



THE UNIVERSITY  
of LIVERPOOL

January 2005

Issue 12

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LIVERPOOL UNIVERSITY

**LUCAS**

CENTRE *for* ARCHIVE STUDIES



*Speakers at 'Crime in the Archives' (L to R) Hilary Chambers, Cheshire Record Office, Paul Booth, University of Liverpool, Angela Brabin, author, Dr Matt Houlbrook, University of Liverpool.*

**“Putting the Past on Trial: Crime in the Archives”  
11 December 2004**

The imposing setting of the Crown Court in St George's Hall provided a fitting backdrop to LUCAS's Archive Awareness Campaign event, 'Crime in the Archives'. The afternoon proved inspiring and educational for participants from a wide range of backgrounds, from academics to family

historians, and from local historians to those with no previous experience of using archives. First of all we were given an insight into the wider relevance of court and police records by Dr Matt Houlbrook of the University of Liverpool, who described how his research had led him to discover more about British sub-cultures of the 1920s. By examining the boundaries between what is legal and illegal at any given time, he argued, we

can gain a wider picture of social history, including learning more about subjects so often missing from the historical record, such as gay culture and black communities. Next to speak was Angela Brabin, who gave an account of the research she carried out in order to write her book, *The Black Widows of Liverpool*. The story of the two sisters who, during the late nineteenth century, systematically murdered members of their families in order to reap the payments from their life insurance had all the more resonance as the trial of the sisters had been held in the very courtroom we were sitting in.



Hilary Chambers, Cheshire Record Office

Hilary Chambers and Paul Booth then gave us an insight into researching crime in local record offices. Hilary, archivist at Cheshire Record Office, described the importance of the underused Quarter Sessions records in researching crime and punishment, and their wider research potential in a variety of subjects, from genealogy to sociology and psychology. Paul, from the University of Liverpool, continued Hilary's theme of

researching life stories by recounting some of the tales found in local archives. These included a surprising account from the records of the Court of the Bishop of Chester in 1720, concerning a rude song which had been sung by a Lancashire woman about her neighbour!

Finally, Steve Binns, Liverpool City Council historian, described the ways in which archive copies of newspapers can aid research into crime and punishment. Steve told us the fascinating story of Bartholomew Binns – sadly, he pointed out, not an ancestor of his – who had come to be known as one of the worst hangmen of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Following the discontinuation of Bartholomew's services in London, he had come to Liverpool, where, we learnt, he had hanged the two sisters spoken about



St George's Hall, venue for 'Crime in the Archives'

earlier in the day by Angela Brabin. Steve also emphasised the importance of enjoying research, and the fact that these resources were available to everyone: a fitting note on which to end an event which aimed to raise awareness

and use of archive resources amongst the public.

Overall, then, the afternoon provided something for everyone, from the seasoned researcher to the simply curious. From local history to sociology and scandalous stories, there was something to spark everyone's interest and inspire new ways of, and new reasons for, using archives.

Jo Wong, University of Liverpool

**A date for the diary:  
'Archives amid division:  
the Northern Ireland  
experience' – Dr Gerry  
Slater, Public Record  
Office of Northern  
Ireland at the 2005 AGM**

The 7<sup>th</sup> AGM will be held on Wednesday, 16 February, 2005 at 5.30 p.m. at The Sherrington Building, University of Liverpool, Ashton Street, Liverpool.

Members should have already have received a personal invitation to the AGM but all are welcome. Dr Slater's talk will be followed by wine and light refreshments.

If you would like to attend and haven't already notified us, contact Caroline Williams (contact details on p. 1) A map showing the location is at <http://www.liv.ac.uk/maps/precinctplan.pdf>

## Political Pressures and the archival record: reprise

The international conference held by LUCAS in the summer of 2003 has continued to arouse interest in the world. At the end of the conference proposals were made for carrying the work forward, and these were followed up at the International Congress on Archives, held in Vienna in August this year. The congress organisers allowed us a whole session, which was well attended. We were also glad to come into contact with a group working on the human rights aspect of archives. After our session a small group of colleagues (coming from the USA and Australia, in addition to our participation) got together and formulated two possible projects, which might form the basis of research programmes.

The first project was to expand the already existing Code of Ethics of the International Council on Archives. This is binding on all members but is rather general in tone. Our idea is to try to find a formulation that would guide and support anyone (especially anyone who thinks themselves far from power) who might be faced with the problem of deal with politically sensitive records – including records which, if revealed, might have explosive consequences. There are many

examples in the world today, of cases like this: we might think of the example of the whistleblowers at GCHQ. If we can find a proper formulation to meet these cases, it could also be adopted by national professional associations. There is of course a considerable potential public interest in the question.

The second project was to seek ways to set up a publicly available register of cases where politically sensitive records have been the centre of attention. Again, there are many examples of this – we might think of the case of the criminal records held by the Hull police before the Soham murders. A preliminary (international) list was put to the Liverpool conference. Such a register would of course have to be maintained over time.

*Michael Cook*

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*In an occasional series we profile members of the LUCAS Executive Committee. In this issue:*

### **Janice Tullock**

Janice graduated from Lancaster University in 1991 and began her career in the research department of a trade union. After gaining experience in a variety of archive organisations she undertook training in archive administration and records management at Aberystwyth. Her first

post after qualification was with Buckinghamshire Record Office and in 1996 Janice moved to Kent Archives Service to take up the post of Senior Archivist, overseeing archives in a variety of locations and setting up the new East Kent Archives Centre at Dover, where she became Manager. She continued to develop new archive services after a move back north to set up a new service for Wirral Archives at Wirral Museum. Since 2001 Janice has been Archives Development Officer for the North West initially for the North West Regional Archive Council and latterly for the regional agency Museums, Libraries and Archives North West (MLA North West).



In this post she has led the implementation of the regional archive strategy, the Logjam project, the North West Archives Festival and various other initiatives. She is interested in the strategic management of archives and the future fortunes of Liverpool Football Club

*For more information about the work of NWMLA see [www.nwmla.org.uk](http://www.nwmla.org.uk)*



# International Congress on Archives 2004

23-29 August - Vienna - Austria  
Archives, Memory and Knowledge

International Council on Archives Congress, August 2004

## Vienna in the autumn

Several members of the Executive Committee took part in the International Council on Archives Congress held in Vienna in August. The ICA congress is held every four years and is a great opportunity to find out what's happening internationally. Over 2000 delegates from 116 countries were able to choose from hundreds of sessions dealing with all aspects of archives and records management. In addition the Congress made formal recommendations about a number of issues: these included recommendations for the protection of the records and archives in event of armed conflict; a call for free access to archives, a call for the UN to adopt the final report on the perpetrators of human rights; and a call to UNESCO to support project designed to preserve and provide access to archives relating to the defence of human rights. There

was also a call on the UN to organise and International Archives Day. A full list of recommendations is on the conference website at <http://www.wien2004.ica.org>

**LUCAS Chair** Caroline Williams is an active member of the ICA Section on Archival Education and took part in a number of presentations on the work of the Section and, in particular on work that she has been carrying out on international distance learning opportunities 'No Boundaries, No Limits: Distance Education for Archivists and Records Managers' provided an overview of distance learning provision and its implications.

Elsewhere in the conference programme, Dr Michael Cook took part in a session on Political Pressure (see p.3 for a longer report) while Margaret Procter facilitated informal discussion sessions associated with the ICA's journal *Comma*. Elizabeth Oxborrow-Cowan, the fourth member of the Executive present in Vienna, may have felt that she picked



Not all work: the Conference dinner took place in Vienna Town Hall ...

the short straw in all this – for the duration of the Congress she had an administrative role with the ICA Secretariat helping to ensure that the Congress organisation ran smoothly.

Again, a full list of conference speakers, with the full text of many of their presentations is available from the Congress website.

### In the pipeline: future LUCAS Events

**Feb 16 2005:** AGM.

**May/June 2005:** publication of *Proceedings of Political Pressure and the Archival Record conference*.

**Nov. 2005** Following the success of 'Crime in the Archives' the Executive Committee is considering running a similar afternoon on 'Death in the Archives'

**Would you like to join LUCAS? If so, please complete this form and send to:  
Margaret Procter, Associate Director and Secretary,  
LUCAS, 9 Abercromby Square, Liverpool, L69 7WZ**

**I wish to join LUCAS and enclose cheque/postal order for £10 payable to the 'University of Liverpool'**

**Name (Block capitals):** .....

**Address (Block capitals):** .....

**If you would like information on institutional membership, contact Margaret Procter on 0151 794 2411**

