

ARCHIVES AT THE MILLENNIUM

The Twenty-Eighth Report of the
Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts
1991-1999

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Cover illustration

Decorative border from the Sherborne Missal (now Additional MS 74236). The Missal, one of the most important manuscripts to have been accepted for the nation in lieu of tax, was allocated to the British Library in 1998. *By courtesy of the British Library Board*

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The Royal Warrant

ELIZABETH THE SECOND, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of Our other Realms and Territories Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith, to all to whom these Presents shall come, Greeting!

Whereas it was represented to Her late Majesty Queen Victoria that there were belonging to many Institutions and Private Families various Collections of Manuscripts and Papers of general Public Interest a knowledge of which would be of great utility in the illustration of History, Constitutional Law, Science and general Literature; that in some cases these Papers were liable to be lost or obliterated, and that many of the possessors of such Manuscripts would be willing to give access to them and permit their contents to be made public provided that nothing of a private character or relating to the Title of existing owners, should be divulged:

And whereas it appeared to Her Majesty that there would be considerable public advantage in it being generally known where such Manuscripts and Papers were deposited, and that the contents of those which tended to the elucidation of History, and the illustration of Constitutional Law, Science and Literature, should be published; Her Majesty did accordingly, by Royal Warrant bearing date the second day of April, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-nine, appoint Commissioners to make inquiry as to the places in which such Manuscripts and Papers were deposited, and for any of the purposes therein mentioned:

And whereas by Royal Warrants bearing date the eighteenth day of December, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-seven and the twentyseventh day of March, one thousand nine hundred and nineteen, new Commissions were issued for the purposes specified in the original Commission above referred to:

And whereas we have deemed it expedient that the terms of reference to Our said Commissioners should be revised and extended:

NOW THEREFORE we do Will and Ordain that Our said Commissioners shall make enquiry as to the existence and location of manuscripts, including records or archives of all kinds, of value for the study of history, other than records which are for the time being public records by virtue of the Public Records Act; with the consent of the owners or custodians inspect and report upon them; with the consent of the owners or custodians reproduce and publish or assist the publication of such reports; record particulars of such manuscripts and records in a National Register thereof; promote and assist the proper preservation and storage of such manuscripts and records; assist those wishing to use such manuscripts or records for study or research; consider and advise upon general questions relating to the location, preservation and use of such manuscripts and records; promote the co-ordinated action of all professional and other bodies concerned with the preservation and use of such manuscripts and records; carry out in place of the Public Record Office the statutory duties of the Master of the Rolls in respect of manorial and tithe documents.

Given at Our Court at Saint James's the fifth day of December, 1959; In the Eighth Year of Our Reign.
By Her Majesty's Command,

RA BUTLER

The Commissioners

| | <i>Appointed</i> |
|--|------------------|
| The Rt Hon Lord Bingham of Cornhill, LCJ (<i>Chairman</i>) | 1 Dec 1994 |
| GE Aylmer, D PHIL, FBA | 23 Jan 1978 |
| Sir Patrick Cormack, FSA, MP | 3 Apr 1981 |
| The Rt Hon Lord Egremont and Leconfield, DL | *23 Feb 1989 |
| Sir Matthew Farrer, GCVO | *1 Jan 1991 |
| Sir John Sainty, KCB, FSA | *1 Jan 1991 |
| The Very Revd HEC Stapleton, FSA | *27 May 1992 |
| Sir Keith Thomas, FBA | *27 May 1992 |
| Mrs A Dundas-Bekker, DL | *16 June 1994 |
| The Rt Hon The Earl of Scarbrough | *16 June 1994 |
| Dr Susan J Davies | 13 June 1995 |
| Professor HCG Matthew, D PHIL, FBA | 8 April 1998 |
| Dr Alice Prochaska | 8 April 1998 |
| Dr Caroline Barron, FSA | 15 Feb 1999 |
| Rosemary Dunhill, FSA | 15 Feb 1999 |
| Professor TC Smout, CBE, FBA, FRSE | 15 Feb 1999 |

* Date of first appointment, subsequently renewed. From October 1991 the term of appointment was for 7 years, renewable. From December 1993 this was reduced to 5 years, renewable; and from February 1999 to 3 years, renewable.

The Twenty-Eighth Report
of the Royal Commission
on Historical Manuscripts
1991-1999

TO THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY

We, Your Majesty's Commissioners appointed to perform those duties in respect of historical manuscripts set forth in Your Majesty's Warrant dated 5 December 1959 humbly submit our Twenty-Eighth Report for Your Majesty's gracious consideration.

In the period under review, the terms of appointment of new Commissioners have twice been reduced: from seven years to five in 1993 and from five years to three in 1999. Dr GE Aylmer completed his five-year term of office as Chairman in 1994 and Your Majesty was pleased to appoint in his place Sir Thomas Bingham, Master of the Rolls (now The Right Honourable Lord Bingham of Cornhill, Lord Chief Justice).

We report with great regret the death in 1999 of the Commission's former Chairman Lord Denning, OM, and the deaths of two former Secretaries of your Commission, Dr GRC Davis in 1997 and Mr RH Ellis in 1998. We have appended to this Report as a matter of record a complete list of all Commissioners since the first appointment of the Commission in 1869.

List of abbreviations used in the text

| | |
|------------|--|
| AHRB | Arts and Humanities Research Board |
| AM | Archives at the Millennium (written responses) |
| ARCHON | ARCHives ON-line (NRA's link to other websites) |
| BAC | Business Archives Council |
| BAC(S) | Business Archives Council of Scotland |
| BLRIC | British Library Research and Innovation Centre |
| BRA | British Records Association |
| CIPFA | Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy |
| CVCP | Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals |
| DCMS | Department for Culture, Media and Sport |
| DNH | Department of National Heritage |
| EAD | Encoded Archival Description |
| FMPR | Financial Management and Policy Review |
| GLAN | Greater London Archives Network |
| HE | Higher Education |
| HEFCE | Higher Education Funding Council for England |
| HEI | Higher Education Institution |
| HLF | Heritage Lottery Fund |
| HMC | Historical Manuscripts Commission/ Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts |
| ICT | Information and Communications Technology |
| IDAC | Interdepartmental Archives Committee |
| JISC | Joint Information Systems Committee [of the Higher Education Funding Councils] |
| <i>JSA</i> | <i>Journal of the Society of Archivists</i> |
| LIC | Library and Information Commission |
| LMA | London Metropolitan Archives |
| MGC | Museums & Galleries Commission |
| MLAC | Museums, Libraries and Archives Council |
| NCA | National Council on Archives |
| NFF | Non-Formula Funding |
| NPO | National Preservation Office |
| NRA | National Register of Archives |
| PRO | Public Record Office |
| SCAM | Standing Conference on Archives and Museums |
| SUSCAG | Scottish Universities Special Collections and Archives Group |
| V&A | Victoria & Albert Museum |

Preface

Our Reports to the Crown have traditionally been the occasion to stand back from current events and pressures and to take a longer-term look at the health of the nation's archives. The present report is no exception. Central to its concern are the developments affecting archives, for good or ill, in the years 1991 to 1999. But since this period also takes us up to an important chronological divide, the end of the millennium, we felt it would be helpful on this occasion not simply to state our own views, based on our meetings and discussions and the Commission's activities during this period, but rather in the customary manner of a Royal Commission to take wider soundings and to listen to other people's views, or 'evidence', on the strengths and weaknesses of the United Kingdom's archives.

Accordingly, under the title *Archives at the Millennium*, we launched in the spring of 1998 an appeal for written evidence, placing advertisements in a number of national newspapers and on the Commission's website. Our Secretary extended this by including articles about the survey in the Commission's first *Newsletter*, widely distributed to archivists and historians in 1998, and in *The House Magazine*, the journal of the Houses of Parliament. We also sent specific invitations to all the main national bodies concerned with archives, including the national record offices and libraries, the archival professional bodies, user groups and grant-awarding bodies, asking them to contribute evidence. In the autumn of 1998 with the help of the British Records Association we contacted all the known groups of Friends of Record Offices throughout the country. Finally, towards the end of the year, we contacted the heads of many of the national museums and galleries with major archive collections, whilst the Local Government Association as its own contribution to the survey kindly issued a circular drawing it to the attention of local authorities. All of the resulting written evidence is available for public inspection except in the very few cases where we were asked to treat it in confidence. We are most grateful to all our respondents for the time and care they invested in preparing their evidence. A list of all the respondents is given in the Appendix.

We asked respondents, particularly those from the national and professional bodies, to take as read the great array of reports and analyses of archive services that have appeared in recent years: sectoral reports on the local authorities and the universities; strategic and campaigning reports on such issues as national archives policy, preservation, networking and electronic records; formative reports on museums and libraries, and so on. Many of these are listed as a matter of record in the bibliography appended to this report and we urge anyone interested to explore further these important publications, all of which may be consulted on application to our search room. It has been no part of our intention to summarise, let alone re-state, all the ideas and statistics they have contained, but it is important for the reader to recognise this wider evidential context for our views. In reaching our own conclusions we have been guided not only by this published material and the direct responses to our survey, but also by the Commission's longstanding knowledge and experience of the world of archives.

Oral evidence has also been gathered. The Royal Historical Society asked whether it might give a response in kind by organising a day conference on the theme of historians' needs with regard to archives. This was held at the end of January 1999, with five Commissioners among those present, and we thank the Society for this valuable initiative. The Department of Information and Library Studies at the University of Wales Aberystwyth organised a similar consultation in Aberystwyth in April 1999 to give archivists, librarians and researchers in Wales an opportunity to contribute their views. In addition, a small ad hoc committee of Commissioners which has overseen the production of this report – Sir John Sainty (Chairman), Dr Alice Prochaska and Miss Rosemary Dunhill – met a number of respondents informally in May and June to explore their views further. The views of private owners were taken in the course of a consultative meeting at Petworth House, held at the kind invitation of Lord Egremont, on the occasion of the launch of the second volume of the Commission's guide to *Principal family and estate collections* in June 1999.

Part One:

The overall ‘archival health’ of the nation

ARCHIVES AS A NATIONAL RESOURCE

Archives have a vital role to play in this Information Age. They provide the evidence on which the integrity and judgement of our public institutions, and of individual decision-makers and opinion-formers, can be vouched for or called into question. More generally, they provide evidence about past events, although like all evidence they need to be studied cautiously and without any notion that they convey the absolute truth: this in itself makes them a valuable educational tool. Archives, it has often been said, embody our national ‘memory’ and give us a sense of our identity as individuals, families or communities. They enshrine our legal and moral rights. In many walks of legal, business, industrial and family life they are practical, everyday working tools.¹ Their very availability has transformed and is daily transforming the way in which history is written.²

Here is what some of those who have written to us over the past year have said:

‘Archives are not simply a leisure interest for a tiny minority, they are a vital element of our cultural heritage and part of the infrastructure of a modern democratic society in which information, and access to it, is properly valued.’³

‘Archives are important not only for their use as a record of past achievements, but also as a working research tool on a daily basis for information which affects decisions and actions taken today... The cultural wealth of the UK’s archival holdings is of interest at all levels, a heritage recognised as providing a unique access to a past otherwise lost to our understanding.’⁴

‘Underlying everything is the rich and diverse archival legacy inherited from past generations. The duty of the present generation is to ensure that this legacy is

preserved and made as accessible as possible and also that arrangements are in place that will ensure the proper preservation of the archives of our own time.’⁵

‘Interest in family history has been a feature in the field of archives over the last twenty-five years, with numbers of those pursuing such interest steadily rising. It is encouraging to observe the development of this research from a purely family based interest to the study of local history in its many facets. This is coupled with greater competence in historical research, to a point where a significant minority are conducting researches at levels comparable with the professional historian.’⁶

‘Whatever the challenges faced by archives in the new millennium, it is certain that substantial inroads will not be made until additional resources are made available. By its nature, archival work – from appraisal, through sorting and listing, to physical conservation – is time-consuming. Unless there is adequate investment, the immense cultural and information asset which is the archival heritage of the United Kingdom cannot be unlocked for this or any future generation.’⁷

STRENGTHS

Regular users will need no convincing of the importance of archives to our society and culture. And overall, we are optimistic. **In very many respects British archives are in better shape at the end of the second Millennium than they have ever been.**

- **More documents are in safe custody than ever before.** Large new collections of archival material have come into the public domain by gift and purchase or on loan, by transfer as a by-product of major structural changes such as local government reorganisation and the privatisation of formerly nationalised industries and utilities, and as a direct

¹ For more background see Christopher Kitching, *Archives. The very essence of our heritage* (Phillimore for the National Council on Archives, 1996).

² AM 141.

³ Ian Dunn, Cheshire County Council, AM 111.

⁴ Library Association, AM 66.

⁵ British Records Association, AM 67.

⁶ Friends of Worcestershire County Record Office, AM 80.

⁷ Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, AM 84.

result of the surveying and rescuing activities of record repositories and of other bodies. The latter include of course the Commission itself, the National Register of Archives (Scotland), the British Records Association, the Business Archives Councils, the National Cataloguing Unit for the Archives of Contemporary Scientists and the Contemporary Medical Archives Centre. Yet, in spite of this ceaseless effort, we highlight below a number of continuing gaps in the provision of care for the nation's archives.

The Commission's monitoring suggests once again that owners disposing of their papers have on the whole continued to act responsibly to maintain their archival integrity, and not to promote their break-up for sale or export. We list in Appendix 4 to this Report the major private treaty sales and allocations of manuscripts accepted in lieu of tax in this period.

- **There is a well established network of publicly-funded record repositories** at national and local level and in the universities, whilst a growing number of businesses and private organisations either maintain specialist repositories or at least employ professional archivists. So too do a number of private owners. But the fact that these collections are housed in many different physical premises should never blind us to the inter-relationships among the archives. It is one of the Commission's privileges to study the entire picture of the United Kingdom's archives and to show, through the NRA and the Commission's publications, the relationship between physically separate collections. From this viewpoint no single element in the pattern of archive service provision is dispensable. We strongly agree with one of our respondents that 'a hole in the national provision is a loss to the nation'.⁸ All the evidence suggests that whilst there remains a great deal of unevenness in the provision there has been a steady overall growth in the resources devoted to archives nationally in this period, albeit from a more pluralistic funding base than in the past.
- **The overall standard of archive storage accommodation has again significantly improved** over the past decade. Many

new buildings have been brought into service, most of which meet the highest standards, not just for the care and custody of archives but also for public access. The Commission has played a prominent part in advising both the sponsoring authorities and the major grant-awarding bodies as these projects have come to fruition. Standards and best practice guidelines issued during this period by the Commission itself, the Public Record Office, the Society of Archivists, the National Council on Archives, the International Council on Archives and the British Standards Institution are listed in the Bibliography. These have been widely welcomed and implemented. They provide a solid basis for archive services and act as yardsticks by which the services can be monitored and measured. There is strong support for the promotion and further development of such standards. We are also confident that the standards of professional training for archivists, archive conservators and records managers alike have never been higher.⁹

- **Reader visits to the United Kingdom's archives have continued to rise steadily**, and although figures are not available for every kind of repository, 1 million visits per annum now seems likely to be an underestimate.¹⁰ To quote one respondent, 'an ever greater number and variety of people seek to use archives for a bewildering variety of educational, leisure, legal and commercial purposes'.¹¹ The sectors of most dramatic growth are local and family history and the use of archives for educational purposes to underpin the national curricula.¹²
- **A steadily greater number of documents is produced each year for public inspection**, and there is corresponding growth in the number of copies sold for study.

⁹ AM 109,133,138,139,140,143.

¹⁰ CIPFA, *Archive services statistics 1998-99 estimates*, p.2 suggested that the figure for 1997/98 for local authority repositories in England and Wales alone was around 700,000. To this must be added Scotland and Northern Ireland, the national repositories, the university and specialist repositories, business and private archives, and those libraries and museums with archival holdings not otherwise covered by the archive service statistics.

¹¹ National Council on Archives, AM 88.

¹² According to one recent estimate the mean figure for family historians as a proportion of readers in local authority repositories is around 57%: R Boyns, 'Archivists and family historians...', in *JSA* vol 20 no 1 (1999), p.63. AM 75, 80.

⁸ AM 141.

- **Information on the nature and whereabouts of archives is becoming more systematised and easier to access,** particularly with the growth of information and communications technology (ICT) applications. The Commission has been at the forefront of these developments, making its indexes to the National Register of Archives available over the Internet, developing its ARCHON link to the websites of other repositories, and playing a full part with other national organisations and professional bodies in promoting the development of national name authority files. The longer-term goal, however, is remote access through the national networks to computerised catalogues of the holdings of every record repository in the country. As we go to press the means of achieving this objective are coming more clearly into focus: a lot of the groundwork has been prepared and funding bids are being formulated. Some building blocks are already in place, in the NRA itself, the incipient Scottish Archives Network, and the growing electronic catalogues of individual national, local and university repositories in particular.
- **To a greater extent than in the past there is a sense of community among those who deliver archive services.**¹³ This has been fostered by the wholly beneficial development of national and local structures to improve the coordination of strategy and objectives and the dissemination of common standards. Cross-sectoral collaboration between archive services and museums and libraries is already well established at the centre and in many localities, and there is a growing hope that new national and regional structures now under consideration will bring further steady improvements in standards of service.

WEAKNESSES

Why, then, do archives not feature higher in the cultural agenda both nationally and locally?

- **In part this is because the number of users is not great in comparison with visitors to museums or stately homes,**

¹³ AM 88.

public libraries or sporting events.¹⁴

These, however, are not reasonable comparisons: few visitors turn up at a record office or archives department on a casual basis simply because it is there or because they want something diverting to do: rather, they are pursuing a specific line of research that has required some premeditation. Archive users are still a small minority of the total population of the UK, and despite targeted publicity campaigns and outreach activities by archive services and the national archival bodies the public at large has very little perception either of what archives are or where they are to be found. Indeed, many people remain unaware of the existence of record offices, archives departments in the national and local museums, library local studies departments or the special collections of the universities, or of the National Register of Archives which provides pointers to all of these. **We acknowledge that much more publicity and education needs to be undertaken by all those concerned for the future of our archives, including the Commission.**¹⁵

- **Most seriously, this lack of public awareness envelops many of our elected local councils and the governing bodies of our businesses and universities** like a shroud under which all that smacks of the past and its dust can be quickly buried so that attention can be turned to today's pressing problems. 'Heritage is something that most people agree is a good thing but it is also something for which people do not always want to pay directly,' as one of our respondents put it.¹⁶ These are short-sighted attitudes.
- **Archivists, like the archives in their care, still have an image problem.**¹⁷ It is often based on a very imperfect awareness by employers, on the one hand of the full range of skills and competencies which

¹⁴ A recent survey showed that three out of four households in Britain use public libraries (BL Research and Innovation Centre *Research Bulletin* 22 (1999), p.7), whilst the Museums & Galleries Commission estimates that there are over 80 million visits per annum to the United Kingdom's 2,500 museums. This compares with perhaps one million reader visits per annum to record repositories.

¹⁵ AM 28, 52, 67, 81, 141.

¹⁶ Northampton Borough Council, AM 127.

¹⁷ Or a 'lack of image' problem: see Mark Stevens, 'Local authority archives: places and perceptions,' in *JSA* vol 20 no 1 (1999), pp.85-92.

archivists now have to offer and on the other hand of the complexities of the job itself if done to any professional standard. Some forward-looking employers have indeed fully grasped these competencies and are already reaping the benefits in terms of improved administrative efficiency and enhanced public services. But unless archives have a determined champion on council, committee or board – and, happily, such people do in places exist – the danger is that they have a very low profile indeed and command little support when it comes to the allocation of budgets.¹⁸ **It seems to be all too widely assumed that archives can get along on a shoestring budget under officers at the lowest possible tiers of management. This woeful situation will not be changed overnight, but as a nation we should indeed be striving to change it, at every level – national, regional and local, and in the private sector – if today's archives are to inform tomorrow's memory.**

- **More generally the global funding allocated to archives, by central and local government and other public bodies in particular, falls well short of requirements if archives are to be properly exploited as a resource for all.** The rapid changes taking place in our government and society present their own new demands for documentation and improved standards in the care of records and archives.¹⁹ So too do the present government's new imperatives of access for all and lifelong learning. But what we see in many sectors, and perhaps especially in local government, is not universally the laying of new foundations to make this possible but rather restrictions on (or even reductions in) expenditure, making it ever harder for archive services to perform to their full capacity. Resources are stretched and too few staff are employed to allow the full range of work to be accomplished. The effects are different in different places, reflecting local opportunities and priorities: but they include reductions in public opening hours, rising backlogs of cataloguing and conservation work, the virtual abandonment of survey and rescue work to seek out archives that are in need of care, and a new necessity to seek

external funding, often in direct competition with many other bidders within and beyond the cultural sector, for what should really be core work, with all the attendant problems of finding internal partnership funding and the staff time even to make the case.²⁰

- **The decade under review has been a period of great change, uncertainty and at times justifiable apprehension for those concerned about archives.** The structures under which archives are created and administered have been subjected to repeated change. From 1992 onwards, local government was reorganised in England, Wales and Scotland. As this report was being written in 1999, a new Parliament was elected for Scotland and a new Assembly for Wales. New administrative arrangements for Northern Ireland were still under discussion. The government has also announced its intention to establish a Museums, Libraries and Archives Council with effect from April 2000 and new Regional Cultural Consortia which will include archives in their remit. In the university sector, following the Joint Funding Councils' review of library resources in 1993, new grants were made available for Non-Formula Funding and for ICT developments. These in turn were succeeded in 1999 by the Research Support Libraries Programme, with a different range of objectives.

INTO THE NEW MILLENNIUM

- **Computer technology is revolutionising the means of communication** both within and between record repositories and their users, presenting enormous new opportunities for cataloguing and outreach but also enormous funding and technical challenges which require a huge coordination of effort at national level.
- **The dissemination of more information about archives on the national and international computer networks, and the making available of more primary material in surrogate form, for example as digitised images mounted on the National Grid for Learning, will steadily raise awareness of the available**

¹⁸ AM 67, 140.

¹⁹ AM 23.

²⁰ AM 8, 88, 133, 138, 141.

archival resources and their accessibility.

- Other changes just over the horizon, such as the move towards **Freedom of Information** legislation (for which a draft Bill was published as this report was in preparation),²¹ and the implementation of 'Best Value',²² must bring increased appreciation of the benefits, and indeed the cost-effectiveness, of competent records management and archive keeping, and give public bodies in particular a greater degree of pride in managing their affairs systematically.
- **The increasingly organised voice of the user**, for example in the many archives Friends' and users' groups that are growing in strength throughout the country, will also be a force to be reckoned with.
- **New sources of funding have come on stream.** The Heritage Lottery Fund made its first grants in 1994 and has since established itself as the greatest single source of funding for archives apart from the core funding of repositories by their parent authorities. The efforts first of the Commission and then of the archival community more generally to establish a credible list of needs for lottery funding highlighted serious inadequacies in the resourcing of archive services. The National Manuscripts Conservation Trust, which was launched shortly before the publication of our Twenty-seventh report and sponsored jointly by the Commission and the British Library, has now established a track record of grant aid, and has in a sense 'come of age' with the gradual build-up of its endowment fund and the withdrawal in 1999 of the government's pump-priming grant.
- Last, but we hope by no means least, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council also promises to give archives a higher profile.

The stakes must be raised, and it is hard to escape the conclusion that if major change is to be effected a strong lead will be required from the centre to give a new impetus to our archive services. We suggest elsewhere in this report that that might require legislation to give new statutory recognition to archives, and targeted funding to encourage the improvement of standards. These challenges cannot be surmounted by any single agency acting alone. They will require the coordinated action of bodies such as the Commission, the Interdepartmental Archives Committee, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and the National Council on Archives and its constituents. We hope that this report will serve to inform their future strategy.

It has never been more essential for all the national and professional bodies engaged in this field to hold steady and work together towards common objectives. Equally, in our view it has never been more important to have an independent mechanism for monitoring the archival health of the nation.

²¹ *Freedom of information. Consultation on draft legislation* (Cm 4355), 1999.

²² Defined by the government as 'the continuous search by a local authority to improve the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of all its services and activities for its community and other service users', in the White Paper *Modern local government: in touch with the people* (July 1998). See also AM 153.

Part Two:

Standards of care and access

1. PRESERVATION

The improvement of standards of care for the nation's archives has been the Commission's top priority in its Corporate Plans throughout this period. This has been addressed most tangibly by:

- Publication of a study of *Archive buildings in the United Kingdom 1997-1992* (1993).
- Revision and promotion of the HMC *Standard for record repositories* (second edn 1997), including the inspection of repositories to assess their compliance with the Standard.
- Lead role, under the auspices of the British Standards Institution, in the revision of British Standard 5454, *Recommendations for storage and exhibition of archival documents* (draft for public comment 1999).
- Promotion, through the Standing Conference on Archives and Museums, of the Museums & Galleries Commission (MGC) *Code of practice on archives for museums* (revised edn 1996).
- Collaborative study with MGC of the archival holdings of museums in the South West of England, published as *Hidden assets* (MGC 1996).
- Continued sponsorship, jointly with the British Library and more recently with the National Preservation Office, of the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust.
- Grants-in-aid to the Business Archives Council (until 1998) and the British Records Association's Records Preservation Section.
- Advice to owners and custodians on the care of their archives and papers.
- Advice to grant-awarding bodies on schemes for new buildings or improvements to existing buildings; and on conservation and preservation.
- Collaboration with other bodies including the British Library, the National Preservation Office and the Museums & Galleries Commission on specific research projects in this field.



In the world of archives, as in that of libraries, preservation – whose fundamental importance has long been recognised – has become a paramount issue in the past decade.

Efforts have been redoubled by bodies such as the National Preservation Office and the national libraries and record offices to develop cost-effective long-term strategies to ensure that our written heritage is not lost to future generations. The Society of Archivists published specific guidance in this area in 1997.²³ The NPO and the British Library have sponsored a number of research projects to measure the scale of the problems, determine the safeguards already in place and promote best practice. The archival 'mapping' projects

described below have all embraced preservation needs, and work has proceeded apace under the auspices of the British Standards Institution to bring the British Standards in this field²⁴ thoroughly up to date. All these emerging standards have been widely welcomed. It still remains the case that there is no single centre of excellence coordinating research and development in the field of archive conservation and no central source of income to promote research and identify research needs in this field.²⁵

²³ C Pickford, J Rhys-Lewis and J Weber, *Preservation and conservation. A guide to policy and practices in the preservation of archives* (Best Practice guideline 4, 1997).

²⁴ Particularly BS 5454 and BS 4971.

²⁵ Archives are not alone in this. See for example Kate Foley and Vincent Shacklock (eds), *Conservation research: needs and provision* (De Montfort University, Leicester [1998]).

BUILDINGS

The provision of appropriate storage accommodation with a stable environment is the first desideratum in any preservation strategy.

Since the Commission published its study of *Archive buildings in the United Kingdom 1977-1992*, which has been widely drawn on in the planning and design of subsequent buildings, good progress has been maintained in improving standards for the storage of archives. From a long list of developments, it is gratifying to record that since 1992 new buildings have been opened, for example, for the Public Record Office, the British Library, the National Archives of Scotland, the National Library of Wales, and the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (now merged with English Heritage); for local authority record offices in Cumbria (Whitehaven), Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Leicestershire, Shropshire, Surrey, Westminster and for London Metropolitan Archives and in Scotland for Dumfries, Highland (Wick) and Perth and Kinross; for the Modern Records Centre at the University of Warwick (jointly with BP archives), the Ruskin Library at Lancaster University and the university libraries of Glasgow, Huddersfield and Leeds; for the cathedral archives at Hereford and York; and, among business archives, for BT and News International plc. Extensive refurbishments have been undertaken elsewhere, including the Corporation of London Records Office, Manchester City Library and Staffordshire and Flintshire Record Offices, the Royal Archives and the archives of the Dean and Canons of Windsor. While this report was being compiled, further new buildings were in progress or at an advanced stage of planning for Carmarthenshire, Berkshire, Devon, Essex and Norfolk and for the Fawcett Library at London Guildhall University. None of this could have been achieved without the costly commitment of the respective governing and funding bodies and determined advocacy of archives, often in highly competitive funding arenas, by many individuals and committees. These achievements are a source of pride. We consider separately below the crucial role of the Heritage Lottery Fund which has supported, for example, the buildings for Gloucestershire, Flintshire, Lancaster, London Guildhall University, Surrey, Windsor and York mentioned above.

But by no means all repositories have fared so well. We emphasise elsewhere in this Report the unevenness of funding committed to archive services especially by local authorities, the poor conditions of storage attained by many of those responding to the various 'mappings' of archival needs, and thus the very high priority that, in our view, must continue to be attached to improving or replacing inadequate archive buildings if the general rate of progress towards the care of the nation's archives is to be maintained. We do not underestimate the difficulties of raising capital for this purpose, a point which was actually made to us by one of the *successful* HLF bidders.²⁶ The Society of Archivists²⁷ made a comparison with France, where local archives to a great extent come under national direction and funding, and where an impressive programme of archive building has resulted. Lacking such a centralised system in the UK, we can only commend the successes above to those who have hitherto been less fortunate, as examples of what can be achieved when the right kind of support is in place.

The Commission's *Standard for record repositories* (2nd edition 1997), which has been endorsed by all the national and professional bodies, provides a useful and impartial yardstick by which a governing body can measure its archive service and its building provision. In 1997 the Commission began to offer formal 'HMC' accreditation to repositories which in all essential respects meet the recommendations of the *Standard*. A 5-year programme of inspections²⁸ is currently under way, and eventually this new form of recognition will replace the old 'M&T' designation for repositories to which Manorial and Tithe Records (over which the Commission has statutory oversight on behalf of the Master of the Rolls) might be directed for safe keeping. At present, participation in these inspections is entirely voluntary. Some,

²⁶ Surrey County Council, AM 147.

²⁷ AM 75.

²⁸ The Commission is not the only body concerned with repository standards, although its remit is wider than that of any other inspecting body. In England and Wales it works closely with the PRO in particular, which inspects local places of deposit for Public Records. Archive buildings in Scotland fall within the responsibility of the Keeper of the Records of Scotland and the Commission does not carry out formal inspections there unless requested to do so, and then by agreement in advance with the Keeper. The diocesan authorities of the Church of England and the Church in Wales have their own respective systems for approving repositories for the custody of Church records.

like the National Council on Archives and the Government Purchase Grant Fund, have called for the system to be given more teeth, linked to specific funding incentives, and even to a system under which government inspectors could move in where standards fell below an acceptable level, as may be done for example in the case of schools.²⁹ **Whilst we would not wish to go as far as this, we would certainly like to see funding – from all sources, central as well as grant-aided – match need and reward attainment to a greater extent than is the case at present.**

PRESERVATION STRATEGY

Beyond the provision of suitable buildings, preservation strategy commonly includes such elements as: instructing staff and public alike in the careful handling of original materials; copying originals on to a surrogate medium such as microfilm and making the surrogate rather than the original available for public consultation; the provision of simple protective packaging, especially for little-used items, to help prevent further deterioration; and finally active intervention to repair damage or arrest further decay.

In terms of labour and materials the last of these options is the most expensive. Conservation programmes are therefore increasingly having to be prioritised. But even when this has been done the backlog of work is often still substantial, and the immediate staffing or financial resources of many repositories are sufficient to meet only a proportion of the need. **Additional permanent resources for preservation are therefore urgently needed,³⁰ although it is doubtful whether the present supply of professionally-trained staff is sufficient to meet significantly expanded demand for their services. Additional recruitment and training may be necessary.**

Conservation workshops have long been among the most distinctive and prized features of the United Kingdom's archival landscape. The need for them stems from the unique nature of archives themselves. If these become unusable through decay or wear and tear they cannot simply be replaced by another identical specimen, or by something that would serve nearly as well, as might frequently be the case

with library books. **Whilst every effort is made by most repositories to facilitate public access to the information contained in archives, there is a degree of tension between access and preservation. Preservation must win the argument every time.**

Respondents to our survey have noted that archive conservators have become increasingly professionalised during this period,³¹ largely thanks to the Society of Archivists' training scheme. Cross-sectoral efforts, which we welcome, were under way while this report was in preparation, to standardise the professional accreditation of conservators.³²

To a greater extent than ever before, senior conservators are being given full managerial and strategic roles within their repositories. The new archive buildings of the past two decades – at least those in the national and local government sectors – have virtually all included purpose-designed workshops, well-equipped for the full range of conservation work. Many of them are of outstanding quality, and must rank among the successes of British archives in this period.

Still the fact remains that the backlogs are daunting. Over two-thirds of English local authority record offices, for example, were found in a recent survey to have growing backlogs of untreated material. Another report³³ has emphasised that low budgets for preservation either encourage low horizons or imbue professional archivists and conservators with a sense of inadequacy when, for example, they monitor conditions carefully and know them to be unsatisfactory but the resources are lacking to do anything to remedy the situation. As one recent observer put it, there is a 'feeling of powerlessness to get standards improved.'³⁴

Whilst on security grounds and in the interests of minimising handling it is highly desirable that archives be repaired in-house, this does

²⁹ AM 59, 88, 157.

³⁰ AM 28.

³¹ AM 67, 75. See also Tim Edwards, 'UK paper conservation courses: an overview', in *JSA* vol 20 no 1 (1999), pp.49-60.

³² Joint Accreditation Group of the Conservation Forum, *Professional accreditation of conservators: Introduction to the Professional Accreditation Scheme. Draft for professional accreditation trials, March-May 1999.*

³³ John Feather and Paul Eden, *National preservation policy: Policies and practices on archives and record offices* (British Library Research and Innovation Report 43, 1997).

³⁴ Elizabeth Parker and Christine Smith, *Study of the archival records of British universities* [TFPL Ltd] (1997). pp.25, 96.

not always make the best economic sense, especially in the case of small repositories. Some already buy in services from neighbouring repositories – a practice which might be more widely followed. Others rely on contracting out the service to the private sector. **The means of service delivery is in a sense a less important issue than the existence of a clear strategy, and a commensurate budget for getting the work done.** For the university sector, where dedicated archive conservation units are less common than in local authority record offices, one suggestion raised by a recent consultancy for JISC was that a limited number of regional centres, on the model of that at Dundee University, might be established. **We strongly support the development of collaborative ventures.**

The Commission has continued to play an important role in advising grant-awarding bodies on grants towards conservation and preservation. Grants from the **British Library** under section 1.3(b) of the British Library Act materially assisted both the preservation and cataloguing of archives and manuscripts between 1993 (when the grants were reinstated after a gap) and March 1999 when they again came to an end.³⁵ The **National Manuscripts Conservation Trust**,³⁶ however, about which we shall have more to say below, continues to thrive.

Digitisation offers important new possibilities, both as a form of surrogacy and, in a more limited context, as a preservation technique for archives in the traditional media of paper and parchment.³⁷ However, it is not the universal panacea sometimes supposed. Digitisation alone does not remove the need for interpretative skills to understand a document and its context, and the digitised image, if it is to serve a wide public, will often have to be accompanied by explanatory material. The key problem with regard to preservation is that the digital surrogates themselves are subject to decay; nobody is yet quite sure of their life-expectancy. Long-term costs, whether of re-scanning the material or moving the existing

digitised images to new platforms before they become unreadable, could be prohibitive.³⁸ Archive quality microfilm, by contrast, has an estimated life-span of a century or more. It is still in many ways the preferable medium for preservation. Indeed, good quality microfilm can in some circumstances be used as the source from which the digitised image is taken (and if necessary re-taken in later years, without disturbing the original).

Our overall conclusion is that whilst there are no grounds for complacency, and additional resources for preservation are clearly required, significant advances are being made in this field, both towards national strategies and towards the solution of practical problems on the ground.

³⁵ *British Library grants for cataloguing and preservation. Annual reports for 1997-98 and 1998-99* lists the most recent grants, which were of wide benefit, for example to the archives of boroughs including Dover, Cheltenham and Ipswich, businesses including Ferranti and Lotus, and institutions including the Royal Naval Benevolent Society.

³⁶ AM 61.

³⁷ Rather different considerations apply in the case of the digitisation of sound and film archives and the preservation of electronic records, which are not under discussion here.

³⁸ See, for example, Mary Feeney (ed) *Digital culture: maximising the nation's investment* (National Preservation Office, 1999), and Jeff Rothenberg, *Avoiding technological quicksand: finding a viable technical foundation for digital preservation* (European Commission on Preservation and Access, 1999).

2. COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

In its promotion of preservation in the broadest sense, the Commission has regarded those collections which are at risk of dispersal or destruction as its highest priority. In particular it has:

- Advised both private individuals and organisations, on suitable repositories to which they might lend, give or sell their papers.
- Monitored the catalogues of the principal auction houses and dealers with a view to informing repositories of items within their known field of interest, and instituted annual professional training seminars on sales.
- Encouraged the more systematic definition of repositories' collection policies through subscription to the HMC *Standard for record repositories*, and through specific published guidelines.
- Advised the government on the allocation of manuscripts accepted for the nation in lieu of tax.
- Advised grant-awarding bodies on grants towards the purchase of manuscripts and archives.
- Been a member of the Documents Working Party and Advisory Council on Export of Works of Art, and occasionally acted as expert adviser to the Reviewing Committee.



THE CONTINUING FLOW OF ARCHIVES INTO PUBLIC REPOSITORIES

Our Royal Warrant charges us with responsibility to seek out and report upon records and archives of all kinds that are of value for the study of history. After 130 years of investigation the Commission has an unrivalled awareness of most of the country's major accumulations and collections of accessible historic papers, whether in public repositories or still in private hands, and it is gratifying how often an enquiry about an old-established family or business collection can be matched against one of the Commission's files from previous contacts, or against publicly available information in the NRA. This cumulative treasury of information is the bedrock of the Commission's claim to speak authoritatively in every sphere of its work.

The broad general picture, however, is capable of much more detailed development. Since the early 1980s we have been systematically filling gaps in our knowledge through our series of Guides to sources for British history. Each of these has taken a category of persons or organisations in a defined period and has sought, by research, written enquiry, and visits to owners, to identify and summarily describe their known archives or papers. It is a salutary, and in a sense a humbling exercise, because every such survey continues to bring to light material that was previously unknown, or that

was lost amid the broader information already at our disposal. The number of such surveys which we could in principle conduct is huge, but in practice our resources will not permit the pursuit of more than one or two concurrently. Each survey may occupy many staff-years, so we are always glad to lend advice or support wherever we can to the efforts of other surveying bodies or individual survey officers in specialist fields, as we have recently for example in the compilation of the Artists' Papers Register. In this period we have published guides to the records of the metal processing and engineering industries 1760-1914,³⁹ and to principal family and estate collections.⁴⁰ Work is also now well advanced towards a guide to the papers of British antiquaries and historians. The computerisation of the NRA indexes has opened up the possibility of developing some sections of the indexes without resorting to traditional hard-copy publication, and as the first fruits of this the Commission has begun the process of systematising its electronic coverage of information on the surviving records of medieval religious houses.

One of our greatest regrets is that we lack the resources to be as attentive as we should like to the papers of living or recently deceased

³⁹ Guide no 9, 1994. For full titles see the list of the Commission's publications in Appendix 3.

⁴⁰ Guides nos 10 and 11, 1996, 1999.

individuals or to the archives of modern organisations. Our response for the most part necessarily has to be a reactive one, giving advice when it is sought. Even on this basis, however, we find that a gratifying number of individuals and organisations still turn to us every year for advice on their private papers, ranging from arrangement, care or records management *in situ*, to proposals for deposit, gift or sale to a repository. Not infrequently we therefore find that the Commission itself is directly encouraging the transfer of private papers into public custody, or even into public ownership. We are pleased to assist in this process where that seems to be the right outcome for all concerned, but we continue to respect the needs and interests of all owners whether individual or corporate, and to do what we can to assist them when their choice is to retain possession of their papers.

The Commission's monitoring of the migration of papers both by private treaty and through the sale rooms indicates that there has been on the one hand a vigorous continued flow into public repositories throughout the country of highly significant historical material which had never before been firmly in the public domain, and on the other hand a substantial transfer into public ownership of material that had formerly been privately owned but held on loan by a public repository. As will be seen from Appendix 4, these include major groups of family and estate papers, and papers of politicians, military and naval officers, churchmen, artists, scientists and businessmen. It is very noticeable from the list that every kind of repository has been a beneficiary: the national libraries in England, Wales and Scotland, university libraries and a number of special collections, and many local record offices. Nothing could better demonstrate how inter-woven is our archival heritage, with much nationally important material held locally, and not a little material of local significance held in national institutions.

It is gratifying to note how little archival material of major importance has been dispersed at auction over the past decade, and how much has been acquired for the nation either directly, through purchase by repositories open to the public, or indirectly, through the acceptance of major collections in lieu of tax. Much of this flow goes unnoticed unless, as in the case of the Churchill papers (bought by Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge, in 1995 with the help of a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund), adverse

publicity about the beneficiaries creates controversy. In a longer perspective the nation can count itself immeasurably richer in terms of the fine collections which it has acquired in perpetuity during the last years of this century. The expenditure involved, or tax written off, is minimal when compared with the cost of acquiring a handful of old master paintings, and the results set out in the Appendix represent good value for money, for which the Commission can claim some credit through its advice to grant-awarding bodies and its sale-catalogue monitoring service for record repositories. It should not be forgotten that without these archives our culture and history cannot be understood and the other aspects of our heritage, ranging from buildings and landscapes to paintings and artefacts, interpreted.

It would be wrong to suppose that we are only interested in locating and describing the material of supreme national importance. We regard our Warrant as extending to all facets of British history whether national or local. There is a steady continuing flow into record repositories of other material of local or specialist interest, whilst detached individual items or portions of formerly larger archives, sometimes unknown or forgotten, also continue to turn up unexpectedly. Our annual survey of *Accessions to repositories*, which is now published electronically, charts the arrival of much of this material and offers the prospect of its eventual availability for study. As each generation adds its contribution to the cumulative national 'memory', and as many individuals and even quite long-established organisations have yet to take stock of their archives, there is still much scope for fruitful survey work on both a local and a national basis.

ALLOCATION OF MANUSCRIPTS ACCEPTED FOR THE NATION IN LIEU OF TAX

We continue to advise heritage ministers on the allocation of manuscripts offered to the nation in lieu of tax, although the Commission has no part in the administration of the scheme or in advising on the acceptability of the offers, both of which have in this period been the responsibility of the Museums & Galleries Commission. Appendix 5 to this Report is a list of the individual cases that have been referred to us for allocation. On average there have been two collections per year for our

consideration. It is striking that in the entire period only one case⁴¹ was a completely open offer, for which any interested repository could bid. All the rest came with either a firm condition attached that they be allocated to a specified repository or with a wish to this effect on the part of the offeror. Where a condition applies, the case is usually an open and shut one – either the condition is acceptable or the offer falls (so this is potentially a high-risk strategy on the part of the offeror). Where only a wish is expressed, the offer is openly advertised but the wish is mentioned and we take full account of it before determining what is the right repository in the national interest. In practice, as the record shows, the wishes of offerors have been widely respected. If any evidence were needed as to the indispensability of the Acceptance in Lieu scheme it was surely the acceptance of the Sherborne Missal, one of the greatest illuminated manuscripts in the country, from the estate of the late Duke of Northumberland in 1998.

GAPS AND WEAKNESSES IN PROVISION

The network of record repositories in the United Kingdom is not centrally controlled, but has grown up to meet the respective needs of central and local government, the universities and some parts of the private sector. In general its scope and coverage are satisfactory. But – the Public Records apart – no central agency allocates specific homes to records in need of rescue. The Commission can advise both individual and corporate private owners on possible places of custody for records which they no longer wish to retain. What it cannot do – nor do we think it should – is instruct that any particular records⁴² be sent to any particular repository.

There are both strengths and weaknesses in these arrangements. Repositories, which have to steward their own resources, now commonly set out a collecting policy.⁴³ Understandably, within that policy, on grounds of cost and storage space they have to appraise and select the records they will take in. They

can no longer afford to be as indiscriminating as were the earliest repositories in their effort to establish themselves and their credibility. For their part, owners have a degree of freedom of choice over where they place their records. On the other hand, under this system certain kinds of records can be difficult to place.⁴⁴ The archives may, for example, fall outside the declared collecting policy of all existing repositories. Or the repository which in every other respect might seem the right home for them may lack the space or (in the case of modern media) the specialist storage or technical facilities to take them in. The Commission has not yet failed to find a home for records whose owners wished to part with them, but it has come perilously close on several occasions during this period.

Concern has been repeatedly expressed about the haphazard nature of care for the archives of **the formerly nationalised industries and utilities in England and Wales**.⁴⁵ Records of nationalised industries covered by the Public Records Acts are Public Records up to the date of privatisation. Thereafter they are not, nor are they statutorily required to be deposited in a public repository or made accessible to the public, although in certain cases the protection of the Public Records Acts can be extended to them. Whilst de-nationalisation has led to major transfers of records, for example of the steel industry and the railways, into public repositories, the records have not been accompanied by any dowry for their future cataloguing, care and conservation, which all falls to the charge of the respective recipient repositories.⁴⁶ The Commission was able to offer some limited archival advice *after* the privatisation of the electricity and water industries, but was not consulted in advance about the care of their archives. We have been concerned not least by the way in which the archives of smaller predecessor bodies such as local water companies have been caught up in these general arrangements.

Other kinds of records of national importance and public interest fall outside the scope of the Public Records legislation. The PRO from time to time reviews the status of records of **Non-Departmental Public Bodies** to determine which are Public Records and which

⁴¹ Barrington papers, 1993.

⁴² With the exception of Manorial and Tithe records over which the Commission, on behalf of the Master of the Rolls, has statutory oversight.

⁴³ Strongly promoted by the Commission's *Standard for record repositories*. See also Christopher Kitching and Ian Hart, 'Collection policy statements', in *JSA* 16 no 1 (1995), pp.7-14.

⁴⁴ For further evidence of the gaps in coverage by the present network of repositories, see particularly Appendix A of *An archives policy for the United Kingdom* (National Archives Policy Liaison Group, 1996).

⁴⁵ See, for example, section 2.13 and Appendix A4 of *An archives policy for the United Kingdom*. See also AM 79.

⁴⁶ AM 122.

are not. Whilst the Keeper has discretion to accept custody of some such records this is by no means always done, and they are then left to take their chances along with the records of non-governmental organisations and businesses for which no statutory provision is made. **We support the call for the extension of control by the PRO (and also by the national record offices in Scotland and Northern Ireland) over most such records.**⁴⁷

For reasons which we do not understand, and in spite of our previous representations on this subject, the **registration records of births, marriages and deaths** in England and Wales are not classed as Public Records but come under the surveillance of the Registrar General. Their ownership has not been statutorily defined. There is no statutory requirement that the vital original records, retained locally by the registrars, should be kept in accommodation which meets nationally agreed standards, or that they should be under the professional care of an archivist or deposited for safe keeping in an appropriate local repository. We know that in some cases they are kept in far from ideal conditions. Concern has also been expressed to us about the high cost of obtaining copies of these records.⁴⁸ A review of the civil registration system for England and Wales was being undertaken by the Office of National Statistics during this survey. **We recommend that at an early date these records should be defined as Public Records and come under the full surveillance of the Keeper.**

The most surprising anomaly is over the records of the **police**, which with the exception of the policy files of the Metropolitan Police (which are Public Records) are apparently not subject to any statutory control but are variously transferred to local record offices, retained in local or national police museums, or kept in store for want of any professional and systematic custody. The creation of large regional police authorities has tended to exacerbate this problem because it is by no means always clear which would be the appropriate 'county' or 'local' repository to take charge of the records if they were handed over. We were alerted to some of these problems by the Police History Society,⁴⁹ and the Commission has drawn them to the attention of the Association of Chief Police Officers and the Interdepartmental Committee on Archives.

⁴⁷ *An archives policy for the United Kingdom*, s. 2.18.

⁴⁸ AM 6, 156.

⁴⁹ AM 85.

Records of **UK national organisations and businesses, based in and around London in particular**, are especially problematic. The Corporation of London, through its Guildhall Library and London Metropolitan Archives, performs a vital role for the nation in holding many of these archives. But the capacity of these repositories is not unlimited, and it is sometimes a relief to identify specialist repositories, not necessarily in London, into whose collection policies they squarely fit. Special collections such as those of the universities, as we indicate elsewhere, may be controversial when they appear to cut across the collecting interests of the local authority record repositories, but they are a vital part of the national provision.

Our respondents have variously shown, that archaeological survey records, architects' papers (at least in England), modern administrative records of the Church of England, title deeds to land since the advent of land registration, and scientists' papers below the level of the national elite, are among other categories of archives not being systematically garnered throughout the country, and therefore remaining at some risk of loss and dispersal.⁵⁰

Proposals emerge from time to time for the establishment of new specialist repositories. One such is currently being considered in relation to the archives of national **voluntary organisations**. Before the Commission can lend its support in such cases, the possible conflict of interest with any established repositories that have similar holdings has to be assessed. So also does commitment of the intended sponsoring body to meeting not just the capital start-up costs but also the longer-term revenue costs needed to do the job properly. The Commission has, however, encouraged a number of charities and voluntary bodies to put their records in order *in situ* through the appointment of a professional archivist.

From the historian's point of view, gaps in coverage by record repositories can be of an altogether different nature. The relative scarcity of available documentation for the **activities of the ordinary citizen** (as distinct from the national and local elite, whose papers tend to be well represented) does not reflect a lack of repositories able to take in such material, but rather a fundamental shortage of such material in the first place. The Royal Historical Society's day conference during our

⁵⁰ AM, 9, 11, 41, 79, 98, 103.

survey, for example, heard of the paucity – at least in record repositories – of **surviving diaries and letters from ordinary individuals**. Whilst repositories clearly cannot summon up such material to order, a wider awareness of its scarcity and of the potential demand for its use might help to influence accession policies. In these circumstances, the collecting activities of **specialist oral history societies and sound archives** are especially important. **We would wish to encourage the dissemination of professional standards in this sector, and we draw attention to the need of these bodies for a decent level of resources.**

Likely public demand for access to any given material (however attractive as a yardstick against which expenditure on acquisition, cataloguing and care can be justified) can be a dangerous guide when it comes to selection. Only a tiny minority of potential researchers may need to see the most **detailed technical documentation** of industrial processes or machinery, and as the Science Museum pointed out, ‘the constraints which cause it to surface and be lost often coincide with those which prevent publicly funded repositories accepting it’.⁵¹ Nevertheless, selection policies which exclude such documentation, on the grounds of its bulk or the likely low level of usage, can actually frustrate one whole strand of research.⁵² It could also be said that by restricting acquisitions policy to archival materials for which there is an established current demand, repositories will overlook the future value of very modern material. Indeed, concern is already being expressed by contemporary historians about the rate of loss of papers created during the last thirty years.

Quite different issues arise with regard to the archives of **ethnic minorities** in the United Kingdom.⁵³ With a few notable exceptions, among which the records of Jewish organisations are an obvious example, the archives of ethnic organisations and individuals have been slow to find their way into the established national, local and special repositories. In part this is attributable to a degree of mistrust by the ethnic communities of the motives of the collecting institutions, despite carefully balanced campaigns by archivists to raise awareness of the repositories’ own existence and of the value of such archives for study. In part, however, it reflects a problem common to records of all

types, namely the sparseness of resources for record repositories to undertake primary survey work to locate records that are in need of a home. At the same time, it is the experience of many researchers that a good deal of documentary evidence for the existence and role of ethnic minorities in history does in fact survive in the established archival collections if only there were adequate means to identify all the relevant references. **We are giving our strong support to the efforts of the Black and Asian Studies Association to explore possible solutions to these and related problems.**

Another fundamental problem which leads to gaps in the coverage of our archival network is **the flow of UK archival materials to other countries**, especially the United States of America. The export regulations require licences to be applied for in respect of archives over 50 years old, other than the personal papers of the exporter or the exporter’s spouse. There is no way of knowing to what extent this control is flouted either wittingly or unwittingly. It is impossible to search every bag that leaves the country and every parcel that is posted. It is equally impossible to believe that a licence has been sought in every case before an item has been shipped or flown to a foreign academic library. There are no grounds for complacency about this. On the other hand, in the case of law-abiding exporters who do apply for a licence, the system allows an Expert Adviser to scrutinise the applications and raise an objection with the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art which, if the objection is upheld, can result in a licence being withheld until it is seen whether a British institution can match the asking price in order to retain the material in this country. As far as we can judge, at this level the system has continued to work well throughout the period under review and no major collections falling within the regulations are known to have been exported.⁵⁴

The absence, however, of any export controls on papers less than 50 years old, and in particular on **the papers of living authors**, has continued to result in a steady drain of material across the Atlantic. To address this, the National Council on Archives⁵⁵ has advocated the extension of licensing requirements to

⁵¹ AM 125.

⁵² AM 103.

⁵³ AM 107, 136.

⁵⁴ For a recent discussion of some of the perceived problems, see Elizabeth Lomas, ‘The ones that get away? Archives and export legislation in the UK’, in *Business Archives Principles and Practice* no 77 (May 1999), pp.13-30.

⁵⁵ AM 88.

papers under 50 years old in return for capital taxation concessions to the owner. Another of our respondents made the point that it would be more sensible for the government to redirect its energies towards addressing this problem than place so much emphasis on the aesthetic value of other, export-stopped, categories of material.⁵⁶ The risk of loss has been all the greater in that several potential sources of grant-aid for British repositories, including the National Heritage Memorial Fund, have been unwilling to make grants where the direct benefit would (or could) be seen to accrue to the living writer.⁵⁷ These issues are actively under review.

On the other side of the equation, however, British national repositories are still vigorously collecting modern literary papers, and a number of public-spirited authors have given them their material. A fighting fund has been established by the Friends of the National Libraries, with the help of substantial donations from the Royal Literary Fund, to support the bidding power of British institutions on the open market.⁵⁸ It should also be recorded that collaborative arrangements between British and American repositories are now beginning to mitigate the problem, for example with the introduction of arrangements for the exchange of copies of complementary material. The growing access to catalogues by means of the Internet is another positive development.

ELECTRONIC RECORDS

Taking the country as a whole, few electronic records have yet passed into the control of professional archivists and records managers, although there are some major exceptions. The new challenges facing all who create and manage electronic records, from central and local government at one end of the spectrum to private individuals at the other, were among the issues most frequently raised by those who responded to our survey.⁵⁹ It is clear that there is widespread concern, and as yet little confidence that the problems are being addressed with sufficient urgency except with regard to the Public Records. There is of course a direct link between this issue and the more general one (discussed elsewhere in this

report) of the reluctance of so many public and private organisations to engage in effective management of their current and semi-current records.

The media on which electronic records are carried have a known lifespan of just a few years, compared with paper or parchment which have a proven life of centuries. The software used to create electronic records becomes obsolete at a dizzying pace, and so does the hardware, the machinery used to process and read the data. For these reasons it is vital (a) that adequate documentation of the system and software used in its compilation should accompany any electronic data transferred to archives, and (b) that data stored archivally should not be system-dependent but should be capable of refreshment and migration to future platforms. Other major factors are that much electronic data undergoes constant change and updating in the course of daily business, and with the use of databases certain kinds of 'document' are created only on demand. Working drafts and out-dated spreadsheets, among other things, tend to be deleted unless someone takes specific action to preserve them. In the worst case, nothing ever becomes 'archival' because everything is kept in current systems without professional management.

Many of the lessons from this are clear. **Authorities and businesses concerned to see appropriate data preserved for the future are going to have to involve archivists and records managers from the very moment of its creation.**⁶⁰ **The professional staff must have a hand in defining how electronic records are to be appraised, selected cost-effectively, and captured in archival form for posterity.** A number of our respondents feared, however, that too few archivists have yet become specialists on these issues; and that creators of electronic records in whole sectors such as local government and industry are unaware of the longer-term implications, and are quite happy to continue using their computers on a day to day basis with the data that they happen then to contain, rather than thinking of any archival issues. As one of our respondents put it, 'the consequences of inaction are likely to be far more lasting than any Year 2000 computer date problems',⁶¹ and will not go away if we ignore them.

⁵⁶ AM 28.

⁵⁷ AM 11, 20, 66, 79.

⁵⁸ Letter to *The Times*, 6 April 1998, by Lord Egremont and others (AM 20).

⁵⁹ AM 12, 18, 67, 92, 138, 150.

⁶⁰ AM 84.

⁶¹ AM 18.

To be fair to the leading protagonists, these issues have been widely debated both internationally in Europe and North America and nationally. It is not that the issues are unknown to archivists, but rather that they have yet to percolate through to the records creators, and in order to tackle them new core funding will certainly be required. The Public Record Office has established its own system for managing the government's electronic records, giving guidance to departments (which is also more widely available for study by practitioners)⁶² and creating a National Digital Archive of Datasets through which the care of governmental electronic data is contracted out to a specialist centre run by London University. It has been suggested to us that it may be cost-effective for other sectors such as the universities to follow a similar path and establish a single or at most a small number of centres for handling electronic archives,⁶³ and the same course may commend itself to other sectors. Other new initiatives include the establishment of a MPhil course in digital preservation at Glasgow University.

Whilst a lead is being given by a few bodies, it is clear that this issue must remain high on the agenda of all the national and professional bodies concerned with archives. **We are entirely sympathetic to the view of the NCA⁶⁴ that a collaborative programme of training and awareness raising represents the best way forward. We were therefore encouraged to learn of the establishment during this survey of a new training programme sponsored by the PRO and three of the training schools.⁶⁵**

FILM AND SOUND ARCHIVES

We have no particular brief to speak for film and sound archives, for both of which there are other national lead organisations. In the national interest we do, however, maintain general vigilance over archives of all kinds, and of course many general purpose archive repositories do *de facto* hold small quantities of film and sound material. One notable problem of access, to which we draw the

attention of the respective organisations, is that film and sound archives have never been included in the National Register of Archives. **It would seem appropriate for the specialist bodies concerned to consider establishing distinct registers in both of these fields.**

The Commission's *Standard for record repositories* (section 3.9) states that such material 'should not be acquired unless the record repository has, or plans soon to obtain, the necessary equipment, or is able to arrange facilities for appropriate public access elsewhere under proper invigilation'.⁶⁶ We are glad to report the extension, during the period under review, of the regional film archives; the development of the Film and Sound Archives Group within the Society of Archivists; the emergence of new collaborative ventures, with (for example) the Wessex Film and Sound Archive housed in Hampshire Record Office, the East Anglian Film Archive looking to a new partnership with Norfolk Record Office, and a South East Film Archive based at West Sussex Record Office which serves the county record offices of East and West Sussex, Surrey and Kent. It is pleasing also to report that a number of general purpose repositories have taken steps to establish special storage environments to ensure that the newer media in their care are properly catered for, but the recent mapping surveys show that very many still have not.

Our attention has been drawn to other special and continuing needs of film and sound archives: for example, the relative lack of public funding available to support them, which according to one respondent 'has seriously endangered the future of the most vivid record of twentieth-century life';⁶⁷ the masses of material requiring long term conservation or costly transcription into new digital media;⁶⁸ the quest for common standards of cataloguing and the development of search engines to facilitate the retrieval of information from different specialist archives.⁶⁹ **Tribute has rightly been paid to the role of the National Heritage Memorial Fund and the Heritage Lottery Fund in supporting film preservation in particular. But there is a need for more central funding as well as external grant-aid if this sector is to flourish, as it must, for the future.**

⁶² PRO, *Management, appraisal and preservation of electronic records, Vol 1 Principles; Vol 2, Procedures* (2nd edn, 1999).

⁶³ AM 23.

⁶⁴ AM 88 page 7.

⁶⁵ Announced in a circulated publicity leaflet.

⁶⁶ See also *An archives policy for the United Kingdom*, s.2.10.

⁶⁷ AM 2.

⁶⁸ AM 47, 135.

⁶⁹ AM 47.

3. PUBLIC ACCESS

In the period covered by this Report the Commission has promoted public access to Britain's archives most notably by:

- Maintaining a public search room in its offices at Quality House.
- Publishing a periodic directory of *Record repositories in Great Britain* (9th edn revised, 1992; 10th edn, 1997; 11th edn, 1999).
- Developing the National Register of Archives as a comprehensive research tool (see next section of this Report).
- Compiling thematic information sheets on sources for particular historical topics.
- Developing its own website (<http://www.hmc.gov.uk>) with information about the Commission; links to the NRA, to record repositories and to a number of other sources for historical and genealogical research; and the text of HMC's electronic publications.
- Publishing an annual summary of *Accessions to repositories*, with thematic digests for appropriate learned journals.
- Publishing a bibliography of *Surveys of historical manuscripts* and assisting others conducting surveys, in particular the Artists' Papers Register project.
- Continuing its series of Guides to sources for British history based on the National Register of Archives and bringing to completion its Reports and Calendars Series.
- Publishing, jointly with the PRO, a reader's guide to *Using manorial records* (1994).
- Developing regional computer databases for the Manorial Documents Register for Wales (with the National Library of Wales), Yorkshire (with the University of York Borthwick Institute) and for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight (with Hampshire Record Office).
- Listing a number of privately-held archives for inclusion in the NRA.
- Advising grant-awarding bodies on grants for cataloguing archives.



A detailed *Survey of visitors to British archives* in June 1998 recorded a very high level of reader satisfaction.⁷⁰ This is widely reflected in the responses to our own survey. It is in large part the result of a sustained and deliberate improvement in attention to readers' needs during this period which has in turn been influenced by the development of professional standards in this area.⁷¹ Resources invested in understanding and addressing readers' needs are resources well spent. This is amply demonstrated by the growing strength of Friends and other user groups, which exist not primarily as pressure groups to seek improved services and facilities (although there may be an element of that), but much more significantly to support the record office, raise funds for its work and lend help in kind.

⁷⁰ Published by the Public Services Quality Group for archives and local studies. On average, services received an 'excellent' rating from 69% of users, whilst over 90% rated the staff friendly and helpful.

⁷¹ For example the Society of Archivists' Best Practice Guidelines on *Measuring performance* (1993) and on *Archive education services* (1998).

We have also learnt, however, of some degree of frustration over impediments to access, most of which come down to a shortage of funds and human resources.

CHARGES

Along with many of the respondents to our survey,⁷² **we remain committed to the goal of free and equal access for everyone to archives held in the United Kingdom's public repositories. We recognise that in the case of privately-held archives the operating constraints are rather different.**

On the whole, good progress has been maintained towards this goal during the 1990s. The Public Record Office and the British Library, at different times during this period, both had to investigate the pros and cons of

⁷² See also *An archives policy for the United Kingdom*, s. 1.3.

charging for access. Neither found that the likely financial benefits outweighed the disadvantages, and charges for access to original records were avoided. It is still the case that only a tiny handful of local authority record offices and university special collections levy an admission charge; others have considered doing so but decided against, and a few have tried the experiment but concluded that it did not raise sufficient revenue to be worthwhile. Charges for additional services such as genealogical research undertaken on behalf of the enquirer or for the supply of photocopies are inevitable, and we do not accept the view that these must be delivered free of charge.⁷³ **Whilst we do understand that the variations in the level of charging between one repository and another can be bewildering for users, we consider that this must remain entirely a matter for local determination.**

Particular representations were made during our survey about the scale of charges for searches in the General Register Offices and the Principal Probate Registry, and the deterrent effect which these are having on family history research.⁷⁴ Whilst these charges must be a matter for the respective authorities, we have a good deal of sympathy with researchers caught up in this problem. We allude elsewhere in this report to the separate issue of the status of these records.

LOCATING THE SOURCES

Perhaps the greatest barrier to access is a lack of precise information about what archival material is held where, and on what terms and conditions it may be seen. The first tools for overcoming this are the National Registers of Archives in London and Edinburgh, established respectively in 1945 and 1946. The Registers have gone from strength to strength. They are used by more people than ever before, and one of the most significant landmarks of the information revolution in archives in the 1990s was the mounting on the Internet of the computerised indexes to the NRA in 1995. Since then, readership has

soared beyond all expectations, as charted in the Commission's *Annual reviews*. As the Commission's writ specifically excludes the Public Records, details of these have hitherto been deliberately excluded from the NRA, which some users have found mystifying.⁷⁵ This should be resolved when National Name Authority Files for corporate (including government) bodies are developed and access to both streams of records becomes possible through the same system.

The National Registers serve well the growing number of people who are aware of them and exploit their resources, but the fact remains that most people begin their research by calling in at their public library or record office, with little prior knowledge of these national research tools. As more institutions and individuals are connected to the Internet, and as the school and public library networks take shape in the coming years, we can confidently predict that familiarity with the world of archives and its research tools will grow. **This is certain to result in increased demand and increased pressures upon our record repositories. Their funding authorities should take note and monitor the situation. Some archivists see these new pressures as a threat to their services, others as the most formative development putting archives, almost for the first time, at the disposal of the whole nation. These views can only be reconciled if sufficient additional resources are pumped into our archive services, first by the service providers but secondly also from the centre.**

Not the least of the challenges is the fact that many readers lack even the most basic training in research and self-help.⁷⁶ They may also come to archival sources with quite false expectations, based most likely on their previous use of library books,⁷⁷ only to find that special training is required, for example to read and understand early documents which may be in archaic scripts or in Latin. They may assume that central indexes will lead them (as might well be the case with library books) to all the references they need to complete their research, when in fact they will find out much more if they are willing to invest the time in understanding more about the records and the context in which they were created.⁷⁸ **All of this serves to underline the importance of**

⁷³ AM 56, 106.

⁷⁴ AM 27, 156. The issue was also raised by the Federation of Family History Societies at the NCA meeting on 27 April 1999. The cost of a certified copy from a registration record is now £6.50; a copy will costs £5 and inspection of an original £15. It should be noted that the post-1858 probate records in the custody of the Principal Probate Registry of the Family Division are Public Records.

⁷⁵ AM 130.

⁷⁶ AM 139, 156.

⁷⁷ AM 84.

⁷⁸ AM 84, 106.

having specially trained staff on hand to assist readers, and further specialist staff who have a clear understanding of the potential strengths and pitfalls of the collection as a whole when it comes to exploitation for educational purposes.⁷⁹ All authorities intending their archive services to play a major educational role should bear this in mind when allocating resources.

ELECTRONIC ACCESS

For our part, we look forward to the day, now not far distant, when public access to archival information including the databases of the NRA will be readily available in every public library, school and record office. We hope that this will serve to provide a stronger community awareness of the relevance and importance of archives. To the uninitiated, the distribution of archival resources among the record repositories, libraries and museums even within one locality such as a major city or metropolitan borough can be quite confusing. How much more so is the existence in local repositories of material of clear national interest, or vice versa. One of the advantages we expect to accrue from enhanced electronic access to archival data is the identification by researchers of material relevant to their researches which is *not* in the place they might have expected.⁸⁰

In recent years there has been a steady growth in the number of repositories developing searchable electronic versions of their finding aids. Whilst some of these were initially for in-house use only, the trend is now towards making them more widely available over the Internet. A strong lead has been taken by national organisations including the Public Record Office, the National Library of Wales, the National Archives of Scotland and the British Library. The universities too have made great headway, particularly as a result of cataloguing grants from JISC. A few local authority record offices including the new Surrey History Centre and the new Essex Record Office have been designed to be highly automated, and a number of software packages, developed specifically in order to apply systematically the emerging national and international rules for archival description, are now available for consideration by those coming into this market for the first time. The

challenge for the future is to tie all these developments together in a UK-wide network for archival information. We return to this theme below.

Increasingly too, record repositories are venturing into the new territory of digitisation, making original records available in computer-readable form either on-line over the networks or in stand-alone products such as CD-ROMs, serving the interests of local communities and providing material for educational use and lifelong learning. The manuscripts and archives in question range from single 'treasures' such as the British Library's Beowulf or Aberdeen University Library's bestiary, to multiple archival sources for a given area such as those included in the Hackney on Disk or Powys Digital History projects, seeking to take archives to a much wider community than hitherto. Here, the challenge for the future is going to be to place this kind of material at the disposal of the National Grid for Learning, where the Public Record Office blazed a trail for archives from the very beginning. The Commission was involved during 1998-99 in initial discussions about the role of the New Opportunities Fund in promoting such developments.

COMPETING PRIORITIES FOR CATALOGUING

Here we must face a fundamental dilemma. Archives have to play a full part in the information revolution: first because they have so much to offer towards the government's targets for education and lifelong learning, but secondly because it would be foolish not to take advantage of the new resources which are available specifically to promote the development of electronic information and the new networks. The conversion into searchable electronic form of archive catalogues and other finding aids which are already available in hard copy or as word-processed text is a laudable objective and will significantly enhance and accelerate research by a wide range of users. It should also help to reduce wasted and speculative searches, thereby reducing wear and tear on the original documents. But when perhaps 25% of all the material held in repositories is languishing completely unlisted, when cataloguing backlogs are measured not just in staff years

⁷⁹ AM 43, 156.

⁸⁰ AM 56, 58, 59, 67, 104.

but in staff decades or in miles of shelving,⁸¹ and when resources are finite and therefore have to be allocated to one operation or the other, questions must be asked about what is the first priority for the repository: tackling the backlog of wholly uncatalogued material or converting existing catalogues to electronic form.⁸² Some Friends groups have provided volunteer labour for cataloguing, indexing, educational outreach, and preservation programmes,⁸³ and we salute this public-spiritedness on their part. **It is clear to us that the current thrust to make existing catalogues available in electronic form, in order to feed data into the networks in support of education and lifelong learning, is essential but it must whenever possible be funded from new money and not by the diversion of resources from the essential task of primary cataloguing. We urge the various grant-awarding bodies to maintain programmes for the cataloguing of previously uncatalogued material.**

Users and staff alike responded to our survey by emphasising just how much of an impediment to access these cataloguing backlogs are.⁸⁴ Some sense – on the whole we believe wrongly – that cataloguing priority is always given to records likely to be of widest popular use, especially for family history.⁸⁵ The rather different point has also been made that even material which appears to have been fully catalogued can remain intractable if there is no index or if the indexing terms omit the very issues the searcher is interested in. This applies, for example, to references in the archives to people from ethnic minorities, but it can also apply to more general uses such as genealogical and family research. Some user groups are tackling this by rewriting existing

finding aids to bring out the references that are of most significance for their own purposes and that were not foreseen by the compiler of the original catalogue or index.⁸⁶ This is another area where, in the longer term, electronic searches and controlled thesauruses may overcome some of the worst problems and open up new possibilities for research.

OPENING HOURS

If record repositories are to serve the whole population they have to be increasingly sensitive to the varied work and leisure patterns of users, some of whom are unable to visit during standard working hours of 9-5, Monday to Friday. Users emphasised to us the importance of evening and Saturday opening.⁸⁷ Many repositories have already responded to this demand by having at least one late night opening, even if this has to be paid for by closures at other times. Such arrangements, however, are always vulnerable to trimming when costs have to be cut. Whilst the ideal would be a full weekday service plus extended opening, we recognise that in many places this is unrealistic given present staff resources. Nationwide, the continuing rise in the number of reader visits is bringing its own pressures. Indeed, some custodians have told us that they could easily commit all their available resources to servicing public demand, but then no cataloguing or outreach would be done and other primary care of the archives would also suffer. Closure for one or more days a week, or as at Lancashire Record Office for one week per month, has been forced on a number of repositories simply in order to make time for these crucial activities. **Readers are in general sympathetic, but we cannot avoid the conclusion that this is really a stark indicator of the under-resourcing of our archive services in proportion to the need.**

MICROFILM SURROGATES

Other solutions to the pressures of public demand include the now very widespread provision of surrogate copies of the most used material, especially that for family history, on microfilm. This is normally made available on a self-service basis to improve speed of access to the information and at the same time reduce

⁸¹ Over half the English repositories have large cataloguing backlogs (*Our shared past*, p.7). Among specific cases drawn to our attention, there are estimated arrears of 14 staff-years at Northamptonshire Record Office, where many entries are still uniquely on card indexes covering some 75 years of accessions (AM 127), and 53 staff-years at Hertfordshire Record Office (AM 30), whilst at London Metropolitan Archives there are 6 miles of uncatalogued records (AM 52). In the universities the cataloguing backlog has been estimated at as high as 40% of holdings in over half the repositories: see JISC *Study of the archival records of British universities*, p.22.

⁸² AM 67, 111.

⁸³ For example the indexing at Westminster of 18th century settlement examinations (AM 82) or participation in the probate conservation programme at Lancashire's Record Office (AM 104). See also AM 52, 81, 99. Friends are not the only volunteers: see for example M Bateson and R Leonard, 'Social club or compulsory experience: reflections on the proper role of volunteers in record offices', in *JSA* vol 20 no 1 (1999), pp.75-84.

⁸⁴ AM 43, 52, 66, 81, 100, 104, 141.

⁸⁵ AM 103.

⁸⁶ AM 104.

⁸⁷ AM 7, 48, 53, 56, 57, 78, 106.

wear and tear on the originals. The most striking testimony to the benefits of this form of service is the remarkable success of the PRO's Family Records Centre in Islington which provides census and probate material for study on microfilm. It sometimes exceeds 1,000 reader visits per day.

Most readers have grown accustomed to consulting microforms, and respect the reasons for this, whilst robustly defending the need to preserve the original records as well.⁸⁸ There is some feeling that more could be made of this by selling copies of the film to regular users.⁸⁹ But the *Survey of visitors to British archives* found that whilst more readers were now using microfilm than original materials this was one of the areas of least satisfaction. This was taken up by several users responding to our survey, who pointed out that if their work is not to be frustrated the films must be of good quality, the equipment to view them well maintained and up-to-date, which regrettably is not always the case,⁹⁰ and the indexing sufficient to enable the required sections of the film to be accessed quickly and accurately. Another complaint concerned bound or tightly-rolled original materials where there is a high risk (not always anticipated and safeguarded against by the custodian) that some of the original information can be obscured or omitted altogether in the surrogate form.⁹¹ **Custodians and governing bodies who make material available in surrogate form clearly need to be still more attentive to users' needs.**

PRESSURE ON READER SPACES

The pressure on available reader spaces is sometimes so great that booking systems have had to be introduced in the most popular search rooms. Thus there is in fact a degree of rationing for the facilities.⁹² The alternative may be working in excessively cramped conditions. **We are pleased to note that the practice of providing copies of both finding aids and original documents for remote use in other libraries and service points is slowly growing. We regard this as wholly beneficial, and it can be expected to gain pace as popular materials are digitised for remote access.**

RAPIDITY OF PRODUCTION

Apart from convenient opening hours, competent finding aids and a high standard of public service, readers hope for the rapid delivery of the documents they wish to see. Usually they are not disappointed, and in the case of microfilmed material self-service facilities are now widespread. When it comes to original documents, however, problems can arise especially where the authority has had to meet pressures on storage space by using remote out-stores, when advance notice may be required to produce the records for study.⁹³

OTHER READER FACILITIES

Readers today also have a reasonable expectation of creature comforts: refreshment facilities or at least a place where they can sit and eat their own sandwiches, WC facilities, adequate car-parking nearby and/or good access by public transport.⁹⁴ New buildings designed in the 1990s usually address these issues. But there are still too many older repositories, especially those situated in civic libraries, where visits of long duration to study materials in-house were never foreseen by the building's original planners and where even public WC facilities are lacking. In many cases this problem will only be addressed by relocation.

⁸⁸ AM 156.

⁸⁹ AM 41, 156.

⁹⁰ AM 24, 156.

⁹¹ AM 9.

⁹² AM 59, 100.

⁹³ AM 9.

⁹⁴ AM 146.

4. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

The Commission has taken a lead role in the application of ICT to archives and archival information in this period. In particular it has:

- Completed the computerisation of the indexes of the National Register of Archives and mounted these on the Internet.
- Developed a link (ARCHON) to the websites of record repositories.
- Set up an archival mailbase to promote the exchange of information and ideas.
- Steered, for the NCA, work on the *Rules for the construction of personal, place and corporate names* (1997).
- Represented archival interests in the Content Creation Task Group of the Library and Information Commission (1998).



The world of archives has been radically transformed during the 1990s by the rapid extension of computer applications to such varied processes as the description of archives, the management of accessioning, storage and production to readers, and the control of modern records.

The Commission has been at the forefront of developments with regard to archival description and the exchange of information about archives. In 1994 it completed its initial 7-year programme to computerise the indexes to the National Register of Archives. They were mounted on the Internet in 1995, and the means by which they can be searched have been systematically upgraded since that date, most recently in 1998. Other milestones have included the development of an extensive website⁹⁵ containing information about the Commission and direct links to the NRA indexes, to ARCHON (an electronic link to other archive websites), to a range of the Commission's electronic publications including the annual returns of accessions to repositories, and to other useful gateways for historical and genealogical research. The Commission was also directly involved in the formulation of two international standards for archival description which are gradually being adopted in the UK.⁹⁶ It took the lead, on behalf of the National Council on Archives, in developing a prototype set of national rules for

the formulation of names in archival descriptions,⁹⁷ and it has since continued to be closely involved in wider initiatives to establish a UK-wide archival network, of which elements are slowly falling into place.

As this report was in preparation, plans were well advanced for a Scottish Archives Network, linking over 40 repositories and containing all the electronic finding aids of the National Archives of Scotland, summary descriptions of holdings in all the other participating repositories, and the digitised images of wills from General Register House. The project is funded to a large extent by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Plans were also under discussion as this report was being written for a separate Welsh Archive Network, to follow when resources can be found for its implementation. Significant strides have already been made by the universities towards making electronic catalogues of their archival holdings more widely available. The largest immediate challenges lie first in establishing a section of the network for England and capturing or converting into electronic form all the available archive catalogue information, and then in linking all the constituent parts of the UK network to each other and to other providers of information by appropriate links and search engines. The NRA and ARCHON are well placed to play a key role in the latter respect as the new millennium opens.

⁹⁵ <http://www.hmc.gov.uk>

⁹⁶ See Bibliography (Standards: International Council on Archives).

⁹⁷ *Rules for the construction of personal, place and corporate names* (1997).

We note below the uneven nature of the distribution of resources for the nation's archive services. This is particularly true with regard to ICT, and a survey undertaken through the Commission for the NCA in 1998⁹⁸ showed that many repositories were far from ready to join actively in any nationwide networking. But the situation is changing rapidly. Many additional repositories each year mount websites; quite a number are on the threshold of major new advances in automation and there are some promising new systems designed specifically to meet the needs of archival description in accordance with national and international standards. **It seems to us likely that if central funding of a suitable magnitude can be found, to support networking initiatives, the gap between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' in this field will rapidly close.**

It may be said that the public are readier to exploit new electronic information than archive services are to meet their needs. The *Survey of visitors to British archives*, 1998,⁹⁹ for example, found the great majority of archive users to be ICT 'literate', even though few record offices were yet in a position to give them direct electronic access to their own finding aids, let alone to other people's data via the Internet. At the forefront of best practice lie repositories such as the new Surrey History Centre which makes its own lists available to readers electronically and has additional terminals from which the public may access the Internet, including of course the Commission's website, the NRA indexes, and links to other repositories. We confidently expect this to be the norm within a few years, and the public who have used such facilities in one repository will surely come to expect them in another.

Respondents to our survey repeatedly stressed the enormous benefits that will accrue from a greater investment in ICT infrastructure, and the importance of pressing ahead with plans for networking. The benefits include the dissemination of information to all, outreach even to communities that are otherwise poorly served by archive services (particularly in the remoter parts of Wales and Scotland); and new possibilities for cross-sectoral collaboration with libraries and museums and among archive repositories themselves.

Enthusiasm for these developments in computer applications is not, however, unbounded. Some of our respondents were critical of the diversity of standards in place for archival description and for system specifications, when comparing one record repository with the next or record repositories in general with libraries and museums.¹⁰⁰ These issues have been debated for many years, and may not be capable of resolution in a way that pleases everyone, although several initiatives are under way to consider aspects of inter-operability and harmonisation. Archives, however, have very specific needs which are not always fully understood by other sectors. Archive services, for their part, are often constrained to fit in with the ICT systems and practices of their parent authority, and there may be no escaping this problem. So a degree of plurality even within the networked environment seems inevitable, and the NRA and any other search engines that are developed in future will have to take account of this. A few respondents raised the spectre of ICT swallowing up all available resources and commanding such priority that machinery, rather than the staff to carry out the basic operations of cataloguing, conservation and management of archives and the service of the public, would be the focus for future expenditure.¹⁰¹ We recognise these dangers even from the Commission's own experience. **We certainly do not see ICT as the answer to all our prayers for the nation's archives.**

We could not accept the view of a small minority that all archives should be digitised and the originals destroyed.¹⁰² Digitisation is already being embraced by a number of archive services, either in connection with particular educational projects (including the National Grid for Learning) or as a more general tool for facilitating research or conservation. We would agree that archives have much to offer in this respect. But digitisation presents its own very specific problems, ranging from the quality of the initial scanning, through the costly provision, on the network connections, of high enough band-width to carry the best images; to longer term problems of migration and storage of the digitised data. **We see no significant likelihood of the digitisation of the contents of whole repositories becoming a substitute for keeping the originals.**

⁹⁸ Peter Gilman, *National name authority file: A report to the National Council on Archives*.

⁹⁹ Public Services Quality Group.

¹⁰⁰ AM 66, 106, 108.

¹⁰¹ AM 76, 138.

¹⁰² AM 25.

5. RECORD PUBLICATIONS

local and specialist record publishing societies,

The publication of texts, calendars and indexes of original records was for many years the Commission's core function. We recorded in our previous report our continued progressive withdrawal from this form of work, in the absence of any source of public subsidy, and we reflected that this was only part of a wider decline in record publishing. A consultative meeting which we held with historians, editors and publishers in 1991 confirmed the continuing need among scholars for access to edited texts. It also highlighted the difficulties in producing such texts: both the economics of publication for a small specialist market and the increasing difficulty of finding suitably-qualified editors. The progress of technology has now largely solved the former problem.

To our dismay, and the bewilderment of academic users of archives, the Prior Options stage of the Commission's Financial Management and Policy Review, undertaken by the then Department of National Heritage in 1996-97, concluded that textual editing should not be a core function of the Commission. We did not accept this finding, but against such a background our efforts to obtain additional core funding to permit editorial work to proceed on our long delayed project for the publication of Melbourne's correspondence (in the Prime Ministers' Papers Series) fell on deaf ears. We subsequently found that several grant-awarding bodies shared our view that such work ought to be core-funded by government, but it is little consolation to note that this was then among the factors causing them to decline our applications for grant aid.

It is not easy to see a way out of this impasse. The Commissioners have not lost sight of the fact that the Commission is the only body in the public sector able to undertake or at least to sponsor certain kinds of editorial work on original documents of private origin. We still hope to be able to pursue such projects, even if necessarily on a more occasional and severely constrained basis, with the help of external partnerships. Meanwhile, the final volume of our calendar of the Trumbull papers was published in 1995, and the final volume of the whole Reports and Calendars series, *Finch V*, will go to press in the Millennium year.

On a broader front, we are glad to have been able to offer some modest support to national,

by participating in the occasional Record Editors' Meetings convened by the British Records Association. Arising from this, the Commission in 1997 mounted on its website a comprehensive electronic list¹⁰³ of these societies' publications since the appearance of ELC Mullins's *Texts and calendars II*.¹⁰⁴

Record publications by repositories are now rare, but independent record societies flourish, and indeed there have been some signs of new growth in this period, and a degree of new funding for indexing through a new body, English Record Collections. We salute all their achievements. We are grateful to Dr Peter Spufford of the British Record Society for a wide-ranging review of that Society's history and its publishing activities.¹⁰⁵

As will be evident from other sections of this report, and from the table of publications given in the Appendix, there has been a major shift in our own publications programme towards partnership ventures with other bodies, including the British Library, the Institute of Historical Research, the PRO, the Museums & Galleries Commission, the NCA, the National Library of Wales, the Borthwick Institute of Historical Research and Hampshire Record Office. We have also ceased to think of publications as merely equivalent to hard-copy printed matter. Indeed, the making available on the Internet of the computerised indexes to the NRA and sections of the Manorial Documents Register have been among our most notable 'publications' of the period, whilst electronic publication has become the norm for many of our annual and occasional publications.

Electronic publication, whether through a website or in a distributed form such as CD-ROM, is already being widely explored by repositories for a wide range of publications. It is opening up new possibilities: searchable databases and textbases, high quality reproduction of photographs and maps, and a wide range of multi-media educational tools. Record publishing societies may need to embrace these new opportunities rather more

¹⁰³ Ian Mortimer and Michelle Ingram, *Texts and calendars since 1982: a survey*.

¹⁰⁴ *Texts and calendars II: An analytical guide to serial publications 1957-1982* (Royal Historical Society, 1983).

¹⁰⁵ AM 155.

than they have to date if they are to continue to meet users' needs.

6. TRAINING

The training of professional archivists and conservators, and of postgraduate historians, is not a direct concern of the Commissioners under their Royal Warrant. A number of the Commission's staff, however, have been actively involved in teaching and examining and in the planning of training, by invitation of the archive training schools, the Society of Archivists and the Institute of Historical Research. In addition, it has long been the norm for all students enrolled on the professional training courses and the introductory courses of the IHR to visit the Commission to hear about its work and to be introduced to the resources of the National Register of Archives. We were therefore very pleased when it became possible, upon the Commission's acquiring additional accommodation in the lower ground floor of Quality House in 1992, to establish a training room with computer projection and video facilities.

Training has been seen by several respondents to our survey as a core strength of British archives at the millennium. An increasingly professionalised community of archivists and conservators also means that there is a growing demand for further training and development, and this is obviously a matter of professional concern.¹⁰⁶

As regards archivists and records managers,¹⁰⁷ there seems to be broad agreement that the standard of training offered by the four post-graduate courses in archives administration, at the universities of Liverpool, Wales (Aberystwyth and Bangor) and University College London, by the more recently established records management course at the University of Northumbria and by the Society of Archivists in-service training scheme is already high and is constantly improving. Some of the administrative and funding problems associated with the running of these courses were reported to us in the joint response of the archives and records management training schools.¹⁰⁸ There is a healthy degree of variety in the contents and methods of the courses but all have had to adapt to the new challenges of managing very modern records in a variety of media. Funding

has lately been in a state of flux as administration of the state-funded grants passed from the Department for Education and Employment to the British Academy and then to the Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRB), and the future still holds some uncertainties. The training courses have done what they can to match the supply of trained archivists to the demand for their services, and in general the prospects of employment have been good. Demand may have been distorted by the sudden availability during the late 1990s of funding for staff on short-term contracts, particularly in the university sector. But there is some feeling that a greater number of archivists and records managers may have to be trained in the not far distant future to meet new demand generated by the Freedom of Information legislation and the need to manage electronic records to which we have already referred.

Some at least of the courses are small and vulnerable, and a particular weakness is that at present none of them is based in Scotland, although specialised training is being developed at Glasgow in the field of digitisation. Research and development in the field of archives has not hitherto been a strong point in the United Kingdom, but this is changing, spurred on by the needs of the profession, the imperatives of research assessment ratings in the universities, and the availability of new funds for research from AHRB. Improvements are confidently expected.

All the courses have, however, come up against the impossibility of teaching their students everything they need to know for a lifetime within the space of a single year. Refresher modules and follow-up courses designed to be undertaken in the early years of employment after initial qualification, are being vigorously developed.¹⁰⁹ Training courses and modules for staff at para-professional level have also been warmly welcomed.¹¹⁰

We refer elsewhere to the specific need to develop competencies in the field of electronic records management. At the other end of the spectrum chronologically we are concerned

¹⁰⁶ AM 43, 75, 84.

¹⁰⁷ For conservators, see section on Preservation. This section is based on responses such as AM 43.

¹⁰⁸ AM 158.

¹⁰⁹ AM 141.

¹¹⁰ AM 139.

that the decline of the teaching of Latin in schools is seriously reducing the number of candidates coming forward for archival and historical training with this basic skill, which is essential for handling not only the very earliest archival sources but also many forms of records right up to the 18th century. **We must not put such emphasis on the need to care for and study the most modern records that we no longer have the skills to manage and interpret early documents. Training in Latin and early palaeography may well need to be boosted to assist and encourage both archivists and historians who are to work in this field.**¹¹¹

¹¹¹ These issues were particularly raised at our consultative meeting in Aberystwyth.

Part Three:

The infrastructure of Britain's archives

1. SCALE AND FUNDING

The tenth edition of the Commission's directory *Record repositories in Great Britain* (1997) listed over 300 repositories whose objectives include the systematic collection and preservation of written records other than those of their own administration, and which also make regular provision for their public use. These include the **national record offices, libraries and museums** (core-funded by central government); **local authority record offices, archives services and libraries** (core-funded by local government, with an indirect contribution from central government via the spending assessment); and **university libraries and special collections departments** (core-funded by the respective Higher Education Funding Councils, with funds provided by government). Also included are a number of **special libraries and archives** supported mainly by privately or charitably endowed societies and institutions.

Beyond these repositories lie many more archive-holding institutions with, in general, a more restricted collection policy and little or no public funding. The directory *British Archives* (3rd edition, 1995) contains in all over 1,000 entries, and the Commission's ARCHON link some 1,500. Privately funded business archives are growing in number, and some individuals also employ archivists to maintain their family or estate archives.¹¹² There are many further archives still held by the individuals, families and organisations which created or accumulated them, but to which in certain circumstances the public can have access by appointment. Finally, there are countless thousands of similar archives, of both individuals and institutions, whose existence is known only to their owners and is nowhere officially recorded, and which are not in any meaningful sense accessible to the public.

In law, the ownership of all these archives is very diverse. Even many of those held in public repositories are still privately owned. Responsibility for their care and maintenance,

too, is highly fragmented, with every separate repository and private custodian of archives undertaking a share of the total national effort. There is no central direction, no central source of common funding, and little conception of the totality of Britain's archives, except through the National Register of Archives which the Commission is glad to maintain.

We would not claim that all Britain's archives morally belong to everyone as of right. But we do think it is helpful to take stock of the whole 'national collection', in the sense of all the archives that are in public custody or are made available for public consultation by their owners. From this standpoint, which reflects our responsibilities under our Royal Warrant, we can clearly see (a) the extent to which individual archives in different repositories and in private hands are interrelated,¹¹³ and (b) the extent to which the entire national enterprise of archive-keeping is reliant upon the goodwill of so many players in every sector, a situation that is reflected only too well in the present segregated funding regimes of central and local government, the universities, business and the private sector. These, as several of our respondents pointed out, make no allowance for what might be termed the 'added value' to the nation of an archival collection – even one of national importance – being administered by any non-national body.¹¹⁴

Public funding may be applied for according to need by designated public repositories, from the **government purchase grant funds** administered by the Victoria & Albert Museum (for the MGC), the Science Museum and the Royal Museums of Scotland; and from the **National Heritage Memorial Fund** (mostly for purchase). Objectives such as conservation, cataloguing and research may also be supported by public funding from the

¹¹² See section 7 below.

¹¹³ This point was well illustrated at our Welsh consultative meeting in Professor Aled Jones's account of the varied sources for the history of the water supply industry in Wales.

¹¹⁴ See, for example, AM 157.

Economic and Social Research Council, and the **Arts and Humanities Research Board**.

Sources of private grant aid include the **National Manuscripts Conservation Trust**, and (for purchase of archives) the **Friends of the National Libraries**, whilst some of the larger private trusts also occasionally support archival objectives. Friends organisations for record offices commonly assist with fund-raising and give assistance in kind, and there are a few local and specialised trusts dedicated to archival objectives – of which the best known is perhaps the **Hampshire Archives Trust** – that have developed a whole range of activities and initiatives in support of archives. A number of local authorities have recently been exploring trust status as a means of protecting and developing their archive services, but to our knowledge none has yet found an appropriate formula for this.

The most recent addition to these sources of funding for archives is the **Heritage Lottery Fund**. From its inception in 1994-95 we welcomed this Fund as potentially the largest single source of grant-aid for archives. We mention elsewhere in this report some of its striking achievements to date in support of archive buildings and the purchase, conservation and cataloguing of archives, which are a source of real national pride.¹¹⁵ Almost from the Fund's beginning, however, we identified a risk that, because of its requirement of partnership funding, the archive services with the weakest financial base (i.e. those most obviously in need of assistance and improvement) would find it hardest to apply for and benefit from these new resources, whilst those that were either already better resourced, or had readier access to sources of external financial support or could commit the resources needed to seek it, would be able to make applications more quickly. We felt that this would lead not only to a widening gap between the 'haves' and the 'have nots', but also to a distribution of HLF funds to objectives which, although individually worthy, were not necessarily the true priorities for the nation's archives as a whole. The slow rate of applications for HLF funding from the archive sector compared with the museums sector, and the continued absence of improvements for some of the worst resourced archive services, suggest that these fears were well founded.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ The specific role of HLF with regard to film archives is acknowledged in AM 47.

¹¹⁶ The difficulties are well illustrated by a note in the *RIBA Newsletter* 5, March 1999, concerning a grant from

Several respondents to our survey drew attention to these and related problems: the difficulties of getting to the starting blocks and the impossibility for small archive services of finding the staff time to make the application let alone seek the partnership funding;¹¹⁷ competing priorities within the parent authority for lottery funding, resulting in archives being low down in the pecking order; the apparent lack of any real national strategy in this area.¹¹⁸

With other national bodies in the field of archives the Commission has been working to overcome these difficulties. First, in order to assist HLF strategy with regard to archives, in discussion with HLF's Chairman the Commission initiated the idea of 'mapping' the needs of the archive sector, beginning with local government in England and Wales. It presented to HLF two strategic overviews for these respective countries, and then entered into a partnership with the National Council on Archives, the Association of Chief Archivists in Local Government, and the Public Record Office as lead body, to produce a more detailed map of needs for England.¹¹⁹ Similar exercises have now been undertaken for Wales and Scotland, under the respective leadership of Archives Council Wales and the National Archives of Scotland, and to some extent for the university sector under the auspices of JISC.¹²⁰ The evidence emerging from these mapping projects has underpinned the contributions made not only by the Commission but also by the NCA¹²¹ and other national archival bodies to the strategic planning of the HLF for the next five years. We refer to the findings of these surveys elsewhere in this Report.

In its evidence to the Select Committee for Culture, Media and Sport's study of the Heritage Lottery Fund in 1998,¹²² the Commission drew attention to some of the

HLF towards the purchase of sketchbooks by Sir Edwin Lutyens. To meet the partnership funding required for purchase and conservation, RIBA had to secure additional grants from the V&A Purchase Grant Fund, the Pilgrim Trust, the Idelwild Trust, the Friends of the National Libraries, the Manifold Trust, HSBC Holdings plc, the British Architectural Trust and an anonymous donor.

¹¹⁷ AM 133, 138

¹¹⁸ 'National provision should not be so dependent on the chance and vagaries of local circumstances'. AM 111.

¹¹⁹ *Our shared past: An archival domesday for England* (Archival Mapping Project Board, 1998).

¹²⁰ See Appendix 2 under Lottery and JISC respectively.

¹²¹ AM 88.

¹²² House of Commons: Culture, Media and Sport Committee. First Report, *The Heritage Lottery Fund*, volume III pp.167-171 (195-III, Stationery Office, 1999).

problems inherent in the present situation. It noted the unsettling effects of the continual changes in HLF's guidance to applicants and to its structures for handling grants. It called for 100% grants in cases of agreed national priority. It urged the continuance of capital grants for archive buildings (which we would still see as among the most pressing priorities if our archives are to be preserved for future generations). In the light of the increasing devolution of grant-making decisions to the constituent countries and regions of the UK, the Commission also warned against the fragmentation of funding (which could mean that the really big needs might never be met), and against the loss of vision of national priorities.

We are optimistic that the case for more investment in Britain's archives has now been amply made, and that with the help of the NCA's Lottery Officer more potential applicants from the field of archives are preparing their cases. The appointment by HLF of a Libraries and Archives Adviser, and more recently of expert panellists in this field, and the indicative increase of HLF's expenditure for archives in the years ahead¹²³ have all served to strengthen our confidence that a strategic vision will prevail. To a very large extent the initiative now rests with the various governing bodies of archive services throughout the country. A small additional investment on their part could be multiplied at least four-fold, and in some cases ten-fold, by HLF money. These opportunities must be seized.

The bewildering list of possible sources of funding for archival projects continues with such recent arrivals on the scene as the **New Opportunities Fund** and the **Research Support Libraries Programme** of the Higher Education Funding Councils. The complexity of this funding regime and the relative unpreparedness of the archival community to enter into the 'bidding' culture, were among the issues raised at the Royal Historical Society's colloquium,¹²⁴ at our consultative meeting in Wales, and by a number of individual respondents to our survey.

We suggest elsewhere in this Report a number of ways in which central funding for the UK's archive services might be improved, but we are in no doubt that a commitment to run any such service, no

matter under whose auspices, must carry with it also a commitment to a commensurate level of core funding for every aspect of the service. It should not be expected that the whole, or even the lion's share, of the burden should be picked up by external sources of funding.

¹²³ The HLF *Strategic Plan* (1999) proposes allocations rising from £20 million to £25 million.

¹²⁴ AM 152.

2. STRUCTURAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGE AT NATIONAL LEVEL

The 1990s have seen major structural and administrative changes affecting on the one hand the way in which archives are managed and funded and on the other hand how archival issues are discussed and brought before government. It is impossible to assess the overall health of the nation's archives without an understanding of these new structures. Whilst the most significant changes to date have perhaps been those affecting the structures of local government in England, Wales and Scotland (but not Northern Ireland) which we discuss below, we begin by considering some of the structures at national level.

There has been no change throughout this period to the Commission's terms of reference under its Royal Warrant. The first ('Prior Options') stage of a Financial Management and Policy Review (FMPR) of the Commission was initiated by its sponsor body, the Department of National Heritage, in 1996 but frozen when the General Election was called in 1997 before any ministerial decisions were taken about the Commission's future. The DNH was itself then replaced by the new Department for Culture, Media and Sport, which became the Commission's new sponsor. Among the new government's priorities was a government-wide Comprehensive Spending Review carried out during 1997 and 1998, during which no further progress on the FMPR was possible. In the course of the DCMS's spending review the Commissioners were invited to consider a number of options for the Commission's future including a move to sponsorship by the Lord Chancellor or an outright merger with the Public Record Office. The Secretary of State agreed after discussion with the Chairman that in the context of this review the Commission should remain under DCMS sponsorship. In view of the range of the Commission's daily working relationships with other organisations in the cultural sector, including the British Library, a number of public grant-awarding bodies and numerous local archive custodians, as well as its cross-sectoral liaison with the Museums & Galleries Commission and the Library and Information Commission, we welcome this decision, which should also assist the work undertaken by the Commission in relation to privately owned archives, and as a source of independent national advice on archives.

The DCMS spending review also resulted in a proposal to abolish the MGC and LIC and establish a new **Museums, Libraries and Archives Council** which was being designed while the present report was in progress. This is believed to be the first government body in England to include the word 'archives' in its title, a fact which in itself has raised considerable expectations that archives will be given a higher priority in national planning. In the same vein the Libraries and Information Division of DCMS announced early in 1999 the addition of Archives to its own title. By such tokens archives are steadily becoming more visible on the national agenda. **Provided this does indeed lead to beneficial improvements to their care, management and funding, and to their public accessibility, we welcome these moves, and we have told the Secretary of State of our readiness to work with MLAC to achieve strong cross-sectoral solidarity. It will be essential for MLAC and HMC to work together to establish a proper division of responsibilities and for the government to commit clear allocations of funding to both bodies.**

The **Interdepartmental Archives Committee** (IDAC) grew out of an earlier, more informal gathering of the heads of the national archival institutions in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. It took on a new character in 1996 with the addition of representatives from a number of central government departments and its core membership then included the Commission and the British Library as expert advisers. Following the DCMS spending review of 1998 the National Council on Archives and the Local Government Association were similarly invited to send expert advisers, whilst other government departments and agencies which are not normally members may be invited to particular meetings according to the issues on the agenda. IDAC has quickly established itself as the governmental forum for archival policy issues, monitoring legislation that will or may affect archives, providing a focus for the UK's input to European Union archival initiatives, and advising Ministers on aspects of national archives policy.

Elections to the **Scottish Parliament and National Assembly for Wales** were held while this report was in preparation. We have been informed of plans to bring an archives

Bill before the Scottish Parliament. Meanwhile, the renaming of the Scottish Record Office as the National Archives of Scotland from 1999 gives a clear indication of a new national focus. Active discussion has also been taking place about the future of Wales's Public Records following the creation of the National Assembly for Wales. In Northern Ireland the shape of any new administration emerging from the implementation of the peace agreement remained to be determined as we went to press.

In 1990 the Commission and the British Library together launched the **National Manuscripts Conservation Trust**, headed by three trustees, one nominated by the Commission, one by the Library and one independent. The Commissioners are grateful to Mr John Ehrman and Lord Egremont for accepting nomination successively as their representatives. The Trust is substantially funded by private benefactions. Until 1999 it had benefited greatly from an annual government grant, successively from the Department for National Heritage and the DCMS. Until 1999 the Trust was administered, at no cost to the Trustees, by the British Library Research and Development Department (subsequently the Research and Innovation Centre, BLRIC). As a result of the DCMS spending review, BLRIC was transferred to the Library and Information Commission with effect from April 1999, and the National Preservation Office kindly undertook to provide the Trust's administration. At the same time we were sorry to learn that the government grant, always intended as a pump-priming grant to give the Trust time to raise a substantial endowment fund of its own, was to be discontinued. We are grateful to the Department for its financial support in the Trust's early years. We have every confidence that the Trust, which has now raised an endowment well in excess of £1 million and is driving on towards its target of £2 million, will continue its valuable work. In the period 1990-1998 this had already benefited over 130 applicants in every sector of the United Kingdom's archives. Taking into account the matching funding raised, the Trust had been responsible for the commitment of a grand total of almost £2 million towards the conservation of archives and manuscripts.¹²⁵

¹²⁵ National Manuscripts Conservation Trust, *Annual report* 1998.

The **National Preservation Office** (NPO) has been in existence since 1984, operating as a semi-independent body but housed in, and given substantial financial support by, the British Library. Since 1996, however, NPO has been jointly funded by the Library (still the major stakeholder) and a number of external partners including the Confederation of University and Research Libraries and the Public Record Office. The Commissioners, when invited by NPO to become stakeholders, reluctantly had to conclude that since the Commission is funded from the same governmental source as the British Library and in any case has no resources for this purpose, it could not appropriately take on this role. Nevertheless HMC continues to work closely with the NPO on issues of national preservation strategy with regard to libraries and archives.

The **National Council on Archives** (NCA) was formed in 1988 as an assembly for representatives of the national and professional bodies concerned with the custody and management of archives, together with representatives of the main user groups. Under a succession of officers working on a wholly voluntary basis (including as the NCA's first Chairman one of our then Commissioners, Mr David Vaisey) it has achieved striking success, not only in publicising and promoting archives, but also in encouraging its various member bodies to work together to achieve more than they could individually. The Commission was glad to be asked to take the lead under the NCA's auspices in developing the *Rules for the construction of personal, place and corporate names* in archive catalogues which were published in 1997 after years of painstaking groundwork. These will be a basic building block for the development of National Name Authority Files which is now under way. The Council's subsequent report *Archives on-line. The establishment of a United Kingdom archival network* (1998) provided the impetus for concerted national action to ensure that archives benefit from, and are a part of, the new government initiatives towards the networking of electronic information.

Aware of the generally slow pace at which applications for Lottery funding for archival projects were coming forward, the NCA in conjunction with the PRO and the Society of Archivists appointed a Lottery Officer to promote and encourage applications. Most recently, in the light of government proposals to strengthen the regional framework for

cultural institutions, the NCA has begun the process of coordinating archival participation in the proposed regional cultural consortia. **The Commissioners warmly welcome this initiative and hope that it will be substantially funded by government, because otherwise the burden on a rather small archive establishment in the regions could be disproportionate to any gains to be achieved.** The Commission, like the PRO and the British Library, has been among the members with ‘observer’ status on NCA. We are glad that it has been able to participate actively in many of the Council’s initiatives and to take a lead in some of them.

Archives Council Wales/Cyngor Archifau Cymru is a younger body than NCA, having been set up in 1994 for a similar purpose within Wales. This was a timely initiative in view of local government reorganisation and the need to coordinate discussion of a possible archive network in Wales. Once again, the Commission is pleased to be associated with it. The creation of the **Wales Region of the Society of Archivists** in the same year was also of wide benefit.¹²⁶ There was every indication at our consultative meeting in Aberystwyth of a growing Wales-wide determination among archive custodians in all sectors to work together to bury old differences over, for example, collection policies, which used to divide the National Library from the local authority archive services in particular, and to cooperate across cultural sectors to secure more funding and a higher profile for archives. Several speakers emphasised that collaboration, not competition, was the new watchword, and that there was a readiness to present a united front to the National Assembly for Wales as it begins to address the country’s archival needs. We warmly welcome this strategy.

The developments recorded above are only the tip of a substantial iceberg of both standing and ad hoc committees dealing with specific archival issues nationally or regionally. The Commission is represented on very many of these. Coordination of all this effort is becoming increasingly difficult, and it has sometimes been stated that there are simply too many archival bodies for the sector’s own good, and that it is never easy to field one person or organisation who can successfully represent the whole sector. Each of the bodies involved, however, does seem to us to have a quite well defined and distinctive remit. **There**

is very little overlap in functions, and our own discussions in the course of the present survey have not identified any easy way in which the present arrangements could be made tidier without the risk of loss of important functions and viewpoints.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ AM 89.

¹²⁷ AM 157.

3. LOCAL AUTHORITY ARCHIVE SERVICES IN ENGLAND AND WALES

GENERAL ISSUES

Local authority archive services remain the key plank in the national strategy for protecting our written heritage. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) recently estimated that in 1997-98 the total annual revenue expenditure for local authority archive services in England and Wales was in the region of £26.5 million.¹²⁸ Archives come under a variety of different administrative arrangements, which reflect both differing local perceptions of the nature of an archives and records management service and differing methods and priorities for the delivery of public services in general. As the Society of Archivists put it, 'archives fit only awkwardly into the local authority scene. Their administrative and cultural aspects make classification a problem.'¹²⁹

More commonly than in the past, archives find themselves in the same administrative division as libraries and/or museums, and we return to this in section 6 below. Even where they are not linked administratively, archive services are often working collaboratively with other services, or hoping to do so,¹³⁰ and many custodians as well as users have welcomed the opportunities which this has given to exploit the 'synergies' between the respective services and their resources.¹³¹ All of this remains a matter for local determination, although there are both regional and national dimensions to it with the emergence of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council on the one hand and of the national networks for computerised data on the other.

The general trend towards larger groupings of administrative, cultural or heritage, educational, leisure or community services, with archives typically (but not invariably) embraced under one of these heads, has very commonly resulted in the most senior post with professional archival responsibilities being pushed further down the chain of command from the Chief Officer status, which in the earlier days of county record offices used to be fairly common, to a third-, fourth-

or even a fifth-tier post. Whilst archivists, like

other professionally trained staff, have sometimes successfully applied for more senior managerial and administrative posts, the overall effects have been to weaken the archival voice when it comes to the determination of policy and finance within local authorities, to cause the distinctive role of archives as an administrative as well as a cultural tool to be played down, and to reduce the direct budgetary control by professional staff which is one of the key recommendations of the Commission's *Standard for record repositories*.¹³²

Another quite general problem is the extreme vulnerability of archive services to budget cuts, not least because as non-statutory services they are seen to be a luxury rather than a necessity,¹³³ especially when compared with priorities such as education and the care of old people. This affects not only their funding but also their ability to reach the top of the local priorities vying for partnership funding when it comes to applications to external grant-awarding bodies. Constraints on local authority expenditure, especially on capital projects, have in places hit archives services disproportionately hard, making it ever more difficult for them to reach the highest standards.¹³⁴ This in turn has lowered staff morale.¹³⁵ But the fact that there are exceptions to the rule also highlights another aspect of the current imbalance: with stalwart local political champions, archive services can thrive against all the odds. In too many authorities they lack such champions.¹³⁶

Under section 224 of the Local Government Act 1972 local authorities have a statutory duty to make 'proper arrangements' for the care of their own records and other records in their custody – on which arrangements guidance was being prepared under the auspices of the Interdepartmental Archives Committee while this report was in progress. There is no similar requirement upon local authorities to provide an archive service of a more general kind to take in material of local

¹²⁸ CIPFA, *Archive services statistics 1998-99 estimates*, p.23.

¹²⁹ AM 111.

¹³⁰ AM 49, 116, 119.

¹³¹ AM 54, 58, 66.

¹³² For a recent commentary on these trends see Mark Stevens, 'Local authority archives: places and perceptions,' in *JSA* vol 20 no 1 (1999), pp. 85-92.

¹³³ AM 131.

¹³⁴ AM 121.

¹³⁵ AM 30, 95.

¹³⁶ AM 67.

interest by gift, purchase and deposit on loan. Nevertheless, principal authorities are *empowered* to do this, by the Local Government (Records) Act 1962, the provisions of which now apply to all counties, all London and metropolitan boroughs, and all the new unitary authorities. Happily the great majority of them have indeed made such provision either jointly or severally, thereby showing themselves willing, as one of our respondents put it, to ‘invest resources above and beyond their statutory obligations’.¹³⁷

As a result of local authorities’ general willingness to take responsibility for the archival resources of their respective areas as a whole, a large proportion of our collective memory is entrusted to their care. Some 20% of Public Records together with a high proportion of diocesan and parochial records of the Church of England and the Church in Wales have, after inspection and approval of the premises by the respective authorities, been deposited in the care of local authorities. Add to this the material of private provenance, and it is generally true that well over half the holdings of any local repository in England and Wales are records other than those of the parent authority. Yet no part of central government’s annual grant to local authorities is hypothecated for archive services, even to cover the locally deposited Public Records,¹³⁸ nor is there at present any mechanism whereby archive services can be ‘equalised’ across the country, for example in proportion to the quantity of records held, the extent of demand for access, or the need for periodic injections of capital for buildings and equipment.¹³⁹

The principle, hitherto widely accepted, that archive custody is a service offered to the community by local authority repositories free of charge is being challenged in places. At London’s Guildhall Library, for example, certain categories of depositor are now invited to make a contribution to costs of storage and maintenance of their records. More generally, custodians are increasingly tending to seek outright gifts of records and papers, rather than loans which might be recalled at any time by their owner no matter how much has been spent on their care. At the same time, constraints on space are everywhere causing archivists to appraise offered material more carefully to ensure that its research potential is sufficient to justify giving it house-room.

We indicated in our previous report¹⁴⁰ our long-held view, which has not hitherto commanded support in government, that the provision of archive services by local authorities should be made a statutory responsibility. The call for this to happen has however continued to be echoed by the professional bodies.¹⁴¹ If the funding of (statutory) library services is anything to go by, we cannot suppose that this would overnight guarantee a significant and lasting redirection of resources towards archives. But it would perhaps lift archive services, which have often been regarded as ‘also-rans’, on to quite another plane within local government and provide significant reinforcement to their plea for resources appropriate to the task in hand. We know that there would be general support for such a move within the archive and library professions and user groups.¹⁴² With new responsibilities just around the corner in respect of Freedom of Information and Data Protection it would also serve to guarantee that local authorities were required to take their responsibilities in this field more seriously. **It is still our view that early consideration should be given to making the provision of archive services by local authorities a statutory duty. It should also be considered whether some form of central funding could be made available to assist local authorities to care for locally deposited Public Records in particular.**

Despite these constraints, the system of local authority record offices continues to serve extremely well. A comprehensive network of local authority record offices now covers the country. New building, over the past two decades in particular, has significantly improved the lot of many locally-held archives, and it is much easier than it would have been even a decade ago for the Commission to point to excellent examples of archive storage, public services and outreach, publication, conservation, and the professional care of modern media such as film and sound archives. In many repositories, too, significant progress has been made towards tackling backlogs of cataloguing and making a greater proportion of the holdings than ever before available for public inspection. Computer applications, although slow to be adopted in archives compared with libraries, are now beginning to bring new efficiencies and to

¹³⁷ AM 111.

¹³⁸ See, for example, AM 157.

¹³⁹ See, for example, *An archives policy for the United Kingdom*, s.2.16.

¹⁴⁰ Twenty-seventh report, p.29.

¹⁴¹ *An archives policy for the United Kingdom*, s.2.6; see also AM 157 and many other individual responses.

¹⁴² AM 48, 66, 67.

improve output on many fronts. The 1996 Survey of Local Authority Archive Services [in England] concluded that: 'in most of the areas looked at there has been continuing growth. More space, and more of it meeting BS 5454 standards, is available for the storage of archives. Larger and better equipped search rooms cater for the needs of customers, who (in increasing numbers) benefit from longer opening hours to consult a wider range of documents. Staff numbers have grown and cataloguing backlogs have diminished'.¹⁴³

But there are many remaining problems. Chief of these is the unevenness of investment in archive services throughout the country, to which Peter Brooke, as Secretary of State for National Heritage, drew attention early in this period when launching the Commission's survey of *Local authority archive services 1992*. If anything, the disparities have since been heightened as a result not only of the reorganisation of local government in the 1990s but also of the more widespread remodelling of local authority administrative structures referred to above, which has affected even authorities that have escaped local government reorganisation. The NCA has calculated that there is a staggering variation of up to 500% in the financial commitment which local authorities make towards their archive services per head of their population. The result is a growing gulf between the best- and worst-resourced repositories, the 'haves' and 'have-nots'.

This has been well charted in the research undertaken over the past three years by the Archival Mapping Project Board, and by Archives Council Wales, as well as by the Commission. All have shown that the attainment of the highest standards is unfortunately not at all typical. In England alone, for example, about two-thirds of all record repositories fall significantly short of the recommended standards for archive storage, whilst 60% have seriously under-resourced preservation programmes and two-thirds have growing backlogs of documents awaiting conservation.¹⁴⁴ **Buildings of a suitable standard for archive storage, and a systematic preservation programme, are the two top priorities for the care of the nation's written heritage. Any authority seeking to play a full part in this needs to be fully aware of its responsibilities in both these**

respects, and commit the necessary resources to meet them.

We have touched on cataloguing backlogs elsewhere in this Report. Other areas of most obvious need are ICT (where fewer than one third of English repositories are well equipped to play a strong role for the future and we must hope that improvements will flow from the various networking initiatives currently under way); and the management and storage of electronic records, where virtually no local authorities have begun to tackle the problems that are looming. The latter issue, however, reflects a disappointing degree of commitment on the part of local authorities to professional records management more generally. Although the upheavals caused by local government reorganisation – to which we turn in a moment – served to focus the minds of several new unitary authorities on the need for records management, we are concerned that despite guidance from central government there are in very many local authorities still no arrangements in place for the professional management of current and semi-current records. Fewer than half the local record offices contacted for the 1996 survey¹⁴⁵ provided records management services for their authority. Yet both the financial and moral justifications for investment in records management are clear-cut: it helps to sustain current business efficiently, to provide adequate evidence to the citizen of activities and processes within local government when public accountability is at stake, and to feed in material to the archives of the future through a process of orderly selection and appraisal.

The successive changes in local government since the 1960s have themselves contributed to the widespread destruction and loss of local authorities' own records.¹⁴⁶ Records management will become increasingly important as issues of Data Protection and Freedom of Information impinge upon local government, and as decisions have to be taken on the management of information that is held only in electronic form. **There is an urgent need for local authorities to review their overall strategy with regard to records management. We recommend that overall responsibility for records management should rest with the archives service, which will need appropriate human and capital resources to undertake this task. In particular, urgent attention must be paid to the management of records being produced**

¹⁴³ SOLAAS 1996, p.17, but see below, p.41.

¹⁴⁴ *Our shared past*, pp.6, 7, 46.

¹⁴⁵ SOLAAS 1996, p.9.

¹⁴⁶ AM 58, 67.

today in electronic form, to ensure that appropriate archival records are preserved for the future.

In their 1996 report, Heather Forbes and Rosemary Dunhill noted an average increase of over 20% in visitor numbers since 1992 and of 130% since 1979, with surges over and above these figures in the case of new repositories and new configurations of archives with local studies libraries. In the same period, the average number of readers per member of staff also rose by over 20%. Staffing levels overall had grown steadily, but restructuring, local government reorganisation and general budgetary constraints had already led to staff reductions in many individual offices, a trend which has subsequently continued. The consequences for the hardest-hit offices, as emphasised by respondents to our own survey, have been a concentration of staff on front-of-house public service duties to the relative neglect of cataloguing and survey work and therefore a return to mounting backlogs of cataloguing;¹⁴⁷ local reductions in opening hours; the loss of dedicated education-officer posts; and a general need to seek external sources of funding to support short-term contract staff in undertaking core functions such as cataloguing and conservation.

LONDON

The London metropolitan area, because of its sheer scale, presents particularly difficult archival challenges.

A region-wide archive service is provided by London Metropolitan Archives (LMA), formerly the Greater London Record Office, which together with the Corporation of London Records Office (for the Corporation's own archives) and Guildhall Library Manuscripts Department (for archives of local interest acquired for the City by gift and loan) is funded by the Corporation of London.

Concurrently, each of the 32 London boroughs is also empowered under the Local Government (Records) Act 1962 to spend money on the acquisition and care of archives of local interest, but the extent to which these powers have been embraced is extremely uneven across the capital. LMA does not normally concern itself with records which

relate exclusively to one borough: it has to occupy a more strategic role. This does not mean, however, that in every case the boroughs themselves maintain a proactive archive service, seeking out records of interest or at risk in their area, taking them in and ultimately making them available for public inspection. A few do: many do not. Most work within the constraints of the local library service, where the public indeed benefit from the juxtaposition of archives and local studies resources. But the down-side to this is that as a general rule pressures on budgets are such that staff with archival expertise, where they exist at all, are few in number: often singletons; and storage space for archives is inadequate both in quantity and quality. Even the official records of the borough authorities themselves are not in every case systematically managed and properly housed, let alone the private records of businesses, institutions and individuals within a given borough.

With regard to private records, demarcation at times becomes an acutely difficult issue in London. Can LMA and Guildhall Library possibly be expected to take in the archives of every institution and business that happened to be based in London? We think not. Undoubtedly in some cases the organisations in question are of a size and scale to warrant having their own archivist(s) and records manager(s), and the public sector cannot be expected to pick up the tab every time. Additionally, in certain fields there are university and specialist repositories (both in London and elsewhere) with congruent interests to lend a hand. As with organisations, so with individuals: it should not be supposed that the records and papers of everyone who happens to have a London home can most appropriately be housed in a London local repository. Private and public lives are multi-faceted. There will often be associations with other parts of the country or with the existing collections of repositories outside local government, or outside London altogether. In a few cases the papers will be of a significance to warrant a home in one of the national libraries or museums. The Commission plays its part in helping owners determine the right repository to approach.

London's problems were highlighted by a report, *Towards 2000, the future of London's archives*, published in 1993 by the Greater London Archives Network. This emphasised the concern felt also in those adjacent counties which lost some of their historic territory to the new London boroughs in the local government

¹⁴⁷ *Our shared past*, p.34.

changes of the 1960s. The Friends of Historic Essex¹⁴⁸ in particular have drawn our attention to the lack of archivists and adequate archival accommodation in the five London boroughs which formed part of the historic county of Essex.

There have been several notable improvements in the present decade. Striking new buildings have gone up, for example for the archives of LMA, Westminster and Hammersmith & Fulham, and there have been more modest improvements in a number of others. A new working relationship has been established between LMA and the London boroughs, whilst the development of the Greater London Archives Network (GLAN) and the London Archive Users' Forum has been entirely beneficial in promoting the exchange of professional views and giving users a greater voice. But there is no room for complacency. The London Archive Users' Forum represented to us as its greatest concern 'the unevenness of local authority archive services in Greater London, and indeed their virtual total absence in some places'.¹⁴⁹ In a few boroughs the situation has deteriorated in recent years, at times occasioning critical coverage in the local press. It is clear from a number of responses to our survey,¹⁵⁰ as well as from the Commission's visits and inspections carried out during this period, that in some London boroughs archives are still woefully under-resourced, archivists (where they exist at all) feel isolated and their duties and potential are only poorly understood.

With the election of a mayor of London imminent during our survey, the Greater London Archives Network gave particular thought to these problems, emphasising the need:

- to ensure that all London local authorities meet acceptable standards and make adequate provision for the custody of and access to archive and local studies materials;
- to promote cooperative ventures between boroughs where a single authority cannot make adequate provision from its own resources;
- to urge local authorities to achieve official, recognised repository status by adopting the HMC *Standard*; and
- to strengthen the link between local archive services and record creating functions within the authority itself to stimulate efficient and cost-effective management of records and

information.¹⁵¹ **We support all those objectives.**

GLAN further suggested that HMC's powers should be enhanced to include the supervision and enforcement of standards within London archive services, and that HMC might work with the Audit Commission and others to develop standards for records management and encourage authorities to recognise the link between this and the cost-effective and efficient delivery of information as a whole. Whilst we applaud the latter objective, others must determine whether it properly falls within the Commission's remit. **We do not feel that any such measures could sensibly be applied to London alone, but we shall be taking up with other bodies including the DCMS, the Interdepartmental Archives Committee and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council what might be done on a country-wide basis.**

Meanwhile we would urge the London borough authorities to take a more strategic and longer-term view, severally and/or jointly, of what their archive services are for: surely not just to make a random collection of useful local information available as a resource for the public, but rather to systematise and guard the local memory for today's and tomorrow's citizens, starting with the official archives of the authorities themselves and then extending outwards to other archival resources that can be applied to the greater public good. The Commission remains willing to discuss the way forward in individual cases. We are convinced, however, that unless a certain critical mass is achieved, if necessary by the pooling of resources within (or among) London local authorities, they will remain incapable of sustaining archive services which meet national standards.

REORGANISATION

The Commission was called upon successively by the Local Government Commission for England, the Department of National Heritage and the Welsh Office for advice on the likely effects upon archive services of the changes in the structures of local government arising from the Local Government Act 1992 in England and the Local Government (Wales) Act 1994.

¹⁴⁸ AM 86.

¹⁴⁹ AM 57.

¹⁵⁰ AM 53, 57, 97, 103, 129.

¹⁵¹ AM 60.

We advised consistently that to the greatest possible extent existing archive services, and the standards which they had reached, should be maintained if not improved, and that fragmentation and the multiplication of small under-resourced services should be avoided. On the whole, rather to our surprise, fragmentation has in the event been avoided, but not without an unwelcome degree of turmoil and uncertainty where previously stable arrangements were unpicked or worried over. Several respondents to our survey commented that for a small service such as archives local government reorganisation – of which we have not seen the last – presented a real threat, and that where new collaborative arrangements had been introduced to prevent the fragmentation of the service, new uncertainties and the risk of future instability had come with them.¹⁵²

England

With hindsight it is now possible to say that almost without exception the new unitary authorities in England accepted the need to enter into joint arrangements with neighbouring authorities for the continuance of existing archive services. There were many nervous months of negotiation throughout the country before final settlements were reached, and signatures were still awaited to a number of joint agreements as this report went to press. In places, serious financial or structural damage to an existing archives service was only narrowly averted.

In a few cases, such as North Yorkshire and Hampshire, where one or more new unitary authorities were detached from an existing county the archive service was not exempted from across-the-board budgetary cuts and staff losses that arose directly from the county's loss of population and revenue. Some early cuts of this nature were however restored in subsequent years' budgets. Conversely, some authorities like Southampton made additional resources available for archives or records management, and in several of those areas where joint agreements were struck, new facilities for access and outreach, including more service points for the study of lists and microforms of popular records, were made available by the counties to their partner unitary authorities to ensure a more even coverage by the archive service. Stoke-on-Trent became a partner in the new Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service and its former local studies service at

Hanley Library formed the basis of the new Stoke-on-Trent City Archives.

As the Commission's successive *Annual reviews* have shown, the least satisfactory outcome was in the former Humberside. The new East Riding of Yorkshire authority was left holding the Humberside county archives as well as material concerning the whole of the previous county of the East Riding without any agreement or financial adjustment having been reached with the other Humberside authorities. In England, by June 1999 the situation on the ground remained to be resolved only in two instances: Thurrock council was negotiating to remove from Essex Record Office the records of Thurrock borough and its predecessor local authorities; and Peterborough was still considering entering into joint arrangements with a neighbouring authority.

Quite apart from structural reorganisation, LGR in places brought further pressures in the form of huge quantities of records for processing and selection, taken in from the outgoing authorities. Encouragingly these challenges were sometimes matched by additional staff resources to deal with the problem, but at a very early date in the LGR process the Commission was informed that the records of one former district council, which had not been subjected to professional appraisal, had been unceremoniously dumped in a refuse skip. We fear that this case may not have been unique.

Wales

In Wales, as in England, the consequences of local government reorganisation for archive services were less severe overall than might have been expected. The Commission was among the bodies represented on a small group advising the Secretary of State for Wales on the Schemes for archive services under Section 60 of the Local Government (Wales) Act 1994, which have been widely respected by the new authorities as a declaration of their intent and vision. As the Commission's 1997 report concluded, 'for the most part durable new administrative arrangements have been put in place and provision made for the care of the authorities' accruing records... the standard of public service is commended by users and the extent of cataloguing backlogs is below the national average'.¹⁵³ In part this was because archives were specifically covered in the relevant legislation, under which the local

¹⁵² AM 75, 111.

¹⁵³ Mary Ellis, *Local authority archive services in Wales* pp.v, 27.

authorities submitted to the Secretary of State schemes embodying their proposals for archive services and for the management of their own future records as well as those of predecessor authorities.

In Wales, in contrast to the phased reorganisation in England, radical changes were introduced to the structure of local government in a single operation in 1996. Eight former counties were replaced by 22 unitary authorities and a number of boundary changes were introduced. These, together with changes of name among the authorities caused some initial confusion among users of records, but major transfers of archives between authorities were avoided.

The former county archive service of Dyfed was split into its three constituent parts as the three old counties of Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Cardiganshire re-emerged. Clwyd was split into two parts, also losing its most western area to the new Conwy and the populous Wrexham area to independent status. Gwynedd (Caernarfon and Merioneth) also lost a portion to Conwy whilst Anglesey re-established its own separate archive service. Conwy appointed an archivist, who was initially seconded to Gwynedd which continued to hold the archives, but on the review of the first three-year agreement in 1999 Conwy decided to establish its own archive service in Llandudno. Wrexham too established an incipient archive service based on its museum.

Despite significant fragmentation of Gwent and the two Glamorgans into numerous new authorities the archive services of Glamorgan, West Glamorgan and Gwent continued, thanks to hard-won joint agreements among the constituent unitary authorities, and that in Powys remained unchanged. Archives Council Wales has pointed out in its response to our survey¹⁵⁴ that some benefits accrued, for example, modest additions to staff in Powys and Ceredigion and two new service points in West Glamorgan. One archive service gained its own in-house conservation facilities but two others lost their previous association with a county-wide conservation service. As in England, the whole exercise caused a great deal of uncertainty and anxiety, and this is not fully resolved as we go to press,¹⁵⁵ although most of the signs are encouraging.

Our principal (and continuing) concerns over the local authority sector in Wales have been the loss of senior professional expertise through the early retirements of a number of former county archivists; the general downgrading of senior archivist posts within the administrative hierarchy;¹⁵⁶ and the very low level of staffing and capital resources available for archives, particularly in some of those authorities where the record office once formed part of the service of a larger county. Three Welsh repositories continue to be served by a single professional archivist and another by two archivists.¹⁵⁷ It was emphasised at our consultative meeting in Wales that there has been significant loss of economy of scale and of professional collegiality in cases where previously strong services have been broken up into smaller constituent parts. The absorption of archive services into very large local government directorates has in places led to a loss of hope that archival issues will ever reach the top of the pile for consideration. On the other hand, even the smallest new authorities have seen that their archives can be a real asset in establishing their corporate identity. There has also been much wider appreciation of the importance of records management throughout Wales, and new authorities (as in Conwy and Wrexham) which did not inherit record offices have started their progress towards an archive service by addressing the records management needs of the parent authority. With reorganisation now behind them some of the initial worries of the new authorities have been removed and new opportunities can be sought to make the new structures work in their favour.

The Commission reported on the state of Welsh local authority archives to the Secretary of State for Wales in 1997 and will do so again in 1999, highlighting these problems. On both occasions it has found that every record repository in Wales has significant needs: if not for new storage accommodation, then for cataloguing, conservation and above all ICT development.

The sparsely populated areas of Wales pose particular problems when it comes to finding the resources which are vital if archive services are to attain UK-wide standards. We urge the National Assembly to keep archive services throughout Wales under review. The Commission will

¹⁵⁴ AM 68.

¹⁵⁵ See for example AM 100 for the fear that joint arrangements might fall apart in years to come as the separate authorities strive to establish a distinct identity.

¹⁵⁶ AM 89.

¹⁵⁷ Mary Ellis, *Local authority archive services in Wales*, p.4.

continue to make its advice available as required.

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND THE FUTURE SHAPE OF LOCAL AUTHORITY ARCHIVE SERVICES

Despite all the good things that can be said about the state of local authority archive services, it will already be clear that we cannot report that all is well in this sector. We have expressed reservations above concerning the unevenness of the service and its vulnerability to more general cuts in local authority budgets. But there is a more fundamental question, namely whether some local authorities are approaching their responsibilities in this field in a sensible way in the first place, when they provide, or aspire to provide, an archive service on an impossibly restricted budget with too few staff and inadequate buildings and resources.¹⁵⁸ Few have taken the opportunity to stand back from the daily pressures and think strategically about what it is they hope to achieve now and in the long term, or to quantify and then find the resources necessary for that purpose. (There are some honourable exceptions.) Looking back a decade, we still wish that this kind of thinking had commended itself more widely in the metropolitan counties, where many local authority archive services are still struggling with wholly inadequate buildings and resources. **A question that must surely be asked is whether in certain parts of the country the archive services and their repositories are too many and too small. As regionalisation takes deeper root this seems likely to become a more urgent issue.**

Already, when seeking lottery funding for example, a number of local authorities have at least sounded out one or more neighbouring universities about sharing expertise or planning together for jointly-funded new buildings or other services. We would wish to encourage imaginative cross-sector partnerships of this kind even though, as far as we are aware, the right kind of lasting partnership between a local authority and a university has yet to be forged that would satisfy the disparate needs of the respective parent bodies and of external funding partners. Other forms of collaboration, perhaps including the private sector, may commend themselves. We were interested to learn, for

example, of the partnership between the University of Warwick Modern Records Centre and BP to share a building for their archives; and also of the merger of Chester City and Cheshire County archives services. Might the latter provide a model for other archives operating practically within each other's shadow in some of our towns and cities (both within and outside local government)? As we suggest below, the new synergies that are being discovered between archives and libraries and/or museums may provide another good means by which a critical mass for reference and research can be aggregated rather than fragmented, for the benefit of the whole community. **In those areas where the appropriate critical mass for archives and their resourcing has not been reached the way forward in the next millennium may well be the creation of a more strategic repository operating on a larger scale, serving two or more adjacent authorities from one centre, with satellites or service-points elsewhere in its catchment area. This will require a great deal of groundwork, but we would be glad to see it tried as an experiment in an appropriate area.**

More immediately, we would urge those local authorities which operate archive services on a shoestring budget to consider whether the public interest would not be better served by their entering into new partnerships either with other cultural organisations within the same authority, or with the university or private sector where appropriate, or with other adjacent authorities, in order to achieve together what cannot be achieved separately.

¹⁵⁸ AM 93, 123.

4. SCOTLAND

Even before the advent of the Scottish Parliament in 1999, Scottish legislation gave the Keeper of the Records of Scotland a more general oversight of archives of all kinds in that country than is enjoyed in England by the Keeper of Public Records. In all its endeavours to maintain a UK-wide perspective on archives, including information about their nature and location so far as Scotland is concerned, the Commission has worked closely with the Keeper and his staff. Lists of private archives, prepared by the NRA (Scotland), have continued to be copied to the NRA in London and references to these integrated in the NRA indexes. Scottish institutions and individuals have been welcome to seek the Commission's advice if they wished. On matters such as national standards this has been freely given, and we are glad that the Commission's *Standard for record repositories* has been found a useful yardstick in Scotland as well as elsewhere in the UK. On more particular issues raised by private owners the enquirer has more appropriately been put in touch with the Keeper. We believe that these arrangements, on which we have worked to achieve a closer understanding since they were called into question by the DCMS's Financial Management and Policy Review of the Commission in the mid 1990s, have worked to everyone's advantage. We hope that they will not be significantly affected by the new Scottish archive legislation which the Scottish Records Advisory Council hopes to bring before the Scottish Parliament at an early date. This initiative has been preceded by a ground-breaking statement, *A Scottish national archives policy*, prepared by a working group in 1998.

We are indebted to the Keeper for his report on the current situation in Scotland.¹⁵⁹ We have already mentioned (p.34) the renaming of the Scottish Record Office as the National Archives of Scotland, and the launch of the Scottish Archives Network (p.25).

The reorganisation of local authorities arising from the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1994 was, as in England and Wales, on the whole less traumatic for archives than might have been feared. Several of the former large regions, among them Strathclyde and Central

regions, which had centralised archive services, were split up, and their archival holdings with them, to the obvious concern of local user groups.¹⁶⁰ In parts of the former Strathclyde, little has yet been done to make good the deficiency. However, the insertion in the Act of a specific role for the Keeper in advising all new unitary authorities on their record keeping – a timely and most welcome development in a Scottish context – provided the opportunity to issue specific guidance. The provision of archive and records management services by local authorities in Scotland is of much more recent origin than in England, and everywhere they operate on a much smaller scale. There are still places, of which the most notable is Fife, in which the challenge has not yet been addressed, but on balance there are now more archives and more archivists and/or records managers than before reorganisation, with completely new archive services established in South Lanarkshire, West Lothian and Clackmannanshire and a significant strengthening of small services elsewhere. As the Keeper puts it, 'little by little progress is being made towards a proper archive service in all authorities'.

We agree with the Keeper, however, that there are no grounds for complacency and that archives in Scotland are still not notably prosperous: there is no obvious sign that additional resources will be forthcoming for archives, or that administrators will continue to embrace records management with enthusiasm unless perhaps made to do so by the new twin pressures of Freedom of Information and Data Protection. A still less optimistic view, drawing attention to the huge funding needs of archives in Scotland, was put to us by the Keeper of Special Collections at Edinburgh University Library,¹⁶¹ who drew attention to the strains placed on existing archive services by local government reorganisation, to substantial backlogs in cataloguing and conservation, and to the 'ridiculously low' profile of archivists: all problems which our evidence suggests could be said to apply equally in England and Wales.

In the view of the Scottish Universities Special Collections and Archives Group (SUSCAG), for example, 'storage, management,

¹⁵⁹ AM 55.

¹⁶⁰ AM 38, 48.

¹⁶¹ AM 76.

cataloguing, conservation, access, publicity and promotion are all at risk from a general paucity of funding' in the universities.¹⁶² Without wishing to deny this general statement, it is worth acknowledging also some of the specific strides made in Scottish universities as a result of the Non-Formula Funding and JISC grants, and in particular the strengthening of the archive conservation unit at Dundee University as a centre of excellence for the whole of Scotland. Another centre of excellence is Glasgow University Archives' Business Records Centre which is also the base of operations for the Business Archives Council of Scotland (BAC(S)).¹⁶³ The Centre has achieved a UK-wide reputation in its holdings of business records, especially those arising from the closure of many shipbuilding and heavy engineering companies. BAC(S), however, draws attention to the difficulties presented by large collections of business records of local significance in a context where local authority archive services are still relatively new and operate generally on a very small scale.

With new legislation and a Scottish Archives Network to provide the basis for renewed confidence, and with new possibilities of regional funding through the HLF's new country committee for Scotland, we think it quite possible that new opportunities will open up for Scotland's archives.

¹⁶² AM 69.

¹⁶³ AM 73.

5. THE UNIVERSITIES

The United Kingdom's universities are, from the Commission's perspective, key players along with local government and the national repositories in the overall strategy for protecting the nation's written heritage. Yet they receive no dedicated government funding in recognition of this fact and, because archives tend to have such a low profile generally, we suspect that many of their senior officers and decision-making bodies remain largely unaware of the importance and implications of this quasi-national role, as well as unable to commit the regular funds necessary to sustain it. Equally, as one of our respondents pointed out, potential readers from a non-university environment are often unaware of the nature and accessibility of university special collections for research: **they need more promotion if they are to serve a wider public.**¹⁶⁴

Apart from maintaining the archives of their own institutions – an important if under-utilised research resource, but nonetheless a reasonable charge upon their own central funding – many universities have built up special collections of archives and manuscripts to sustain research. Commonly, these holdings have a local, regional, national or even international dimension which extends well beyond the direct interests of the university and its present members. This material has been assembled by gift, purchase or loan, sometimes over a very long period antedating the establishment of other local and specialist repositories.¹⁶⁵

Quite often users from outside the holding institution outnumber those from inside, and this has influenced the decision to allow as far as possible free and reciprocal access at least to all members of other higher education institutions (HEIs), and usually to bona fide researchers from among the general public as well. This 'burden of use' will be one of the issues addressed by the Research Support Libraries Programme of the Higher Education funding councils, which was just coming into being as our present report was in preparation.

It is clear that to a greater extent than in the past, collecting policies have now been defined

and demarcation lines drawn with local, national and other university repositories to reduce competition and overlap, although animosities do still surface, and we suspect that there is no prospect of overcoming these problems entirely with so many collecting institutions in existence. Newer universities as well as the older-established ones occasionally seek to establish a role for themselves by setting up special archival collections in a field of study that has hitherto been (or is thought to have been) neglected.

Following publication in December 1993 of the report of Sir Brian Follett's review of academic libraries,¹⁶⁶ the four higher education funding bodies for the constituent parts of the United Kingdom invited universities to apply for special grants of 'non-formula funding' (NFF) to preserve, develop and improve access to special collections in the humanities, including their holdings of archives and manuscripts. The Commission offered its assistance to the funding bodies in assessing the initial applications, but to the regret of many¹⁶⁷ this was not taken up, partly on account of the speed with which the money had to be allocated and spent. The Commission was, however, able to supply the funding bodies, for the benefit of their applicants, with general guidance on the standards then emerging for national and international archival description.

The NFF awards had a number of limitations and weaknesses. Grants tended to be driven by bids, and therefore to be somewhat random in nature¹⁶⁸ rather than based on systematically-identified strategic priorities. They were for the short term only,¹⁶⁹ which resulted in a (presumably temporary) surge in demand for project staff and hence a short-term distortion of the labour market for archivists and researchers. In a few cases units were set up on a short-term basis, for example for cataloguing and conservation, for which there is a clear ongoing need that the universities now have no means of addressing. Furthermore, the grants were specifically devoted to the research materials held in special collections but

¹⁶⁴ AM 31.

¹⁶⁵ See for example Christopher Kitching, *Archives: the very essence of our heritage*, pp.37-40; SUSCAG, *Ensuring Scotland's cultural heritage* (1997).

¹⁶⁶ Professor Sir Brian Follett, *Joint Funding Councils Libraries Review Group: Report* (HEFCE, 1993).

¹⁶⁷ AM 95.

¹⁶⁸ AM 11.

¹⁶⁹ AM 69, 75.

excluded the care of the applicant's own archives and modern administrative records. Across the HE sector's special collections as a whole, about £50 million was committed to this initiative, partly in the form of one-off ('non-recurrent') payments for the year 1994-95 and partly in recurrent grants spread over a limited period between 1995 and 1999. These were administered by the Joint Information Systems Committee of the funding bodies (JISC), and two committees: the Humanities Non-Formula Funding Committee and the Archives Sub-committee. Archives in fact proved remarkably successful in making their case for funding, and in the end they accounted for very nearly half of all the projects supported.

A series of consultancy reports commissioned by the JISC Archives sub-committee,¹⁷⁰ taken together, provide the most detailed picture of archives in the HE sector that has ever been assembled. We congratulate all concerned on the imaginative and determined way in which they have identified and measured the problems, and established an agenda for further action, not least through a series of regional presentations and follow-up meetings.

A general survey of archival needs in respect of holdings other than the institution's own archives¹⁷¹ had some of the character of the 'mapping' surveys of local authority archive services described elsewhere in this report, albeit on a more summary level. Responses suggested, for example, serious pressures on storage space, and with only just over half of this environmentally controlled; 39% of responding institutions with no professional archives staff and a further 44% with only one (total 83%); significant backlogs of cataloguing; and about 10% of holdings in need of urgent conservation.

The archives of the HEIs themselves, excluded from the above survey, were covered in a separate consultancy report¹⁷² which established that whilst most HEIs make formal provision for the care of their own archives, few entrust them to professional archivists, and the person(s) so appointed generally has a low profile in the organisation. Standards of storage accommodation are generally poor. The consultants concluded that 'there is a general awareness of the potential hazards in storage areas and a feeling of powerlessness to

get standards improved'.¹⁷³ Current administrative records which have not yet become archival are often not under professional care at all. Sometimes they appear not even to be anyone's specific responsibility. The consultants made important recommendations to raise awareness of the issues by the governing bodies and to improve standards. Ideas were also floated for greater collaboration across the HE sector to provide the necessary skills and advice from colleagues elsewhere when needed. The same consultants went on to develop a model for the appraisal of university records for retention or disposal according to function and activity.

We commend all this work to the attention of the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals. It adds considerable detail to the Commission's representations, made to the CVCP in 1997, that the storage accommodation in many of the university repositories visited by the Commission in the course of its work fell significantly short of the best standards recommended in BS 5454 and the Commission's *Standard for record repositories*. To our great encouragement, the CVCP lent its support by recommending to universities the adoption of the second edition of the *Standard* published in 1997.

Other JISC consultancies looked at the scope for collaborative working in providing conservation services for the HE sector, possibly on a regional basis;¹⁷⁴ at measuring user satisfaction at archive and manuscript repositories in the HE sector;¹⁷⁵ and at a thesaurus-based approach to subject indexing.¹⁷⁶ The Archives sub-committee also, as part of its contribution to the wider national initiatives under way for the networking of archival information, commissioned a consultancy to develop a National Networking Demonstrator Project. This explored the feasibility of multi-level searches across the electronic descriptions of a number of repositories, in different formats, in the HE sector and beyond, and designed a possible 'user inter-face' for such an application. As this report was in progress additional funding had just been committed to the establishment of a number of regional 'hubs' to support network connections and collection-level descriptions of archival data.

¹⁷⁰ See Bibliography: JISC.

¹⁷¹ Willpower (1998).

¹⁷² Parker and Smith (1997).

¹⁷³ Ibid., pp.25, 96.

¹⁷⁴ Sheppard (1998).

¹⁷⁵ Tavistock Institute (1998).

¹⁷⁶ Foster (1997).

Although the JISC surveys identified many shortcomings in the universities' provisions for the care of archives and records, they also gave a vision of how things might be improved on a number of fronts, and it would be wrong to underestimate the very significant improvements brought about in the HE sector by the non-formula funding grants referred to above.¹⁷⁷ Of the sum dedicated to archival applications much was committed to advancing the pace of cataloguing of special collections. Cataloguing projects were supported at some 20 universities, enabling some, like Swansea University in relation to the South Wales Coal Field Archive, to tackle huge backlogs of cataloguing. Considerable progress was also made in converting manual finding aids for archival holdings into electronic form, using Encoded Archival Description (EAD) to facilitate search and retrieval. This latter initiative in particular put parts of the HE sector well ahead of other UK repositories in their readiness for networking electronic information about their holdings. Image digitisation projects were undertaken at Oxford and Aberdeen. Among other projects, reader facilities were improved at Liverpool and London University's School of Oriental and African Studies; storage accommodation was improved at Huddersfield, Manchester, Surrey and St Andrews; new conservation units were established, or existing ones developed, at Hull, Manchester, York and Dundee.¹⁷⁸

All this is good news. But the short-term burst of funding just described has raised awareness of, and expectations of future access to, the research resources of the universities' special collections. Can this be sustained? Is there sufficient core funding for these collections? Most of the evidence assembled by JISC, as well as that from some of our own respondents,¹⁷⁹ suggests that this is not the case. We must reiterate that anyone intent on taking in archives and making them available for research must be aware of the long-term commitment that this entails: to custody in accommodation that meets today's best standards, and with the staffing levels needed for access, invigilation and basic custodial activities such as cataloguing and conservation. The Commission would always advise any HE institution seeking to establish a new specialist archive to consider these on-costs very carefully. But the commitment applies no less to the older institutions. Short-

term funding initiatives, such as those described above, are very welcome, but they need to be seen as part of a long-term development strategy.¹⁸⁰ We are glad to see that the JISC reports have looked outwards, towards more collaborative solutions both within the HE sector and outside it, and we are convinced that many of the problems could be solved if an approach wider than just that of the individual institution could be adopted. A still greater danger attaches to short-termism in connection with collecting policies. As one of our respondents put it, 'What was originally seen as a key asset can come to be regarded as a drain on resources, especially if academic trends on the parent campus move to other subject areas'.¹⁸¹

Perhaps the single most important feature of the post-Follett funding was that no matching or partnership contributions were required from the applicants. The money was top-sliced from the overall HE budget and then allocated to achieve worthwhile objectives. If a similar approach could be devised for the local authority sector many of its current problems such as cataloguing backlogs could be tackled.

¹⁷⁷ AM 59, 69.

¹⁷⁸ JISC, *Accessing our humanities collections*.

¹⁷⁹ AM 108.

¹⁸⁰ AM 75.

¹⁸¹ AM 11.

6. ARCHIVES, LIBRARIES AND MUSEUMS

LIBRARIES

In many different contexts, archives are administered alongside, or as part of, a library service. At national level for example, the special collections of all the national and copyright libraries, and those of very many university libraries, are rich in archival and manuscript material including many of the nation's individual manuscript treasures and important collections of private papers.

In the local authority sector, the old established municipal libraries often set a trend by taking in and caring for archival materials before there was any notion of a 'record office' as something that might be quite distinct from a library. The majority of the London and metropolitan boroughs came to favour this library-based model for their archive services, whereas the county councils – at least until the more general restructuring of local government services in the 1980s and 1990s mentioned above – more commonly made their record offices answerable to the legal or central administrative officers, thus emphasising as their first responsibility the custody of the records of the authority itself.

Today, as new structures have been imposed on local government, archive and library services more commonly lie within the same overall department or directorate. Even where this is the case, however, the degree of autonomy and professional leadership for the respective sectors varies; and there may be such additional partners as museums and archaeological services, or heritage services in a wider sense, again varying from one authority to the next. Archives and local studies in particular are often housed and managed together or in very close proximity, an arrangement which has been of wide benefit to those studying local and family history because it enables primary and secondary source materials to be studied side by side. The pooling of accommodation and staff resources formerly allocated separately to archives and to local studies has also generally resulted in a better regular ratio of staff to public.

As national and regional strategies for cultural services are developed it is going to be crucial to take account of these local variations. The development of any computer networking

links that are confined to public library services, for example, will embrace archive services as of right in only a few cases: it will pass them by in many others unless a determined effort is made to avoid this outcome. The regrettable tendency of many recent pronouncements about the library sector to omit specific mention of archives but assume they will be broadly covered by library developments tends to assume synergies and structural and administrative links which do not everywhere exist on the ground, but which it may be beneficial to facilitate in places as a matter of policy. If this is the objective, then special and explicit attention must be paid to the needs of archives, based on a factual assessment of the actual situation.

Irrespective of the synergies that everyone rightly wishes to exploit, archives will remain something essentially different from library books. The former are primary source materials, the latter mostly secondary. In our experience this is one of the most difficult things to communicate, first to readers (who may tend to see 'information' as something more homogeneous than it really is), and secondly to library managers and more particularly their governing bodies (who for planning purposes in particular need to be sharply aware of the constraints, costs and challenges of keeping archives).

Archives are unique and irreplaceable. They cannot be kept on the open shelves for browsing at will. They cannot be borrowed, or even moved around from one room to another unsupervised. Close attention has to be paid to the bona fides of their readers, who will also require more invigilation than is necessary for those studying most reference books. All of this points towards special study areas designated for archives, and not open access in general-purpose reading rooms. In the Commission's experience, existing library buildings, whether public or university libraries, are not usually well designed to cope with this. We also note elsewhere that indexes and finding aids for archives are by nature rather different from those designed for books: so readers of archives may need more introductory training and encouragement to exploit them to best advantage. This has specific implications for staff training.

Then there is a range of physical constraints. Archives are intended for perpetual preservation: a circumstance which brings with it substantial financial and moral commitments on the part of the holding authority to provide a secure and controlled environment for their care, and an active policy of preservation and careful handling, including where necessary the provision of surrogate copies to save wear and tear on the originals. Finally, and possibly most expensive of all, if the holding authority is at all active in seeking out accruals for the archive collection, the space taken up by the archives will continue to grow from year to year, and it is no good assuming for planning purposes that it will not. In this respect archives are far more demanding than library stock, which to some extent can be disposed of and refreshed at will, or bought in by external arrangements such as inter-library loan.

This all serves to emphasise that there are certain perils in adopting a view of archives which is too exclusively library-oriented. Archives have their own needs, and in return they offer their own distinctive contribution to the information society, not just as some adjunct to library books. The cohabitation of the two sectors has much to recommend it, but it also brings scope for misunderstandings and in the last analysis for the diminution of what a comprehensive archive service can really be, that is to say a service which embraces the care of the parent authority's modern administrative records, and places due emphasis on conservation and preservation as well as public access. A great deal more public debate is needed on these issues in the context of library-based archive services.

THE NATIONAL MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES IN ENGLAND

The national museums and galleries' own archives are mostly Public Records under the superintendence of the Keeper of Public Records and therefore outside our terms of reference under our Royal Warrant. But many of these institutions have also assembled important collections of additional archive and manuscript material which is clearly of direct concern to us. Some of this documents, or illustrates the context of, the museum and gallery objects themselves, an important synergy whose benefits were emphasised by a number of our respondents. Some, however, has been acquired to sustain research by the

museum or gallery's curatorial staff, to provide a research resource for the public, or (at times) simply because the museum or gallery existed and there was no other obvious home for the material. Few of these institutions were set up with the express purpose of collecting archives for public or institutional research. It was something that developed over time, and there was not necessarily adequate (or any) provision for its accommodation and management.

It may be the case, as was represented to us,¹⁸² that the public at large remains unaware of the wealth of archival resources for study held by our national museums and galleries. To some extent the National Register of Archives serves as a central access point for this information, but it does have certain limitations: some of the national institutions have been more systematic than others in keeping the NRA informed of their holdings, and users turning up at a national museum or gallery may not previously have heard of the NRA.¹⁸³ Another source of confusion hitherto has been that the museums and galleries' own archives, as Public Records, have not been included in the NRA.¹⁸⁴

The responses to our survey suggest that in general collection strengths have now been systematically identified. The assumption that national bodies can be sweepers up of material that cannot find another home is being challenged,¹⁸⁵ but public expectations sometimes outrun the funding realities, as for example with the expectation that the National Railway Museum will be the home of last resort for all railway records.¹⁸⁶ The British Museum¹⁸⁷ and the Science Museum¹⁸⁸ told us that they make strenuous efforts to find other suitable homes for proffered material for which they are not the logical custodian. But then what happens in the last resort? The Science Museum, for example, told us that it takes in 'collections in the general field of physical science and technology for which there is no suitable local or specialist repository', and emphasised its concern (which is alluded to elsewhere in this report) about gaps in the provision nationwide for scientific and technical archival material.¹⁸⁹ Similarly

¹⁸² AM 130.

¹⁸³ AM 145.

¹⁸⁴ As explained above, the development of National Name Authority Files should solve this problem, see p.21.

¹⁸⁵ AM 122, 125.

¹⁸⁶ AM 122.

¹⁸⁷ AM 128.

¹⁸⁸ AM 125.

¹⁸⁹ AM 125.

the Natural History Museum argued for a degree of flexibility in collection policies to ensure that records at risk found a home.

Collection policies have been drawn up, inspired in many cases by the Museums & Galleries Commission's Registration Scheme, in which most of the national museums are participants. Competition among national institutions with overlapping scholarly interests is reduced by careful liaison. The V&A, for example, has special interests in archives related to art, craft and design but defers to the Tate Gallery when it comes to 20th-century fine art.¹⁹⁰ A greater degree of competition for acquisitions still persists with institutions outside the national sector, particularly with the special collections of some of the universities and newer museums.¹⁹¹

Collecting other people's archives is subsidiary to the national institutions' main purpose and therefore tends to be low in the list of priorities when it comes to funding. Even when archives are on the agenda, priority in the allocation of resources has to be given to the institution's own archives, which as Public Records enjoy a degree of statutory protection that does not apply to the rest of the holdings.¹⁹² In some of the national museums, economy measures including staff cuts have fallen heavily on curatorial posts, with direct consequences for cataloguing, conservation, invigilation, and the extent of opening hours for public access.¹⁹³ Others freely admit that the level of their staffing has simply never been a match for the scale of the task of managing their collections properly, so material is taken in but not catalogued or made accessible.¹⁹⁴ One-off grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund or other grant-awarding bodies may go some way towards addressing backlogs of arrangement, cataloguing and conservation. However, it is sometimes assumed by funding bodies that the national institutions are sufficiently well heeled to foot the bill without such grants. External grant-aid in any case cannot address the underlying long-term need for core funding for care of and access to the archives. If this need cannot be met by the governing body alone, partnerships or sponsorship deals with the private sector may need to be explored, but here the archives departments can find their activities

constrained by the overall policies of the parent body.¹⁹⁵

Monumental buildings designed – many of them in the 19th century – to show off works of art or museum objects to the public are rarely perfect for archive storage, and indeed their original designers usually did not have this in mind. Overall security and fire protection may be good. (This is evidently not always the case). But the attainment of a clean and stable environment for the storage of archives in accordance with BS 5454 can be a major challenge, especially in a listed building and with the atmospheric pollution of the capital.¹⁹⁶ Quite commonly, storage has had to be found in areas such as basements, unwanted or inconvenient for other purposes. Problems of this kind have occasionally been brought home to us when we have been considering national institutions as contenders for the allocation of archival material accepted for the nation in lieu of tax. It took more than ten years, for example, for the Tate Gallery to meet satisfactorily our requirements for the storage of the papers of Lord Clark, accepted for the nation in lieu of tax as long ago as 1987 but only definitively allocated to the Tate in 1998. In respect of their own archives, some of the national institutions find it equally hard to meet the requirements of the Keeper of Public Records, whilst others like the National Gallery¹⁹⁷ and the National Portrait Gallery¹⁹⁸ with smaller and more tightly defined collections have made better progress.

The national institutions are facing the same challenges as the rest of the archival world with regard to the conservation of their holdings, and the larger among them, including the V&A and the Imperial War Museum, have raised with us their particular concerns with regard to electronic records and film and photographs respectively. These issues are treated elsewhere in this report.

Where do the responsibilities of the national institutions for archives begin and end? Should they take in material for which they can find neither adequate storage nor the staff time and resources for cataloguing and conservation? Who else will do so if they will not? Should they receive some additional central funding in recognition of this role? The consensus among our respondents was that there is no overall national strategy, or

¹⁹⁰ AM 130.

¹⁹¹ AM 130, 145.

¹⁹² AM 126, 130.

¹⁹³ AM 117, 118, 145.

¹⁹⁴ AM 122.

¹⁹⁵ AM 130.

¹⁹⁶ AM 128.

¹⁹⁷ AM 126.

¹⁹⁸ AM 117.

even a definition¹⁹⁹ of the role of the national museums in this respect, and too little central guidance or supervision of standards. **We consider that a separate, more detailed review of archives in this sector, covering the above issues and perhaps others such as staffing and conservation, would be timely and we intend to take this forward in consultation with the Museums & Galleries Commission and the PRO following the publication of the present report.**

THE NON-NATIONAL MUSEUMS

Many local and independent museums have acquired archival material (other than their own administrative records), and some indeed began to do so before there was a network of local record repositories. Across the country as a whole an estimated 45% of museums are known to hold archival material.²⁰⁰ This ranges from very substantial collections of papers at one end of the scale to a few individual exhibitable items at the other. However, very few museums employ archivists even in an advisory capacity, and for the most part information about their archival holdings has been slow to reach relevant local, national or specialist record repositories or the National Register of Archives. In effect, the archival collections are frozen, and intellectually inaccessible. Tensions may arise between the two sectors when the collection of such material by museums cuts across the declared collecting policy of record repositories.

The 1990s have seen considerable progress towards resolving these problems. A working party of the professional bodies of archivists and museum curators together with representatives from the Museums & Galleries Commission and HMC was convened and then found more permanent existence as the Standing Conference on Archives and Museums (SCAM). It drew up for publication in 1990 a *Code of Practice on Archives* for museums in the United Kingdom, and held a number of regional workshops. SCAM continues to meet on a regular basis, and to provide training on these issues. It has materially contributed to a growing mutual understanding and respect between the two sectors. The Museums & Galleries Commission's Registration Scheme has in turn encouraged more museums to define their

collecting policies and subscribe to the *Code of Practice*, which was revised and updated in 1996.²⁰¹

On SCAM's initiative a pilot survey of museums in Devon and Cornwall was undertaken jointly by MGC and HMC. This sought to investigate the extent of museums' holdings of archives, to publicise them more systematically, and to make recommendations for their future care and management. The results were published in 1996.²⁰² A rich variety of material was identified, in many different media, from paper and parchment to photographs, film and electronic records. These (in terms of the number of items) might typically comprise as much as two-thirds of any given collection. Most commonly the material had been acquired by donation, and the consultants reported 'greater awareness by the public of the role of museums compared to record offices'.²⁰³ The report, while acknowledging a growing professional awareness of the issues, identified widespread problems in almost every museum in meeting the best standards for storage, conservation, and documentation. If these problems are to be addressed, significant additional funding is required. The report's recommendations are a useful supplement to the *Code of practice*. SCAM is now considering how the lessons learnt from this pilot study can be applied throughout the country. The findings for the South-West in all probability reflect the problems being experienced by museums throughout the UK.²⁰⁴

We conclude that there is scope for continuing collaboration between museums and archives services, especially (but not exclusively) where these are run by the same parent authority and sometimes by the same department within the authority. As new thought is given to the development of local and regional cultural services it is to be expected that the two sectors, together with the libraries sector, will grow together and in some instances be co-located. We would not wish to advocate such co-location in every case, but in some instances it will be worth exploring as a means of providing the best public awareness and understanding of the whole range of the cultural heritage. In others no doubt the same results could be achieved by electronic means, ranging from the creation of local, regional and national

¹⁹⁹ AM 125, 128.

²⁰⁰ AM 74, quoting *Museum Focus*, Issue 1, 1998.

²⁰¹ Published by the Museums and Galleries Commission.

²⁰² Emmeline Leary et al., *Hidden assets* (1996).

²⁰³ *Hidden assets* s.3.7.3.

²⁰⁴ See, for example, AM 34.

networks to the supply of documentation in digitised or other surrogate form, or the creation of ‘virtual’ exhibitions.

Archives and museums will often benefit from sharing their expertise, for example with regard to descriptive practices, ICT applications, the storage environment, security, conservation and educational outreach. In some cases a museum’s best long-term solution for its archives might be to transfer them into the care of a record office and then borrow back items needed for a particular exhibition. In other cases – photographs are one example – there might be scope either for merging holdings locally, or alternatively for establishing joint data banks or digital images so that the physical boundaries between the custodial institutions are not an impediment to intellectual access.

Wider reporting of their holdings by museums via the National Register of Archives would be welcome, and reciprocal links between the MGC’s new Cornucopia database of museum collections and the NRA could be mutually beneficial. We strongly support the view of the Museums & Galleries Commission²⁰⁵ that any national strategy for archives has to include those in museums; and that continued dialogue between the sectors is essential, and must result in practical collaboration to achieve common high standards and to break down existing barriers. However, much of this must be put into practice in a local and regional context. We hope that the emerging regional structures for cultural services including archives will actively promote this work.

²⁰⁵ AM 74.

7. PRIVATELY-HELD ARCHIVES

BUSINESS ARCHIVES

The past decade has seen a growing awareness of the importance of business archives as a research resource: for the history of business itself, of course, but equally for a wide range of other disciplines including social and economic history, geography and the fine arts. The value of their archives to companies themselves has also come to be better appreciated, although one former Company Secretary told us that it was only after taking to business history in his retirement that he had finally come to understand the value of company archives, and warned (along with several other respondents) of the likelihood of the destruction of business archives at times like business mergers or upon a company's entering into receivership or liquidation. The Business Archives Council (BAC) estimates that over the past 25 years the number of archivists employed by businesses has risen from a mere dozen to something like 200.²⁰⁶

In several other European countries national strategies with regard to business archives have been formulated and, as at the Archives du monde du travail at Roubaix, France, efforts have been made to establish single large repositories specialising in the acquisition and care of business archives on a national basis. A similar aspiration was expressed by British economic historians as long ago as the 1920s but has never caught the public imagination. Very little public money has been earmarked in the United Kingdom for the rescue and care of business archives, although there is a significant contribution in kind from the many publicly funded repositories – mostly in the local government and university sectors – that have taken in large quantities of business archives. By far the largest of these is Glasgow University Archives Business Records Centre which, with the help of a large private endowment, has gone from strength to strength in this period.

For the most part, however, the repositories which hold business archives lack the resources to pursue a proactive policy of seeking out such records or maintaining a

watch at moments of crisis and loss such as

those surrounding company mergers or liquidations. In 1996 the National Archives Policy Liaison Group called for firmer national

action on this latter front in particular.²⁰⁷ Much of the momentum on this is currently maintained by the voluntary sector, especially by the BAC and BAC(S). The latter continues at present to receive a modest annual grant from the National Archives of Scotland towards its survey work, but has no guaranteed source of public funding. To our regret in 1997 we had to discontinue the much smaller grant which we had given annually to the BAC, leaving the Council with no source of public subsidy.

We salute the strikingly successful and productive efforts of the two Business Archives Councils over a wide range of activities: identifying records at risk and steering them into suitable repositories; offering advice both to the creators and the would-be users of the archives; conducting targeted surveys of business archives and publishing the results; setting standards for the better care of business records; and through publications, including notably BAC's excellent journal *Business Archives*, raising awareness of business archives more generally.

It has been represented to us that whilst national attention has been paid to the needs of local authority and university repositories in the various 'mapping' exercises discussed elsewhere in this Report, business archives have so far failed to command a corresponding degree of concern. This is clearly the case: evidence on business archives remains to be collected and analysed in the same comprehensive fashion. Yet there is abundant evidence that business archives are significantly under-resourced in proportion to the needs of the present and the challenges of the future. They are the subject of very little legislation or regulation other than the terms of the successive Company Acts. There is nothing amounting to a national strategy for their care and preservation, and a great deal is left to chance.

²⁰⁶ AM 37.

²⁰⁷ Appendix A.3 to *An archives policy for the United Kingdom*.

No doubt part of the explanation for this relative neglect lies in the peculiar problems associated with business archives. Often they are bulky: difficult to process in a repository and difficult for the researcher to exploit. With shelf space rapidly filling up, repositories are being forced to take a hard look at the open-ended collection policies of earlier generations and to assess the costs of taking in and storing bulky material that may be little used. Deaccessioning is actively under way in some areas, whilst new approaches are being developed, by the BAC and others, to streamline the selection and appraisal process in order to ensure that key business and industrial functions and activities are documented for posterity in a meaningful and usable way. Those researchers who have persevered despite the intractability of some of the material have often found that business archives contain a treasure-store of information. These archives have much to contribute towards national and local education programmes, and as their care is becoming more professionalised so their exploitation, and awareness of how they fit into the wider national archival resources, are becoming more of a reality. This was well demonstrated by the Royal Bank of Scotland's CD-ROM *Past Lives: a Royal Bank Account*, complete with a guide for teachers, which was awarded the 1999 Phillimore Prize.²⁰⁸ At the same time, potential users need reminding that business archives are mostly of a private nature and, as for other private records, certain constraints and restrictions upon access have often to be imposed in the interests of confidentiality.

One of the most serious challenges to the present arrangements for the care and management of business archives, which is already having to be addressed and may become more pressing in the future, arises from the growth of multi-national enterprises. When the UK enterprise is only part of a wider conglomerate, and is not necessarily the headquarters operation, business and ethical considerations may vie with one another when it comes to determining where the archives should be maintained and who should have access to them for what purpose. These considerations have been brought sharply into view in recent years in such episodes as the collapse of Barings Bank and the use of banking archives more generally to establish

claims to money and property confiscated by the Nazis in Germany in the 1930s and 1940s.

Business archives must be taken fully into account in any assessment of national archival strategy, and particularly in the allocation of any public funding for development of the archives sector as a whole.

VOLUNTARY BODIES

Another category of privately owned archives of particular concern, as highlighted in evidence from the editors of the directory *British Archives*,²⁰⁹ is that of the many hundreds of **small societies and voluntary bodies** throughout the country, commonly with no permanent staff or premises and unaware of the basic needs of records management or the professional care and advice available through local record offices and agencies such as the British Records Association and the Commission. In this sector, substantial reliance has to be placed on the outreach activities of local record offices, but this is clearly part of the wider problem of publicising archives and archive services, in which all bodies interested in archives, both national and local, have a part to play. The Alpine Club²¹⁰ drew attention to the difficulties experienced by small national special interest clubs, with volunteer staff, needing to catalogue their archives and make them available. In most cases where such organisations need (or choose) to retain their archives, grant-aid for such purposes is hard to identify, but the support of private grant-awarding bodies may be forthcoming if there is a quid pro quo of public access to the material for study and reasonable standards of care.

ECCLESIASTICAL ARCHIVES

The Commission has from its earliest establishment recognised the special importance of ecclesiastical archives as a national historical resource, and throughout this period we have maintained the tradition of having a senior representative of the Church among the Commissioners. The Commission has also been independently represented on the archives advisory group of the General Synod of the Church of England and on the libraries and archives sub-committee of the Catholic

²⁰⁸ Another recent example is the CD-ROM *Prudential: The archive 1848-1998* distributed with *Business Archives Principles and Practice* no 77 (May 1999).

²⁰⁹ AM 79.

²¹⁰ AM 17.

Bishops' Conference for England and Wales, as well as being an observer at the annual meetings of the Cathedral Librarians and Archivists' Association. It gave particular advice to cathedral archivists and the Cathedrals Fabric Commission on the question of inventories of holdings required under the Care of Cathedrals Measure 1990, and has also advised on plans to improve the archival accommodation of the cathedrals of Canterbury and York and of the Dean and Canons of Windsor. Nor has such advice been limited to the Church of England, as similar assistance has been provided to Dr Williams's Library, a major centre for nonconformist records, and to the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham. We are glad to note also that ecclesiastical records have been among the beneficiaries of conservation grants on which we have advised in this period. It seems likely that the approach of the millennium will focus renewed attention on these important collections.

ARCHIVES OF INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES

Although, as we note above, the transfer of privately owned papers into public custody has continued apace in the 1990s, as evidenced by the Commission's annual surveys of accessions to repositories published on its website, very many private archives are still in the hands of the individuals, families and institutions that have created and maintained them over the generations.²¹¹ The Commission, being an independent and non-acquisitive body, is uniquely well placed to offer impartial advice and guidance to private owners, either on the care of their records *in situ* if this is what they choose – a solution which we encourage whenever the practicalities of the situation permit it – or alternatively on their disposal to another place of custody by gift or sale, or on loan, if that is what is under consideration. We are grateful for the affirmation from respondents to our survey that these services are valued. In Scotland a similar role is performed by the National Register of Archives (Scotland).

We are indebted to the many private owners who in this period have allowed the Commission access to their papers, and who have allowed the details to be recorded in the National Register of Archives. This has been

especially valuable for the development and publication of the Commission's series of Guides to sources for British history. We are confident that the Commission's recently-completed two-volume study of *Principal family and estate collections* could not have been undertaken by any other organisation or individual, depending as it did on the willing cooperation of so many private owners. We are equally confident that as its contents are assimilated by scholars the quite striking importance and scope of the papers there described will shine through. Nothing could better demonstrate the vital importance of private collections to an understanding of our local and national history.

Some private owners with very substantial archives have appointed their own archivists. Given the right kind of facilities, clear benefits can accrue from keeping the archives in the houses to which they relate. Some of the archives continue to be of direct practical importance in day-to-day administration of house and estate, and conversely where their care is closely linked to the practical process of records management a proportion of the current family and estate records will eventually join the archives, after systematic selection, in the future.

The Commission has found its contacts with the Historic Houses Archivists Group particularly useful, and we were so encouraged by the enthusiastic response of both owners and archivists to our consultative meeting at Hatfield House in 1996 on the subject of the Country House Archive²¹² that we arranged a second such meeting, at Petworth House, in 1999 during the course of the present survey. This amply bore out our view that no single pattern of custody or access can be promoted as the norm. Much depends on local circumstances.

A number of private owners, for example, have made arrangements for access to their archives through a local record office. Others have appointed their own archivists, who often play an important part in the management of an estate or business and its records as well as providing a service for historians. Most private owners, however, have neither the staff to make papers available to enquirers nor regular access to professional archival advice or assistance. Much of the material in their possession may as yet be uncatalogued and difficult of access. In its own Guides, the

²¹¹ For major sales and acceptances in lieu of tax see Appendixes 4 and 5.

²¹² See HMC *Annual review 1996-1997*, pp. 35-36.

Commission is always careful to point out to would-be users that privately-held papers cannot always be consulted as freely as those held in public repositories. The privilege of access to this private material is still not sufficiently understood either by scholars, who are used to writing to tight deadlines and finding most of their material readily accessible in the public domain, or by the growing number of researchers in the field of family history. Users tend to bring to their dealings with the private sector, a certain assumption that terms of access will be as in a public repository, and as a result regrettable (and avoidable) misunderstandings do from time to time continue to occur. Whenever it lies within our power, we advise researchers to make discreet enquiries in advance in order not to be frustrated by a wasted visit.

Private owners who deposit their papers on loan with a public repository are now usually asked to enter into a formal loan agreement which spells out the rights and expectations of both parties. Some repositories including the British Library and a number of local record offices have recently revised their policy, making the acceptance of material on loan the exception, and gift or purchase the norm. This is in order to reduce the risk of private owners withdrawing their material for sale, perhaps after substantial amounts of public money have been spent on its care and cataloguing. The Government Purchase Grant Fund²¹³ was among those calling for stricter measures to ensure that in the event of a sale to the repository the care devoted to the collection during the period of its deposit should be properly reflected by an abatement of the asking price.

Our most recent concern in this field has been over the government's revised approach to the conditional exemption of archives and manuscripts (together with works of art) from capital taxation. Despite our representations to Ministers and to the Inland Revenue, the new guidelines on *Capital taxes – relief for assets: Notes on the changes made by the Finance Act 1998* are seeded with potential difficulties for owners of manuscripts and archives, which we (and they) fear will lead to material being withdrawn from the scheme and possibly sold and/or dispersed. Our particular anxieties centre on (a) the insistence on an element of open access, that is, access without prior appointment for those wishing to see or study the papers in question, and (b) the application

of a test of 'pre-eminence' not just to material that is to be newly exempted but also, upon the next chargeable event (death of the owner), to material that is already conditionally exempt. **We hope that our fears prove to be unjustified, and we shall monitor the situation jointly with the Museums & Galleries Commission or its successor body, MLAC. Conditional exemption is a strong indicator of the long-term intent of an owner to preserve the archives intact. We feel it ought to be seen as a sufficient warranty to open the way for grants from the main grant-awarding bodies towards cataloguing, conservation, etc which would not normally be given if they stood to benefit a private owner directly. The National Manuscripts Conservation Trust has already accepted this principle.**

We recommend that, as a further incentive to owners to seek conditional exemption for their archives and manuscripts, government indemnities should be available to cover conditionally exempt privately-owned archives and manuscripts loaned to public repositories.

²¹³ AM 59.

Conclusions and recommendations

Archives are, or should be, at the forefront of the nation's cultural resources. They have a vital part to play in furthering the present government's objectives such as education and lifelong learning, open government and freedom of information, social inclusion, access for all and cross-sectoral collaboration.

We firmly believe Britain's archives to be in good shape overall as we approach the Millennium, and ready to be harnessed to serve some of these objectives. But this cannot hide the fact that archive services have been buffeted by the administrative changes of the 1990s and that in some areas they have been starved of the resources to enable their full potential to be realised.

In this Report we have suggested several courses for future action to strengthen the position of archives in our society. Our previous Reports have stood as a matter of independent record for the nation, but there has been no obvious agency within government to take forward any proposals. With the changes that have come about during this period there are now a number of bodies within government that might wish to study our Report and its recommendations (only the more important of which are summarised here). They include the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the National Assembly for Wales and, where pertinent, the Public Record Office and National Archives of Scotland; the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council; and the Interdepartmental Archives Committee. We commend our findings to all these bodies for study and, where appropriate, response.

LEGISLATION AND GOVERNMENT DIRECTION

We reaffirm our earlier view, which is also widely supported by the professional bodies, that there should be **legislation to make the provision of archive services by local authorities (jointly, severally or in partnership with other bodies) a mandatory responsibility** (pp.8, 38). As far as possible while respecting the different administrative frameworks it would be beneficial if similar requirements applied to all parts of the United Kingdom.

We continue to believe that the records of the **registration of births, marriages and deaths** in England and Wales should be made Public Records and their custody and access brought fully within the terms of the Public Records Act (p.16). We are also concerned at the current lack of any legislative protection to the records of **police authorities** (p.16).

We welcome the government's proposals to develop, in the wake of its Freedom of Information legislation, firm guidance to all relevant record-creating authorities on the **development of appropriate records management systems** to secure the preservation of the required information. As a by-product this will certainly have a beneficial effect upon archive services (p.39). In this context also we commend for further consideration the suggestion made to us by the Greater London Archives Network that **the Audit Commission might have a role to play, either with this Commission or other central bodies, in the scrutiny of records management by local authorities**.

FUNDING

There should be a more deliberate and focused injection of central funding to support care of and access to archives (pp.7, 21). We look to MLAC in particular to consider at an early date its own funding role in relation to archives. We call upon it to support financially the efforts of the NCA to establish and maintain a vigorous voice for archives on the proposed Regional Cultural Consortia (p.36). We also suggest that it should consider reintroducing direct financial support to a number of bodies in the voluntary sector, such as the British Records Association and the Business Archives Council (formerly supported financially by the Commission itself) which operate in the national interest to rescue and promote archives. Another area we commend to its attention is the financing of film and sound archives, which have special needs (p.19).

The means should also be found of injecting central funding directly into local government archive services, at least in England and Wales, in recognition of their vital role in protecting the nation's written heritage and

serving the government's key objectives of open government and access to information. We agree with many of our respondents that one of the most significant contributions that could be made would be the reimbursement of local places of deposit for their care of Public Records, either directly in proportion to the quantity or bulk of records held or by way of incentive funding to maintain staffing resources for cataloguing and access or to reach approved national standards (p.38). More generally, incentive funding should also continue to be made available by the Heritage Lottery Fund to assist repositories in meeting national standards (p.10).

Those public and private bodies which take on the role of archive custodian should, however, recognise and make provision for the long-term funding commitments which this entails in meeting appropriate standards for their care, preservation and access. The costs are not insignificant, but the services cannot be efficiently and effectively run on a shoe-string budget (p.7, 11, 21, 33, 39) nor can the government or external sources of grant aid be expected to pick up the bill for core responsibilities.

PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION

More publicity and promotion is needed for archives and archive services in every sector throughout the United Kingdom (p.6). Everyone involved can play a part, from government departments and agencies to record repositories and user groups.

COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

At the strategic level we reaffirm the value of a coordinated approach among the national and professional bodies concerned with archives (p.8; Part Three section 2).

At the operational level we urge all those providing archive services to consider whether they could achieve greater efficiency and critical mass by working collaboratively rather than separately. This might for example include collaboration between adjacent local authorities (p.43); more cross-sectoral working between archives, libraries and museums (Part Three section 6); or collaboration between local authorities and the university or private sectors (pp.11, 41, 44).

Despite the clear need for more cross-sectoral collaboration, we are convinced that archives have a distinctive role which is quite separate from those of libraries and museums, and that this must not be sacrificed for the sake of homogeneity in the provision of seamless public services (p.51).

NATIONAL PRIORITIES

If the importance of the United Kingdom's archives is to be properly recognised, and if archival sources are to play the part they should in the 'Information Age', archives need to be more fully represented in the whole range of **networks** being developed by the government, including the National Grid for Learning and the Public Libraries Network. Together with the other national archival institutions the Commission is currently seeking major central funding for the establishment of an archival network to provide key catalogue information across the networks.

We believe, however, that if archives are to be properly stewarded for the use and enjoyment of future generations top priority must be given to their **preservation**, and that this must at times override considerations of access (p.11). The most important plank in any preservation strategy is the provision of adequate **buildings** for storage accommodation, an area in which there are still pressing needs despite all the progress that has been achieved in this period (p.39). **Digitisation** of original materials has a part to play in preservation but needs to be approached with caution in view of the longer-term costs (p.26).

Efficient access to the information which users require can only be secured when the records are **appropriately catalogued**. Additional core funding, supplemented by grant-aid from bodies such as the HLF, is required to 'unlock' the contents of material hitherto uncatalogued and to tackle the very large backlogs which in some places still exist (p.23). The retroconversion into electronic form of existing catalogue information should not be allowed to swallow up all cataloguing resources, and if resources can be found there should be a deliberate nationwide effort, with HLF support early in the new Millennium, to **eliminate cataloguing backlogs**.

The management and preservation of **electronic records** present specific new

challenges which need to be addressed by all those providing archive services. Additional **professional training** needs to be provided in this field (p.18) but record creating bodies in both the public and private sectors also need to be made more aware of the perils of inaction and the need to appoint professionally qualified staff to deal with these new challenges. Training programmes should not, however, become so concerned with today's records that the specific requirements and training skills for caring for the records of past generations are lost (p.30).

STRUCTURES

We welcome the establishment of a Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and will be working with the new body to secure the best outcomes for archives within this framework.

We look forward to negotiating an unambiguous demarcation of responsibilities with MLAC, but at the same time we call on the government to complete quickly its

interrupted assessment of this Commission's future, and dispel the uncertainties which have beset our planning for much of the period under review (p.34).

We humbly submit this Report and our Conclusions to Your Majesty's gracious consideration.

BINGHAM OF CORNHILL, *Chairman*

GE AYLMER

PATRICK CORMACK

EGREMONT

CM FARRER

JC SAINTY

HEC STAPLETON

KEITH THOMAS

ALTHEA DUNDAS-BEKKER

SCARBROUGH

SUSAN J DAVIES

HCG MATTHEW

ALICE PROCHASKA

CAROLINE BARRON

ROSEMARY DUNHILL

TC SMOUT

Appendix 1

List of respondents to *Archives at the Millennium*

INSTITUTIONS

| | |
|--|--|
| Alpine Club | Historical Association |
| Antiquarian Booksellers Association | Historic Houses Archivists Group |
| Archives and Records Management Training Schools (joint response) | House of Lords Record Office |
| Archives Council Wales | Imperial War Museum |
| Association of Chief Archivists in Local Government | International Association for History and Computing |
| Association of Greater Manchester Authorities | Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies |
| Avon Local History Association | Institute of Historical Research |
| Bath Central Library | King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council |
| Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Records Service | Leeds Library and Information Services (Local Studies Library) |
| Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council | Leicestershire Record Office |
| Black and Asian Studies Association | Lewisham Local History Council |
| British Academy | Library Association |
| <i>British Archives</i> | Liverpool Libraries and Information Service |
| British Film Institute | London, Corporation of |
| British Library | London Archive Users' Forum |
| British Museum | London Steamship Owners' Mutual Insurance Association |
| British Records Association | Management History Project |
| Business Archives Council | Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre |
| Business Archives Council of Scotland | Merseyside Maritime Museum |
| Cheshire County Council | Museums & Galleries Commission |
| Christie's | National Cataloguing Unit for the Archives of Contemporary Scientists |
| Consortium of University and Research Libraries | National Council on Archives |
| Doc Rowe Collection | National Gallery |
| Data and Archival Damage Control Centre | National Library of Scotland |
| Derbyshire County Council | National Library of Wales |
| Durham County Council | National Manuscripts Conservation Trust |
| Ealing, London Borough of | National Portrait Gallery |
| Easi Bind International Ltd | National Railway Museum |
| East Sussex County Council | Natural History Museum |
| Edinburgh University Library Special Collections | Newark Archaeological and Local History Society |
| Flintshire County Council | Norfolk Record Office |
| Friends of the Clwyd Archives | North Devon District Council |
| Friends of the Cumbria Archives | North West Film Archive |
| Friends of Devon's Archives | Northampton Borough Council |
| Friends of Dundee City Archives | Northern Ireland Family History Society |
| Friends of the East Sussex Record Office | Pembrokeshire Record Office |
| Friends of Gloucestershire Archives | Peterborough City Council |
| Friends of Gwent Record Office | Police History Society |
| Friends of Hereford Record Office | Public Record Office |
| Friends of Historic Essex | Public Record Office of Northern Ireland |
| Friends of Lancashire Archives | Restormel Borough Council |
| Friends of the Suffolk Record Office | Royal Archives |
| Friends of the Warwickshire County Record Office | Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England |
| Friends of Worcestershire County Record Office | Royal Historical Society |
| Greater London Archives Network | St Albans District Council |
| Hampshire Archives Trust and Hampshire County Council | Scarborough Borough Council |
| | Science Museum |
| | Scottish Record Office |

Scottish Universities Special Collections and Archives Group
 Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne
 Society of Archivists
 Society of Genealogists
 South Gloucestershire Council
 South Gloucestershire Heritage Forum
 Stirling Archive Users Group
 Surrey County Council
 Tameside Metropolitan Borough
 Tate Gallery
 Teesside Archives
 Tyne & Wear Archives Service
 University College London: School of Library, Archives and Information Studies
 University of East Anglia Library
 V&A National Art Library
 V&A Purchase Grant Fund
 Wales Region of the Society of Archivists
 West Sussex Archives Society
 Wirral, Metropolitan Borough of
 Worcestershire County Council
 Wrexham County Borough

INDIVIDUALS

Ashcroft, MY (County archivist, North Yorkshire)
 Birtwistle, David
 Bloomfield, GV (Burton Joyce, Notts)
 Bothwell, Laurence (Sidcup, Kent)
 Cockeram, Tom (Redditch, Worcestershire)
 Collett, Graham (Copmanthorpe, York)
 Cox, Ms Helen Rae (environment and conservation consultant)
 Dundas-Bekker, Mrs A (Arniston; HMC Commissioner and owner of MSS)
 Dunn, John (Stirling)
 Franklin, Mrs Audrey (Compton, Berks)
 Garrod, Mr and Mrs JH (individual friends of Westminster City Archives)
 Gomme, Robert (Blackheath)
 Hardy, Revd Anthony E (New Malden, Surrey)
 Heath, Philip (Heritage Officer, S. Derbs District Council)
 Holmes, Miss EN (Taunton, Somerset)
 Jennings, Nina
 Jukes, Eric (Enfield, Middlesex)
 Ormerod, Mrs Pamela (Bedford)
 Pargeter, Mark (Newcastle, Staffs)
 Pearl, Mrs Susan (Saffron Walden, Essex)
 Plumridge, Peter (Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk)
 Priestland, Pamela (Radcliffe-on-Trent, Notts)
 Robinson, Dr David (county archivist, Surrey)
 Salisbury, The Marquess of (archivist to)
 Spufford, Dr Peter
 Storey, Richard (Kenilworth, Warws; former

director, University of Warwick Modern Records Centre)
 Stuart, Neville (Morpeth, Northumberland)
 Thompson, Dr Kate (county archivist, Hertfordshire)
 Waley, Dr Daniel (Lewes, East Sussex; former Keeper of Manuscripts, British Library)
 Whitson, MJ (Tonbridge, Kent)

Numerical list

1. Mark Pargeter
2. North West Film Archive
3. Neville Stuart
4. N Ireland Family History Society
- [5. number deleted]
6. MJ Whitson
7. Tom Cockeram
8. London Steamship Owners' Mutual Insurance Association
9. Peter Plumridge
10. Management History Project
11. Richard Storey
12. International Association for History and Computing
13. Easi Bind International Ltd
14. GV Bloomfield
15. Pamela Priestland
- [16. L Bothwell: telephone call]
17. Alpine Club
18. Eric Jukes
- [19. Correspondence: omitted from the written evidence]
- [20. Article by Daniel Rosenthal in *The Times*, 31 March 1998]
- [21. Letter of acknowledgement: omitted from written evidence]
22. Mrs Susan Pearl
- [23. Discussion at National Council on Archives meeting 15 April 1998]
24. Robert Gomme
25. Nina Jennings
- [26. Letter of enquiry about the survey: not filed as written evidence]
- [27. Article by Anthony Camp in *Family Tree Magazine*, April 1998 about registration records]
28. Dr Daniel Waley
- [29. National Library of Scotland: **CONFIDENTIAL**]
30. Dr Kate Thompson
31. University of East Anglia Library
- [32. Response seeking guidance on an individual archive, omitted from written evidence]
- [33. Response seeking guidance on an individual archive, omitted from written evidence]

34. Ms Helen Rae Cox
35. Antiquarian Booksellers Association
36. Newark Archaeological and Local History Society
37. Business Archives Council
38. Stirling Archive Users Group
39. Miss EN Holmes
- [40. Notes of London Archive Users' Forum meeting]
41. Revd Anthony E Hardy
- [42. Letter of enquiry, omitted from the written evidence]
43. University College London: School of Library, Archives and Information Studies
44. Friends of the Cumbria Archives
45. Doc Rowe Collection
46. Christie's
47. British Film Institute
48. Mr John Dunn
49. Bath Central Library
50. Society of Genealogists
51. Graham Collett Esq
52. London, Corporation of
53. Lewisham Local History Council
54. Association of Chief Archivists in Local Government
55. Scottish Record Office (Keeper of the Records of Scotland)
56. Mrs Audrey Franklin
57. London Archive Users' Forum
58. Avon Local History Association
59. V&A Purchase Grant Fund
60. Greater London Archives Network
61. National Manuscripts Conservation Trust
62. The Archivist to the Marquess of Salisbury
63. The Royal Archives
- [64. *Carried forward to AM 79*]
65. South Gloucestershire Heritage Forum
66. Library Association
67. British Records Association
68. Archives Council Wales
69. Scottish Universities Special Collections and Archives Group
70. Historical Association
71. Historic Houses Archivists Group
72. National Library of Wales
73. Business Archives Council of Scotland
74. Museums & Galleries Commission
75. Society of Archivists
76. Edinburgh University Library
77. Mrs A Dundas-Bekker
78. Friends of the Clwyd Archives
79. *British Archives*
80. Friends of Worcestershire County Record Office
81. Friends of the Warwickshire County Record Office
82. Mr and Mrs JH Garrod
83. West Sussex Archives Society
84. PRO of Northern Ireland
85. Police History Society
86. Friends of Historic Essex
87. Friends of Devon's Archives
88. National Council on Archives
89. Wales Region of the Society of Archivists
90. Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies
91. Public Record Office
92. House of Lords Record Office
93. Friends of the East Sussex Record Office
94. Friends of Gloucestershire Archives
95. British Academy
96. Institute of Historical Research
- [97. Enfield, London borough of: return to *Accessions to repositories*]
98. National Cataloguing Unit for the Archives of Contemporary Scientists
99. Friends of Dundee City Archives
100. Friends of Gwent Record Office
101. Friends of the Suffolk Record Office
102. North Devon District Council
103. Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England
104. Friends of Lancashire Archives
105. Data and Archival Damage Control Centre
- [106. Philip Heath: **CONFIDENTIAL**]
107. Black and Asian Studies Association
108. Consortium of University and Research Libraries
109. British Library
110. Tyne & Wear Archives Service
111. Cheshire County Council
112. Leeds Library and Information Services (Local Studies Library)
113. Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne
114. Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre
115. Restormel Borough Council
116. St Albans District Council
117. National Portrait Gallery
118. Durham County Council
119. Merseyside Maritime Museum
120. Natural History Museum
121. East Sussex County Council
122. National Railway Museum
123. Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council
124. South Gloucestershire Council
125. Science Museum
126. National Gallery
127. Northampton Borough Council

- | | | | |
|-------|---|------|--|
| 128. | British Museum | 148. | Derbyshire County Council |
| 129. | London Borough of Ealing | 149. | Leicestershire Record Office |
| 130. | V&A National Art Library | 150. | Peterborough City Council |
| 131. | Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough | 151. | Scarborough Borough Council |
| 132. | Pembrokeshire Record Office | 152. | Royal Historical Society |
| 133. | Friends of Hereford Record Office | 153. | Worcestershire County Council |
| 134. | Tameside Borough Council | 154. | Wrexham County Borough |
| 135. | Imperial War Museum | 155. | Dr Peter Spufford |
| 136. | Liverpool Libraries and Information Service | 156. | Consultative meeting with family historians and genealogists, 10 May 1999 |
| 137. | Hampshire Archives Trust and Hampshire County Council | 157. | Consultative meeting with national archival bodies, 10 May 1999 |
| [138. | MY Ashcroft: CONFIDENTIAL] | 158. | University of Wales Aberystwyth: Archives and Records Management Training School, and joint response of other Archives and Records Management training schools |
| 139. | Association of Greater Manchester Authorities | 159. | Flintshire County Council |
| 140. | Norfolk Record Office | 160. | Consultative meeting in Wales, 17 April 1999 |
| 141. | Dr David Robinson | 161. | Consultative meeting with private owners, Petworth House, 24 June 1999 |
| 142. | Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Records Service | | |
| 143. | King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council | | |
| 144. | Teesside Archives | | |
| 145. | Tate Gallery | | |
| 146. | Mrs Pamela Ormerod | | |
| 147. | Surrey County Council | | |

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Wales:

'An assessment of the needs and priorities of local authority archive services in England and Wales in relation to potential Heritage Lottery Fund assistance' part 1: Wales. (Paper presented by HMC to HLF, 1997).

'Archive services in Wales: a map of funding needs' (1999).

National Archives Policy Liaison Group,
An archives policy for the United Kingdom
1. *Statement of Principles and Policy Objectives*.
2. *Discussion Document* (NCA, 1996).

National Council on Archives,
Archives on-line. The establishment of a United Kingdom archival network (1998).
Rules for the construction of personal, place and corporate names (1997).

Public Services Quality Group, *Survey of visitors to British archives*, June 1998.

Rothenberg, Jeff, *Avoiding technological quicksand: finding a viable technical foundation for digital preservation* (European Commission on Preservation and Access, 1999).

Scottish National Archives Policy Working Group, *A Scottish national archives policy* (1998).

Stevens, Mark, 'Local authority archives: places and perceptions,' in *JSA* vol 20 no 1 (1999), pp. 85-92.

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES PRODUCED IN THE PERIOD COVERED BY THE REPORT (1991-1999)

International Council on Archives

General international standard archival description: ISAD(G) (Ottawa, 1994).

International archival authority record for corporate bodies, persons and families: ISAAR (CPF) (Ottawa, 1996).

Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts

A standard for record repositories on constitution and finance, staff, acquisition, access/Safon ar gyfer stordai cofnodion (2nd edition, 1997).

Public Record Office

Susan Shaw, *Beyond the Public Record Office: public records in places of deposit* (1994).

Requirements under the Public Records Act when using information technology (CCTA/PRO, 1994).

Electronic access: archives in the new millennium (Conference proceedings, 1998).

Management, appraisal and preservation of electronic records, Vol 1 Principles; Vol 2, Procedures (2nd edn, 1999).

Department of National Heritage

Guidance on the care, preservation and management of records following changes arising from the Local Government Act 1992 (DNH, July 1995).

Welsh Office

Guidance on schemes for the care, preservation and management of records under Section 60 of the Local Government (Wales) Act (Welsh Office, 1995).

Scottish Record Office (now National Archives of Scotland)

A series of guidance notes to the new local authorities issued by the Keeper of the Records of Scotland 1994-1996.

Society of Archivists Best Practice Guidelines

1. Methven, Patricia and others, *Measuring performance* (1993).
2. Dunn, FI, *Security* (1994).
3. Childs, RJ, *Health and safety* (1996).
4. Pickford, Chris and others, *Preservation and conservation* (1997).
5. Bond, David and Vaid, Angela, *Archive education services* (1998).

Appendix 3

HMC publications, 1991-1999

Since the Commission's last Report was prepared the following volumes have been published by the Commission or in conjunction with other partners:

Reports and Calendars Series

Report on the manuscripts of the Most Honourable the Marquess of Downshire formerly preserved at Easthampstead Park, Berkshire Vol VI: Papers of William Trumbull the elder September 1616-December 1618. By G. Dyfnallt Owen and Sonia P. Anderson. 1995.

Guides to Sources for British History based on the National Register of Archives

Records of British business and industry 1760-1914: metal processing and engineering. 1994.

Principal family and estate collections: family names A-K. 1996; *family names L-W.* 1999.

Other Publications

**The Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts: annual review.* Annually.

**Accessions to repositories and reports added to the National Register of Archives.* Annually on paper only to 1992, and electronically only from 1994.

Record repositories in Great Britain. Ninth edition, 1991; second impression with revisions, 1992; third impression with revisions, 1994; tenth edition, 1997; eleventh edition, 1999.

Local authority archive services 1992. (British Library R&D Report 6090), 1993.

Archive buildings in the United Kingdom 1997-1992. 1993.

Using manorial records. By Mary Ellis (PRO Readers' Guide no 6), 1994; second edition, 1997.

**Surveys of historical manuscripts in the United Kingdom: a select bibliography.* Second edition, 1994; third edition, 1997.

The National Register of Archives: an international perspective. Essays in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the NRA (Historical Research, Special Supplement no 13), 1995.

**Manuscript sources for British history: their nature, location and use.* By RJ Olney (London University Institute of Historical Research, Guides No 3), 1995.

Archives. The very essence of our heritage. By Christopher Kitching (for the National Council on Archives), 1996.

**Writing web pages. Guidelines for archivists.* By Una O'Sullivan and Simon Wilson (for the Archives and Internet Group, electronic only), 1997.

**Texts and calendars since 1982: a survey.* By Ian Mortimer and Michelle Ingram (electronic only), 1997.

**Rules for the construction of personal, place and corporate names.* 1997.

A standard for record repositories on constitution and finance, staff, acquisition, access/ Safon ar gyfer stordai cofnodion. *Second edition, 1997.

**HMC newsletter.* Spring 1998; Spring 1999.

*Unless otherwise stated, asterisked titles are available both electronically and in hard copy.

Appendix 4

Sales of major collections of historical papers, 1991-1999

1991

Family and estate papers of the Kerr family, Marquesses of Lothian, 12th cent.-1940, including papers of Schomberg Henry Kerr (1833-1900), ninth Marquess, Secretary for Scotland 1887-92, and Philip Henry Kerr (1882-1940), eleventh Marquess, statesman. Partly noticed in the Commission's *First report*, 1870. *Scottish Record Office*, where they had been deposited on loan from 1932. Private treaty. Price not disclosed

Family, political and other correspondence and papers of the Herbert family, Earls of Carnarvon, c1780 - c1880. *Hampshire Record Office*. Sotheby's, 18 July 1991, lot 384. £18,000.

Family and estate papers of the Arundell family, Barons Arundell of Wardour, 12th-20th cent., noticed briefly in the Commission's *Second report*, 1871. *Cornwall Record Office* and *Wiltshire Record Office*. Private treaty. £200,000.

Correspondence between Horace Walpole (1717-97), afterwards fourth Earl of Orford, and George Montagu (1713-80), 1736-70. *British Library*. Private treaty. £65,000.

Political, diplomatic and naval correspondence and papers of John Montagu (1718-92), fourth Earl of Sandwich, statesman, mainly listed by the Commission 1972-76. *National Maritime Museum*. Private treaty. £700,000.

Official correspondence and papers of General John Francis Caradoc (1759-1839), first Baron Howden, and General John Hobart Caradoc (1799-1873), second Baron Howden. *Bodleian Library, Oxford*. Private treaty. £12,000.

Correspondence and papers of Field-Marshal Stapleton Cotton (1773-1865), first Viscount Combermere, including 70 letters from the first Duke of Wellington 1810-23. *National Army Museum*, where they had been deposited on loan from 1972. Private treaty. £15,500.

Correspondence, mainly with his family, of Vice-Admiral Robert Fitzroy (1805-65), hydrographer and meteorologist. *Cambridge University Library*.

Sotheby's, New York, 13 June 1991, lot 39. £25,750.

Correspondence, diaries and papers of John Wodehouse (1826-1902), first Earl of Kimberley, statesman, mainly listed by the Commission 1953-57. *Bodleian Library, Oxford*. Sotheby's, 12 December 1991, lot 291. £48,000.

Correspondence of Edward White Benson (1829-96), Archbishop of Canterbury, his wife and children, and literary manuscripts of his three sons. *Bodleian Library, Oxford*, where most of them had been deposited on loan since 1949. Private treaty. £61,850.

1992

Family and estate papers of the Cust family, Barons and Earls Brownlow, 12th-20th cent. *Lincolnshire Archives*, where some had been deposited on loan from 1957. Private treaty. £220,000.

Family and estate papers of the Vyvyan family, baronets, of Trelowarren, 13th-19th cent. *Cornwall Record Office*. Private treaty. £25,000.

Letters from John Churchill (1650-1722), first Duke of Marlborough, to Sir Charles Hedges (d1714) and others, with related papers, 1697-1714. Withdrawn from the Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge, where they had been deposited on loan since 1977. *British Library*. Private treaty. Price not disclosed.

Correspondence, diaries and papers of Charles Townley (1737-1805), collector of classical antiquities. *British Museum*. Private treaty. £209,081.

Correspondence, diaries and papers of Edward Turnour (1883-1962), sixth Earl Winterton, politician. *Bodleian Library, Oxford*. Private treaty. £12,800.

1993

Correspondence, papers, printed books and pamphlets of the Fairfax family, Barons Fairfax of Cameron, late 16th cent. - c1820, including papers

of General Thomas Fairfax (1612-71), third Baron Fairfax. Sotheby's, 14 December 1993 (541 lots). Dispersed. Institutional purchasers of manuscripts included the *British Library*; the *Bodleian Library, Oxford*; the *Brotherton Library, Leeds University*; *York Minster Library*; the *Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, York University*; *York City Archives*; and *Buckinghamshire Record Office*.

Family and estate papers of the Dering family, baronets, of Surrenden Dering, 14th-20th cent. *Centre for Kentish Studies*, where they had been deposited on loan from 1953. Private treaty. £15,950.

Family and estate papers of the Mostyn Owen family of Woodhouse, 15th-19th cent. *Shropshire Records and Research Centre*. Private treaty. £25,500.

Correspondence and papers of Sir William Petty (1623-87), political economist, statistician and scientist, including maps and other papers relating to his Down Survey of Ireland. *British Library*. Private treaty. Price not disclosed.

Letters from John Churchill (1650-1722), first Duke of Marlborough, to Anthonie Heinsius (1641-1720), Grand Pensionary of Holland, 1701-14. Withdrawn from the Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge, where they had been deposited on loan since 1971. *British Library*. Private treaty. £181,250.

Business archives and working library of the Stevenson family, civil engineers, of Edinburgh, 18th-20th cent. *National Library of Scotland*. Private treaty. Price not disclosed.

1994

Correspondence and papers of the Butler family, Dukes of Ormonde, 1551-1712, partly calendared in the Commission's *Fourteenth report*, Appendix VII, 1895, and *The manuscripts of the Marquess of Ormonde*, new series, IV, 1906. Withdrawn from the British Library and offered at Sotheby's, 19 July 1994, lots 247-277. The *National Library of Ireland* purchased four lots, and the *Bodleian Library, Oxford* acquired a further lot when it was offered again at Sotheby's, 13 December 1994, lot 266.

Family and estate papers of the Cowper family, Earls Cowper, c1280-1953, including papers of the first Earl (c1665-1723) as Lord Chancellor, and of the related families of Lamb, Viscounts Melbourne, and Grenfell, Barons Desborough. *Hertfordshire*

Record Office, where most had been deposited on loan since 1952. Private treaty. £577,500.

Business, technical and personal correspondence and papers of James Watt (1736-1819), engineer and inventor, and members of his family, 1729-1870. *Birmingham City Archives*. Private treaty. £1,050,000.

Naval correspondence and papers of Admiral William Carnegie (1758-1831), seventh Earl of Northesk. Sotheby's, 13 December 1994 (33 lots). Dispersed.

Correspondence and papers of and relating to James Weddell (1787-1834), Antarctic explorer. *Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge*. Private treaty. Price not disclosed.

Political correspondence and papers of Lord Randolph Henry Spencer Churchill (1849-95), statesman. Withdrawn from the Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge, where they had been deposited on loan since 1969. *Cambridge University Library*. Private treaty. Price not disclosed.

1995

Family and estate papers of the Clive family, Barons Clive and Earls of Powis, c1727-c1840, including Indian papers of Robert Clive (1725-74), first Baron Clive, Edward Clive (1754-1839), first Earl of Powis, and Brigadier-General John Carnac (1716-1800). *National Library of Wales*, where they had been deposited on loan since the 1950s. Private treaty. £135,000.

Correspondence and papers of Robert Clive (1725-74), first Baron Clive, mainly relating to his career and interests in India, with some later family papers. *British Library, Oriental and India Office Collections*, where they had been deposited on loan since 1955. Private treaty. £315,000.

Family and estate papers of the Ingilby family, baronets, of Ripley, Yorkshire, c1150-c1950, including the foundation charter of Mount Grace Priory 1398, noticed in the Commission's *Fifth report*, 1876, and *Sixth report*, 1877. *West Yorkshire Archive Service, Leeds District Archives*, where most had been deposited on loan since 1964. Private treaty. £130,000.

Family and estate papers of the St John, Jones and Boothby families of Fonmon Castle, Glamorgan, 13th-20th cent., including papers of Colonel Philip Jones (1618-74) and letters from John and Charles Wesley. *Glamorgan Record Office*, where they had been deposited on loan since 1953. Private

treaty. £75,000. Letter books and a diary of Sir William Boothby (c1638-1707) were sold at Sotheby's, 24 July 1995, lot 29, and were later bought by the *British Library* after refusal of an export licence. Private treaty. £32,500.

Family and estate papers of the Evelyn family of Wotton, Surrey and Sayes Court, Kent, 16th-19th cent., including the diary, correspondence and papers of John Evelyn (1620-1706). *British Library*. Private treaty. Price not disclosed.

Family and estate papers of the Fraser and Mackenzie-Fraser families of Fraser Castle, 16th-20th cent., including papers of Lieutenant-General Alexander Mackenzie-Fraser (1758-1809). *Aberdeen University Library*. Private treaty. £25,000.

Correspondence and papers of the Reverend John Newton (1725-1807) and the Reverend William Bull (1738-1814), with related family correspondence, 1753-1896. *Lambeth Palace Library*. Private treaty. £14,500.

Correspondence and papers of and relating to Ford Madox Brown (1821-93), painter. *Victoria & Albert Museum, National Art Library*. Sotheby's, 18 December 1994, lot 537. £32,110.

Correspondence and papers 1874-1945 of Sir Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill (1874-1965), statesman and historian. *Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge University*, where they had been deposited on loan. Private treaty. £12,500,000.

1996

Political, personal and family correspondence and papers of William Petty (1737-1805), first Marquess of Lansdowne, Henry Petty-Fitzmaurice (1780-1863), third Marquess of Lansdowne, and Henry Charles Keith Petty-Fitzmaurice (1845-1927), fifth Marquess of Lansdowne. The papers of the first Marquess were listed in the Commission's *Third report*, 1872, *Fifth report*, 1876, and *Sixth report*, 1877. *British Library*. Private treaty. Price not disclosed. Other correspondence, mainly of the first Marquess, was dispersed at auction. Christie's, 12 October 1994, lots 1-89.

Family and estate papers of the Musgrave family, baronets, of Edenhall, 1333-1901. *Cumbria Record Office, Carlisle*. Private treaty. £12,000.

Family and estate papers of the Lovell family of Cole Park, 17th-20th cent., including papers of

Edward Willes (1694-1773), Bishop of Bath and Wells. *Wiltshire Record Office*, where they had been deposited on loan between 1950 and 1960 and since 1975. Private treaty. £13,139.

Correspondence and papers of William Bingham Baring (1799-1864), second Baron Ashburton, and his wives Lady Harriet Montagu (1802-57) and Louisa Stewart Mackenzie (1827-1903), including nearly 300 letters from Thomas Carlyle. *National Library of Scotland*. Private treaty. Price not disclosed.

Diaries, notebooks, bank books and other papers of Isambard Kingdom Brunel (1806-59), civil engineer. Christie's, 29 November 1996, lots 1-98. Dispersed. *Bristol University Library* acquired 22 lots for £28,732.

Correspondence and papers of (Frederick) Louis MacNeice (1907-63), poet and BBC producer. *Bodleian Library, Oxford*. Private treaty. £38,000.

Literary manuscripts and correspondence of Norman Alexander MacCaig (1910-96), poet. *National Library of Scotland*. Private treaty. £30,000.

Business archives of the Diaghilev Ballet 1908-29. *Victoria & Albert Museum, Theatre Museum*. Private treaty. £155,000.

1997

Family and estate correspondence and papers of the Amherst family, Earls Amherst, c1600-1933, including papers of Field-Marshal Jeffrey Amherst (1717-97), first Baron Amherst, and Lieutenant-General William Amherst (1722-81). *Centre for Kentish Studies*, where they had been deposited on loan since 1968. Private treaty. £210,000.

Correspondence and papers of William Pitt Amherst (1773-1857), first Earl Amherst, governor-general of Bengal 1822-28. *British Library, Oriental and India Office Collections*, where they had been deposited on loan since 1966. Private treaty. £25,000.

Family and estate papers of the Battie-Wrightson family of Cusworth Hall, Yorkshire, 12th cent.-1952. *Doncaster Archives Department*, where some had been deposited on loan since 1976 (the remainder being deposited in Leeds District Archives). Private treaty. £32,800.

Garden designs by Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932), with related papers, 1890-c1925. *Surrey Record*

Office, where they had been deposited on loan since 1993. Private treaty. £28,000.

Correspondence between George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950), playwright, and Sir Barry Vincent Jackson (1879-1960), theatre director, 1923-50. *Birmingham Central Library*. Private treaty. £30,000.

Literary manuscripts and other papers of Norman Alexander MacCaig (1910-96), poet. *Edinburgh University Library*. Private treaty. £99,000.

1998

Journal 1652-71 and other papers of Admiral Edward Montagu (1625-72), first Earl of Sandwich, relating to political, diplomatic and naval affairs. *National Maritime Museum*. Private treaty. £84,630.

Letters from a wide range of correspondents to Thomas Bewick (1753-1828), wood engraver, and his daughters, 1795-1881, with related papers. *Tyne and Wear Archives*. Sotheby's, 15 July 1998, lot 276. £27,500.

Correspondence and papers of John Buchan (1875-1940), first Baron Tweedsmuir, author and governor-general of Canada, and members of his family, 1894-1996. *National Library of Scotland*, where they had been deposited on loan. Private treaty. Price not disclosed.

Archives of the Royal Society of Literature 19th-20th cent. *Cambridge University Library*. Private treaty. Price not disclosed.

1999

Correspondence and sketchbooks of Sir Edwin Landseer Lutyens (1869-1944), architect. *British Architectural Library, Royal Institute of British Architects*, where they had been deposited on loan since 1972. Private treaty.

Correspondence and papers of Woodrow Lyle Wyatt (1918-97), Baron Wyatt of Weeford, politician and journalist. *Bodleian Library, Oxford*. Private treaty. £80,000.

Appendix 5

Manuscript material accepted for the nation in lieu of tax, 1991-1999

Historical and other manuscripts which constitute a pre-eminent addition to a public collection, whether national, local authority or university, may be accepted by the Treasury in lieu of capital taxation under the provisions of schedule 4 to the Finance Act 1975. The procedures are explained in the pamphlet prepared by the Commission and published by the then Office of Arts and Libraries, *Works of art: manuscripts and archives*, 1990. The Commission has advised the appropriate minister where the accepted material should most suitably be placed in the general national interest.

1991

Correspondence and papers of, and works of art collected by, Anthony Twentyman (1906-88), sculptor, including over 200 letters to him from John and Myfanwy Piper.

Amount of tax satisfied: £137,918.

Allocated in accordance with the terms of the offer to Wolverhampton Borough Council, the manuscript material being placed in Wolverhampton Archives.

Correspondence, notebooks and papers of George Bellas Greenough (1778-1855), geographer and geologist.

Amount of tax satisfied: £39,120.

Allocated in accordance with the wishes of the offeror to University College London Library.

1992

Minute book 1772-96 and accounts 1791-96 of the Hambledon Cricket Club.

Amount of tax satisfied: £26,600.

Allocated in accordance with the wishes of the offeror to Hampshire Record Office, where they had been deposited on loan for some years.

1993

Family, political and estate papers of the De Grey family, Barons Lucas, of Wrest Park, Bedfordshire 12th-20th cent., including political and official papers of the second Baron Grantham (1738-86) and the second Earl De Grey (1781-1859).

Amount of tax satisfied: £266,000.

Allocated in accordance with the terms of the offer to Bedfordshire Record Office, where they had been deposited on loan for many years.

Family and estate papers of the Barrington family, Viscounts Barrington, mainly 18th-19th cent., including the papers of the second Viscount Barrington as secretary at war 1755-61 and 1765-78, and a contemporary model of a gunship c1710.

Amount of tax satisfied: £147,000.

Allocated to the British Library, with the exception of the ship model which was allocated to the National Maritime Museum.

Manuscript copy of John Fletcher's play *The Humorous Lieutenant*, made for Sir Kenelm Digby 1625.

Amount of tax satisfied: £50,505.

Allocated in accordance with the terms of the offer to the National Library of Wales, where it had been deposited on loan for many years as part of the Brogyntyn MSS.

1994

Family, political and estate papers of the Acland family, baronets, of Killerton, Devon 13th-20th cent.

Amount of tax satisfied: £42,000.

Allocated in accordance with the terms of the offer to the National Trust. In accordance with the wishes of the offeror they will remain on deposit in Devon Record Office.

Family and estate papers of the Fitzherbert family, baronets, of Tissington, Derbyshire 13th-20th cent., including the papers of Alleyne Fitzherbert, Baron St Helens (1753-1839), diplomat.

Amount of tax satisfied: £49,000.

Allocated in accordance with the terms of the offer to Derbyshire Record Office, where they had been deposited on loan for many years.

1995

Correspondence and papers of Sir William Fairfax (d1597), including papers relating to the defence of northern England and Gilling household books.

Amount of tax satisfied: £24,500.

Allocated in accordance with the wishes of the offeror to North Yorkshire Record Office, where they had been deposited on loan for many years as part of the Fairfax (Wombwell) archive.

1996

Family and estate papers of the Gell family of Hopton Hall, Derbyshire 13th-20th cent., including papers concerning Sir John Gell's involvement in the Civil War.

Amount of tax satisfied: £79,360.

Allocated in accordance with the wishes of the offeror to Derbyshire Record Office and (a single item) Northamptonshire Record Office, where they had been deposited on loan for many years.

Estate and miscellaneous family and legal papers of the Langford Brooke family of Mere Old Hall, Cheshire 13th-20th cent.

Amount of tax satisfied: £42,000.

Allocated in accordance with the wishes of the offeror to the John Rylands University Library, Manchester University, where they had been deposited on loan for many years.

1997

Family and estate papers of the Torbock family of Crossrigg Hall, Cumbria 18th-20th cent., and the Henley family of Leigh House, Somerset 15th-19th cent.

Amount of tax satisfied: £9,450.

Allocated in accordance with the wishes of the offeror to Cumbria Record Office and Somerset Record Office, where they had previously been deposited on loan.

1998

Family and estate papers of the Throckmorton family, baronets, of Coughton Court, Warwickshire 12th-20th cent.

Amount of tax satisfied: £154,000.

Allocated in accordance with the terms of the offer to Warwickshire Record Office and the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Records Office, where they had been deposited on loan for many years.

'The Sherborne Missal', a lavishly-decorated manuscript produced for the Benedictine abbey of Sherborne, Dorset c1400.

Amount of tax satisfied: £7,500,000.

Allocated in accordance with the terms of the offer to the British Library, where it had been deposited on loan for some years.

Family and estate papers of the Hawkins family of Trewithen, Cornwall and Bignor Park, Sussex 13th-20th cent.

Amount of tax satisfied: £121,520.

Allocated in accordance with the wishes of the offeror to Cornwall Record Office, where the majority of the papers had been deposited on loan for many years.

Letters and postcards (125 items) from Ben Nicholson (1894-1982), painter, to Sir John Summerson 1939-58, with three paintings by Nicholson and two by Barbara Hepworth.

Amount of tax satisfied: £225,400.

Allocated in accordance with the terms of the offer to the Tate Gallery.

1999

Charters and charter rolls (558 items) of the Cistercian abbey of Margam, Glamorgan 12th-16th cent.

Amount of tax satisfied: £262,500.

Allocated in accordance with the terms of the offer to the National Library of Wales, where they had been deposited on loan for many years as part of the archives of the Talbot family of Penrice and Margam.

Papers of the Clive family, Barons Clive, mainly relating to their estates and local administration in Shropshire 14th-20th cent.

Amount of tax satisfied: £116,471.

Allocated in accordance with the terms of the offer to Shropshire Records and Research Centre, where they had been deposited on loan for many years.

Family and estate papers of the Kay-Shuttleworth family, Barons Shuttleworth and furniture (14 items) from Gawthorpe Hall.

Amount of tax satisfied: £139,945.

Drawings and plans relating to Sir Charles Barry's remodelling of Gawthorpe Hall in the 1850s, with other miscellaneous papers, have been allocated to the National Trust for retention at Lancashire Record Office, together with the furniture which will remain on display at the Hall. Further family and estate papers have yet to be allocated.

Appendix 6

List of the Commissioners, 1869-1999

The following list, compiled by Sir John Sainty, is designed to make available in chronological sequence the names of the 121 individuals who have served as Commissioners of Historical Manuscripts since the inception of the Commission in 1869 together with details of their periods of service. The commencement of such periods is dated by reference to the warrant of appointment except where the warrant specifies otherwise. The cause of termination is indicated by 'd.' for death and 'r.' for resignation or retirement. Where a Commissioner served as Chairman this fact is noted.

| | |
|------|---|
| 1869 | Romilly , John (Romilly) 1st Lord. <i>Chairman</i> 2 Apr. 1869-24 Oct. 1873 (r.). Salisbury , Robert Arthur Talbot (Gascoyne Cecil) 3rd Marquess of. 2 Apr. 1869-22 Aug. 1903 (d.). Airlie , David Graham Drummond (Ogilvie) 5th Earl of. 2 Apr. 1869-25 Sept. 1881 (d.). Stanhope , Philip Henry (Stanhope) 5th Earl. 2 Apr. 1869-24 Dec. 1875 (d.). Petty Fitzmaurice , Lord Edmond George (cr. Lord Fitzmaurice 9 Jan. 1906). 2 Apr. 1869-21 June 1935 (d.). Stirling Maxwell , Sir William, 9th Bart. 2 Apr. 1869-15 Jan. 1878 (d.). Russell , Charles William. 2 Apr. 1869-26 Feb. 1880 (d.). Dasent , George Webbe (ktd. 27 June 1876). 2 Apr. 1869-11 June 1896 (d.). Hardy , Thomas Duffus (ktd. 1873). 2 Apr. 1869-15 June 1878 (d.). Graves , Charles [Bishop of Limerick]. 31 Aug. 1869-17 July 1899 (d.). Talbot de Malahide , James (Talbot) 4th Lord. 31 Aug. 1869-14 Apr. 1883 (d.). |
| 1870 | Houghton , Richard Monckton (Milnes) 1st Lord. 4 May 1870-11 Aug. 1885 (d.). |
| 1872 | Acton , John Emerich Edward (Acton) 1st Lord. 24 July 1872-19 June 1902 (d.). |
| 1873 | Jessel , Sir George, Kt. <i>Chairman</i> 24 Oct. 1873-21 Mar. 1883 (d.). |
| 1876 | Bath , John Alexander (Thynne) 4th Marquess of. 24 Oct. 1876-20 Apr. 1896 (d.). |
| 1878 | Hardy , William (ktd. 31 Dec. 1883). 12 July 1878-17 Mar. 1887 (d.). |
| 1882 | Carlingford , Chichester Samuel (Parkinson Fortescue) 1st Lord. 22 Aug. 1882-30 Jan. 1898 (d.). Lothian , Schomberg Henry (Kerr) 9th Marquess of. 22 Aug. 1882-17 Jan. 1900 (d.). Rosebery , Archibald Philip (Primrose) 5th Earl of. 22 Aug. 1882-21 May 1929 (d.). Carnarvon , Henry Howard Molyneux (Herbert) 4th Earl of. 22 Aug. 1882-28 June 1890 (d.). |
| 1883 | Brett , Sir William Baliol, Kt. (cr. Lord Esher 24 July 1885; Viscount Esher 11 Nov. 1897). 16 June 1883-24 May 1899 (d.). <i>Chairman</i> 16 June 1883-18 Dec. 1897. |
| 1886 | Stubbs , William [Bishop of Chester (from 1889 Oxford)]. 24 Mar. 1886-22 Apr. 1901 (d.). Lyte , Henry Churchill Maxwell (ktd. 1897). 24 Mar. 1886-28 Oct. 1940 (d.). |
| 1897 | Lindley , Sir Nathaniel, Kt. (cr. Lord Lindley 10 May 1900). 18 Dec. 1897-27 Mar. 1919 (r.). <i>Chairman</i> 18 Dec. 1897-23 July 1900. Ripon , George Frederick Samuel (Robinson) 1st Marquess of. 18 Dec. 1897-9 July 1909 (d.). Crawford , James Ludovic (Lindsay) 26th Earl of. 18 Dec. 1897-31 Jan. 1913 (d.). Fry , Sir Edward, Kt. 18 Dec. 1897-18 Oct. 1918 (d.). Lecky , William Edward Hartpole. 18 Dec. 1897-22 Oct. 1903 (d.). Gardiner , Samuel Rawson. 18 Dec. 1897-23 Feb. 1902 (d.). |
| 1900 | Stanmore , Arthur (Hamilton Gordon) 1st Lord. 14 Mar. 1900-13 Jan. 1912 (d.). Alverstone , Richard Everard (Webster) 1st Lord (cr. Viscount Alverstone 24 Nov. 1913). 23 July 1900-15 Dec. 1915 (d.). <i>Chairman</i> 23 July 1900-14 Mar. 1901. |
| 1901 | Smith , Sir Archibald Levin, Kt. <i>Chairman</i> 14 Mar.-20 Oct. 1901 (d.). Dartmouth , William Heneage (Legge) 6th Earl of. 29 July 1901-11 Mar. 1936 (d.). Hawkesbury , Cecil George Savile (Foljambe) 1st Lord (cr. Earl of Liverpool 22 Dec. 1905). 29 July 1901-23 Mar. 1907 (d.). Collins , Sir Richard Henn, Kt. (cr. Lord Collins 6 Mar. 1907). 18 Nov. 1901-3 Jan. 1911 (d.). <i>Chairman</i> 18 Nov. 1901-1 May 1907. |
| 1904 | Morley , John (cr. Viscount Morley of Blackburn 2 May 1908). |

- 27 July 1904-27 Mar. 1919 (r.).
Firth, Charles Harding (ktd. 1922). 27 July 1904-10 July 1930 (r.).
1907 **Cozens-Hardy**, Sir Herbert Hardy, Kt. (cr. Lord **Cozens-Hardy** 1 July 1914).
Chairman 1 May 1907-27 Mar. 1919 (r.).
1912 **Mills**, James. 12 Apr. 1912-5 Sept. 1914 (d.).
Roberts, Richard Arthur. 12 Apr. 1912-2 Apr. 1943 (d.).
1913 **Crawford**, David Alexander Edward (Lindsay) 27th Earl of. 23 July 1913-8 Mar. 1940 (d.).
Mostyn, Llewellyn Nevill Vaughan (Lloyd-Mostyn) 3rd Lord.
23 July 1913-11 Apr. 1929 (d.).
Kenyon, Sir Frederic George, Kt. 23 July 1913-23 Aug. 1952 (d.).
1919 **Eady**, Sir Charles Swinfen, Kt. (cr. Lord **Swinfen** 1 Nov. 1919).
Chairman 27 Mar. 1919-15 Nov. 1919 (d.).
Pollard, Albert Frederick. 27 Mar. 1919-15 July 1948 (r.).
Ball, Francis Elrington. 27 Mar. 1919-20 July 1925 (r.).
Sterndale, William (Pickford) 1st Lord. *Chairman* 26 Nov. 1919-17 Aug. 1923 (d.).
1923 **Pollock**, Sir Ernest Murray, 1st Bart. (cr. Lord **Hanworth** 28 Jan. 1926; Viscount **Hanworth**
17 Jan. 1936). 19 Nov. 1923-22 Oct. 1936 (d.). *Chairman* 19 Nov. 1923-7 Nov.
1935.
1926 **Stamp**, Alfred Edward. 22 Dec. 1926-4 Mar. 1938 (d.).
1928 **Rutland**, John Henry Montagu (Manners) 9th Duke of. 3 Apr. 1928-22 Apr. 1940 (d.).
Cranborne, Robert Arthur James (Gascoyne Cecil) *styled* Viscount (succ. as 5th Marquess
of **Salisbury** 4 Apr. 1947). 3 Apr. 1928-23 Feb. 1972 (d.).
Temperley, Harold William Vazeille. 3 Apr. 1928-11 July 1939 (d.).
1929 **Chart**, David Alfred. 26 Mar. 1929-15 July 1959 (r.).
1935 **Ancaster**, Gilbert (Heathcote Drummond Willoughby) 2nd Earl of.
16 Aug. 1935-11 July 1945 (r.).
Sandon, Dudley (Ryder) *styled* Lord (succ. as 6th Earl of **Harrowby** 30 Mar. 1956).
16 Aug. 1935-6 July 1966 (r.).
Wright, Robert Alderson (Wright) Lord. 7 Nov. 1935-15 July 1959 (r.).
Chairman 7 Nov. 1935-31 May 1937.
1937 **Greene**, Sir Wilfrid Arthur, Kt. (cr. Lord **Greene** 16 July 1941).
31 May 1937-18 July 1951 (r.). *Chairman* 31 May 1937-17 June 1949.
1938 **Flower**, Cyril Thomas (ktd. 1946). 6 May 1938-9 Dec. 1959 (r.).
Ratcliff, Sidney Charles. 6 May 1938-8 Sept. 1948 (d.).
Angus, William. 6 May 1938-12 Jan. 1956 (d.).
1941 **Herbert**, Sidney Charles (Herbert) *styled* Lord. 1 Dec. 1941-9 July 1958 (r.).
MacKinnon, Sir Frank Douglas, Kt. 1 Dec. 1941-23 Jan. 1946 (d.).
Pickthorn, Kenneth William Murray (cr. Bart. 31 Jan. 1959).
1 Dec. 1941-6 July 1966 (r.).
Jacob, Ernest Fraser. 1 Dec. 1941-7 Oct. 1971 (d.).
1943 **Davies**, William Llewellyn (ktd. 1944). 29 Oct. 1943-11 Nov. 1952 (d.).
1947 **Young**, George Malcolm. 22 May 1947-10 Dec. 1957 (r.).
Pares, Richard. 22 May 1947-4 Dec. 1952 (r.).
Jenkinson, Charles Hilary (ktd. 1949). 22 May 1947-5 Mar. 1961 (d.).
1949 **Evershed**, Sir Francis Raymond, Kt. (cr. Lord **Evershed** 20 Jan. 1956).
17 June 1949-3 Oct. 1966 (d.). *Chairman* 17 June 1949-19 June 1962.
1953 **Wynn**, Harold Edward [Bishop of Ely]. 31 Mar. 1953-12 Aug. 1956 (d.).
Edwards, John Goronwy (ktd. 1960). 31 Mar. 1953-20 June 1976 (d.).
Potter, George Richard. 31 Mar. 1953-17 May 1981 (d.).
Wedgwood, Cicely Veronica (cr. DBE 1968). 31 Mar. 1953-31 Mar. 1978 (r.).
1954 **Evans**, David Lewis (ktd. 1958). 24 May 1954-31 Jan. 1981 (r.).
1956 **Fergusson**, Sir James, 8th Bart. 12 Nov. 1956-25 Oct. 1973 (d.).
1957 **Evans**, Seiriol John Arthur [Dean of Gloucester]. 5 Feb. 1957-29 June 1984 (d.).
1959 **Summerson**, Sir John Newenham, Kt. 5 Dec. 1959-30 Nov. 1983 (r.).
Stephens, Leon Edgar (ktd. 1960). 5 Dec. 1959-24 Jan. 1977 (d.).
Quirk, Roger Nathaniel. 5 Dec. 1959-22 Nov. 1964 (d.).
Beckett, James Camlin. 5 Dec. 1959-10 July 1986 (r.).

- 1962 **Denning**, Alfred Thompson (Denning) Lord. *Chairman* 19 June 1962-25 Jan. 1983 (r.).
- 1966 **Somerville**, Sir Robert, Kt. 14 Jan. 1966-10 July 1986 (r.).
Kenyon, Lloyd (Tyrell-Kenyon) 5th Lord. 10 Oct. 1966-9 July 1992 (r.).
Fletcher, Sir Eric George Molyneux, Kt. (cr. Lord **Fletcher** 9 July 1970).
10 Oct. 1966-9 June 1990 (d.).
Goodwin, Albert. 10 Oct. 1966-31 July 1981 (r.).
Ridley, Hon. Nicholas. 10 Oct. 1966-9 July 1979 (r.).
- 1973 **Northumberland**, Hugh Algernon (Percy) 10th Duke of. 9 Mar. 1973-11 Oct. 1988 (d.).
Ehrman, John Patrick William. 9 Mar. 1973-31 Dec. 1994 (r.).
- 1975 **Wemyss**, Francis David (Charteris) 12th Earl of. 3 Apr. 1975-12 Dec. 1985 (r.).
Blake, Robert Norman William (Blake) Lord. 3 Apr. 1975-15 July 1997 (r.).
Chairman 25 Jan. 1983-1 Dec. 1989.
- Milsom**, Stroud Francis Charles. 3 Apr. 1975-11 Jan. 1998 (r.).
- 1978 **Habakkuk**, Sir Hrothgar John, Kt. 23 Jan. 1978-10 July 1990 (r.).
Aylmer, Gerald Edward. 23 Jan. 1978. *Chairman* 1 Dec. 1989-1 Dec. 1994.
- 1981 **Cormack**, Patrick Thomas (ktd. 1995). 3 Apr. 1981.
Bond, Maurice Francis. 1 Dec. 1981-24 Dec. 1983 (d.).
Colvin, Howard Montagu. 1 Dec. 1981-14 Jan. 1988 (r.).
- 1984 **Barrow**, Geoffrey Wallis Steuart. 1 Jan. 1984-31 Dec. 1990 (r.).
Pearl, Valerie Louise. 1 Jan. 1984-31 Dec. 1990 (r.).
Anglesey, George Charles Henry Victor (Paget) 7th Marquess of.
1 Dec. 1984-31 Dec. 1991 (r.).
Chadwick, William Owen. 1 Dec. 1984-31 Dec. 1991 (r.).
- 1986 **Vaisey**, David George. 25 Nov. 1986-24 Nov. 1998 (r.).
- 1987 **Arbuthnott**, John Campbell (Arbuthnott) 16th Viscount of.
14 Apr. 1987-10 Nov. 1993 (r.).
Camoys, Ralph Thomas Campion George Sherman (Stonor) 7th Lord.
4 Nov. 1987-10 Nov. 1993 (r.).
- 1989 **Egremont and Leconfield**, John Max Henry Scawen (Wyndham) 2nd and 7th Lord.
23 Feb. 1989.
- Thirsk**, Irene Joan. 23 Feb. 1989-22 Feb. 1996 (r.).
- 1991 **Farrer**, Sir Charles Matthew, Kt. 1 Jan. 1991.
Sainty, Sir John Christopher, Kt. 1 Jan. 1991.
Harvey, Barbara Fitzgerald. 1 Jan. 1991-31 Dec. 1997 (r.).
Campbell, Roy Hutcheson. 12 Nov. 1991-11 Nov. 1998 (r.).
- 1992 **Thomas**, Sir Keith Vivian, Kt. 27 May 1992.
Stapleton, Henry Edward Champneys [Dean of Carlisle]. 27 May 1992.
- 1993 **Short**, Cynthia Mary. 30 Nov. 1993-29 Nov. 1998 (r.).
- 1994 **Dundas-Bekker**, Althea. 16 June 1994.
Scarborough, Richard Alfred (Lumley) 12th Earl of. 16 June 1994.
Bingham, Sir Thomas Henry, Kt. (cr. Lord **Bingham of Cornhill** 4 June 1996).
Chairman 1 Dec. 1994.
- 1995 **Davies**, Susan Jane. 13 June 1995.
- 1998 **Matthew**, Henry Colin Gray. 8 Apr. 1998.
Prochaska, Alice Marjorie Sheila. 8 Apr. 1998.
- 1999 **Barron**, Caroline Mary. 15 Feb. 1999.
Dunhill, Rosemary Carole. 15 Feb. 1999.
Smout, Thomas Christopher. 15 Feb. 1999.

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