



THE UNIVERSITY
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LIVERPOOL UNIVERSITY

LUCAS

CENTRE for ARCHIVE STUDIES

From the Director, Caroline Williams:

A happy new year to all LUCAS members. 2001 was an interesting year, and our two training days, **Publishing Local History** and the **Descriptive Standards for Catholic Archivists** workshop are described in this *Newsletter*. Unfortunately our day on **Documenting the Historic Environment** planned for November had to be cancelled due to lack of take-up: but it was an interesting programme and both the Executive and the speakers are keen for it to be rescheduled.



Caroline Williams (centre) pictured at a meeting of the International Council on Archives Section on Education and Training held in Marburg, Germany, in September

We are particularly delighted to congratulate Michael Cook who received a guest professorship from the Archives College of Renmin, part of the University of Beijing. He was also invited to China in November as a guest speaker on the first Chinese PhD Forum for Archives. This was partly organised by An Xiaomi an associate professor at Renmin and a recent LUCAS student. Congratulations are also due to Xiaomi who received her PhD in July. (See picture on page 4. An account of Michael's trip will appear in the next *Newsletter*.)

We are now looking forward to 2002. Our first event, which we hope you will all attend, is the fourth LUCAS AGM. This will be held on Wednesday 27 February at 5.30 pm, once again at the Glaxo Centre. We are delighted to have as our speaker Mr **David Vaisey** the President of the Society of Archivists who will be speaking on *Now and then: reflections on forty years in archives* and looking forward to the future. A day on the *Archives of science and technology* takes place on 6 March. More NEWS on page 2.

Publishing Local History Day 12 September 2001

The five speakers at this excellent day school covered several facets of publishing. **Sylvia Harrop** opened proceedings (*pictured below*) by relating the experiences of the Birkdale and Ainsdale Historical Research Society. This society endeavours to make local history available to local people. Its hardback books combine scholarship with readability and an attractive format on good quality paper. The decision by members to add publishing to their researching and writing skills led to a steep learning curve into aspects of printing, finance, marketing and storage. It proved, however, to be a sound decision. Now, each new publication is funded by the profits of its predecessor.

Using his expertise as co-editor for the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, **Chris Lewis** then described the background to the publication of academic journals like *Transactions*. Editors looked for originality in submitted articles. Perhaps the paper covered a subject never studied before or presented new facts on an old topic. Submitted papers were read by the editors



to assess their suitability and then by two independent referees.

Originality was also a factor in choosing books for the reviews section. Choice of reviewer was also important: informed but impartial judgement was necessary.

Following a buffet lunch, **Dave Cotterill** and **Ray Physick** dealt with publishing via the World Wide Web. They related how Liverpool Record Office is the driving force behind 'Liverpool 2007', the electronic publication of Liverpool's history between 1207 and 2007. This ambitious task already includes articles linked to historical milestones and over 1000 images showing the city's development. Besides a notice board and a quiz, individual stories from local people record the diversity of the urban community

Colin Wilkinson of Liverpool's Bluecoat Press then described his work as a publisher of local history. His aim is to introduce people to the particularity of Liverpool and to the importance of its social history. Although Colin describes his softback books as 'cheap and cheerful' and professes not to be an academic publisher, his *Buildings of Liverpool* by Quentin Hughes

is a book of major architectural importance.

Simon Fowler, editor of *Family History Monthly*, brought proceedings to a close with an entertaining account of how to please editors of history magazines. Intending authors should adopt a professional attitude. There is a need for well researched, well written and well presented articles. The task is to communicate. Simon's many stylistic tips included varying the length of sentences and using Anglo-Saxon rather than Latinate words.

This was a most useful, informative and interesting day. The delegates extend their thanks to the five speakers and to Margaret Procter, Caroline Williams and David Stoker for their hard work in organizing the event.

Audrey Coney

LUCAS NEWS

Our new publication *Archives in the UK and the Government Agenda* is scheduled to appear in time for the AGM (£5 and £4 to members). It includes revised versions of our 2000 and 2001 AGM addresses by Sarah Tyacke and Vic Grey, and a consideration of social inclusion within archives by one of our 2001 MARM students, Paula Brikci. Overall it provides a snapshot of the archives landscape at the beginning of the 21st century as the profession seeks to come to terms with an ever-shifting political and social landscape.

A visit to Canada

Executive Committee member **Helen Ford** and her partner **Gary Collins** recently spent a couple of weeks in Canada, enjoying what some of us might regard as a busman's holiday. Here, Gary relates what they found

in Vancouver. (A version of this article previously appeared in the Society of Archivists Newsletter.)

What do you do when you've just finished a six-month secondment to the Society of Archivists and want a break before returning to work for your employer? You go to Vancouver for a two week holiday and take the opportunity to meet some Canadian archivists.

As a result my partner **Helen Ford** (Lattice Group/National Gas Archive) and I found ourselves visiting two repositories and meeting lecturers from the School of Library, Archival & Information Studies at the University of British Columbia (<http://www.slais.ubc.ca>). Our visits had been arranged in advance by **Laura Millar**, a consultant archivist and one of the archive course lecturers. She was keen to hear about business archives in the UK and Helen was keen to find out what was taught on the archive course.

The first visit was to the British Columbia Provincial Archives at Victoria on Vancouver Island. Provincial Archivist Gary Mitchell very kindly took time out from preparing for the Canadian archivists conference at Winnipeg to show us around. Of particular interest was the fact that the provincial archives had members of staff dedicated to dealing with requests made under Freedom of Information and it made us wonder how long it would be before this was happening in the UK. We also had the opportunity to look at the Provincial Archives website in their searchroom (www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca)

At the University of British Columbia in Vancouver where we had lunch with **Dr Luciana Duranti** (Graduate Advisor and Chair of the Archival

Studies Programme), **Terry Eastwood** (Associate Professor), **Heather MacNeil** (Assistant Professor) and Laura Millar. After Helen had passed on details of LUCAS and a copy of their first publication *New Directions* we met **Chris Hives**, University Archivist and **George Brandak**, Manuscripts Curator in charge of Special Collections, who gave us a brief tour of the strongrooms.

The tour ended with a look at the UBC Archives website (www.library.ubc.ca/spcoll/ubc_arch/ubc_arch.html) with Records Analyst & Archivist **Erwin Wodarczak**. Erwin also gave us a view of the prototype website allowing for searches across Canada (similar to the HMC's ARCHON). He used the Canadian Pacific Railway as a search example because it was a business and because its records featured heavily in the Chung Collection, material donated by Dr Wallace Chung to UBC, which had set up a separate gallery for the records (www.library.ubc.ca/chung).

Using CPR was also appropriate as one of its former engines was on display at a Vancouver community centre just around the corner from where we were staying.



Busman and woman's holiday in Canada. L to R: Luciana Duranti, Helen Ford, Laura Millar and Heather MacNeil.

We thoroughly enjoyed our break and welcomed the opportunity to meet archivists from another country. It was an

interesting experience and I don't think many archivists can say that they were visiting a repository in the morning and whale watching in the afternoon.

Gary Collins, Unilever plc

MARM: a view from the coalface

The postgraduate Master of Archives and Records Management degree has run in one form or another for over 50 years. Kevin Bolton, a 2001 graduate, reflects on how it prepared him for the 'real' world

During the course I never thought about whether it was adequately preparing me for employment. I was more concerned with ensuring that I met the coursework deadlines and did the required reading. It was not until I started working (at Liverpool Record Office) that I realised how much I had learnt and how much confidence it had given me. Not only did it give me a solid understanding of the theory behind the job, but it taught me important 'practical' skills such as giving presentations, team work, dealing with customers, cataloguing, report writing and managing a repository.

I feel that my pre-course experience was also important in preparing me for my first job as an archivist. I undertook two years work as an Archives Assistant at the Surrey History Centre where I learnt an enormous amount about the type of material a local authority record office holds. Despite doing a 'Archives and History' module on the course it is impossible to cover everything in detail in the classroom. Many of my colleagues from the course who are now working in a local authority record office for the first time have told me that at

first they found public duty difficult since the customers, especially family historians, and other members of staff expected them to be experts.

The one part of the course that I found the most difficult to grasp was Records Management. I may have found it easier if I had undertaken some pre-course Records Management experience or had some practical experience on the course. Despite this I still feel it prepared me well enough to be a Records Manager. The most difficult and demanding part of the course was Medieval Palaeography! It was also, however, very rewarding and I acquired a skill which many of my contemporaries sadly do not have.

Description standards for Catholic archivists: a workshop

The Catholic Archives Society came to LUCAS for a workshop day on archival description standards. Most of the members of the society work without professional support, and many of them are self-trained. The majority are archivists of dioceses or of the local provinces of religious orders. This means that it has been difficult for them to keep up to date with the rapid changes that have taken place over the last few years. Since the international congress on archives in Seville in 2000 we have not only had to cope with

the two international standards, but also with the standards and technologies needed to join in the British national networks. All this is quite difficult for isolated archivists and informally trained groups to keep up with. 26 Catholic archivists attended the day, including the CAS secretary, Margaret Harcourt Williams, and the past chairman Fr Chris Smith from Dartmouth in Devon. The society is now

working towards developing a software package that will cover most of the basic processes of archival management and be straightforward enough for a largely amateur membership

The CAS workshop was held on the fateful 11 September 2001. Participants heard the news of the attacks in America as they left. Let's hope it did not diminish their enthusiasm.

Michael Cook



Michael Cook pictured talking to Chinese archives students during the first PhD Forum on Archives held in Renmin University of China (RUC) in November. More than 110 delegates including more than 60 PhD students and their supervisors attended. Other invited overseas scholars included David Bearman (USA), Luciana Duranti (Canada), Masahito Ando (Japan), Eun Park (Korea) and Brent Lee (Canada). In speaking on the role of the archives profession, Michael's paper offered reflection on the nature of an archives service, the management of current records, user services, new legislation, the electronic revolution and archival networks.

Would you like to join LUCAS? If so, please complete 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
