

**Researching the Fabric and Fittings of the Historic Library  
in the British Isles: Problems and the Way Forward.**

**A report commissioned by the Library History Group of the  
Chartered Institute of Library and Information  
Professionals  
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**by  
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## **Researching the Fabric and Fittings of the Historic Library in the British Isles: Problems and Ways Forward.**

In the early 1990s the Library History Group of the (then) Library Association (now CILIP: the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) began to seek ways of promoting the understanding and, where possible, the preservation of the surviving physical heritage of the library and librarianship. A working party was established to consider how this might best be effected. It identified the library building itself as the most profitable focus of attention, especially as, at the time, some concern was being caused by press reports of early public library buildings being closed as libraries or demolished. A second working party of 1992, under the chairmanship of John Crawford, considered the matter in more detail.

The initial ambition was to undertake a survey of historic library buildings to be published as a series of printed directories. For success this scheme depended on obtaining external grant funding to cover the costs of the research, and finding a commercial publisher. HMSO Scotland agreed to publish a directory for Scotland, provided another source of funding could be found to cover the costs of the research. In 1994 a grant application was made to the Leverhulme Trust for this purpose. When this proved unsuccessful the Library History Group resolved to continue with the planned surveys on a smaller scale, using volunteer surveyors from among its members to cover smaller areas of the country. This resulted in local projects in Yorkshire and Humberside, and more recently in Edinburgh and South East Scotland, which will be discussed in greater detail below.

The working party had laid down some basic methodology for the proposed project. This consisted of a definition of a historic library building, for the purposes of the project, as ' a building (or part of a building) which was purpose built or used as a library in an architecturally distinctive fashion for a long period. The building need no longer be used as a library.' The definitive test for inclusion was whether a building could in any way inform library history. The working party decided on a cut-off date of 1945, World War II having provided a natural break in building activities. A set of database fields and a classification of types of library to be used in the collection of data was devised. Some experiments were made in collecting and inputting data to establish the time needed for this task. Based on a sample of thirty three records, compiled from a combination of secondary sources and a questionnaire, it was concluded that about 1400 records a year could be created and input by one person using these methods. A very brief bibliography was compiled. Contact was made with the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments of England, to establish what data already existed and to investigate whether they might be interested in taking on the project themselves.

In early 2001 the Library History Group decided to revisit the project and appointed a temporary part time research assistant with the remit to revisit the earlier work, examine whether the policies worked out then were still valid, to produce a report and policy guidelines which would inform further planning and help to standardise activity. What follows here is the result of that process.

## 1. Literature Review

A literature review was carried out, with the dual aim of updating and expanding the very basic bibliography of sources compiled by the earlier working parties, and reviewing the recent literature against the Library History Group's original objectives. This concentrated on works covering libraries in general, or groups of libraries either by location or type; in the interests of practicality works on individual buildings were for the most part excluded. The bibliography appears as Appendix 1.

a. Works relating to library buildings. The literature can be broken down into two categories: works consisting of collections of data and works of interpretation. Significant new work has appeared in both categories. For example, Michael Perkin's forthcoming second edition of the *Directory of parochial libraries*, while primarily describing the book collections will not neglect to describe their housing. It is to be more fully illustrated than the earlier edition of the work. Brendan Grime's *Irish Carnegie libraries: a catalogue and architectural history*<sup>1</sup> is worthy of mention, as is the major multi-volume work forthcoming from Cambridge University Press *A history of libraries in Britain and Ireland* which will include entirely interpretative chapters on library buildings and furniture.

A significant characteristic of the literature is that a high proportion is of very recent publication, and several significant items are forthcoming, reflecting just how much interest is currently being generated in the history of the book in its widest sense. Unpublished work, including both theses and papers given at conferences and meetings over the past few years, reinforces this impression. The (then) Library Association's Rare Books Group devoted their 2001 conference to 'The book in its setting', covering topics ranging from the medieval monastery to the early Yorkshire subscription libraries,<sup>2</sup> a conference was held in Cambridge in 2001 to revisit the work of John Willis Clark, while the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing (SHARP) devoted a session of their conference in London in July 2002 to the seventeenth-century gentleman's library room.

Several general points about the state of the subject were revealed by the literature review, which might usefully inform future developments in the Library History

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Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1998

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*Rare Books Newsletter*, no.66(summer-winter 2001), p.24-42.

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Group's project. Firstly, a strong degree of specialisation is visible in the literature; truly general works on library buildings are almost non-existent, most works cover only one type of library, a particular location or a particular period of history. Secondly, much of the best work has strong links into related academic fields; in the case of library buildings this is often architectural history, but may equally be the social history of the period or institutional setting of the type of building in question. Many such publications appear within the literature of the 'other' subject. This is true of the field of library history in general; it should not be forgotten that the Library History Award 2001 was awarded to a paper published in the journal *Urban history*.<sup>3</sup>

Some of the most recent work, much of it as yet unpublished, but given in conference papers, makes another important point; that great sensitivity is needed in defining a 'library' space and in understanding the relationship between space dedicated to book reading and book storage, especially for the earlier periods of history. The papers by Catherine Wander and Susie West at the 2002 SHARP conference, on book storage in gentlemen's studies in the early seventeenth-century, and library rooms in Norfolk in the later seventeenth-century, respectively, admirably demonstrated this. Similarly Michael Perkin, addressing the Rare Books Group in 2001, noted the loss of much early library furniture, through lack of understanding of its significance, when collections of books have been moved out of parish churches to safer storage in record offices or university libraries in recent decades.

b. Comparative works on other types of building. The literature review took some account of publications dealing with other types of building, which might provide useful comparisons with libraries and suggest both points of methodology and possible formats for publication. Three types of publication were identified as offering possible models, each suiting different circumstances.

The first of these is the illustrated guide to a building type, typically containing a general introduction, followed by pictures and descriptions of many examples. Tolbooths and town houses have been given this treatment by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments in Scotland<sup>4</sup> and more recently the method has been applied to the libraries of Oxford in Giles Barber's book *Arks for learning*.<sup>5</sup> As far as libraries are concerned this approach seems likely to offer the most

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M. Hewitt 'Confronting the modern city: the Manchester Free Public Library 1850-80', *Urban history*, vol. 27, no.1, 2000. p.62-88.

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I. Fisher (ed.) *Tolbooths and town-houses: civic architecture in Scotland to 1833*, Edinburgh: H.M.S.O., 1996.

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G. Barber *Arks for learning*, Oxford Bibliographical Society, 1995.

possibilities for publications of a similar sort; covering a particular locality and requiring a fairly photogenic group of subjects.

The second format thought to have possibilities, probably for a directory of libraries on a rather larger scale, is broadly that of Pevsner's *Buildings of England* series, giving brief, fairly formulaic descriptions of the most essential information, with a limited number of pictures.

A third model is that of the interpretative study of a building type, based on a survey of examples. The building type is set in its social and historical context, its function is described and its design explained. This sort of work has mostly been produced by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, now part of English Heritage, most notably for hospitals and workhouses.<sup>6</sup> For libraries this approach would be successful if applied to a single type of library for which a set of generalisations could be made. Such a treatment would undoubtedly raise the profile of the library as a built form, but would require considerable expertise on the part of the author.

## 2. Sources of Information

The literature review was followed by an attempt to identify library collections, catalogues, indexing services and other bibliographical sources likely to be useful for carrying out more detailed bibliographical searching essential as a prelude to any survey of library buildings.

a. Library collections. Two library collections were identified as having major holdings of material likely to be of use for the study of historic library buildings. The Thomas Parry Library, of the Department of Library and Information Science at the University in Aberystwyth has excellent coverage of librarianship in general. Specifically it holds a major collection of materials relating to library planning, including architectural plans.<sup>7</sup> The British Architectural Library at the Royal Institute of British Architects in London has extensive holdings on architecture, including manuscript material. The computerised catalogue, accessible over the Internet, includes excellent subject indexing, and catalogues individual articles in journals in the collection.<sup>8</sup> Retrospective conversion, although advanced, is incomplete and a complete bibliographical search of the library's holdings would require a visit to the library.

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H. Richardson (ed.) *English hospitals 1660-1948*, RCHME, 1998. K. Morrison *The workhouse*, RCHME/English Heritage, 1999

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The catalogue of this collection is available only in the library.

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[www.riba-library.com/oncat.html](http://www.riba-library.com/oncat.html)

b. The Internet. The Internet was examined as a possible source of information. For information on individual library buildings, even for historic buildings on their own organisations' web sites, it proved disappointing. However, it is invaluable for access to library and archive catalogues, and for providing access and opening information of the libraries and record offices themselves, and for finding contact details of organisations likely either to be interested in library surveys or able to provide information. A welcome development is the appearance of web-based catalogues to archaeological and architectural data held by the statutory bodies responsible for the National Monuments Records of England, Scotland and Wales.<sup>9</sup> Similar catalogues, covering data held by a wider range of organisations, are maintained by the Archaeology Data Service.<sup>10</sup> All of these are discussed below. A list of useful web sites was compiled. (Appendix 2). A search for e-mail discussion lists which might carry messages relevant to historic libraries proved disappointing, being limited in practice to the small number concerned with book history.<sup>11</sup>

### **3. Existing Data.**

Existing sources of data for historic library buildings were examined, to identify groups of libraries which might already have been adequately recorded and to identify sources of information which might be drawn on for future surveys.

a. Official organisations The most significant sources of data for historic libraries are the National Monuments Records (NMR), maintained as a statutory duty in England by English Heritage, by Royal Commissions on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales and of Scotland and by the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland. The holdings of all these organisations are extensive, including both computer databases and files of plans, drawings, photographs, reports and other material, generated both by the organisations themselves, and incorporating data produced by other organisations which has been deposited in the NMR. Some of this originates from various local government bodies and some from independent research projects, usually carried out in conjunction with the statutory body, whose data was added to the NMR when its original purpose had been achieved. Data can be supplied to researchers on application; the relevant NMR should be the first port of call for anyone carrying out a survey of library buildings. Catalogues of a small proportion of the data held by each of the organisations are now available online, but access to the

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The Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland's web site was not working at the time of investigation.

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<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk>

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Appendix 3

data itself is available only on request.<sup>12</sup> At the time of writing the online catalogues include only a tiny number of libraries and are probably of little use to the Historic Library Buildings Project as they stand; it would be necessary for a researcher undertaking a survey of library buildings in a particular area or of a particular type to make contact with the relevant National Monuments Record to request full searches of their catalogues.

A source of catalogue information of a very similar type, for data held in a variety of locations, (including the NMR), is the Archaeology Data Service, part of the Arts and Humanities Data Service.<sup>13</sup> This service exists to provide a means of preserving digital information of an archaeological nature (including records of historic buildings) and to promote good practice with regard to data management. At the time of writing the only entries for libraries appearing on a search of this catalogue appeared also in the catalogues of the National Monuments Records of England and Scotland, since they belonged to datasets which have been incorporated into those bodies' collections. However, it is perfectly possible that situation may change in the future.

The three statutory bodies have published a certain amount of information from the registers and their researches, most notably the well-known volumes of inventories of historical monuments in different localities. One piece of work has been dedicated specifically to libraries; in 1992 English Heritage produced a report with a gazetteer containing descriptions of all the municipal libraries of London built before 1945.<sup>14</sup> The aim was to produce an overview of the building type, towards developing a better understanding of it, and to revise the listing of London libraries. However, this report does for this category of library very much what the Library History Group's original working parties hoped to achieve on a larger scale.

English Heritage are responsible for an electronic 'publishing' project which includes some libraries. The 'Images of England' project aims to collect photographs, taken by volunteer photographers, of listed buildings in England and to make them available on their web site.<sup>15</sup> This project is very much still in progress.

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Except Northern Ireland: see note 9 above. URLs for the catalogues appear on the list of web sites, Appendix 2.

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<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk>

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R. Bowdler & S. Brindle *A survey of pre-war libraries in London*, English Heritage, 1992.

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[www.imagesofengland.org.uk](http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk)

b. Other Organisations. The organisation which probably has in its care the largest number of historic libraries in the country is the National Trust. Under their present Libraries Advisor, Mark Purcell, information about their library collections, including their physical surroundings, is being collected in a systematic fashion, as part of a policy to make them better known and to facilitate further study of them.

c. Other Sources. While the official organisations are concerned primarily with buildings which have been listed, several other sources have wider coverage. Nikolaus Pevsner's *Buildings of England* series include many libraries, and the relatively recent index on CD- Rom enables them to be identified as a group.<sup>16</sup> It is possible, via the project's web site, to request searches of the current files for up-to-date coverage.<sup>17</sup> The series has been extended to Scotland, for which volumes are in progress.

A mine of information, likely to assist in the process of identifying the libraries to be included in a survey, is the web site of Robin Alston. This lists historical libraries of all types, not all them surviving, identified from a great variety of sources, including county histories and directories.<sup>18</sup>

#### **4. Pilot projects**

The Library History Group's original interest in the subject of historic library buildings resulted in two local pilot projects. The first is being carried out by Toni Bunch, and consists of a survey of library buildings of all types, built before 1950, in Edinburgh, East, Mid and West Lothian and The Borders. An amended version of the database fields defined by the working parties is to be used, and photographs will be collected. It is hoped eventually to mount the data on a website, and to use it as the basis of a printed publication. The project is in the early stages of development; identifying the libraries to be included, carrying out bibliographical searches, establishing the data to be collected making contacts in the libraries and undertaking some preliminary visits.

The second project is considerably more advanced. It began as a photographic survey of Yorkshire and Humberside libraries, carried out by Bob Duckett and supported by a grant from the local branch of the (then) Library Association.<sup>19</sup> It has

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<sup>16</sup>

*A compendium of Pevsner's Buildings of England on compact disc.* Oxford University Press, 1995.

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[www.pevsner.co.uk](http://www.pevsner.co.uk)

<sup>18</sup>

[www.r-alston.co.uk](http://www.r-alston.co.uk)

<sup>19</sup>

B. Duckett 'Mute testimony: Yorkshire's historic library buildings' *Library review*, 44 no.3 (1995), p.44-68

since grown, with great local enthusiasm, into 'Project 150', with the aim to photograph all the public library buildings in the area of the Yorkshire and Humberside Branch of CILIP, who are continuing to provide financial support. The images, with brief details, are to be mounted on a web site; the photographs themselves will be preserved in the Branch's archives. A selection of about 200 of the pictures is to form the basis of a book, to be published jointly by the Branch and the Wharnccliffe Press in 2003, celebrating the heritage of the public library in the region, including information and anecdote, and aimed at a general, but essentially local audience.

## **Methodology**

The Library History Group's original working parties attempted to establish a methodology for carrying out library buildings surveys: the situation was reviewed in the light of current developments to the project and the current state of technology. The main focus of the working party's attention was the production of a set of database fields and a classification of library types, which they hoped would provide a standard for data collection for surveys connected with the project. Since it seems likely that the project will continue as it has begun, i.e. as a number of smaller projects with objectives of their own beyond those of the original Library History Group survey, and probably conducted over a relatively long time-scale, it became clear that requirements for the data to be collected and the methods of processing it are unlikely to be uniform. The two issues have been separated and dealt with individually.

a Data Management The issue of data processing was made the subject of a separate report.<sup>20</sup> Given the speed of change in computer technology, as well as the unpredictable and diverse needs of the project, this has been kept fairly general, aiming to provide background information for the project management rather than recommending any single solution. It outlines a range of technological possibilities, suggests the circumstances where each might be most appropriate, and provides a reference to some of the key concepts likely to be encountered. A major issue for the project, if electronic data is collected, will be the long-term maintenance of the files in a form which can be read; the report included the implications for this of each of the most likely options and investigated the guidelines of organisations expert in the field, and the possibilities of having such an organisation take on responsibility for the data.

b Standards for data recording. The issue of the data to be recorded was addressed separately. The original working parties had access to relatively few resources by way of guidelines for recording historic buildings and constructing databases of the results, and thesauri to assist with producing standardised descriptions and indexing.

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They designed their own database fields and lists of terms.<sup>21</sup> Since then several useful resources have become readily available.

A network of the British organisations most closely concerned with recording architectural and archaeological data have co-operated to produce a manual of guidelines, which is available both as a paper publication, and on the Internet.<sup>22</sup> These are guidelines, rather than strict cataloguing rules, designed to cover quite a wide range of applications, with the expectation that the data will be held electronically. They would repay further study, and undoubtedly include some useful advice, particularly on the practicalities of working with electronic data. However, they do not appear to conflict significantly with the database fields defined by the Library History Group, as far as architectural data is concerned. These were reviewed in conjunction with Toni Bunch, who is intending to adopt them for her project in Scotland; with minor alterations they were agreed to be largely satisfactory.

Several thesauri covering architecture and archaeology are now available on the Internet.<sup>23</sup> Several of these were examined and their potential use to the project considered. The project's main applications for a thesaurus are likely to be for classifying libraries for indexing purposes and for providing consistent language for architectural terms and the description of fixtures and fittings; particularly important if any form of free-text searching is to be used on a database or other electronic file. Unsurprisingly, none of the thesauri examined provided enough terms for different types of library to satisfy the needs of the project, leaving the classification made by the original Library History Group working party as the best choice for that purpose. For architectural terms and descriptions of fixtures and fittings two thesauri offered possibilities. The first, that of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments of England has been designed with their needs in mind; while it caters for a wide range of types of building, its coverage of fixtures and fittings is rather less detailed, but might prove useful, depending on the needs of the individual user. The Art and Architecture Thesaurus, a collaborative project run by the Getty Institute, is considerably more detailed, and has more potential where accurate, detailed descriptions of library interiors are required.<sup>24</sup> However, it might prove too detailed in some of the circumstances the Library History Group project might find itself in.

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Appendices 5 and 6

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E. Lee (ed.) *Midas: a manual and data standard for monument inventories*. Data Standards Unit of English Heritage, 1998. and: [www.rchme.gov.uk/midas/index.html](http://www.rchme.gov.uk/midas/index.html)

23

For a list of several see: [http://www.rchme.gov.uk/thesaurus/thes\\_splash.htm](http://www.rchme.gov.uk/thesaurus/thes_splash.htm)

24

<http://www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabulary/aat>

c Opportunities for co-operation The Library History Group's working party made contact with English Heritage in 1992-3, and received a generally encouraging response to the proposed project. It was hoped that English Heritage might become sufficiently interested in libraries to make them the subject of a study project as the basis of a publication of their own. The contact has been renewed; English Heritage are still encouraging, and prepared to co-operate with a survey project, in particular being likely to be able to help with methodological matters and perhaps in ultimately taking data into the National Monuments Record for long-term preservation.<sup>25</sup> (This has been done with a number of other independent research projects, the details of some of which can be found on their web site.<sup>26</sup>) Their own limited research resources are invariably directed towards the categories of buildings considered to be most urgently at risk: libraries have never quite fallen into that category and are thus unlikely to be the subject of a specific project. This is encouraging for libraries, if disappointing for the Library History Group.

## **Conclusions**

1. The original vision of the working parties was to produce printed regional directories covering all types of library. Since this has been demonstrated to be an unrealistic ambition, the overall objectives of the project should perhaps be reassessed. The existing literature confirms that there is still a role for the collecting of data about historic library buildings, since much remains unrecorded. There are also types of library which have been recorded and data is of little use unless it is collected for some purpose. If the purpose of the project is decided to be to provide directories which could act as either a reference work or tour guide to significant and interesting library buildings, then some form of survey with final publication of the results may still be appropriate, but may require more selective coverage than originally envisaged. If the purpose of the project is to be to make a record of as many historic library buildings as possible for the purposes of posterity, then a survey where the emphasis is on accuracy and consistency with recognised standards for recording buildings would be more appropriate. In this case the priority should be assuring the preservation of the data and its availability for future research. If the primary purpose of the project is to be to raise the profile of historic library buildings, a more effective method would probably be to sponsor research, probably involving some survey work, but where the emphasis is on interpretation of the data, with the aim of producing a significant publication. Combinations of these purposes are of course possible, and variations will suggest themselves.

2. Whichever of these alternatives is preferred, the specialisation of much of the current literature may contain a useful message, one which reinforces the experience

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Contact: Architectural Investigation Unit, York.

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[www.britarch.ac.uk/info/group/html](http://www.britarch.ac.uk/info/group/html)

of the existing pilot projects: better success might be achieved in completing surveys and finding an audience for published results if a more varied and imaginative treatment is envisaged than the original simple regional directory. A statement of intent which allows for different types of library and different localities to be handled in combinations which suggest themselves as appropriate might even encourage more volunteer surveyors to come forward, to take on projects which match their specific interests and experience.

3. The project should be aware of the implications of taking on responsibility for electronic data, either in the form of a directory made available on a web site, or data created in the course of research which it is thought desirable to preserve in the long term. The implications have been outlined in more detail elsewhere (Appendix 4), but in brief, the commitment would be to finding the necessary file space, to maintaining the readability of the data over a period of time and maintaining the software of any system designed to run over the Internet. The project should be equally aware of the need to preserve data and other materials produced on paper, and for both paper and electronic data how it is to be made available to future scholarship.

4. The Library History Group has not entirely ruled out further attempts to obtain grant funding for a larger project but is continuing the project on the basis of volunteers and the limited funding which can be provided itself. There are distinct implications of this approach:

a) The most obvious is that its activities will remain on a small scale, and be entirely dependent on volunteers coming forward who have the time and expertise to carry out the necessary work. Such volunteers are likely to be few and far between, therefore achieving any marked progress with the project is largely out of the Group's control.

b) Individuals with a high level of expertise in both library and architectural history are scarce. As a result, achieving high standards of research may not be easy, and it is probably in the long-term interests of the project to encourage volunteer researchers to undertake work which reflects their own skills and enthusiasms.

c) It should perhaps be considered whether a project with big ambitions which shows relatively little progress over a long period is more likely to lapse altogether than one with more limited ambitions which are well focussed and financially supported.

d) It seems likely that the experience of the Yorkshire-Humberside project will be typical, where a survey or similar project will be undertaken with local, independent objectives, which might not precisely coincide with those of the original Library History Group survey.

e) From the Library History Group's point of view this has the disadvantage that it will not result in consistency in geographical coverage and the Group will in practice have little control over the types of data collected by projects with independent, diverse objectives. However, there are advantages, in that a project which finds local enthusiasm is likely to succeed in its objectives, and like the Yorkshire-Humberside project prove immensely valuable from the point of view of raising the profile of the subject among both librarians and the general public.

5. The review of the current literature suggested several ways in which the Library History Group's original aims might usefully be modified. The original definition of an historic library building as “a building (or part of a building) which was purpose built or used as a library in an architecturally distinctive fashion for a long period. It need no longer be used as a library,” even when qualified by inclusion of any building from which something could be learnt, would appear to exclude libraries whose physical presence was marked only by dedicated fittings or furniture. These would often hardly qualify as 'architecture', and might easily have been moved in the course of their history, yet may be in themselves historically important and informative. Recent work, particularly the survey of parish libraries, suggests that such furniture is often at risk of loss or destruction if the collection of books it contains comes to be moved, and that it is worthy of greater appreciation. It was undoubtedly not the intention to give the impression of excluding such fittings; the definition of an historic library should perhaps be extended to include 'distinctive furniture and fittings which houses or used to house a library collection', and the test of the information value of individual examples, and the discretion of the surveyors be relied on to determine inclusion of such examples.

6. That published work on historic library buildings is so often specialised, and appears in such a wide range of literature other than that of library history itself, suggests a role for the Library History Group which the working parties of the 1990s did not consider; that of providing some means to try to bring together some of the disparate elements, to make the breadth of the literature better known and to raise the profile of the subject as a whole. This might take the form of the organisation of meetings or conferences, or the collecting and circulating of bibliographical information. Such activities are within the overall purpose of the Group, and part of its existing activities. However, events aimed specifically at library buildings and well-publicised to those outside the immediate sphere of library history could be extremely valuable in promoting the project and ensuring its continuance.

E.A. Quarmby Lawrence  
6th November 2002

## Appendix 1.

### A Bibliography of General Sources for the Study of Historic Library Buildings, to 1945

Only general works and those covering groups of buildings are included: there is a wealth of information available on individual buildings, much of it contained in journal articles, pamphlets for visitors or histories of the institution to which the library belongs.

Some surveys covering periods later than 1945 are included where they may contain features on the conversion and alteration of earlier buildings.

#### General

*British Library yearbook 1900-1901.* London, Greenwood, 1900. (Continues *Greenwood's library yearbook.* London: Cassell, 1897. Subsequently became *Libraries, museums and art galleries yearbook*)

Burgoyne, F.J. *Library construction, architecture, fittings and furniture.* 1897

Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments and the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Scotland: inventories of buildings for individual counties/cities.

Pevsner *The buildings of England*, and *The buildings of Scotland* series. See also the CD Rom index to the series.

Thompson, Anthony. *Library buildings of Britain and Europe.* London: Butterworth, 1963

Reynolds, J.D. ed. *Library buildings, 1965.* London: Library Association, 1966. Made up of features on new buildings originally published in the *Library Association Record* from Vol. 62 (1960) onwards.

Reynolds, J.D. (ed.) *Library buildings, 1966.* London: Library Association, 1967.

Berriman, S.G. (ed.) *Library buildings, 1967-1968.* London: Library Association, 1969.

Ward, H. and Odd, S. (eds.) *Library buildings, 1972 issue.* London: Library Association, 1973.

Ward, H. (ed.) *New library buildings, 1974 issue.* London: Library Association, 1974.

Ward, H. (ed.) *New library buildings : Architect/Librarian assessments. 1976 issue, years 1973-1974.* London : Library Association, 1976.

Streeter, B.H. *The chained library.* London: Macmillan, 1931. Contains detailed descriptions of the fittings and furniture of many of the surviving British chained libraries.

Clark, J.W. *The care of books*. Cambridge: CUP, 1901. A history of library architecture to 1800.

*The Cambridge history of libraries* (forthcoming) will include chapters on architecture, fixtures and fittings, and some library buildings may be described elsewhere in the volumes.

Bloomfield, B.C. and Potts, K. *A directory of rare book and special collections in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland*. 2nd ed. London : Library Association Publishing, 1997. Bibliographical references given with each entry include some relevant to buildings, particularly for older institutions.

Polytechnic of North London. School of Librarianship Library. *Index to the slide collection of library buildings in the School library*. London : Polytechnic of North London, 1974.

Harrison, K.C. ed. *Library buildings 1984-1989*. London : Library Services Ltd, 1990.

Harrison, D. and Rodger, E.M. eds. *Library buildings in the United Kingdom 1990-1994*. London : Library Association, 1995.

*New library buildings 1962-1963 : article and reports reprinted from the 'Library Association record' for December 1963*. London : Library Association, 1963.

Architects' Journal. *Library buildings, Architects' Journal*. [London] : Architects Journal, 1968.

*Bibliographie der Buch- und Bibliotheksgeschichte* Bad Iburg: Bibliographischer Verlag Dr. Horst Meyer, 198- - . Annual bibliography of the history of books and libraries.

*Country life*, contains many articles on libraries, particularly those of country houses.

[English Heritage] *Recording historic buildings: a descriptive specification* (3rd edition), 1996

## **Architects**

Brawne, Michael. *Library builders*. London : Academy Editions, 1997.

Dewe, Michael. *Henry Thomas Hare, 1860-1921 : an Edwardian public library architect and his work*. Thesis (M.A.) - University of Strathclyde, 1981.

## **Public Libraries**

Cotgreave, Alfred *Views and memoranda of public libraries*. London: Library Aids Co., 1901

Evans, Margaret Kinnell, and Sturges, Paul, (eds.) *Continuity and innovation in the public library*. London: LAPL, 1996.

Greenwood, Thomas *Public libraries*. 4th ed. London: Cassell, 1891. (Previous three editions also worth consulting)

Kelly, Thomas *A history of public libraries in Great Britain*. 2nd ed. London: Library Association, 1977. (See section of bibliography on buildings, p.544)

Smith, Anne Judith "Carnegie library buildings in Great Britain: an account, evaluation and survey" 4 vols. FLA Thesis, 1974. (Held at Thomas Parry Library, University of Wales, Aberystwyth.)

Grimes, Brendan *Irish Carnegie libraries: a catalogue and architectural history*. Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1998.

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Dewe, Michael. *Public library buildings in Hammersmith : benefactors and architects*. 1979. 4 p.

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Baggs, Christopher *The miners' libraries of South Wales from the 1860s to 1939* Thesis (Ph.D.) - University of Wales, 1995.

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Willis, R. and Clark, J.W. *The architectural history of the University of Cambridge*. Cambridge: CUP, 1886 (repr. 1988)

Barber, G. *Arks for learning*. Oxford: Oxford Bibliographical Society, 1995

Sykes, Marjorie "Manchester's period libraries" *Country life* vol. 173, no. 4457, Jan. 20 (1983) p144-145. (Chetham's and John Rylands)

McKitterick, D. (ed.) *The making of the Wren Library Trinity College, Cambridge*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995

## **Country Houses**

The National Trust. Guidebooks produced for individual properties. (Available from the properties, or the National Trust offices in London).

S. West 'The development of libraries in Norfolk country houses 1660-1830. PhD thesis, University of East Anglia, 2000. (Under embargo until June 2004).

G. Jackson-Stopes and James Pipkin *The English country house: a grand tour*. London, 1984, reprinted 1998.

Girouard, M. *Life in the English country house: a social and architectural history*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978.

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Read, E. Anne. *A checklist of books, catalogues : and periodical articles relating to the cathedral libraries of England*. Oxford : Oxford Bibliographical Society, Bodleian Library, 1970.

M. Perkin *Directory of parochial libraries* 2nd edition. London: Bibliographical Society, forthcoming.

### **Studies of Other Building Types, Useful for Comparative Purposes**

Morrison, Kathryn *The workhouse - a study of poor-law buildings in England*, 1999

Richardson, Harriet (ed.) *English hospitals 1660 -1948 - a survey of their architecture and design*, 1998

Brodie, Allan, Jane Croom and James O. Davies *Behind bars: the hidden architecture of England's prisons*, 2000

Barnwell, P.S. and Colum Giles *English farmsteads 1750-1914*, 1998

Fisher, I. (ed.) *Tolbooths and town-houses: civic architecture in Scotland to 1833*. Edinburgh: H.M.S.O., 1996

Fenton, A. and B. Walker *The rural architecture of Scotland*, Edinburgh: John Donald, 1981.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Historic library buildings to 1945: Web Sites**

#### **General Architectural information:**

<http://www.britarch.ac.uk/HEIRNET/>

<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/HEIRNET.html>

“Historic Environment Information Resources Network”, provided under aegis of the Council for British Archaeology. Provides links to numerous relevant organisations and projects for the preservation of various types of building, useful for comparative purposes.

<http://ilex.cc.kcl.ac.uk/year1/architecture.html#H-Associations>

Sources for students in humanities and computing at King's College, London. Links to web sites connected with architecture, including architectural history.

<http://adam.ac.uk/>

ADAM: Art, Design, Architecture & Media Information Gateway. Internet resources provided for UK HE community.

<http://www.sahgb.org.uk/links.html>

The Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain. Has a good links page

[http://www.spab.org.uk/contacts\\_other.html](http://www.spab.org.uk/contacts_other.html)

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.

<http://dSPACE.dial.pipex.com/town/square/ac940/weblibs.html>

Links to the web sites of UK public libraries.

<http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk>

A project to compile a database of photographs of all the listed buildings in the country, as of the millennium, and to make the pictures available, along with the National Monuments Record description of the building. In progress: only a limited number of pictures are available, but a few libraries are among them. It is possible to search the database of pictures by category.

#### **Useful Resources**

<http://www.r-alston.co.uk/contents.htm>

Robin Alston's lists of historic libraries, bibliographical sources for them etc.

<http://store.yahoo.com/riba-library/oncat.html>

The RIBA library catalogue. An excellent source of bibliographical information, since journal articles are included (as well as monographs and some manuscript materials, plans and drawings). Coverage is mostly of relatively recent

material: conversion of earlier records appears to be in progress. The emphasis is towards items on individual buildings.

<http://www.pevsner.co.uk/>

The web site for the Pevsner architectural guides. States that searches of the updated database of the CD Rom can be carried out by its compiler, for a fee. The site's links page is particularly strong on Scotland.

[www.mappingwales.ac.uk](http://www.mappingwales.ac.uk)

A site listing library collections and resources in Wales; likely to be of use to anyone undertaking library surveys in Wales.

[www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)

The National Trust (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)

[www.nts.org.uk](http://www.nts.org.uk)

The National Trust for Scotland

[www.ahss.org.uk](http://www.ahss.org.uk)

Architectural Heritage of Scotland

### **Official Organisations**

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk>

English Heritage, including the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments of England and the National Monuments Record for England.

<http://www.rcahmw.org.uk/nmrw/extdbs.html>

The Royal Commission on the Ancient & Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW), including the National Monuments Record of Wales.

[www.cadw.wales.gov.uk](http://www.cadw.wales.gov.uk)

CADW with responsibility for the preservation of historic buildings in Wales, and for the management of those in public ownership.

<http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/>

The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS), including the National Monuments Record of Scotland, with a publicly accessible search facility .

<http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/sw-frame.htm>

Historic Scotland: with responsibility for the preservation of historic buildings in Scotland, and for the management of those in public ownership.

[www.nics.gov.uk/ehs](http://www.nics.gov.uk/ehs)

Environment and Heritage Service, part of the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland, with responsibility for historic buildings.

### **Library History**

<http://homepage.ntlworld.com/g.blaikie>  
The architecture and history of Scottish Libraries.

**Resources for Recording Historic Buildings and the Management of Electronic Data.**

<http://www.rchme.gov.uk/midas/index.html>  
Electronic version of E. Lee (ed.) *MIDAS: a manual and data standard for monument inventories*. Data Standard Unit of English Heritage, 1998.

[http://www.rchme.gov.uk/thesaurus/thes\\_splash.htm](http://www.rchme.gov.uk/thesaurus/thes_splash.htm)  
Links to a collection of thesauri for use in describing historic buildings and artefacts.

<http://www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabulary/aat>  
The Art and Architecture Thesaurus of the Getty Institute.

<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk>  
Archaeology Data Service, part of the Arts and Humanities Data Service. Includes guidelines on the management of electronic data for archaeological recording projects. See especially: <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/userinfo/standards.html> for standards for cataloguing bodies of data, thesauri of terms, etc.

## **Appendix 3**

### **Historic library buildings to 1945: E-mail Discussion Lists**

Some of these lists are likely to be unsuitable for some announcements the Historic Library Buildings Project may want to make. The general scope of individual lists is indicated. Further suggestions of lists will be welcomed, particularly for any reaching architectural historians, which diligent enquiry has so far failed to identify.

The web-sites given below contain instructions for subscribing to the lists, give details of their scope, and allow access to the files of past messages.

<http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/LIS-LIBHIST.html>

The Library History Group's own list.

<http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/LIS-RAREBOOKS.html>

The Rare Books Group of CILIP's list. For librarians working with rare books and special collections, but with a fairly broad interpretation of their interests.

<http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/BOOK-HISTORY.html>

The list of the Book History Postgraduate Student Network. Covers all areas and periods of book history, although the focus is often most on the history of publishing and reading.

<http://www.sharpweb.org/sharp-l.html>

The list belonging to the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading, and Publishing, with a very wide scholarly coverage of all matters relating to book history.

<http://palimpsest.stanford.edu/byform/mailling-lists/exlibris/>

Ex-Libris, a U.S. list for those working with rare books and special collections. More closely focussed on matters of library management than its British counterpart.

## **Appendix 4**

### **Library History Group Historic Library Buildings Project.**

#### **A Guide to Data Management**

The Historic Library Buildings Project (HLBP) will inevitably eventually have need of computer software to manage its collected data; the most appropriate system will depend on the circumstances of the moment and the current state of fast-changing technology. No absolute decisions, particularly at the level of choosing a particular software package, should be made until the project is certain who is to use it and for what end: an approach suited to mounting data on a web-site may be incompatible with the needs of a researcher producing a printed directory of regional buildings, or one seeking to carry out further research by analysis of the collected data.

It is likely that most of those involved with the project will be familiar with electronic library catalogues and thus with many of the concepts necessary to manage data electronically. However, not all may be familiar with the features of the sort of database software package likely to be used, thus a summary of some of the problems and useful features of these may be found helpful.

A major issue for the HLBP is likely to be that of securing the data's long-term preservation. This is relatively straightforward, and well-understood where paper records are involved, but electronic data presents a greater challenge, requiring active maintenance as well as passive preservation, to ensure that it remains readable by newer technology. This potentially could be a considerable commitment for the Library History Group, and should be addressed before the data is collected rather than afterwards. The issues and possible solutions are discussed further below.

This document is intended to be a brief summary of the issues which should be considered when the HLBP comes to choose a suitable system, and some points of information which might be useful for those designing databases or collecting data to be converted to electronic format later, reflecting the current state of computing technology and the current state of the HLBP project.

#### Systems and Software: the Options

1. Database Package run on a pc. Until recently this would have been the most obvious and most sensible method of handling the sort of data the HLBP is likely to produce. The main advantages of this method are that it makes for easy manipulation and indexing of the data, and simple databases are easy to set up; ideal for someone intending to use the database as a working tool. At a more advanced level, the better packages can be programmed to make them into more sophisticated systems (although this may require some input from a professional programmer). The latest editions of the better packages (at the time of writing) are starting to include interfaces to allow a database to be mounted on the Internet: I have not seen any of these in action and do not how easy they would be to implement.

The disadvantages of this method are that database packages do not allow the exchange of data between them as easily as one might hope; unlike word processor packages, where it is usually possible to find a common file format which preserves the text formatting, it is usually necessary to exchange databases at the “lowest-common-denominator” level, which does not preserve either the typographical formatting or any special settings for the data fields (see below). Exchanging files of relational databases is even harder, and exchange of data between databases and word processors only satisfactory with those from the same manufacturer. (See below). This has distinct implications for the long-term preservation of the data. It is not always easy to produce really presentable printed text from a database package, which may make this method less suitable for HLBP applications where the intended outcome is a printed volume with straightforward text and little indexing, unless perhaps the compiler happens to be a confident and experienced database user.

The most popular pc. database package, at the time of writing, is Microsoft Access. This is certainly capable of everything which the HLBP may require. However, it may be a less obvious solution for a user of an Apple-Macintosh computer, where the package Filemaker may be a more obvious choice. (This is also available for pc., and favoured by those resistant to Microsoft software). Both packages have the capability to run relational databases and handle pictures, and both can import and export data in standard formats. Some of the smaller packages should be avoided, their main shortcomings being: some can handle fields no longer than 250 characters, which for HLBP purposes is inadequate; some cannot recognise dates outside a limited time period (eg. before 1900, or before 1960). Microsoft Works, which comes, or used to come, with many home computers is a particular case in point, and is perhaps the one most likely to be encountered.

2. Markup Language. An alternative approach, which looks ambitious for a small project in 2002, but is likely to look increasingly attractive as time progresses, would be to use a markup language of the sort used for writing web pages. These consist of a system of codes which are embedded in a text to mark and identify different components of their content. They are rather similar in appearance to the sort of codes which some older word processors used to display, to show features of typographical formatting which they were otherwise unable to show on screen. Instead of designating typographical functions, markup languages designate the content, allowing manipulation of the way the text is displayed and indexing of the components. In the case of the HLBP the sections of text to be defined would generally roughly equate with the fields which would be used if the job were done on a database. This approach is becoming increasingly popular for cataloguing archives, where catalogues tend to be text-heavy and need to be multi-level, something else which this system does well, although perhaps it is less critical for HLBP purposes.

There is a family of markup languages. They have the advantage over database packages in that they are not limited to a single software package, and are likely to have greater longevity as a result. It is possible to convert data from standard database file formats into markup format. For a general bibliography on the different languages see: <http://lcweb.loc.gov/ead>

a) SGML: Standard Generalised Markup Language. ISO 8879. See: [http://www.arbortext.com/Think Tank/SGML Resources/Getting Started with SGML/getting started with sgml.html](http://www.arbortext.com/Think_Tank/SGML_Resources/Getting_Started_with_SGML/getting_started_with_sgml.html).

b) XML: Extensible Markup Language.

c) EAD: Encoded archival description. This is a language developed specifically for cataloguing archives. It may be useful to members of the HLBP in that its web site explains the principles of markup languages in terms readily understood by librarians, for use in an application broadly familiar to them.

See: [www.locweb.loc.gov/ead](http://www.locweb.loc.gov/ead)

d) HTML: Hypertext Markup Language. This is the standard language used for web pages, and in conjunction with other languages for other applications. Many archives using EAD, for example, use that in conjunction with HTML to produce a archives catalogue with a World Wide Web interface.

This approach is likely to be most suitable for HLBP if a serious attempt is to be made to mount data on the WWW. It might offer particular advantages where data has been created manually, perhaps as word processed text, since adding tags is likely to be a simpler editing job than converting such data into a database format. It would work well with building descriptions which are written in continuous (if standardised) text; if a Pevsner-style guide is the aim it could be an extremely attractive option. At the time of writing its viability is likely to be limited by the availability to the LHG of someone who can set up a system, or commission professional assistance to do so. However, there is such growth of interest in this area that this is likely to be less of a problem in the near future.

### Database Management: Some Basics

#### 1. Database file formats

As outlined above, to exchange data between different database packages all too often has to be done through one of the standard “lowest-common-denominator” file formats. These are the database equivalent of “txt” or “RTF” on a word processor. The two in most common use are “tab-separated” and “comma-separated” text. Most serious database packages support both. It should be noted that transferring data this way is likely to be less simple than transferring word processor files through the equivalent formats: if the database text contains tabs or commas, depending on the format used as the transfer medium, it will prove necessary to manipulate the file to temporarily remove them before the data can be successfully loaded into the destination database package.

These transfer formats generally lose any typographical formatting which was in the original file. They do not transfer the field labels, although this is a less serious problem. Most databases allow fields to be designated to accept only text in a particular format, for example numerals or dates. These designations are not transferred.

It is possible to transfer data between a database package and other software, notably a word processor or spread sheet, using these standard formats. Better results

can be obtained where the database package is part of a suite with the word processor or spread sheet: exchange between the different components of Microsoft Office, for example, is fairly easy.

## 2. Relational Databases and Authority Controlled Data

1. Relational Databases. A concept which members of the HLBP working with databases should be aware of, is the difference between a flat-file database and a relational one. A flat-file is the electronic equivalent of the 3 x 5" card: all the information belonging to a particular database record is contained in it. Any information which appears in identical form in more than one of the records in the database (for example, a name heading in a standardised form), has to be entered in each record separately. A relational database is actually a series of linked databases, where certain fields in one contain no more than a link to send the computer to look up the entry in one of the others. The most familiar manifestation of this is in most modern library catalogues, where the name and subject index authority files are separate from the main catalogue file and the headings fields of the bibliographic records are actually no more than links to them. If it is decided to change the authority form of a name it has to be changed only once, in the authority file, to appear in the new form in all the catalogue records it applies to. This is an immensely powerful tool, but is a feature which does not transfer easily between different database software and should be employed with caution.

2. Alternatives for the authority-control of data. Both Access and Filemaker database packages have a means of maintaining small authority-controlled thesauri without resorting to a full relational database. These consist of lists of terms which appear and can be selected from when data is being entered in relevant fields. The software can be set either to insist on their use in a particular field, or to allow them to be ignored and other text substituted. They will prove useful for such things as lists of library types and furniture descriptions, where consistency of language is essential if the database is to be successful as a search-tool. They should not be overlooked where standard text is required only occasionally, for example for the names of such architects, benefactors and builders as recur. Elsewhere they may be useful where standard wording may be required and consistency and saving typing are an advantage.

## 3. Pictures

Any database package worthy of the HLBP's consideration will be able to store pictures as well as text. A mark-up language-based approach will be able to accommodate them equally easily. However, picture files are very large: they take up a great deal of file space and an illustrated database has the potential of easily exceeding any ordinary allocation of space for a web site, or the capacity of a researcher's hard disc. The implications of this should be carefully considered before a commitment is made to a project involving the electronic storage of pictures. At a less serious level pictures are likely to slow down software. In Access, in particular, there are number of ways of circumventing this, which an experienced user would be able to advise on.

## 4. File sizes

At risk of repeating point 3. above: if the HLBP is to be presented as a working database on the LHG Web site, particularly with pictures, it should be considered at an early stage whether or not the group's file space will be big enough to hold it. A large body of data with pictures is likely to be too much for a file allocation designed mostly to give out information about the group's activities.

#### Standards for preservation of electronic data

1. Central to the Historic Library Buildings Project is the principle of producing a permanent record of the buildings studied. That this is likely to involve making provision for the long-term preservation of data produced in the course of research is obvious, and has already been addressed by the pilot project in Yorkshire, who are arranging for the preservation of their photographs and paper records in the archives of the Yorkshire and Humberside Branch of CILIP.

2. The issues surrounding the preservation of electronic data are rather more complex. Provision has to be made for the data to be maintained in a format which can be read by current software, on a storage medium compatible with current hardware. Given the rate of development of electronic technology this requires active maintenance of the data files, involving a level of effort and commitment not necessary for a paper archive. The Library History Group should consider carefully the implications of this before undertaking the long-term maintenance of such data.

3. Expert advice on this matter is available from the Archaeology Data Service (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk>), part of the Arts and Humanities Data Service, which exists to promote good practice in this field. Their remit includes surviving buildings and artefacts as well as remains recovered through archaeological excavation. Their informative web site includes general guidelines, and specific guides for different sorts of data. See especially J. Richards and D. Robinson (eds.) *Digital archives from excavation and fieldwork: guide to good practice*, 2nd ed., available at: <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/goodguides/excavation>, and their guidelines on producing electronic catalogues for data which is not itself electronic, at: <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/userinfo/standards.html>. The site also includes an extensive bibliography on the subject.

4. The Archaeology Data Service also runs a service by which, usually for a one-off fee, (although there are exceptions for which this is waived or reduced; essentially for UK Higher Education, Research Council, and other government funded projects), they will take charge of a dataset, consisting either of the complete data collected by a project, or just of catalogue records of it, (which can often be generated automatically from a database), and undertake its maintenance for long-term preservation. One of the conditions is that the data, and the data to which a catalogue refers, in the cases where that is what is deposited with them, should be freely publicly available. This route, or a similar alternative, would seem to offer the Library History Group considerable advantages, if the project develops a body of electronic data. Not only would the data be preserved, but its presence in the electronic archive of a centralised, well-known organisation would make its presence known, and make it easy for future researchers to trace.

5. If this route is to be followed then contact should be made with the relevant organisations before the data is created, and their recommendations for file formats and database content followed. Even if this method is not to be used, the Archaeology Data Service's published advice on maintaining electronic data should be studied in more detail. In summary: they stress that the key to ensuring the preservation of data is to ensure that it can be stored and copied in standard file formats which are likely to have a reasonable longevity and reasonable chances of being exchanged with different software packages; good documentation should be maintained to enable someone other than the data's creator to read the files and understand their content and coverage; good practices for backing up the data are recommended.

E.A. Quarmby Lawrence

7 August 2002, corrected 22 November 2002



## Appendix 6

### Historic Library Buildings of Scotland – Type of Library

1. Ecclesiastical                      Church & cathedral
2. Academic
3. Public                              Early endowed (up to 1850)  
    Circulating  
    Subscription  
    Mechanics' Institutes  
    Other endowed (1850 -)  
    Public (rate supported)  
    Rural/Community (not rate supported)
4. School
5. Hospitals
6. Professional and other Institutions
7. Private House
8. Other

Antonia J Bunch May 2001

## Appendix 7.

### Historic Library Buildings of Scotland – Interior Furnishings Check List

1. Windows - treatment
2. Plasterwork
3. Carving
4. Inscriptions
5. Frescoes
6. Paintings
7. Prints
8. Other wall hangings
9. Statues
10. Busts
11. Bookshelves
12. Tables and chairs (Readers')
13. Reading slopes
14. Counter/issue desk
15. Other furniture for staff
16. Other special features

Antonia J Bunch November 2001