



LIVERPOOL UNIVERSITY
LUCAS
CENTRE for ARCHIVE STUDIES

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Issue Highlights

Welcome to the Spring edition of the LUCAS newsletter.

Read all about our new publications, recent public and professional events and other interesting articles!

A word from our Director...

2006 has had a busy beginning here at LUCAS. Our AGM was the largest event we have had to date and this was followed by an interesting professional event on preserving digital archives. We have also been able to celebrate the launch of three successful publications, which have been written and contributed to by LUCAS and members of our Executive.

Caroline Williams, LUCAS Director

Student success across the Atlantic

LUCAS welcomed one of its distance-learning students to Liverpool after she travelled across the globe to receive her award. Shari L Jackson, Archivist for Coca Cola is based in Atlanta, Georgia, where all the archives for Coca Cola, collected since the company's creation in 1885, are housed.

Shari successfully completed her Diploma in Professional Studies in Archives and Records Management in 2004 and is the first distance-learning student to make the long journey to Liverpool to collect the award in person.

Shari was presented with her Diploma by Pro-Vice-Chancellor Chris Gaskell, with Professor Mike Hughes, Head of School of History also present.

Shari was delighted to receive her award. She said

Shari is awarded her diploma by Pro-Vice Chancellor Gaskell

"There is no programme available like this in the US and completing it has given me the chance to learn more about archives. It has been fantastic to be able to come to Liverpool to receive it".



LUCAS welcomes BBC Presenter and Genealogist to Liverpool

Liverpool University Centre for Archive Studies held its 8th Annual General Meeting in February and was delighted to welcome Dr Nick Barratt, Consultant Genealogist and Media Researcher as Guest Speaker.

The event fuelled the interest of archivists, students and the Liverpool public alike as over 250 people attended to hear about LUCAS and to listen to Dr Barratt speaking on 'Archives and the Media: Who do we think they are? What do they think we are doing?', making this the largest audience for the event ever.

Dr Barratt provided listeners with an insight into the use and perception of archives by the media and its development over the years.

A full report of the lecture can be read on page 2.

Caroline Williams with Dr Nick Barratt whose lecture generated a high level of public interest



LUCAS 8th Annual AGM - Event Report



Beginning with his work at the National Archives Medieval Enquiry Service, Dr Barratt described how he frequently found himself fielding questions of genealogy from the public. He discovered that interest in house, local and family history was driven by personal stories and experiences. When a television director from the programme 'House Detectives' came into the National Archives seeking information, Dr Barratt was able to enlighten him on the reality of archives and the scope of their usage.

Dr Barratt described his work on the programmes 'House Detectives', 'Invasion' and 'Seven Wonders of the Industrial World' and how he had to quickly adapt to the terminology of the media environment, including the fact that a researcher had less to do with scrutinizing archives than with telephone calls and making tea! It also introduced to him the fact that archives in reality were very different from the way that they were perceived by the media, commenting that on one occasion programme makers were surprised to discover that documents went back as far as the 16th Century.

Dr Barratt explained that the gap between media and 'reality' gradually began to close as programmes began to utilise more primary sources and documentary evidence in their production. However, he noted that television as a medium continued to use archives to meet their needs, rather than showing them as they really are. Documents that appeared in programmes were chosen for their aesthetic appearance and 'experts' were avoided in case they got in the way of the story.

Dr Barratt concluded that the recent popularity of family history programming looks set to continue, with a number of projects underway and that the Archives Awareness Campaign had been boosted by the media interest. He was keen that the archives world should embrace new media on offer but also to ensure that it is used to help preserve the past. The audience took the opportunity to ask many questions.

Following the lecture, wine and discussion flowed well into the evening, as the wide variety of attendees shared stories on their research and experience of archives and Dr Barratt was able to talk to many interested people. The evening included a raffle for a signed copy of his new book 'Who do you think you are? Discovering The Heroes And Villains In Your Family'

This year's AGM was a resounding success and left both professionals and the public alike anticipating LUCAS forthcoming events. Further details of these can be found at www.liv.ac.uk/lucas



Who do you think you are?

During his lecture, Dr Barratt discussed the concept and production of his most recognised television programme, BBC2's 'Who do you think you are?' He described genealogy as the 'Holy Grail of programmers' due to the level of public interest it generates.

'Who do you think you are?' sought stories of national celebrities that would capture the intensity and personal satisfaction experienced by tracing family roots. He outlined the fact that 150 celebrities were initially considered and whittled down to the 20 that finally appeared in the two wildly successful series.

The programme succeeded in capturing the emotional power of family history, by filming the celebrities in one take, thus ensuring that the viewer shared in the emotional response. It explored stories of military history, social taboos, immigration and the pursuit of family truths. The

stories have all been powerful in a very personal way that had not initially been expected.

The lecture also discussed the impact of the show on the public's use of archives and interest in family history. Dr Barratt referred to the dramatic increase in the number of people using archives, a fact reinforced perhaps by the large audience at the lecture. He explained that much of the information given in the programme had good 'take away ability' and revised some previously unrealistic public perceptions of what archives could tell us.

He mentioned the use of the internet as a resource for accessing archives and he expressed the concern that over-reliance on online resources could eventually erode the vital research skills required to fully maximise archives. He encouraged the audience to use the internet primarily as the initial tool in the search for information.

Preserving Digital Archives Training Day

LUCAS was pleased to host one of the first training events on the preservation of digital archives for the professional community. Held at the Foresight Centre, the event attracted a wide range of delegates from many different organisations from higher education, local government and specialist repositories as well as postgraduate students studying on the current MARM course.

The training day focused on the problems and issues faced by archivists when attempting to deal with digital archives requiring preservation. The training day aimed to explore such issues and try to establish a way forward across the sector.

The speakers were *Kevin Mulley*, from the TNA's Advisory Service who gave a viewpoint of the types of problems encountered in the attempt to preserve digital archives and how these can be overcome; *Maureen Pennock* who represented the Digital



Curation Centre (DCC) and gave an interesting lecture covering the background and role of the DCC and the many challenges faced when dealing with the preservation and receipt of digital archives by repositories of all types; *Najla Semple* from the Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC) who described the role of the DPC and current trends, solutions and future developments; *Heather Needham* from Hampshire Record Office who gave a heartening account of the success of Hampshire Record Office in beginning to deal with the challenges faced by preserving digital archives and finally *Dr Paul Watry* from Liverpool University Special Collections and Archives who described a joint software project with the National Archives in Washington.

During the day the delegates were split into groups to consider the factors that would assist their sector in dealing with digital archives.

It was a successful training event which highlighted the challenges and identified some of the resources available to tackle the issues. LUCAS plan to revisit this subject in future professional training events.

LUCAS' newest institutional member Cranfield University tells us all about the WOSSAC archive project

LUCAS is pleased to welcome Cranfield University, who joined LUCAS in March 2006, as the newest institutional member. Dr Steven Hallett (s.hallett@cranfield.ac.uk), of the University's National Soil Resources Institute, gives us an overview of the most recent archiving project at Cranfield University.

'Over the past 80 years, extensive soil, land use, land resource and land suitability surveys have been undertaken worldwide. Many of these surveys were in danger of being lost or destroyed, as donor funding agencies were subject to reorganisation, companies producing the soil surveys were acquired, merged, downsized or closed, and the surveyors themselves were retiring without being replaced. Action was required to ensure the original maps and reports were not lost for ever, and the World Soil Survey Archive and Catalogue, WOSSAC, was created and is led by Cranfield University's National Soil Resources Institute (www.cranfield.ac.uk/nsri/) in January, 2004.

Supported by the British Society of Soil Science, WOSSAC aims to preserve, archive, catalogue and make available as many reports and maps as possible. The archive is extremely valuable given that the costs which would be incurred to repeat the surveys today are estimated to be in excess of £200million. More serious is that the expertise to undertake the survey work increasingly no longer exists. For many countries worldwide, these reports now represent the only detailed scientific studies of their soils and potential use. The archive can play a crucial role in informing researchers, teachers and practitioners about a range of contemporary environmental and development issues. The information held is of direct relevance for flood and drought management, issues concerning climate change, damage to infrastructure, land accessibility and trafficability, land suitability assessment, monitoring of environmental change, environmental process modelling and land degradation. Many of these issues can also be linked to the UN Millennium Development Goals, such as the alleviation of rural poverty.

The archive has acquired accessions from a wide variety of sources and to date, over 13,200 items have been archived, labelled and catalogued, representing some 60% of the whole collection. The system allows for documents and artefacts to be recorded using a series of structured metadata tags, optimized for storage and retrieval of documentary records. The archive is currently being used for a variety of purposes, including disaster relief, development planning and academic research. The existing Internet gateway (<http://www.wossac.com>) provides the information required to access the archive. Recognised user categories currently include commercial users, government agencies, NGOs and personal researchers. It is important that the archive is used as widely as possible. With this in mind the best means are sought whereby the information held in WOSSAC can be digitised and subsequently interrogated by interested parties in any country in the world.'

We will feature the work of other LUCAS institutional members in this newsletter. If you are interested in submitting an article please contact Lizzie Woulfe at lwoulfe@liverpool.ac.uk.



Recent Publications



Now available to order is a collection of essays given at the *'Political Pressure and the Archival Record'* conference which was held in 2003 at the Liverpool University Centre for Archive Studies. Contributions have come from a breadth of disciplines and from a wide-ranging geographical area. Topics covered at the conference included the 'use of records as a tool of government; destruction of records as a political act; effects of corruption or ideology on the record; secrecy and accountability; and the nature and use of records resulting from repressive policies.' Edited by Margaret Procter, Michael Cook and Caroline Williams the volume can be purchased from the Society of American Archivists website at www.archivists.org/catalog/.

A new text book, *'Managing archives: foundations, principles and practice'* by Caroline Williams was published in March. It has chapters on principles and purposes of records and archives; selection, appraisal and acquisition; archival arrangement and description; access; reference and advocacy; preservation; and managing an archive service. It is aimed at 'those starting out as archive professionals, at students on archives, records, museums, library and information programmes and anyone who has taken responsibility for archives but without any prior experience'. It can be ordered from www.chandospublishing.com.



Dr Matt Houlbrook, LUCAS Executive member has recently published *'Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis, 1918-57'* and this has been voted 'Longman-History Today Book of the Year 2006'. The book describes how gay people negotiated a 'space' for themselves in a city that didn't always understand or accept them and draws on previously unknown sources. Dr Houlbrook revisits the restaurants, clubs, hotels and parks where gay cultures emerged and explores the policing, housing and politics in these areas. *Queer London* 'explores the relationship between queer sexualities and modern urban culture that we take for granted today'. It is available to purchase from Amazon at www.amazon.co.uk

Forthcoming Events

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
LUCAS Research Seminar Series						
The last in the 2006 series will be taking place on 7 June 2006 at 5pm, in the School of History. Matt Houlbrook will be giving a lecture entitled: 'Lost in the Archive: a Post Modernist Speaks'. The lecture will be followed by wine and discussion. All are welcome to attend. Please contact Lizzie Woulfe to reserve a place on lwoulfe@liverpool.ac.uk						
'Sex in the Archives'						
Another event in our popular ongoing <i>'...in the archives'</i> series will be taking place in Liverpool in September 2006. Further details of this public event will be available on our website in due course.						

Have we got news for you?

Is there anything that you would like to see in the next LUCAS newsletter? If you have an idea or suggestion for the next issue we would love to hear from you! E-mail lwoulfe@liverpool.ac.uk

LUCAS@

Visit our website to find out more information about LUCAS' events, publications and programmes.



Would you like to join LUCAS? If so, please complete and send to:
Margaret Procter, Associate Director and Secretary,
LUCAS, School of History, 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):