

December 2009

**Issue 22**

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## LUCAS Committee News



*Best wishes for Christmas  
and the New Year from all  
at LUCAS!*

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**'Making Archives Sustainable'**

This jointly-organised training event by Society of Archivists North West Region (SoA NW) and LUCAS took place on 21 October 2009. It included a broad range of talks designed to give news and advice on sustainability issues from both regional and national perspectives.

Kevin Mulley (Standards and Accreditation Manager for Archives Sector Development at TNA) focused on environmental and sustainable issues for archives buildings. He briefly discussed what sustainability entails for an organisation in view of climate change and current public sector energy efficiency targets, how this relates to archive building construction and geometry, what archives hold and also the impact electronic resources are having on current sustainability approaches within the archival sector.

Up next was Jeff Sorrill from The Green Roof Centre, who gave, as an example of sustainable building technology, a fascinating overview of the many diverse green roof options available and how they could potentially be applied to new and old archive buildings alike depending on current infrastructure and available funds.

He was followed by Bruce Jackson of Lancashire Record Office who gave a lively and engrossing discussion on archival buildings and their eco-sustainability. Ironically, he used his representative repository as a case in point of how *not* to design a sustainable facility! 1970s Lancashire RO was designed at a time when energy was cheap, so its insulation is poor, it is of an awkward "stilt-based" design similar to the radical architecture of the Royal College of Physicians' building making it troublesome for maintenance, and the heating system was built at the top, rather than the bottom of the heating shaft! Bruce though was confident that these problems would be overcome in the future development of the site, for which he hoped to gain HLF aid, and he also provided much advice on eco-sustainable architecture, the general theme being the importance of flexibility for future improvements.

Rounding off the afternoon, the MARM students were given a thorough overview of the roles and benefits of becoming a member of the Society of Archivists from its Executive Director, John Chambers. The perks were made obvious; representation on a professional body which actively strives for the advocacy of archives in the legal and political environments, the opportunity to network fellow professionals across the British Isles, and the chance to enhance one's own development at the frequent SOA regional training events, to name but a few!

After John's talk everyone was treated to a generous helping of drinks and nibbles, with an opportunity to chat with many of the North West archivists who also stayed afterwards; a perfect way to round off a very interesting afternoon.

*Oliver Tickner and Garth Stewart, MARM students*

## LUCAS EVENTS

### Seminar Series 2009: Archives and Conflict

The LUCAS seminar series for 2009 was held on Monday evenings from 2nd to 23rd November in the School of History. On the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War, the theme addressed was 'Archives and Conflict'.

From the National Library of Sarajevo to the National Museum of Baghdad, cultural heritage has come under attack in many recent conflicts. Archives, with their potential for evidence, are particularly vulnerable. Archives can also be sites of resistance, as for example the 'Ghetto archives' of Warsaw, collected by victims of the Holocaust to pass on information about their lives to posterity. Their contents may also be sites of conflict: disagreements over inclusion and exclusion from the archive, contradictory interpretations of documents and events.



*Members of the regiment*



*Prof Esdaile*

The first seminar in the series was given by Prof Charles Esdaile of the School of History, who spoke to the title 'In Search of Past Experience: Re-enactment as Virtual Archive'. Prof. Esdaile has long been known in the School as a member of Colonel Lilburne's Regiment in the Sealed Knot; on the evening he was accompanied by a number of Royalist troops, also in full fit and armed with some terrifying lances. This dramatic presentation aimed to bring to life for the audience the experience of re-enactment, whilst exploring the value of such experience to a historian's interpretation of past conflict.

The second seminar of the series was given by Dr Toby Haggith of the Imperial War Museum, London, who showed clips from a number of films which raised particular issues relating to the theme. These included footage shot in the First

World War Trenches; the British filming of the liberation of Belsen in 1945, both of which have been reproduced on many occasions, and training film shot from RAF fighter planes flown by Polish pilots, many of whom died in action and for whom little other record survives. Dr Haggith discussed the ethical considerations facing archivists at the Imperial War Museum when making such films available and how they seek to ensure they remain embedded in their historical context.

Dr Andrew Flinn from UCL presented the third paper, presenting findings from his AHRC-funded research into community archives, focusing in particular on those communities who view their archives as an active resource for challenging received opinion about their history, identity and future role.

The final paper was presented by Dr Jeremy Ashbee of English Heritage, who spoke on the (English) archival sources for the Welsh castles of Edward I and how these have shaped both the historiography of castles and the presentation of individual sites.

The series has been extremely well attended, by academics (from several departments), practitioners, students and aspiring students, as well as community activists and members of the interested public.

## LUCAS EVENTS

### Shopping in the Archives 19 November 2009



Lewis's Department Store, provided the venue for one of our ever-popular " ... in the Archives" events. The event aimed to highlight the way in which archives could inform research into the history of shopping, from the perspective of both retailers and consumers.

Presenting the retailers' perspective were Adam Shaw of the Co-operative Archive in Manchester and Sophie Clapp of Boots Archive in Nottingham. Both were nineteenth-century foundations but with very different histories: the one being the product of mutual collaboration by members of local communities, the other the success of relentless self-promotion by entrepreneurial members of the Boot family.

From a consumption angle, we heard from Dr Laura Ugolini of the University of Wolverhampton, comparing the 'low' and 'high' ends of the menswear market in the interwar period. And for the same period, Pauline Rushton of National Museums Liverpool discussed the compulsive dress-buying habits of Mrs Emily Tinne of Liverpool.

As ever, one of the highlights of the event was the contribution of the North West Film Archive, and once again Marion Hewitt presented a selection of films relating to shopping in the North West of England, including footage of Stockport market, the opening of a Co-op in Blackpool, some rare colour footage of receiving and spending Co-op 'divvies' and an amusing educational film on how (not) to run a retail outlet.

We are very grateful to Executive Committee member Sarah Starkey for organising this event.

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### Forthcoming LUCAS Events

**February 2010:** The LUCAS AGM will take place in February 2010.

**27th May 2010:** 'Text and Place'. A joint event organised by LUCAS and the Liverpool Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies will take place in the School of History on the theme of situated texts. Speakers include Prof Richard Marks of the University of Cambridge, Dr David Griffith of the University of Birmingham and Dr Peter Horsman of the University of Amsterdam.

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### MARM News

A new cohort of 25 MARM students, including 2 international students from India and Malaysia, joined us in September 2009. At the time of writing they are busy carrying out a Records Management project within a number of

University Departments, and looking forward to cataloguing placements in January, in repositories as various as Alnwick Castle; Diageo; the Henry Moore Institute; the University of Manchester and Wirral Archives.

Some 30 potential applicants attended a MARM Open Day on 25 November 2009. For details of forthcoming Open Days, please keep an eye on the LUCAS website.

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### WE ALSO ATTENDED

#### 'L'archivistique britannique': a trip across the Channel (by Margaret Procter)

Though the Ecole de Chartes (now the Ecole de Patrimoine) remains the best known French institution for producing archivists, several masters' programmes, equivalent to MARM and the other British postgraduate programmes have been set up there in the last couple of decades. One of these is at the University de St Quentin Yvelines (UVSQ) in Versailles. Its Professional Master's programme (*Spécialité Métiers de la culture: archives*) recognises that there are all kinds of opportunities for individuals with recordkeeping skills and prides itself on its international outlook. In February I was invited, as part of their 'Archivistique Internationale' module to speak about 'l'archivistique britannique' – quite a challenge in two hours!

The class, which took place at the Archives Départementales des Yvelines where the students

carry out much of their practical work, started with a geography lesson – what exactly is the difference between the UK, GB, Britain and the British Isles for example? Why are Scottish records different from English and Welsh ones? What happens in the Channel Islands? We moved on to talking about the links between the UK and France over the centuries and why it was important for French archivists to know about British archives – from the administrative records of the Angevin Empire in TNA, one of the main sources for French medieval history, to the personal files of SoE operatives in World War 2.

I'd previously asked the Liverpool MARM students to note down, very quickly, their impression of French archives and records – a sort of archival word association. Some students mentioned the French Revolution – and the establishment of the first National Archives, others mentioned good purpose-built buildings, exhibition spaces and so on. I repeated the exercise with the French students – what do you associate with British archives? Many of them mentioned the PRO (rather than TNA!) and Chancery Lane, but there was also an agreement that the UK had a good reputation for outreach, and had an impressive record of online archive databases.

For more information about the Masters at UVSQ see [http://www2.uvsq.fr/MCMAR\\_CH/0/fiche\\_SSH\\_formation/&RH=FORM2](http://www2.uvsq.fr/MCMAR_CH/0/fiche_SSH_formation/&RH=FORM2)



*Margaret Procter discusses the finer points of the Gascon Rolls with French Masters' students.*

### **The Archives is Politics – and we cannot be neutral (report by Michael Cook)**

Not being able to go to the Society of Archivists conference this year, I joined the preliminary workshop, led by Professor Randall Jimerson (who is director of the archives and records management programme at Western Washington University, and who has just published his book *Archives Power: Memory, Accountability and Social Justice*). It's a hot subject, and I was glad to see that our own publication *Political Pressure and the Archival Record* was cited in the associated literature and in the proceedings.

The event was treated strictly as a workshop, and the 21 colleagues who were there spent pretty well the whole day in small discussion groups based on the kind of employers they had or, later on, on their areas of professional interest. This meant that there was relatively little input from Prof Jimerson, a

disappointment to me and perhaps others. Since overt political pressure is not much experienced in this country (yet, anyway) most of the discussion groups failed to produce vital or new ideas. Also disappointing was that there was little consciousness of active political difficulty in any other part of the world, such as South Africa or Latin America, or, supremely, the USA, among places where our colleagues are up against it.

Within the experience of most of us, the question of political involvement dissolved into questions of general ethics, and the influence of postmodern philosophical thinking. The latter was presented mainly as pushing us towards a great awareness of the needs of the excluded or minority groups in our society: personally I have much sympathy with this movement, though I greet it as a matter of social justice rather than as a consequence of a new habit of questioning meta-narratives. Seen through this lens, most of our work has an ethical, and very sensitive, quality, which should affect all we do, and maybe should prompt us to rewrite all our descriptions of the archives we hold. But I think there is little point in telling us our work is politics (not 'political') if all it means is that we must be sensitive to the feelings of minority groups.

#### **LUCAS Committee**

Executive Committee member Roy Lumb has left the University of Liverpool and consequently the Executive Committee. We're sorry to see Roy go and would like to thank Roy for all his work for LUCAS.