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Issue 19

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LIVERPOOL UNIVERSITY

**LUCAS**

CENTRE *for* ARCHIVE STUDIES



*Professor Luciana Duranti*

## The 10<sup>th</sup> LUCAS AGM, 7<sup>th</sup> February 2008

By Jo Dodd, MARM student

### AGM Lecture

The 10<sup>th</sup> AGM of Liverpool University Centre for Archive Studies was held on 7<sup>th</sup> February and was well attended by nearly 60 students, academics and archives professionals.

Speaking at the meeting was Professor Luciana Duranti of the University of British Columbia, particularly well known for her work in the field of diplomatics. Since 1998, Duranti has been Director of the interPARES (International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems) project, which aims to explore the issue of authenticity in the long-term preservation of electronic records. The third stage of interPARES began in 2007 and seeks to build upon the theory and method explored in stages 1 and 2, to offer practical solutions to the authentication of electronic records.

At the AGM, Duranti's presentation 'It's All About Trust: the reliability, accuracy and authenticity of digital records' focused upon this issue, stressing its current urgency in the digital age. Duranti emphasized the ease with which original versions of electronic records can be manipulated without trace, thereby highlighting the need for a proactive response from the archival community through-out the record's lifecycle.

The presentation was well received and followed by a lively question and answer session. Following the AGM, the discussion continued over drinks and refreshments served in the University's Science Lecture Block.

The lecture is available as a podcast from  
[www.liv.ac.uk/lucas/Sequence%2001.wmv](http://www.liv.ac.uk/lucas/Sequence%2001.wmv)

Further details on the interPARES project can be found at  
[www.interpares.org](http://www.interpares.org).

## Other AGM business

The Directors presented a brief account of the Centre's activities and accounts during 2007/8. The accounts stood at £3154.84, which is acceptable. Events included the 'Pop in the Archives' event at Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, part of the Archives Awareness Campaign; the LUCAS seminar series; a training event on business archives held the same day as the Society of Archivists' welcome party for the Archives and Records Management students; an Open Day for the MARM course. The Directors thanked the members and especially the institutional members of LUCAS for their continuing interest and support.

There were no elections held. A University place on the Executive Committee remained vacant but has since been filled (see page 4 for more details).

Also discussed was the planned programme of activities for 2008-9. A seminar series will be held at some point during the year. 'On Holiday in the Archives' will continue the popular series of 'in the archives' events and will be held in the autumn. The training event and welcome party for the students will also be in the autumn. More open days are planned for 2008/9. LUCAS, in partnership with the National Archives and University College London, is co-hosting the 2010 ICHORA conference in London.

See p. 4 of this newsletter for more information on these upcoming events.

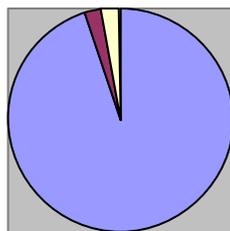
## Report on MARM Open Days

There have now been three very successful open days. The first was in Autumn 2006 and was well attended. We therefore followed this up with another in Autumn 2007. Almost 50 people attended.

On the registration form we asked the visitors for some information about where they were from and what their backgrounds were. Unsurprisingly many of them were from the local area but we also had visitors from further afield, including Ireland, the north east and the south of England.

After a full programme, including a mini palaeography lecture and talks by professionals who themselves attended the Liverpool course, there was the opportunity, at an informal drinks reception, for visitors to chat to the staff and speakers and ask further questions.

The feedback was very positive. All rated the day as either 'excellent' or 'very good' and almost all of them (blue area on chart) felt it had helped them to make or confirm a decision regarding a career in archives and records management and also about applying to the MARM programme.



The best feedback however was that over half of those attending went on to apply

for 2008/09 entry to the MARM course and several others expressed the intention to go and get work experience in the field so that they could apply for future years.

The day was so successful that it was repeated on April 16th 2008 and another is planned for the autumn.

## The Philosophy of the Archive

**Edinburgh  
10-11 April 2008**

LUCAS was represented by Michael Cook and Alex Buchanan at this conference organised by the Centre for Archive and Information Studies (CAIS) at the University of Dundee, with the sponsorship of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. It was part of a sequence of special events organised by CAIS, which, although rather a newcomer in the field of archives, has now an impressive programme of degree and distance courses, and events with wider impact. Speakers and attendees came from far afield, from USA, Canada, Germany, Norway and South Africa. It is intended that many of the papers will be published in a special issue of *Archival Science*.

Michael Cook reports: The ideas behind the philosophy of the archive proved to be far-ranging. Some of the discussion was about philosophy in the strict sense, as some of the leading fashionable philosophers of today – especially Derrida – have explicitly discussed the role of archives in our understanding of life. But the talk was more generally

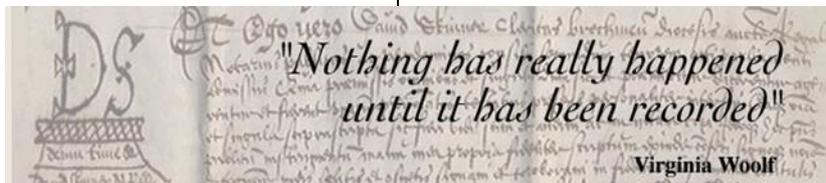
about the meaning and purpose of what we do. An important strand of debate was about the archive as the memory of a community, and of what a community might be – especially communities of neglected or semi-visible groups in society. We also noticed the misdemeanours of some communities over the world; the deliberate falsification of the record, the creation of misleading archives, and suppression of the truth: these alas are also characteristic of our times.

Germany and Africa were set into context, including by Elizabeth Shepherd (UCL), another keynote speaker. Themes of diversity and dissidence were treated in particular by Jim Burant and Andrew Flinn, alongside discussion of efforts to save the Feminist Library as an independent radical entity (Gail Chester), and the creative, as opposed to historical, uses intended for the archive of the Artists' Placement Group at the Tate (Sue Breakell and Victoria Worsley).

Centre for Memory at the Nelson Mandela Foundation), in an impassioned reconsideration of issues of data protection and FoI.

### **News from the National Archives of Zimbabwe**

LUCAS was also represented at the recent archives workshop held by the University of the West of England, Bristol, in April 2008. The theme was how to exploit collections of migrated archives from Africa, but the highlight of the day was a talk by Ivan Murambiwa, the current Director of National Archives of Zimbabwe. There was lively discussion by the meeting, which included several eminent experts (for example, Professor Terence Ranger of St Anthony's College Oxford). The good news is that there is good disinterested evidence that the Zimbabwe National Archives is continuing to give a good service, and has maintained a responsible standard for the maintenance of its holdings. It does indeed suffer, as do many other African archives, from lack of support from its government, and Mr Murambiwa gave specific information on some important archives which have been kept by other ministries and not transferred as they should have been. They also, predictably, suffer from lack of funds, and at the moment have no microfilm readers that are usable. Mr Murambiwa gave a good impression and is clearly a dedicated professional in good standing with his users. In view of the current problems with Zimbabwe it is good to know of this situation.



We came away from this event full of ideas and resolutions about the future. It would appear likely that there will be more events like this, picking out important features of our society and the role of record-keeping and interpretation in it.

Alex Buchanan reports: The subject, the Philosophy of the Archive, is timely: 'the archive' as a concept has taken root in disciplines far removed from record keeping, largely through the work of Foucault and Derrida and their interpreters. Yet, as Terry Cook (University of Manitoba, Canada), argued, in his rousing keynote paper, such theorists have rarely looked at the role of the archivist in the construction and interpretation of the archive.

In Edinburgh, the tables were turned, with speakers coming mainly from within the discipline but with a wide range of perspectives. Past practices in England,

In these contexts, the traditional relationship of the archive to past events, explored in stimulating papers by Geoffrey Yeo and Jennifer Meehan (amongst others), become irrelevant, as archives' potential relationship to future action takes priority. The 'lost in translation' aspect of recording performance was explored by Sarah Jones, whilst 'ghost archives' were seen to haunt their creators through the work of Giulia Barrera, in her role assisting the Italian investigation of the South American Condor plot. Memory (and forgetting) was another important theme, including Nick Barrett's discussion of 'The Nations' Memory Bank' for personal memorialisation and its potential for scholarship and entertainment. The contemporary politics of the archive, in both theory and practice, were never far from speakers' attention and were brought to the fore by the final keynote lecturer, Verne Harris (Head of the

## Changes within LUCAS

Michelle Alexander will be leaving her post at LUCAS but will remain on the Executive Committee which now consists of:

University members:

- \* Margaret Procter and Alexandrina Buchanan (*ex-officio*)
- \* Adrian Allan (Uni Archivist)
- \* Michelle Alexander (Uni Records Manager)
- \* Michael Cook (Honorary Senior Fellow)
- \* Antonio Da Cruz (Uni Map Curator)

External members:

- \* Sarah Starkey (Merseyside Maritime Museum)
- \* Janice Tullock (Archives & Heritage consultant)
- \* Ava Wieclawska (Wirral Archives).

Margaret and Alex are joint Directors. Alex will be the new Executive Committee Secretary but Michelle will be minutes secretary.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Freedom of Information: Three Years On

This event will be from 2pm to 4.50pm on Thursday 19 June in Lecture Theatre One, Rendall Building, University of Liverpool. It is a joint LUCAS and Society of Archivists North West event. There will be four speakers and time for discussion giving an update on how the legislation has worked in practice. This will include lessons learned, problems that have arisen and future developments. The cost is £25 (£20 for LUCAS members). Further details and booking forms can be downloaded from [www.liv.ac.uk/lucas/events](http://www.liv.ac.uk/lucas/events).

## Other future events

### Seminar Series

In the autumn term, a series of work-in-progress seminars will be held on the theme of 'Art and Evidence'. Speakers from historical, archival and art historical perspectives will discuss the problems and benefits of using visual evidence. Already confirmed are Prof. Richard Marks, (University of York/Cambridge) who will speak on 'In a perpetual state of becoming: the icon of the Mother of God of Vladimir', Prof. Matthew Cragoe (University of Hertfordshire), who will speak on political cartoons in the nineteenth century and Dr Alexandrina Buchanan (University of Liverpool), whose paper is provisionally entitled "Stones are mute teachers": Visual Evidence in the Nineteenth Century'.

Seminars will be held in the School of History in the evening (dates and times to be confirmed) and are aimed primarily at postgraduate students but staff and LUCAS members are warmly invited to attend.

### 'On Holiday in the Archives' 15 November 2008, Southport



Following on from our other "in the archives" events we are pleased to announce a holiday themed event aimed at the general public and linked to Archives Awareness week.

## Open Day at LUCAS

Following successful open days (see p.2) we intend to hold another in the autumn.

For more details on all events keep an eye on <http://www.liv.ac.uk/lucas/>

## EXTERNAL EVENTS

**Archive Fervour / Archive Further: Literature, Archives, and Literary Archives**, University of Aberystwyth, 9-11 July 2008

This event is advertised as a major interdisciplinary conference addressing the relationship between literary and archival studies, providing a forum to discuss the ways in which both fields intersect and to explore ways in which mutual co-operation can benefit their future development. Keynote speakers are Prof. Terry Cook (University of Manitoba), Jeff Cowton (The Wordsworth Trust), Prof. Carolyn Steedman (University of Warwick) and Prof. Julian Wolfreys (Loughborough University). Further details available at <http://www.aber.ac.uk/english/>.

### Would you or someone you know like to become a member of LUCAS?

Would you like to join LUCAS? If so, please send a cheque for £10 (annual membership fee) payable to the 'University of Liverpool' with your name, contact details (including email if possible) to: LUCAS, 9 Abercromby Square, Liverpool, L69 7WZ. You will receive a copy of each edition of the newsletter plus discounts on events. For information on institutional membership, contact Margaret Procter on 0151 794 2411 or [m.procter@liv.ac.uk](mailto:m.procter@liv.ac.uk).