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of LIVERPOOL

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**STOP PRESS!**  
LUCAS web pages have just been relaunched at <http://www.liv.ac.uk/lucas>

LIVERPOOL UNIVERSITY

# LUCAS



**Dr David Vaisey at LUCAS AGM**

Pictured above is Dr David Vaisey, Librarian Emeritus of the Bodleian Library, Oxford. David Vaisey took a retrospective look at archives and archivists as guest speaker at the 4<sup>th</sup> LUCAS AGM which took place in Liverpool in February (a fuller report is

on page 3). At the same meeting, LUCAS Director Caroline Williams reported on the year's events, the new publication *Archives in the UK and the Government agenda* was launched, and the evening ended with an enjoyable reception for members and their guests.

The last issue of the newsletter included a photograph of Dr Michael Cook talking to Chinese students during his visit there last November. Here he reflects on that visit.

## A new international link

LUCAS has now become associated with the leading archival training institute of China, the Archives College of Renmin University of China (the People's University) in Beijing. In November, during the first of their PhD seminars, the College invited me to become a guest professor. A colourful ceremony was held, presided over by the Dean of the College, Professor Feng Huiling, who is also a Vice-President of the University. Professor Feng was accompanied by the Assistant Dean, Dr Wang Jian.

British archivists and readers of archives have only recently become aware of the vast resources of China in this field. The world of Chinese archives started to open up to us when the International Council on Archives held its international Congress in Beijing in 1996. Since then Chinese colleagues have shown that they are keen to develop international links. Archives are an important concern in China. The programmes of the Archives College illustrate that. The College has 400 students and a teaching staff of 40 (an enviable ratio). Most of the students are undergraduates, who will go into jobs in archives or information management (the College does run a library stream, but this does not seem to occupy as much of their attention as comparable training schools in the West). Postgraduate

work includes a course leading to a Master's degree, which covers three years, and there are currently 19 PhD students.

The campus of Renmin University is a compact area in central Beijing. Most students and many of the staff live on the campus in blocks of flats. The accommodation is sparse by European standards, with several students sharing each room. However there is a guest hotel, which is fully up to international standards, and several refectories. During my visit the whole area was covered with dust, as there is an extensive building programme under way. This includes garden layouts and recreational areas. The campus is quite big, and it takes about twenty minutes to walk across it from one gate to another, but most locals use the ubiquitous bicycles - walking is quite dangerous as the bicycles are rushing about everywhere, and all clear spaces are used to park them.

Teaching accommodation is also quite cramped, in view of the numbers of students, but is well equipped. Lecture rooms have computer screen projection built in, and it proved quite difficult to arrange for older methods of display, such as flip charts or overhead projectors.

The Archives College publishes a journal, the title being translated as *Archives Bulletin*, and we hope that more of their work will be seen in translation in international publications. There are many other archive training schools in China, one of which, Zheijiang University I was able to visit. The director of this, Professor He Jiasun, also held an

international seminar on the role of archivists in office automation, during my time there.

## USING COMPUTERS FOR FAMILY HISTORY

A day school 12 Oct 2002



The next LUCAS training day will look at how family historians can make best use of the many electronic resources now being developed for them. Sessions will cover: An overview of the internet; using search engines and building on-line family trees; an overview of family history software; the Genealogical Society of Utah; Family Tree Maker software and the Master Genealogist database. Overall the day aims to outline the effective use of the internet for family history, examine some key websites and identify some possible pitfalls!

Cost: £17.50 to members of LUCAS, £30 to non-members (includes lunch and refreshments).

This will be an informal event, with delegates' input and questions welcomed. WWW access will be available. Further speaker details are available at [www.liv.ac.uk/lucas/events.htm](http://www.liv.ac.uk/lucas/events.htm)

## The Mersey Gateway Project

The Mersey Gateway project, which started in December 2001, will create a website incorporating some 20,000 digital images illustrating the history and growth of the port of Liverpool, and the development of distinct communities within the city and in towns on the Mersey. The two-year project, funded by the New Opportunities Fund, is a Merseyside wide partnership of local authority library services, the University of Liverpool, National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies Service and Lancashire Record Office.

A team of researchers based at Liverpool Central Library will select materials for digitisation, including manuscript and printed archives, books, maps, newspapers and photographs, as well as three-dimensional artefacts. Specific themes to be featured will include docks and shipping; the slave trade; trade and industry; public health and welfare; the Black and Chinese Communities; transport and the Second World War.

The digitised materials will form the core of the website, but they will be linked by narrative interpreting the resources. The website will also include educational elements, enabling users to learn by discovery. The project will stimulate interest and increase pride and awareness within the various communities of their history and provide guidance with the

interpretation of primary and secondary source materials.



Preparing for evacuation, 1939: one of the images digitised for the project

We are keen to involve local organisations and individuals with a special interest in the history of the City of Liverpool and the wider Merseyside region and will be forming a users group to participate in the development of the resource. We are also looking to capture personal memories of members of the various distinct communities within Liverpool and from the neighbouring towns.

If you want to know more about the project or wish to be involved with the user group please contact me.

*Simon Wilson*

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### **Elizabeth Gow, currently a MARM student, offers her own perspective on the 2002 AGM**

The archive profession seems to be increasingly concerned about its

'cardigany' image and is eager to be seen as relevant and modern. I felt a certain trepidation when I heard that the address at the LUCAS AGM would be a retrospective of the profession over the past 40 years, rather than a forward thinking talk about a 'hot topic'. It soon became clear that my trepidation was unjustified, for in his address, David Vaisey looked very much to the future. Past developments in the archival profession were used to bring current developments into a wider perspective.

The talk covered the main issues affecting the archival community today, namely archives and professionalism, access versus preservation, training and regionalism. David looked back over his own career as an archivist, and beyond, to show that these questions have been affecting archives for many years. The archival scene has changed dramatically over these years, especially with regards to professionalism. While the argument about access and preservation is essentially the same, attitudes have changed to favour access, possibly because of the change in the manner of funding.

While David Vaisey obviously enjoyed reminiscing about the way things were, he continually stressed the importance of change. This change is not just affecting us now, but has continually reshaped the profession. We should have a positive attitude to this change as a way of moving forward, but we should be aware of implications this change

might have. If younger archivists embrace the future with the enthusiasm and intelligence of archivists such as David Vaisey, the profession will flourish and no more need be said about cardigans.

## COUNTING THE ARCHIVES

Despite some very obvious differences, archives, libraries and museums also have a great deal in common. They are all centres for research, they all contribute to people's leisure and cultural lives and they all provide opportunities for informal, and sometimes formal, learning. However until recently those working in them might rightly have been accused of operating under a 'silo' mentality. This excellent piece of jargon describes working practices which maintain the independence of each specific profession and exploit their differences, equating practices to a line of vertical and enclosed structures which are in fact very similar.

No longer. Resource, the Council for Museums Archives and Libraries was established in 2000 by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. Its express purpose is to

“ensure that museums, archives and libraries belong at the very heart of people's lives – contributing to their enjoyment and inspiration, cultural values and learning potential, economic prosperity and social equity”.

To that end, Resource is not only supporting initiatives designed to aid development in each of the three specific domains, but also, more strategically, to look at areas where collaboration *across* the domains would benefit working professionals and, more importantly perhaps, the public.

### Cross-domain collaboration

Recent examples of such collaborative working have been in the areas of “stewardship” (i.e. care and management of collections), and collections development. LUCAS is involved in a third area – that of data collection. It is clear that to work effectively, museums, archives and libraries need to collect both statistical information and qualitative data about the services they provide. This enables them to demonstrate their contribution to the business objectives of their parent body, their overall competence, service delivery and accountability

to their stakeholders and, more broadly to see how far they contribute to wider government public policy objectives such as life-long learning and social inclusion.

In order to obtain a clearer idea of current practice, Resource asked LUCAS to provide a snapshot, or overview, of the existing systems for the collection and management of data in the archival domain, in all sectors (local authority, higher education, business and specialist) and throughout the UK. Similar projects were undertaken concurrently within the museum and library domains. Resource proposes ultimately to feed the results of these surveys into an altogether wider data analysis exercise. The archival domain survey, undertaken by Caroline Williams and Margaret Procter, demonstrated the *ad hoc* nature of data collection in the archival domain. This won't come as much of a surprise to archive professionals, but it will be useful for Resource to have the abundant existing anecdotal evidence supported by this more formal research. Resource will eventually make the details of this research available on its web site at <http://www.resource.gov.uk>

**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**

