done was lore passed on from generation to generation.

From the outside poorer communities were not seen as villages or neighbourhoods but as an abyss or a hell on earth. Well meaning middle class men who went into these slum areas in the 1870s and 1880s saw themselves as explorers like Livingstone or Stanley. They saw a dark environment which seemed to be threatening, not only in the physical sense of chimneys belting out smoke, and houses crowded together with light and fresh air pushed out, but also that the inhabitants were seen as part of a dark race. Fear of what they saw as this new stunted race led to the idea of sending children abroad to the wide open spaces of Australia and Canada, with bodies such as Barnardo's taking part with the idea of making the children physically stronger. Social engineering like this was respectable before World War 1, and this did not only apply to the right wing - Beatrice Webb advocated the setting up of labour camps for those of the poor who would not work according to middle class interpretations. This was a common theme across the political agenda in the late nineteenth century. If you look at these poorer areas more closely, though they were seen as a netherworld from outside, from inside people saw them as neighbourhoods.

To conclude, here is a poem from Sid Garrett, who left school at fourteen, which to me evokes the tension between a bad environment and nostalgia for a community which was based on kin, on neighbourliness and on people in poverty pulling together. It's called 'Brummagem Courtyard'.

Born in a Brummagem courtyard
That was built in Victorian days,
The back to back houses in crumbling bricks
Which seldom saw the sun's rays.

Us kids played summat like football,
Scored goals with some brick end or tins,
Tore holes in our hand-me-down clothing,
Had bruises and cuts on our shins.

And the wenches brought dolls in our courtyard,
And they'd pat them, and scold them, and nag,
And treat them like real proper babbies,
The dolls made of sawdust and rag.

Then a man from the Council decided
That all on us lived in a slum,
So they pulled down our Brummagem courtyard
And we were scattered all over old Brum.

That's summat that people call progress,
But I'd go back today if I could,
To play marley and tipcat and hop skip and jump
In that courtyard in old Ladywood.

*Dr Carl Chinn is Community Historian,
the University of Birmingham and Birmingham Library Services.*

Editor's note. This is an edited version of an unscripted talk in which Dr Chinn discussed his ideas of the importance of working class history. Apart from many examples in the talk, it was followed by a series of slides with further commentary.

THE BIRMINGHAM HISTORY VAN

Birmingham Public Libraries' "History Van" was the brainchild of John Dolan, currently Acting Director, with the aim of taking a van of local history "goodies" to people who would not otherwise think of coming into a local history library - probably mainly from the inner city area, and including the elderly and the physically disabled. A bid for funding was made to the Inner City Partnership and eventually this was granted in December 1990, the total amount available, to provide a van and its equipment, being £60,000. The main problem was that this money had to be committed by March 31st 1991, which led to a decision to adapt a standard vehicle rather than to commission anything purpose built. A Mercedes 811 Diesel van was selected and a small team drew up plans for the interior design and the equipment to be included: the work was carried out by GC Smith of Loughborough. The completed van was received in the summer of 1991 and was immediately put into action touring around libraries, community centres and residential homes in the city, giving talks and presentations on local history and the resources available for its study.

In a 22 foot van there is not a great deal of space, but there is seating for eight adults, with a tailgate lift to provide wheelchair access. One aim was to provide equipment which could be used creatively to produce a range of information or memorabilia from the users - so that people would not merely watch but actively take part. Thus the van includes equipment to enable this to be done, including tape recorders and an Apple Macintosh computer and scanner. Other items include a public address system, display boards, a screen for showing slides, a video player and microfilm readers. Four hundred popular photographs from all over the city were copied and mounted for use on the vehicle and a basic collection of local history publications is included. The walls of the van are carpeted to enable photographs, maps and illustrations to be attached by 'velcro'. Power is supplied by traction batteries and a rotary converter, which has implications for making recordings as it produces something of a background whine when more than the internal lights are used.

The exterior of the van includes special design work by local artist Colin Howkin which was commissioned through the Public Art commissions agency at a cost of about £3000. This provides a very eye catching appearance and it was initially assumed that this alone would attract people on board to find out what we were doing. This, however, proved not to be the case and we now advertise in advance or target existing groups to work with.

The inclusion of the computer equipment was to enable photographs and documents that people brought with them to be immediately copied without having to be borrowed or taken away, so that we could actively add to our collections, particularly where there are weaknesses - for instance pictures of family life, domestic scenes, etc. An important point here is that it is standard practice to ask the person concerned for permission to use the material in the library: the answer has always been 'yes'. The initial intention was to have a colour photocopier for this purpose but size and expense made this impracticable. Andy Saxon from the University of Central England became involved at this stage as he was carrying out research along these

lines and provided trial software to enable us to scan, index and keyword the photographs collected. He is still developing the second stage of this project which will enable retrieval of any images scanned by the computer, and we are jointly investigating the possibility of producing a CD Rom of the History Van collection.

As mentioned above, the van visits a wide range of locations and organisations. It has, for instance, been out about fifty times in the first half of 1994. It is used mainly by local studies staff, but it has also been used by community libraries and other bodies. A good deal of reminiscence work has been done - Carl Chinn, Birmingham's Community Historian has used it on several occasions, for example. The van seems most effective when a small group can sit in comfort, relax and look at the resources, and then talk and share their experiences: several oral history recordings have been made and materials donated through working in this way.

Schools are seen as one of the target groups. For example, as part of an exercise on finding out about local transport, the local studies library co-operated with the Theatre in Education Company to provide both drama and documentary evidence about the topic for the local school: after the performance and questioning of the characters, the children spent time in the van looking at such sources as maps, directories, photographs and a video. In another situation the sound archive of Charles Parker, a well known radio producer, was used as a base for asking children questions about their interest in various kinds of music, and twenty three tapes of conversation and music were produced. The same exercise was done with elderly people and some interesting comparisons emerged.

During the summer in particular the van attends carnivals and events in parks, and there is a side awning that can be pulled down to increase display space. On one occasion this space was used by the music department of Birmingham Public Libraries to provide a free barbecue to attract people to the van to reminisce about what music meant to them and the types of music they enjoyed.

The van is certainly becoming well known in the area and is becoming more widely used, and the aim is to extend its use still further. One problem, however, is that of staffing, as it is just one part of the librarians' duties. Another problem is that no driver is allocated to the van and, although it can be driven on a normal licence, many staff are reluctant to try as it is considerably larger than a Transit van, so a small pool of willing drivers has had to be developed to try to make sure that its potential can be fully exploited. Apart from library staff there are a few volunteers from local history societies who are willing to take the van out.

As far as we are aware the Local History Van is the only vehicle of its type and has certainly generated very positive reactions and publicity for the Department. If anyone is thinking of developing a similar project or would like any further information on this one, please contact Richard Albutt at the Central Library, Chamberlain Square, Birmingham. B3 3HQ.

Patrick Baird is Head, Local Studies and History, and Richard Albutt is Community History Development Librarian, Birmingham Public Libraries.

THE SHARP END BEFORE LUNCH

Following the success of the panel discussion at Umbrella 1, and open forum was built into this year's programme. As suggested by the title, it was the last session on Sunday morning (ie of the weekend), but despite this it drew a good audience and plenty of comment and discussion. The panellists were Doug Hindmarch, Paul Sturges and Diana Winterbotham, with Ian Jamieson in the chair.

The question of researching for enquirers and charging for the work done arose early on, with a question as to what the panel thought about charging for services, and there was lively discussion. One important point made was that it was necessary to decide at what stage an enquiry became chargeable research. Another speaker made the point that readers should really do their own research and that librarians should basically look after their own collections first. The librarian's first duty was towards the local authority and the local taxpayer, so housekeeping jobs to exploit the collections should come first: all enquirers had a right to expect local studies staff to enable them to use the collection. After that, libraries could either charge or expect readers to do their own research. Despite a generally strong dislike of charges in principle, it seemed to be the view overall that in today's situation there was a case for making a charge, and there was one interesting comment that while the speaker hated the thought of any erosion of free services, as a user he would be prepared to pay if he needed the information badly. One or two delegates, however, were strongly against charging, and it was pointed out that not all libraries are yet under pressure to make charges.

Difficulties then arose when libraries had to decide who to charge and how much, the position of readers who could not afford to pay, and where the amounts raised went to. In Cambridgeshire the money is spent on buying in staff time to replace that of the researcher, but in most libraries it appeared simply to go into general library funds. The level of charges was a problem, as were the expectations by employers of money raising activities. Oxfordshire, which charged £12 per hour up front (the same as the charge at Oxfordshire Record Office) found that the number of enquiries had dropped, and the library had never met its target income of £2000. One example of an anomaly was in Nottinghamshire, where the scheme charged schools if the work was part of the curriculum, but not if the work was to publicise the library service.

Almost inevitably, the local government review was brought up, with a question about the fate of a single local collection if a county became three separate districts, while another questioner was concerned about librarians newly appointed to the Counties at the last reorganisation in 1974. There was a good deal of discussion, much of it related to relationships with record offices, with a majority seeming to feel that joining up with these could be a good thing: as one delegate put it, the public wants one stop shopping, and it could ensure the survival of libraries and even stimulate usage. The position of record offices got some attention and one point made was that they have a strong case in favour of maintaining unity because it would be difficult to break them up because of terms and conditions of deposit. They also seemed to have got their act together

early as far as protest were concerned. Again, they perform a clearly defined function, whereas county councillors often still see libraries in terms of a date stamp. Thus if library local collections were threatened perhaps it would be better to hitch on to a record office than be broken up. It was commented that Gloucestershire had reached this conclusion. Two of the delegates, however, felt that archivists were not as service-oriented as librarians, and questioned whether there was a danger of archivists taking over the librarians' role, and that this was important: there was a difference in type of enquiry. Perhaps record offices should hitch on to libraries. The development of more local studies centres with archives and libraries brought together under one roof was also advanced as a solution.

Size of authority was then brought into the discussion. After the previous comments, one delegate suggested that it would be a good thing to revert to smaller authorities - historically, cities had done better than counties for services because they were more parochial. Comments on this pointed out that in pre-1974 days administrative systems did not allow complete coverage in local history, and the question was raised as to whether smaller local authorities would be able to pay for specialist staff. It was also said that some counties had district local collections supported by a large central collection, Gloucestershire being mentioned as an example.

The old question of the image of librarians was discussed at some length. The role of the individual was seen to be vital here: an outgoing, positive local studies librarian providing specialist encouragement through facilitating a quality link between the collection and the public would create a good image and credibility for the collection by organising it and knowing it thoroughly. Our watchword should be quality, ability and knowledge. It was also said that the image librarians projected could not be generalised, as readers had their own experience of the service they received. Librarians, however, needed to have confidence and ability to put their subject across - but they should be librarians first and historians second. It was wrong to put people in charge of local collections if they were not happy with the work. There needed to be more encouragement to the right people by means of more specialist training, more specialist posts and better salaries. It was pointed out that about four library schools teach the subject. Local history diplomas were now organised by several universities, including the Open University, and these were seen as relevant, though none of course were specifically for local studies librarians. The possibility of distance learning courses was also raised, but there was no response from the audience about this. Another strongly made point was the danger of dilution of the services offered when specialist librarians had to spend time working on general library work, and one delegate wondered in situations like this whether the profession of local studies librarian would survive.

Following on from this the panel was asked for comments on ways of improving services, and to what extent librarians should expect co-operation from other departments. Various points were made here, but one main thread was the relationship with branch libraries. This was important, for example, in terms of awareness of what was being produced locally - there needed to be a mechanism

for material to be collected from local areas. The library could be a link with old people to collect and use material. It was noted that in Sheffield the branch libraries, as well as the local studies library, maintained regular links with schools. Exhibitions and displays could be prepared in the central library for branches to show what material was available. Much, of course, depended on the interest of individual branch librarians, and in the various service points with local studies: this should also apply to other central library departments. To a question from a Scottish member as to whether there were any recommendations from the panel which she could take back to her committee, the LSG Guidelines were recommended, and Lancashire County Library's policy statement was mentioned. Strathkelvin's system, whereby outlying libraries have become involved with local studies and have achieved rapport with their local communities, especially by way of such things as photographs and reminiscences, was commended, and it was suggested that the questioner should get in touch with Don Martin.

A final comment from Diana Winterbotham was that the latest Act of Parliament said 'leave books where they are most used', and that librarians needed to develop new strategies to cope with new situations.

Overall, the liveliness of the debate in this open session served to demonstrate that local studies librarianship has indeed much life in it.



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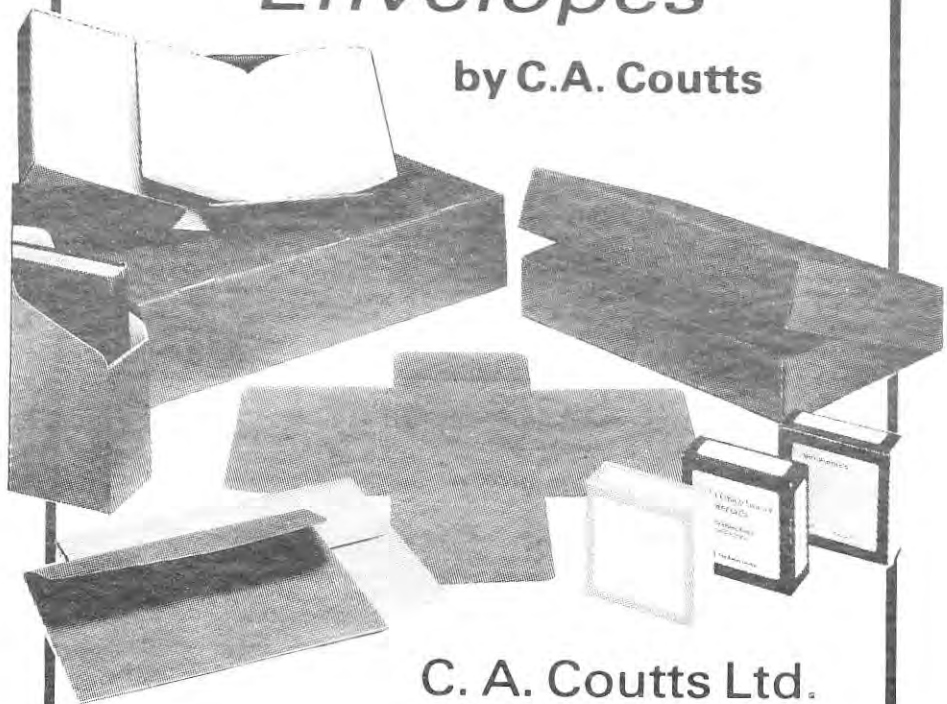
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